



# Pupil Premium Strategy Statement

## December 2025

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium funding to help improve the attainment of our disadvantaged pupils.

It outlines our pupil premium strategy, how we intend to spend the funding in this academic year and the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils last academic year.

### School overview

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school at KS3+4	1232
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	13%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2024-27
Date this statement was published	December 2024
Date on which it will be reviewed	August 2025, August 2026, August 2027
Statement authorised by	James Shapland, Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Hash Khalil, Assistant Headteacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Peter Hepburn

### Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£156,759
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£139
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b>	<b>£156,898</b>
<i>If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year</i>	

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

### ***What are your ultimate objectives for your disadvantaged pupils?***

Our aim for all students is to provide the best opportunities and support so that they are able to flourish and succeed. Our school was founded to care for the most vulnerable children in society and we pride ourselves on our determination to ensure this remains a high priority. It is our ambition to provide care and support for all of our disadvantaged students in receipt of PP funding as well as those who are vulnerable in other ways such as those who are CIN (child in need).

### ***How does your current pupil premium strategy plan work towards achieving those objectives?***

A key part of the action plan is to address the fact that disadvantaged students do not always have the same opportunities as their peers. As well as high quality teaching for all students, we will target more focused support to address individual learning challenges. Since the pandemic, schools have also witnessed a deterioration in engagement, self regulation and adherence to rules and boundaries and attendance for a number of students. All of these must be addressed if we want these students to succeed.

### ***What are the key principles of your strategy plan?***

As a school that has invested in the Hertfordshire Steps programme, we believe that a key part of securing improvements is building and developing positive relationships between school staff, students, their families and their peers. Feedback from these stakeholders has indicated to us how valuable this is and we believe that every student needs to feel a sense of 'belonging' in order to flourish within the parameters and rules of the school community. We know students will experience challenges that are unique to their own circumstances so we are keen to foster a supportive, and where necessary adapted, Teaching and Learning approaches to supporting their progress. In addition, giving students the space to articulate their ideas and feelings, aspirations and frustrations, as well as opportunities to develop their character, will help them develop the greater self-regulation and agency required to take ownership of their learning and progress. These principles underpin much of our plan and the associated activities.

## Challenges

This details the key challenges to achievement that we have identified among our disadvantaged pupils.

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Lower attainment and progress for disadvantaged students exacerbated by knowledge gaps and/or lower literacy (including oracy)/numeracy on entry and in some cases SEND
2	Lower attendance and persistent/severe absence for some students resulting in lack of learning and not making the most of opportunities on offer
3	Need for further educational conversations regarding progress, self regulation and guidance on achieving highly aspirational outcomes
4	Students feeling excluded from the school community as a consequence of their disadvantages
5	Students feeling that they are not able to make positive effective changes in their lives
6	Need for effective strategies, boundaries and routines to support positive attitudes to learning and emotional regulation
7	School not imparting effectively enough the sufficient skills and knowledge to parents to act effectively as co-educators

## Intended outcomes

This explains the outcomes we are aiming for **by the end of our current strategy plan**, and how we will measure whether they have been achieved.

Our ambition is that the progress of disadvantaged students will improve and is closer to their peers in all performance measures including attainment, progress, attendance and attitude to learning and behaviour. Incremental progress on these measures will be benchmarked following the reintroduction of national performance data tables and other data sets.

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Improve rates of <b>progress</b> (including literacy/oracy/numeracy skills) across all year groups for students eligible for PP including those with SEND	Attainment and progress of students eligible for PP is in line with those who are not (internal and external assessments and literacy programmes). Progress of PP students in any group in line with other PP students
Students improve their <b>attendance</b> including a reduction of PA and SA	The school provides appropriate support for specific individual challenges, for students to improve attendance so that it improves and is closer to their peers
Students develop and can <b>articulate</b> high	Reward and consequence points for PP

aspirations for themselves in terms of their learning, behaviour and their education and career 'next steps' and know how to achieve them	students improves and is closer to their peers Student and staff voice indicate development of their ability to articulate these aspirations Destinations data indicates aspirational choices appropriate to the individual and successful next steps
Students feel a greater sense of <b>belonging</b> , esteem and status	Increased attendance, SDQ scores, extracurricular and leadership participation Increased uptake of meal and trip offers
Students develop a greater sense of <b>agency</b> and ownership to become more independent learners	Targeted students take part in leadership opportunities Improved attitude to home-learning scores and VESPA scores
Students develop more positive and well-regulated <b>attitudes</b> to learning	Reward and consequence points for PP students in line with peers Improved attitude to learning scores Increased SDQ scores Feedback from student focus groups
<b>Parents</b> are better enabled by the school to support the learning of their children	Feedback from parents indicates increased capacity to support their child's progress Reduction in F1 points for PP students High (90%+/in line with peers) attendance at events in school

## Activity in this academic year

This details how we intend to spend our pupil premium funding **this academic year** to address the challenges listed above.

