# Pupil premium strategy statement – Smithills School

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

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| Detail | Data |
| Number of pupils in school  | 1215 |
| Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils | 42% |
| Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers **(3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year)** | 2024-2027 |
| Date this statement was published | December 2024 |
| Date on which it will be reviewed | Termly |
| Statement authorised by | C Dewse, Headteacher |
| Pupil premium lead | A Scholefield. AHT |
| Governor / Trustee lead | P Hodgkinson |

## Funding overview

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| **Detail** | **Amount** |
| Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year | £517,650 |
| Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years *(enter £0 if not applicable)* | £0 |
| **Total budget for this academic year***If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year* | £517,650 |

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

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| At Smithills School, we are unwavering in our commitment to fostering high aspirations for every student, ensuring that each child is supported to achieve their full potential. In our allocation of Pupil Premium funding, we consider the unique context of our school and the specific challenges our students face. For many pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM), common obstacles include limited home support, language and communication difficulties, low self-confidence, behavioural challenges, and attendance issues. Some students also navigate complex family circumstances that can impact their academic and personal development. We recognize that these challenges require individualised approaches—there is no “one size fits all” solution.Enhancing the achievement and progress of our disadvantaged pupils is a core priority at Smithills School. We have already seen the positive outcomes of our Pupil Premium initiatives in improved GCSE performance, steady Key Stage 3 progress, and the robustness of our academic programs. These gains reflect our dedication to meeting the diverse needs of our students.While we have made meaningful progress, we remain focused on further areas for development in the upcoming academic year. This includes supporting our high-achieving disadvantaged pupils to reach their next level of potential and addressing specific areas within our curriculum. To accelerate progress for all disadvantaged pupils, we will continue providing targeted, personalised interventions.At Smithills School, we embrace a holistic approach, collaborating closely with families, staff, and community partners to cultivate well-rounded, resilient individuals who are ready to make a positive impact on society. Our commitment extends beyond academics; we are dedicated to enriching students’ lives with opportunities that foster both personal growth and academic success.Our Pupil Premium strategy supports pupils from Years 7 to 11, focusing on three key objectives:* **Enhancing in-class learning**
* **Eliminating barriers to learning**
* **Expanding enrichment opportunities beyond the classroom**

Through these focused goals, we strive to create a nurturing, inclusive environment where every student is empowered to thrive. |

## Challenges

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

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| Challenge number | Detail of challenge  |
| 1 | Disadvantaged pupils at our school generally have lower literacy skills compared to their peers. Assessments across all year groups reveal that the average reading age for disadvantaged pupils is 11.5 years, while their spelling age is slightly higher at 11.8 years. The literacy gap is most pronounced in Years 7 and 8, with a significant disparity in reading age—4.4 years behind their peers in both years. In terms of spelling, the gap is narrower, with Year 7 pupils being 0.8 years behind and Year 8 pupils 0.7 years behind. |
| 2 | Numeracy levels are generally lower for Pupil Premium pupils upon entry to the school. Initial assessments show that disadvantaged pupils have an average Standard Age Score (SAS) of 91 in numeracy, compared to 95 for their non-disadvantaged peers. |
| 3 | Our in-house tracking shows that, overall, Pupil Premium pupils tend to have lower attendance rates compared to other pupils. During the tracked period, 28% of Pupil Premium pupils were classified as 'persistently absent,' compared to 15% of their non-disadvantaged peers. |
| 4 | Our observations and tracking indicate that Pupil Premium pupils are generally less engaged in wider curriculum opportunities compared to their peers, with this trend being particularly evident among disadvantaged boys. |
| 5 | Assessment data, along with input from mentors and the pastoral team, suggests that partial school closures have had a disproportionately large impact on our Pupil Premium pupils. This has led to significant knowledge gaps across many areas of the curriculum, with maths being particularly affected. |
| 6 | In house assessment data, intervention data and observations suggest that the reading comprehension levels of pupil premium pupils are significantly behind their peers. This impacts across the curriculum. Reading ages are lower for disadvantaged pupils on entry to the school |

