

Pupil Premium Strategy Statement:

The Lodestar Academy

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery 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	40 (at the point of funding allocation)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	67.5%
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)	2025-26
Date this statement was published	17.11.25
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2026
Statement authorised by	Steven Hulme
Pupil premium lead	Steven Hulme
Governor / Trustee lead	Keith Hayes

Funding Overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£29,025
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year <i>Recovery premium received in academic year 2023/24 cannot be carried forward beyond August 31, 2024.</i>	NA
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (<i>enter £0 if not applicable</i>)	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£29,025

Part A: Pupil Premium Strategy Plan

Statement of Intent

At the Lodestar Academy, we believe that every child should be supported to achieve success academically, socially and emotionally, irrespective of their background and current circumstances.

Our aim is to use pupil premium funding to help us achieve and sustain positive outcomes for our disadvantaged pupils. Whilst socio-economic disadvantage is not always the primary challenge our pupils face, we do see a variance in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils across the school when compared to their peers (and those who join us at similar starting points) particularly in terms of:

- Academic attainment
- Progression to further and higher education
- Employability
- Social opportunities

The core principles underpinning our use of Pupil Premium funding are:

1. We ensure that teaching and learning opportunities meet the needs of all our pupils.
2. We ensure that appropriate provision is made for pupils who belong to vulnerable groups; this includes ensuring that the needs of socially disadvantaged pupils are adequately assessed and addressed.
3. In making provision for socially disadvantaged pupils, we recognise that not all pupils who receive free school meals will be socially disadvantaged.
4. We also recognise that not all pupils who are socially disadvantaged are registered or qualify for free school meals. We reserve the right to allocate the Pupil Premium funding to support any pupil or groups of pupils the school has legitimately identified as being socially disadvantaged.
5. Pupil Premium funding will be allocated following a needs analysis which will identify priority classes, groups or individuals. Limited funding and resources means that not all children receiving free school meals (or other eligibility criteria) will always be in receipt of Pupil Premium interventions at any one time.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
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1	Internal and external assessments show that disadvantaged pupils are typically entered for 0.5 qualifications fewer than their peers.
2	Through observations and conversations with pupils and their families, we find that disadvantaged pupils typically have fewer opportunities to develop cultural capital outside of school.
3	Our assessments, observations and conversations with pupils indicate that disadvantaged pupils often require additional support to develop personal skills , e.g., independent travel.
4	Our assessments, observations and conversations with pupils and families demonstrate that our disadvantaged pupils experience greater emotional vulnerability , including lower levels of self-esteem (general and academic), perseverance and confidence.
5	Some parents with children eligible for Pupil Premium present lower levels of engagement with the academy and their children's learning: home learning tasks are not always completed and SEMH interventions are not supported within the home.
6	Combined attendance rates for pupils eligible for Pupil Premium are in line with their peers at the Lodestar Academy, but are below nationally expected standards: this reduces their school hours and causes them to fall behind.

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.

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Disadvantaged students will develop resilience, supporting them to overcome social and emotional barriers to learning.	Staff support the SEMH needs of children by means of targeted intervention and appropriate planning of lesson activity. Children present with improved learning behaviours due to better managed anxiety. Progress measured by means of: - lesson observations/learning walks - pupil voice - R4T assessment outcomes - behaviour and safeguarding reports (including SIMS and CPOMS recording) - records of target setting/action planning meetings in tutorial files
Disadvantaged pupils will be supported in school to complete home learning tasks and parental engagement will increase over time.	Parents make a greater contribution to target setting/action planning, including the support of academic and behavioural interventions within the home. Pupils

	make expected (or accelerated) progress in core subjects, meaning that attainment is in line with peers. Progress measured by means of: - home/school communication records - records of target setting/action planning meetings in tutorial files - parent survey responses - records of attendance at revision/booster workshops - work scrutiny and exercise book-looks - half-termly data drops
Improved attendance for disadvantaged children will impact positively on their progress and attainment.	Pupil Premium eligible children improve their attendance by a minimum of 12 percentage points per year. Progress measured by means of: - attendance records and data analysis - records of attendance improvement meetings - half-termly data drops