## Teaching (e.g. CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £80496

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff development to enhance T+L approaches including supporting PP students with SEND, digital pedagogy including AI, Independent learning, revision techniques and Literacy, Numeracy and Oracy across the curriculum</li> <li>● PP students prioritised in Quality First Teaching. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use of INSET and CPD to keep this a high priority</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>In line with EEF research, staff CPD audit and school SEF, key areas of T,L&amp;A are targeted in the CPD programme for the year.</p> <p>Monitoring the impact of the T,L&amp;A training through QA cycle raises the profile of quality first teaching of PP students.</p>	<p>1, 3, 5</p> <p>1</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Improving the use of A2L maps by teachers to improve the planning and delivery of teaching for students</li> <li>○ Use of intersectionality charts in departments to plan T+L in response to multiple barriers faced by individuals</li> <li>● The T,L &amp; Assessment of PP students is a focus on the QA cycle that Middle Leaders and SLT complete</li> <li>● Student Voice - focus groups with PP students to identify which interventions have been most impactful</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bedrock for all students in Year 7 and 8</li> <li>● Form reading in Year 7 and 8 to improve reading and fluency</li> </ul>	<p>PP students have on average a lower reading age than non PP students when they start in Year 7. Effective use of reading comprehension strategies give a potential gain of +6 months. We have used these interventions previously and know they are successful for individual PP students</p>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue to develop and embed the school Character programme</li> </ul>	<p>Research suggests that there are enabling character traits which can improve educational attainment, engagement with school and attendance</p>	3, 5, 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prioritise PP students as we continue to develop the extra and co-curricular offer in school to enable students to develop leadership opportunities and so enhance the social and academic skills that will benefit them in the future.</li> </ul>	<p>Taking leadership roles develops essential communication, problem-solving, decision-making and organisational skills as well as increasing confidence and self-esteem, empathy and performance in the classroom. Current programmes in school have also demonstrated these outcomes.</p>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduce the Paul Dix relational approach to complement the whole school Steps approach to prosocial behaviour management</li> </ul>	<p>Self-regulation (feelings and behaviours) strategies have a potential gain of +7 months</p>	4, 5, 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduce the VESPA mindset programme into KS4</li> </ul>	<p>The model has been successfully implemented at KS5 at Ashlyns. Research demonstrates that these interventions have a positive influence on student mindset.</p>	1, 5

## Targeted academic support (e.g. tutoring, one-to-one support, structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £36296

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Targeted support programme for year 11 students including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Year 11 RAP (Raising Achievement Plan)</li> <li>○ 1 to 1 Tutoring of year 11 students by KS5 students</li> <li>○ Revision strategies PP/SEND parental event</li> <li>○ Services for Young People careers support</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	EEF: Effective use of tuition strategies give a potential gain of +5 months. Pilot from last year showed positive outcomes for most students	1, 3, 4, 5, 7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tutor led pastoral support including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Staff CPD on 'Belonging' and the role of the tutor</li> <li>○ embedding a culture of continuous contact home to build positive relationships with families</li> <li>○ termly data tracking and interventions</li> <li>○ supporting the whole school behaviour strategy including threads and punctuality drive</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	EEF: Effective use of parental engagement strategies give a potential gain of +4 months. HfL CPD	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Small group literacy intervention:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ on Lexia in Year 7 with a RA of under 10 and shared reading</li> <li>○ in Year 8 with a RA of under 11 on Reading Plus</li> <li>○ in Year 9 on Reading Plus</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	As per challenge 1 above for literacy interventions. More intensive support is needed for those students with significantly lower literacy skills	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strategies to improve persistent and severe absenteeism including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ early identification and intervention by the pastoral team</li> <li>○ EBSA coffee morning</li> <li>○ EWO support</li> <li>○ WBA attendance services</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	EBSA toolkit	2, 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Peer tutoring programme using prefects (year 10 with year 8) and Student wellbeing ambassadors (year 13 with year 10)</li> </ul>	Peer tutoring strategies have a potential gain of +5 months	3, 4, 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improving extracurricular participation including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ tutor support</li> <li>○ funding support</li> <li>○ regular check-ins and ensuring provision for CLA/PLA students</li> <li>○ SOHK programme to be continued and enhanced through sports leader programme with partner primary schools</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Research indicates many benefits including academic performance, social skills, positive mental health and self esteem. Student and staff voice feedback clearly indicate that these activities foster a great sense of belonging within the school community.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support for CLA/PLA students including:</li> </ul>	Virtual School	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ PLA (previously looked after) parent support group including for prospective (year 5+6) parents</li> <li>○ ePEP actions including tutoring/ support in identified areas</li> <li>○ bespoke pastoral support</li> </ul>	<p>CLA SEF Trauma and Attachment toolkit</p>	
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## Wider strategies (e.g. related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £40106