## 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.

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| Intended outcome | Success criteria |
| Raise attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils through the implementation of a broad and balanced curriculum, which takes account of knowledge gaps. | Disadvantaged pupils will perform in line with other pupils nationally. |
| Improved literacy skills within the KS3 disadvantaged cohort. | Reduction in gaps for reading and spelling ages of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils and rapid improvement. Work scrutiny through quality assurance process demonstrates an improvement in literacy skills of disadvantaged pupils. |
| To support higher attainment and engagement in Maths and Science through the implementation of STEM based learning. | Gaps analysis of year group data entry demonstrates a reduction in the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils within Maths and Science.Teacher and pupil voice indicates an increase in engagement of disadvantaged pupils. Engagement in STEM extra curricula activities demonstrates engagement of disadvantaged pupils. |
| To achieve and sustain improved attendance for disadvantaged pupils. | The overall absence gap between non disadvantaged and disadvantaged pupils to be 0% by 2026/27.The percentage of pupils persistently absent being below national average and the gap between disadvantaged and other pupils being 0% by 2026/27. |
| To increase the participation in enrichment and extra-curricular activities by disadvantaged pupils. | Attendance data at extra-curricular activities demonstrates that disadvantaged pupils are proportionally represented at these events (42% in 2024/25)Where barriers have existed to engagement in extra-curricular activities, clear strategies are evident in an attempt to overcome them. |
| Improved reading comprehension levels within the disadvantaged cohort of KS3. | Reading age of disadvantaged pupils rapidly improves from entry to the school. Gap between disadvantaged and other pupils narrows from year 7 onwards. QA demonstrates an effort for reading skills to be developed in the classroom and an increased engagement of pupils in reading activities. |

## 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 (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £100,000

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| Activity | Evidence that supports this approach | Challenge number(s) addressed |
| To reduce the core subject gap in order that disadvantaged pupils perform as well as others nationally. | ‘Research acknowledges that underachievement is heavily linked to social, cultural and economic factors that are hard to shift. Barriers to learning faced by these pupils are mostly concerned with language and literacy. [Furthermore] there are other issues to consider, such as independence and resilience and pupils who give up easily, who find it difficult to work collaboratively or who find it difficult to manage their time. However, much of the problem of underachievement is about poor aspiration and engagement in learning. Many of our young people lack self-belief and are easily distracted from learning or have difficulties in understanding its relevance.’ **Kenny Frederick** (Principal of George Green’s school and a member of the National Association of Head Teachers executive) | 1,2,4,5,6 |
| To develop and promote literacy and numeracy across the school for disadvantaged pupils | Phonics approaches have been consistently found to be effective in supporting younger readers to master the basics of reading, with an average impact of an additional four months’ progress. Research suggests that phonics is particularly beneficial for younger learners (4-7 year olds) as they begin to read. (EEF toolkit) | 1,2,6 |
| To improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in Maths and Science through the development of STEM based learning. | “it is not a leap to suggest that those who build a solid foundation in STEM subjects and learning throughout their studies will not only be more employable in the future, but in fact more equipped for the future in general.” Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge | 2,3,4 |
| To ensure that disadvantaged pupils have access to quality first teaching with a particular focus on improving reading | **“**Pupils who can read are overwhelmingly more likely to succeed at school, achieve good qualifications, and subsequently enjoy a fulfilling and rewarding career. In addition to its substantial practical benefits, reading is one of life’s profound joys.” Reading: the Next Steps, DfE, March 2015 | 1,2,3,5,6 |
| Professional development to support the school’s SEF foci and therefore improve outcomes for all pupils  | 1. Research shows that effective professional development leads to a positive impact, not only on pupil motivation, achievement and attitude to work, but also for the staff involved.
2. Effective Professional Development can lead to greater confidence amongst teachers, greater self-efficacy and greater enthusiasm and willingness to try new things and innovate in their practice. Teachers are certainly driven to improve their pupils’ outcomes and also have a vested interest in ensuring that they participate in effective Professional Development.
3. The most effective Professional Development is that which is teacher-driven, collaborative and relevant to teacher’s classes and pupil learning. Teachers need support and freedom to focus on their own professional development and as such they cannot take sole responsibility for Professional Development provision: school leadership, school culture and even national policy must also play a significant role.
4. Teachers should be free to innovate, to take risks, to share their findings and engage in research and evidence that may inform their practice.
5. And whilst all play an important part, it is, however, the ultimate responsibility, and in the absolute interest of the individual teacher to ensure that they are finding and engaging in professional learning to continually improve their practice.

