

Pupil premium strategy statement – Mercia School

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery premium for the 2021 to 2022 academic year) 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 effect that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	Mercia School
Number of pupils in school	612
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	112 – 18.3%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23
Date this statement was published	November 2021
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2022
Statement authorised by	Dean Webster – Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Joshua G. Fisher – Deputy Headteacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Rhona Dodds – Chair of Governors

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£94,545
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£14,790
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	£109,335

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

We spend the pupil premium as a part of our whole-school teaching and learning strategy. The school draws on research evidence from our own experience to allocate funding to activities that are most likely to maximise achievement. We never confuse eligibility for the Pupil Premium with low ability, and focus on supporting our disadvantaged pupils to achieve the highest levels. We consider effective use of Pupil Premium, as published by the EEF (found here:

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Pupil_Premium_Guidance_iPDF.pdf)

Our Pupil Premium spend is divided into the following three priority areas, which is in line with advice and guidance from the DfE (found here:

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Pupil_Premium_Guidance.pdf

After March 2020, we have also considered the Covid-19 catch up plan from the EEF:

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Covid-19_Resources/Covid-19_support_guide_for_schools.pdf

1. Excellent teaching

We understand the importance of ensuring that all teaching meets the needs of each learner, rather than relying on interventions to compensate. Therefore, we develop teacher talent by investing in practice and coaching. We practice key techniques every week to ensure consistency in quality of teaching. The best way to ensure pupils make progress is to harness the power of feedback. Each day has feedback time built into it where the class teacher works with pupils either one-to-one or as a whole group with the aim that no pupil goes home with a misconception. There are assessment points every eleven weeks, followed by two weeks of re-teaching and curriculum innovation. After school intervention and self-study provides further opportunity for pupils to make excellent progress. Vocabulary and language-modelling is central to every single lesson. In short, improving the quality of teaching will raise outcomes for all, but it will be disproportionately beneficial to disadvantaged pupils.

2. Highly tailored interventions and more lesson time

We will find out where the basic knowledge and skills gaps exist among eligible pupils as soon as they arrive in Year 7 and deploy our best teachers to help close these gaps. CATs and internal assessment help us to identify the pupils most in need of support. To help pupil progress, pupils receive five 30 minutes reading sessions mid-morning, two one-hour self-study periods and five half hour Mastery Time sessions focused on reading, Religious Education, British Values and meaningful reflection. A small number of pupils will also be expected to attend further intervention as suggested by the SENCO and intervention lead. This is known as Accelerated Learning.

3. Minimizing barriers to achievement through enrichment/activities

We have thought carefully about what barriers to learning our pupils are likely to be experiencing, and how to remove or, at least, minimise them. For example, we have employed an English specialist intervention lead and an pupil support administration team to provide well-targeted support to improve attendance, behaviour, academics, and links with families where these are barriers to a pupil's learning. We ensure all pupils take part in a wide-range of opportunities, regardless of socio-economic background.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	The academic profile of our new Year 7 cohort (2026 leavers), notably amongst the disadvantaged cohort, is lower than previous years. Additional support will be required to help this cohort recover. In the absence of SATs, the school conducted CATs tests. The CATs Standard Age Score for PP was 92.6 whereas the non-PP score was 99.2. Indeed, progress tests conducted showed an internal gap in English, maths and science also. For example, the SAS in English for PP 97, whereas the non-PP score was 104.
2	Assessments, observations and discussion with pupils (via PASS surveys) show that disadvantaged pupils generally have lower levels of reading comprehension than peers. This impacts their progress in all subjects. When considering NGRT results and current progress being made: Year 7 – As they arrive, the PP cohort has arrived with a SAS of 99, whereas the non-PP pupils have a SAS score of 106. Year 8 - 86% of PP are making expected progress, with 50% of PP pupils making higher than expected progress. Year 9 – 100% of PP pupils are making expected progress, with 47% making higher than expected progress
3	Our SEND team, alongside teachers and after discussions with pupils and families, have identified social and emotional issues for many pupils, such as anxiety and low self-esteem. This is partly driven by concern about recovering lost learning and exams/future prospects, and the lack of enrichment opportunities due to the pandemic. These challenges particularly affect disadvantaged pupils, including their attainment. During 2021-22, in Year 7, 41% of our PP cohort are receiving small group intervention. The vast majority of these pupils are also on the SEND register. This will be monitored closely.
4	Our attendance data in 2020-21 indicates that attendance among disadvantaged pupils was 2.34% lower than for non-disadvantaged pupils. Disadvantaged 95.8% vs non-disadvantaged 98.14% Persistent absenteeism has not been an issue at the school thus far.