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support from the PP administrator for all PP families including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ transition support</li> <li>○ settling in meetings</li> <li>○ securing attendance at parental events</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>HfL CPD including Great Expectations programme EEF: Effective use of parental engagement strategies give a potential gain of +4 months. Our experiences have also shown these strategies promote positive outcomes</p>	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Implementing actions from the EEE (Eliminating Economic Exclusion) HfL visit including in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ meal provision</li> <li>○ extracurricular uptake</li> <li>○ communication with parents</li> <li>○ families above the FSM threshold</li> <li>○ uniform/equipment provision</li> <li>○ hardship support e.g. Toy Hub</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>HfL programme</p>	2, 4, 7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Summer club</li> </ul>	<p>Summer schools offer a potential gain of +3 months.</p>	2, 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Breakfast club</li> </ul>	<p>Breakfast clubs have been shown to reduce hunger, improve focus in class and punctuality to school (DfE)</p>	3, 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● After school study support</li> </ul>	<p>Increased attendance at after school study support gives an opportunity for students to improve their independent learning routines in a structured supportive environment</p>	1, 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Funding support for resources and experiences that support learning as required, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ chromebooks</li> <li>○ trips</li> <li>○ study resources</li> <li>○ revision resources</li> <li>○ music lessons</li> <li>○ uniform</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Ensuring that students are fully equipped and able to participate fully in any opportunities given them is essential to support their learning and sense of belonging (HfL inclusive practice webinars)</p>	1, 2, 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wellbeing support including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use of therapeutic interventions for students identified from the SDQ questionnaire</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>PP student referrals to therapeutic support are above school average.</p>	2, 3, 6, 7

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Signposting parents to Dr Kathy Weston resources on Tooled Up Education platform</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student Voice activities undertaken with students from all Key Stages to understand what students feel support them most as well as what they feel we can do to improved further</li> </ul>	Our experiences have also shown these activities provide valuable and insightful feedback as well as providing those individuals with greater agency	3, 5

**Total budgeted cost: £156898**

## Part B: Review of the previous academic year

### Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Analysis of Year 11 attainment data for 2025 compared to the previous year shows:

- A slight decrease in A8 of PP students compared to 2024 from 38.4 to 36.4 (although still higher than 34.7 in 2023)
- A increase in the A8 gap between PP and non PP students by 6.5 points compared to 2024
- A significant increase in the % of PP students achieving 9-4 in both English and Maths (of 8.7%) when compared to 2024 results
- An increase in the % of PP students achieving 9-5 in both English and Maths (5.9%) when compared to 2024 results.
- P8 data is not available as this cohort did not sit Year 6 SATS

Whilst these results indicate an improvement in the attainment outcomes of PP students in English and Maths, it is clear that improving the academic outcomes across the board will continue to be an ongoing endeavour.

Significant efforts were made throughout the year by teachers, pastoral and support staff to support these individuals. We used in-school tutoring programmes for students across a variety of subjects, continued the successful use of KS5 students as peer tutors for almost every Year 11 PP student in an identified subject (of which 72% improved on the grade achieved in their mock exam) as well as bespoke one to one exam preparation with subject teachers for a selected group of students. Many PP students were successfully targeted by the Year 11 'Raising Achievement Programme' which provided personalised intervention, including direct parental involvement. We held a year 11 parental revision event to provide parents with strategies to support their child as well as resources for students to use in the run up to the Trial Exams. All KS4 students are provided revision guides for their GCSE subjects.