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: **£1,000**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Full-time deployment of 2 x trained Trauma and Mental Health Informed Practitioners (CPD funded by means of	Pupil Premium eligible children make up the majority of CPOMS reports, which evidence a rise in emotional harm/distress over the previous 6 months. General and academic levels of self-esteem are low amongst some children, as evidenced by increasing levels of emotional distress reported within CPOMS and Class Charts; this presents as a lack of confidence in the classroom, meaning that these	4

2023-24 PP allocation)*	students demonstrate below-expected progress. (The impact of the COVID19 pandemic has been to exacerbate this problem, with fewer learners presenting progress in their development of prosocial skills, and with significantly greater blocks to learning.) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a747ef340f0b604dd7ae609/DFE-RR253.pdf	
Creation of a Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Teaching Lead, to develop and improve non-traditional teaching and learning opportunities for disadvantaged students*	A minority of learners have been assessed as requiring SEND support and intervention, in order to develop the Foundation level Habits of Mind required to successfully access classroom-based learning.	2, 3, 4

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

Budgeted cost: £400 + £7,800 + £1,050 (3 x £350) + £13,885 = **£23,135**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Use of Fischer Family Trust's online software application, "Aspire", to support aspirational target setting for disadvantaged learners*	The current presentation of disadvantaged students does not always reflect the capabilities of those students, as evidenced in Key Stage 2 assessment data. As such, it is important to consider long-term data when target setting for this group.	1
Implementation of weekly Year 11 revision	Many Pupil Premium students are not achieving outcomes in line with their peers: these pupils demonstrate a correlative failure to complete	1, 5

workshops for all core subjects*	home learning tasks, including revision and preparation for public examinations.	
Implementation of a bespoke intervention programme, addressing the needs of disadvantaged learners who lack the foundational Habits of Mind required to thrive within the traditional classroom environment*	A minority of learners have been assessed as requiring SEND support and intervention, in order to develop the Foundation level Habits of Mind required in order to successfully access classroom-based learning.	3, 4, 6
Targeted interventions to support language development, literacy and numeracy in disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEND. This to be achieved by deploying a specifically-employed teaching assistant to deliver a structured timetable of assessment and intervention.*	Many Pupil Premium students are not achieving outcomes in line with their peers: these pupils require additional, targeted intervention to address gaps in literacy and numeracy which have developed due to persistent school absence and/or SEND. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/teaching-assistant-interventions https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/teaching-assistants	1, 5
Termly provision of a self-selected reading book for every child eligible for Pupil Premium*	Many children eligible for Pupil Premium have limited access to extended learning opportunities outside school: this limits language development, as well as the wider understanding that the arts are a valuable source of social collateral.	2

	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/attendance-and-reading-key-barriers-to-disadvantaged-pupils-progress-say-three-in-four-schools https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/content/news/literacy-one-in-15-pupils-do-not-have-a-book-at-home/	
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Wider Strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £390 (39 x £10) + £4,500 (30 x £150) = **£4,890**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Universal breakfast and morning break club, free at the point of delivery and providing for the nutritional and emotional requirements of pupils' learning*	There is a clear evidential link between nutrition and cognition, particularly within the developing bodies and brains of younger learners: https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10015414/1/WBLResRep18.pdf https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8839299/	1, 6
Positive recognition of improving attendance and behaviour by means of a structured programme of weekly rewards. Progress is measured quantitatively against prior achievement; interventions are consequently targeted according to the individual need	Pupils' progress and attainment is significantly impacted by poor attendance: https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/05/18/school-attendance-important-risks-missing-day/ https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/attendance-and-reading-key-barriers-to-disadvantaged-pupils-progress-say-three-in-four-schools Pupils who do not regularly attend school are placed at an elevated risk of abuse/neglect, which results in raised anxiety and poorer academic capacity.	1, 6

of disadvantaged learners*		
Implementation of an activity-based rewards programme, which provides incentive for disadvantaged students to succeed and achieve, as well as the cultural capital which disadvantaged students would not otherwise enjoy.*	Disadvantaged students often enjoy fewer immediate and tangible rewards in recognition of their milestone achievements, as well as fewer opportunities to develop the self-esteem and confidence obtained by participation in extra-curricular activities.	2, 3, 4

NB: * indicates those activities approved in the PP Guidance document “Menu of Approaches”

Total Budgeted Cost: £29,025

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

In 2024-2025, we aimed for our disadvantaged pupils to make progress, and to achieve, in line with their peers.