**Teacher Development Trust**  | 1,2,5,6 |

### Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support, structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £*188,000*

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| Activity | Evidence that supports this approach | Challenge number(s) addressed |
| To provide transition support to ensure that all DP pupils make a positive start to secondary school | **“**Success in navigating transition can not only affect children’s academic performance, but also their general sense of well-being and mental health” **Waters et al.**[**2012**](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40894-017-0063-2#ref-CR31) | 3,4,5 |
| To safeguard all pupils | ‘All organisations that work with or come into contact with children should have safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that every child, regardless of their age, gender, religion or ethnicity, can be protected from harm’. **NSPCC** *(Safeguarding Children)* | 3,4 |
| To improve attainment and progress by focusing on improving behaviour for learningthrough interventions which support pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs | +4 months impact. ‘Evidence suggests that behaviour interventions can produce large improvements in academic performance along with a decrease in problematic behaviours’ and ‘interventions which targetsocial and emotional learning…have an identifiable and significant impact on attitudes to learning, social relationships in school, and attainment itself (on average around three to four months additional progress).’ **EEF**‘Research which focuses on teaching assistants who provide one to one or small group support shows a strong positive benefit of between three and five additional months on average. Often support is based on a clearly specified approach which teaching assistants have been trained to deliver’ EEF | 3,4,5 |
| To meet the needs of pupils who require extra support & ensure they have access to Emotional and Well-Being advice | ‘School-based humanistic counselling can bring about significant reductions in psychological distress…emotionally distressed young people value an opportunity to talk and be listened to in a confidential environment; and with a counsellor who is trustworthy, friendly and easy to relate to’ **Professor Mick Cooper** (*The Psychologist*) | 3, 5 |
| To raise the attendance of Pupil Premium children | ‘PP pupils in secondary schools are 3 times more likely to become persistent absentees than their peers and 3 times more likely to receive two or more fixed term exclusions across the year. Pupils who are not present are not engaged in the full curriculum experience and therefore may not make as much progress as those whose attendance is acceptable.’ | 3,5 |
| Focused intervention to raise the aspirations of high and middle ability PP | Khattab (2015) suggests, parental encouragement can have a profound impact on student progress and this, coupled with our school programme, should develop the aspirations of Pupil Premium students.BERA Journals (January 2015) | 1,2,3 |
| To baseline all pupils in year 7 and 8 to identify gaps and subsequently provide targeted interventions  | Intervention that meets the needs of individual children makes an impact on children’s learning…Bespoke programmes impact on pupils’ confidence and ability to approach mathematics. Careful assessment of pupils’ needs was essential in designing an effective programme of support which would progress learning from where each child was rather than from an assumed expected starting point’ **National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics**‘Literacy interventions are designed for pupils with the potential to ‘catch up’ and reach age-related norms by the end of the programme delivery. They are successful when used with the right group of pupils who are able to maintain the fast pace of learning’ **Interventions for Literacy** | 1,2,4,5,6 |
| To provide focused literacy and numeracy support.  | The evidence suggests that children benefit from a balanced approach to literacy that includes a range of approaches. The emphasis of the different approaches will shift as children progress; effective diagnosis can help to identify priorities and focus teaching to ensure that it is efficient.EEF | 1,2,5,6 |
| Support for reading through the employment of a teacher of reading | 1. Phonics has a positive impact overall (+5 months) with very extensive evidence and is an important component in the development of early reading skills, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