The support and progress of PP students remained a central focus for all staff. This included the mandatory production of 'access to learning maps' by all teachers at the start of the year, providing personalised strategies for PP students in lessons. The effectiveness of these strategies was continuously monitored through the Quality Assurance (QA) cycle, involving learning walks and lesson

observations, and was also incorporated into the staff performance appraisal process. Staff development sessions (Inset) consistently addressed PP support, with a specific focus on themes like 'belonging' in the Autumn term and promoting agency and belonging through collaborative learning in the Spring term. All students complete termly subject data reflection tasks, with tutors giving targeted support to PP students. We introduced the VESPA mindset programme to all Year 10 students, following its success in the Sixth Form. Students now use the VESPA academy online platform weekly during tutor time to work on personalised target areas, fostering greater ownership of their learning.

We have reduced the gap for students receiving C5 suspensions for the second year running, although C4 isolations are still broadly in line with the last two years and both metrics are significantly above those received by non-PP peers. Displaying consistently positive learning behaviour remains a challenge for some of our students, as indicated by a rise in Consequence points received by PP students and is a high priority going forwards, as an integral part of the School Improvement Plan.

Improving attendance has continued to be a whole school priority with a range of strategies implemented across the year, including some specifically targeting PP students such as the SOHK programme and piloting a MHST parent workshop. Data for PP students shows a gap of 12% with PP attendance at 82% and non PP at 94%. This gap has increased from last year and is consequently continues to be a key action plan priority going forwards.

The successful SOHK (School of Hard Knocks) rugby intervention programme, which includes a character based curriculum as well as 1 to 1 mentoring, continues to be a major highlight, showing a significant improvement in engagement, self-regulation, and sense of belonging. Building on this success, students participated in the Rugby Sports Leaders programme, making regular visits to primary schools where they demonstrated strong leadership qualities, as well as participation in external tournaments and competitions. Data analysis later in the year, produced by a SOHK partner, confirmed the programme's strong impact, especially for students who attended across both Year 8 and Year 9, with a reduction in suspensions and improved attendance outcomes compared to non-participants.

Following the success of the previous mixed year group mentoring programme between Year 8+10 we have continued to use this as a vehicle to support students to form productive relationships with positive older role models where students are supported in being able to discuss their attitude to learning and set targets for improvement. The majority of students fed back how much they valued the experience. Teaching positive learning behaviour, an area of need highlighted in the statement of intent, is also a key part of the whole school Character Education programme.

Our PP students are given priority consideration for targeted careers events. All year 11 PP students attended an off-site careers fair and we commissioned 5 days of post 16/careers support from SYP (Services for Young People) to provide more in-depth CEIAG for students who we identified as requiring more support than their peers in this area.

Our PP support worker continues to contact parents on a regular basis to respond to any concerns and discuss support required, which helps to secure higher levels of engagement with school events such as PTCs. This is an area where we continue to see a significant improvement in the gap for attendance by parents of PP students for all year groups (reducing the gap for a second year to just 6.8%).

In recent years we have experienced (and supported) a significant increase in requests for financial assistance towards school costs such as food, uniform, equipment and extra-curricular activities. We undertook the HfL EEE (Eliminating Economic Exclusion) audit of our provision in Summer 2024 addressed the various resulting actions. Our Local Authority partner who undertook this audit visited in Autumn 2024 to review progress made and was complimentary about the work done by the school in a variety of areas.

We continue to track participation in, and promote further participation with, extra-curricular experiences, including an engaging Sports Day at a local school, providing music tuition for students showing a particular interest as well as providing financial support for trips and external club memberships.

The extremely successful transition Summer School took place over 5 days and was attended by 80% of the new Year 7 PP students. It included a wide ranging programme of events and experiences including daily literacy and numeracy, science, sports, arts, wellbeing and enrichment activities. Both parent and student feedback evidenced how much the students had enjoyed and benefited from the experiences which clearly helped develop their sense of belonging (the most frequently stated student benefit being 'Making new friends in Year 7'). We have taken the most successful aspects of the previous year to build upon in 2024-25, whilst also incorporating new evidence of emerging challenges to develop our strategy. This process will be continued into 2025-26 to evolve the three year action plan for 2024-27.

## Externally provided programmes

*Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you used your pupil premium to fund in the previous academic year.*

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Provider</b>
Rugby intervention programme	School Of Hard Knocks
Tooled Up Education - Family support	Dr Kathy Weston