We achieved this aspirational target across all metrics at KS3.

At KS4, we supported disadvantaged learners to meet or exceed the achievement rates of their peers within some, but not all, metrics of comparison.

End-of-stage data for KS4 was as follows:

Data Set	Pupil Premium	Non Pupil Premium
% achieving GCSE English	80%	75%
% achieving English (all qualifications)	80%	75%
% achieving GCSE maths	66%	100%
% achieving maths (all qualifications)	100%	100%
% achieving GCSE English and maths	66%	75%
% achieving English and maths (all qualifications)	87%	75%
% of learners entered for 5+ qualifications	60%	100%
Average qualifications entered per learner	6	6.5
Average number of qualifications achieved per learner	4.5	4.5

It is apparent from these data sets that Pupil Premium-eligible students are typically entered for fewer qualifications than their peers and that, with the exception of English, are less successful in their achievement of GCSE qualifications, being more successful within qualification frameworks (such as BTEC and Functional Skills awards) which permit for a range of access points across the academic year or stage (rather than a single point of assessment at the end of Year 11).

Teacher assessment and feedback suggests that these students are more likely to experience low self-esteem and exam-related anxiety than their peers, and that they

are more likely to arrive late (or not at all) for GCSE exams. Student Voice amongst this cohort provides clear evidence that disadvantaged learners are more likely to prioritise core subjects, and to refuse to engage with options/pathway subjects; in 2024/25, a significant number of disadvantaged students (5) refused to approve their own entry for subjects such as Citizenship and/or Religious Studies, insisting that they held no value, and that they “only needed maths and English” in order to access their chosen college programme. (This is the context which underpins the lower number of examination entries for disadvantaged learners.)

The strategies put in place to support disadvantaged students to overcome the challenges, however, are beginning to be embedded and fruitful. Reflecting on the outcomes for disadvantaged students we acknowledge the ongoing disruption and the effects of COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted all subject areas, enrichment provision and disadvantaged attendance to varying degrees. The impact of the pandemic has been most significantly felt by the disadvantaged and the most vulnerable. However, the impact has been mitigated by our resolution to keep children in education, provide high quality curriculum and teaching and learning and pastoral services to support complex social and emotional issues.

In 2023/24, we invested in a number of initiatives to address the social and emotional challenges faced by Pupil Premium learners, including poor attendance and low academic and general self-esteem. These included expenditure on:

- Trauma and Mental Health Informed Practitioner training for 2 staff members.
- Creation of a Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Teaching Lead, to develop and improve nontraditional teaching and learning opportunities for disadvantaged students.
- Implementation of weekly therapeutic sessions for targeted groups of Pupil Premium students, facilitated by the Apricot Centre. (This was developed further in 2024/25, as we were able to implement the learning from this experience by running our own, internally-delivered package.)
- Positive recognition of improving attendance by means of a structured programme of weekly rewards.
- Provision of a student counselling service, enabling targeted Pupil Premium pupils to explore social and emotional barriers to their learning and develop strategies to overcome these.

Outcomes to initiatives outlined above:

- 2 staff successfully achieved accreditation as Trauma Informed Practitioners in 2023/24. They have subsequently contributed an enhanced level of expertise and understanding to the content of staff briefings, as well as making an active contribution to initiatives 3 and 4 (below).

- The allocation of a £1000 TLR payment to a member of the teaching team supported the introduction of a Learning Outside the Classroom Teaching Lead. This appointment enabled the academy to implement a bespoke intervention programme, addressing the needs of disadvantaged learners who lack the foundational Habits of Mind required to thrive within the traditional classroom environment.