EEF  | 1,5,6 |

### Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £ *229,500*

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| Activity | Evidence that supports this approach | Challenge number(s) addressed |
| To continue to improve the number of disadvantaged pupils going into further education or employment | **“**Longitudinal studies suggest that the way in which teenagers think about their futures in education and employment has a significant impact on what becomes of them as working adults. Teenagers who have effectively underestimated the education required for their desired profession, for example, are statistically more likely to end up NEET. In addition, young people from poorer backgrounds are more likely to have career aspirations that are misaligned with their educational ambitions” Careers education: International literature review, **EEF** | 4,5,3 |
| Pupil Premium Discretionary Fund: To provide pupils with additional opportunities that make education fun and meaningful  | ‘A holistic approach seeks to empower children to use their academic learning as a foothold for their emotional and social development. The approach motivates children to learn about a subject. It instills *curiosity* and allows children to learn naturally and creatively…preparing] children to become well-rounded adults’. **Scholar Base *(Why Holistic Education is Important))*** | 3,4,5,6 |
| To enrich disadvantaged pupils’ curriculum experience through a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes cultural capital. | Adventure education usually involves collaborative learning experiences with a high level of physical (and often emotional) challenge. Practical problem-solving, explicit reflection and discussion of thinking and emotion (see also Metacognition and self-regulation) may also be involved (Educational Endowment Foundation) | 3,4,5 |
| To develop parental engagement and clear communication with parents by embedding systems for parents’ evenings, daily contact to ensure regular dialect between home and school regarding academic and pastoral performance | 1. A study by [**the Department for Education**](https://campussuite-storage.s3.amazonaws.com/prod/1558547/25fac70c-4889-11e8-81cf-123d46065de8/1791897/4f285b62-7048-11e8-b464-12e5197c3b90/file/TheImpactofParentalInvolvementon365kb.pdf)  showed a direct correlation between a parent's involvement in their child's education and their academic success, even after accounting for family size, family background and parent education level. The same study also found that 72% of parents wanted more involvement in their child’s education.
2. Parental involvement in a pupil's education is a win-win-win. Teachers benefit from the additional support, both academically and behaviourally; parents feel more involved in their child's academic life; and students can take advantage of an enhanced support system, which increases their chances of academic success.
 | 3,4,5 |

**Total budgeted cost: £** *£517,650*

# Part B: Review of the previous academic year

## Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

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| The P8 score for **English Language** shows promising overall progress, with all pupils improving their outcomes. For disadvantaged (PP) pupils, the score is -0.41, compared to an overall score of -0.10 and 0.08 for non-PP pupils. While there is still a gap between these groups, it is encouraging to note that the gap has remained consistent despite the overall progress made. This suggests that as we continue to improve outcomes for all pupils, the support and strategies in place for disadvantaged pupils are helping to maintain a steady level of progress.•The P8 score in **Maths** for disadvantaged pupils has shown a significant improvement this year, rising to -0.41, compared to the previous year’s outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in 2022/23. Although the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils remains, with non-disadvantaged pupils achieving a P8 score of 0.08, both groups have made notably better progress overall. This improvement highlights the positive impact of targeted interventions and strategies aimed at raising outcomes for all pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, as their progress continues to accelerate.•The **attendance** gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has notably narrowed in 2023/24, with disadvantaged pupils now having an attendance rate just 2.5% lower than other pupils. This marks a positive improvement, reflecting the effectiveness of recent strategies aimed at improving attendance for disadvantaged students. By continuing to focus on targeted interventions and support, the gap has reduced, showing progress in ensuring more equal access to education across all pupil groups.•**Safeguarding** continues to be highly effective, with OFSTED stating that "The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.“ October 2023•The number of disadvantaged pupils engaging in **extracurricular** activities is highly positive, reflecting the school's commitment to providing enriching opportunities beyond the classroom. In the 2023/24 academic year, 49% of all pupils who participated in extracurricular activities (visiting 3 or more activities) were disadvantaged, representing a significant portion of the 6,321 total visits, and a 9% rise on the previous year. This high level of engagement shows that disadvantaged pupils are taking full advantage of the activities offered, contributing to their personal development and broadening their school experience. The rise in participation highlights the effectiveness of targeted efforts to encourage inclusion and foster a well-rounded educational experience for all pupils.•Targeted interventions continue to focus on **mental health** and **well-being**, with evidence from the Wave logging through the ARCAD system showing that strategies implemented have helped pupils manage their challenges more effectively. The Wave system ensures that pupils quickly receive the necessary support, fostering a positive impact on their overall well-being.*.* |