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 current strategy will end in 2023, with our first set of GCSE examinations

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Achieve exceptional attainment and progress scores among disadvantaged pupils across the curriculum at the end of KS4.	<p>By the end of our current plan in 2022-23, 100% or more of disadvantaged pupils enter the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). This will be our first cohort and is the school's intended vision.</p> <p>In 2023, KS4 outcomes demonstrate that disadvantaged pupils achieve well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cohort Progress 8 score of at least +1 which is well above other pupils nationally. • A cohort average Attainment 8 score of at least 47, which would be well-ahead of 2019 national figures.
Continue to improve reading comprehension among disadvantaged pupils across KS3 and KS4.	Reading comprehension tests demonstrate improved comprehension skills among disadvantaged pupils and a smaller disparity between the scores of disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers. NGRT tests will be used to demonstrate. By the end of Year 9, 100% of pupils will be making at least expected progress in NGRT tests. This will help exam performance in 2023.
To sustain high-quality wellbeing for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.	<p>Sustained high levels of wellbeing will continue up to 2022-23 demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • qualitative data from student voice, student and parent surveys and teacher observations • 100% of pupils will continue to access enrichment opportunities at school. This is an annual target for all year groups and was met in 2018-19 and 2019-20.
To sustain excellent attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	<p>Sustained high attendance annually demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the overall absence rate for all pupils being no more than 3%, and the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers being reduced to 1%. This is an ambitious target as we recover from the pandemic.

Activity in this academic year

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

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £67,500

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Purchase of standardised diagnostic assessments. The school has purchased in GL assessment. This will be led by the Assistant Headteacher in charge of data.</p>	<p>We are a school without an external dataset. Standardised tests, such as PASS and GL progress assessments, can provide reliable insights into the specific strengths and weaknesses of each pupil to help ensure they receive the correct additional support through interventions or teacher instruction:</p> <p>EEF - Assessing and monitoring pupil progress</p>	<p>1, 2, 3</p>
<p>Enhancement of our staffing structure to ensure English and Mathematics departments have additional capacity to provide high-quality support for curriculum delivery and impact. The additional teachers will provide small group and individual support within English and Mathematics. Curriculum Leaders will ensure high-quality, subject-specific training in department time.</p>	<p>The EEF Teaching and learning toolkit makes clear that one to one tuition, and small group intervention has a high impact on pupil progress. Overstaffing also makes staff retention far more likely, which provides pupils with certainty. Indeed, more teachers results in more feedback for pupils. For example, a lower-ability class in mathematics will have potentially three teachers providing feedback and tailored support.</p> <p>EEF - Teaching and Learning Toolkit EEF - One to one tuition</p>	<p>1, 2, 3</p>
<p>Weekly CPD relating to teaching and learning led by the Senior Team. All staff receive direct</p>	<p>The EEF are very clear that high-quality teaching is of paramount importance for any pupil premium strategy. We use CPD strategically and react to issues as they emerge. This helps consistency of teaching, with excellent stability in curriculum implementation across departments.</p> <p>EEF - Guide to Pupil Premium</p>	<p>1, 2</p>

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

Budgeted cost: £17,835

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>The Accelerated Learning Programme. Across Y7-9, pupils most in need of support are targeted for academic intervention which will be delivered by teaching staff. Self-study sessions and afternoon mastery sessions will be used as times in the day to deliver intervention.</p>	<p>Structured intervention relating to mathematics and reading are essential. We recognise that our pupils require additional support with reading proficiency, most notably reading comprehension. The EEF supports this. EEF - Reading comprehension</p> <p>Part of this strategy will also include oral language intervention, with advice taken from the SALT team. This will be both in and out of lessons. The EEF supports this: EEF – Oral language intervention</p> <p>Extensive mathematics intervention (TTRS, Numbots, Hegarty Maths and 1:1/Small group intervention) and improving maths teaching are crucial areas to work on. This is a priority area for the school and supported by the EEF: EEF - Mathematics</p>	1, 2, 3

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

Budgeted cost: £24,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>A new staff member will join the pupil support team with the aim of creating capacity to focus on attendance being above at least 97% for disadvantaged pupils.</p>	<p>A focus on improving attendance from our strong 2020-21 position is a clear focus for the school. The DfE's own guidance is fully supported by the school. DfE - Attendance Guidelines</p>	1, 4
<p>A wellbeing fund is in place to ensure that disadvantaged pupils have support in accessing additional support.</p>	<p>Based on our experiences and those of similar schools to ours, we have identified a need to set a small amount of funding aside to respond quickly to needs that have not yet been identified or to issues of poverty/disadvantage</p>	All

Total budgeted cost: £ 109, 335

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

Achievement and Progress:

The assessment cycle was tightened and the process ran effectively in cycle 1 & 3 of 2020-21, despite the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. We added external assessments to help support our understanding of disadvantaged pupils progress. The data generated shows high impact across all year groups. 100% of pupil premium pupils in Year 10 have been entered for the EBACC. This is significantly above the national average.

Furthermore, pupil work, pupil voice, parent voice, attendance and behaviour data shows that disadvantaged pupils continue to disproportionately benefit from our longer school day, additional opportunities for the development of literacy and numeracy, as well as opportunities to undertake homework within the school day.

All pupils received vast amounts of contact whilst the school was closed. Our communication log shows that disadvantaged pupils received even more calls/emails than their 'other' counterparts. A summer-school was held to help pupils close the gap in July 2020, with another held in July 2021. Further information on both can be found in our *Covid recovery report* (available on the school website) which outlines the school's strategy in depth and chronologically, as well as the *Progress and Achievement Report for 2020-21*.

For 2021-22 and 2022-23, it is still essential that our plan remains steadfastly focused on pupil premium progress, notably as we move to external examinations in May/June 2023.

Behaviour:

The school had a consistently calm and focused environment. Low level disruption was rare. There were only 2 FTEs in 2020-21. Pupil Premium FTEs and permanent exclusion rates were significantly below the national average. This has been a consistent trend since we opened in 2018.

Attendance:

Overall, the school achieved strong attendance rates in 2020-21. At times, when all pupils were expected to attend school, the school was able to ensure high levels of attendance across all year groups. Rates of pupil premium attendance were higher than 2018-19 national average for non-disadvantaged pupils. Attendance remains a top priority for the school as we grow.

Pupil Premium pupils also benefited from excellent attendance due to the school's approach to monitoring, and intervening with attendance, through our superb support team. The school worked tirelessly during the school closures (term 2). 91% of all pupils attended the summer school in July 2020. 85% of pupils attended the summer school offered in July 2021.

	Cumulative Year 2020-21			
Whole School	No of pupils	% attend		
PP	112	95.88		
Non PP	333	98.14		
	Term 1		Term 3	
Year 7			No of pupils	% attend
PP	45	97.77	44	94.19
Non PP	141	98.64	137	98.11
Year 8				
PP	36	96.70	34	97.26
Non PP	97	99.05	94	97.78
Year 9				
PP	31	97.36	28	97.46
Non PP	94	98.54	93	98.18

Pupil voice:

In December 2020, we conducted a pupil voice exercise using GL’s PASS surveys. The data for pupil premium and disadvantaged pupils showed strong engagement with the school and its curriculum. Pupils felt happy, had strong relationships with teachers and felt positive about learning. In light of the pandemic, pupil voice and subsequent intervention (as required) remains a focus for the school.

Externally provided programmes

Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you purchased in the previous academic year. This will help the Department for Education identify which ones are popular in England

Programme	Provider
The Scholars Programme	The Brilliant Club

Further information (optional)

Additional activity

Our pupil premium strategy will be supplemented by additional activity that is not being funded by pupil premium or recovery premium. As a school, we have a wide range on offer 'as default' that disproportionately benefits our most disadvantaged pupils. This includes:

- A longer school day (08:25am-17:00pm) that focusses on high quality teaching
- Enrichment for all 16:00pm – 16:50pm offers compulsory electives/self-study/academic intervention
- Exceptional behaviour so teachers can teach. Disadvantaged pupils benefit disproportionately positively from teachers' ability to deliver content unimpeded by low-level disruption
- An academic offer with reading at its heart. All pupils, including our disadvantaged, read a novel for 30 minutes every single day. We aim for pupils to read 12,000 words a day.
- A culture of candour with both pupils and parents/carers. We do not wince if an issue appears. We tackle it with bravery and honesty. We hold parents/carers and pupils to account so they achieve their potential.
- No homework – this ensures gaps don't widen as disadvantaged pupils do not receive the same level of support as more advantaged peers. Furthermore, no homework promotes pupil wellbeing and rest.
- No alternative provision – we encourage full attendance at Mercia and entrust pupils to our exceptional teaching staff
- A feedback model that is consistent across school, in every subject. [EEF evidence](#) demonstrates this has significant benefits for pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils.
- A mastery programme (our version of form time) that ensures pupils understand our 'catch-up' plan by providing information about the support they will receive (including targeted interventions listed above), how the curriculum will be delivered, and what is expected of them. We are exceptionally careful with the language we use to ensure a narrative of 'lost learning' or 'falling behind' does not catch on. We want to limit the level of pupil anxiety in school.
- We offer a wide range of high-quality extracurricular activities to boost wellbeing, behaviour, attendance, and aspiration. Activities (e.g., The Duke of Edinburgh's Award), will focus on building life skills such as confidence, resilience, and socialising. Disadvantaged pupils will be encouraged and supported to participate fully. 90/120 pupils achieved the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award in 2020-21. 120/120 pupils achieved the Certificate of Achievement.

Planning, implementation, and evaluation

As a new school, we prioritised the disadvantaged pupils in the way we designed elements of the school. We are confident that the activity outlined above is showing results and high impact on the progress and achievement of our disadvantaged pupils.

As we move towards our first set of results in 2023, this strategy is key in making sure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well and at least in line with non-disadvantaged peers. We will continue to monitor the performance of disadvantaged pupils by looking at multiple sources of data, such as:

- External progress assessments
- Internal subject assessments
- Book scrutiny and quality
- Parent/pupil/teacher voice will be used to identify the challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils.

As our intent statement above makes clear, we use the EEF guidance on Pupil Premium strategy planning and spending to inform our approach. Notably, we use the [EEF's implementation guidance](#) to help us develop our strategy and will continue to use it through the implementation of our activities.