All participating learners improved their attendance by the conclusion of the project. The average attendance improvement was 23.4% in week 4, while non-attenders increased their attendance by an average of 32% by week 4. Those previously identified as Internal School Avoiders improved their attendance by an average of 17% by week 4.

All learners also demonstrated some progress in terms of their development of the 6 Habits of Mind. On average, learners were able to secure 1 level of progress within each targeted disposition (from “Novice” to “Apprentice”, for example, or from “Apprentice” to “Practitioner”).

All students also demonstrated progress in terms of their Ready for Transition score. The average increase across the cohort was 35.1. The largest gains in this respect were amongst those who had previously refused to attend school at all; it is important to note, however, that the starting scores of these learners were less well-informed, given the limited previous contact with staff.

- Two weekly sessions of therapeutic work were conducted at the Apricot Centre in 2023/24, in response to poor general and academic levels of self-esteem in disadvantaged learners (evidenced by poor attendance, as well as increasing levels of emotional distress reported within CPOMS and Class Charts). Sessions were limited to Pupil Premium-eligible children in KS3, all of whom increased their school attendance (by an average of 10 percentage points) and all of whom made equitable progress in line with their peers in 2023/24. This was an expensive provision, however, and was engaged with on the basis that participating staff members would use their experience working with the Apricot Centre in 2023/24 to self-facilitate an equivalent programme in 2024/25. Successful completion of a Forest School qualification by one participating staff member now means that this programme can be delivered in-house in 2024/25.
- 78% of learners improved their attendance from their starting-point in 2024/25. This represented a significant improvement upon figures in 2023/24.
- Unfortunately, Family Values South West went into liquidation in January, 2024, meaning that this initiative was halted ahead of schedule. A process of credit recovery is currently in progress, using the established legal channels.

In 2024/25, we invested in a number of initiatives designed to provide targeted academic support to disadvantaged learners who were in receipt of the Pupil Premium allocation. These included expenditure on:

- Purchase and implementation of the Fischer Family Trust's online software application, "Aspire".
- Implementation of weekly Year 11 revision workshops for all core subjects.
- Implementation of a bespoke intervention programme, addressing the needs of disadvantaged learners who lack the foundational Habits of Mind required to thrive within the traditional classroom environment.
- Termly provision of a self-selected reading book for every child eligible for Pupil Premium.

Outcomes to initiatives outlined above:

- Access to the Fischer Family Trust database continues to enable the academy to set aspirational targets for disadvantaged learners, particularly in those cases where learners have experienced significant life changes or trauma after the date of their Year 6 SATs.
- Year 11 revision classes were essential in addressing the needs of disadvantaged pupils who required additional support to bridge curriculum gaps caused by interruptions to schooling (due to prior permanent exclusions and/or frequent fixed-term suspensions). Student progress data throughout 2024/25 evidences that those students who regularly attended revision classes (including disadvantaged students in receipt of the Pupil Premium fund) demonstrated improved rates of progress in comparison with their peers.
- All learners demonstrated progress in their development of the 6 Habits of Mind; on average, learners were able to secure 1 level of progress within each targeted disposition (from "Novice" to "Apprentice", for example, or from "Apprentice" to "Practitioner"). In consequence, all students demonstrated progress in terms of their Ready for Transition score, with an average increase across the cohort of 35.1, and were consequently able to increase their participation in classroom-based activity, as well as demonstrate improved rates of progress in core subjects.
- In 2024/25, we focused on Improving literacy in all subject areas in line with recommendations in the EEF's "Improving Literacy in Schools" guidance. As part of that process, we endeavoured to support an ambition of students reading for pleasure; we therefore purchased a self-selected reading book on behalf of every student in receipt of Pupil Premium. These books were read during the weekly "Drop Everything and Read" session, and impact was

assessed using reading age assessments, core subject progress and Student Voice.

Externally provided programmes

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

Programme	Provider

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

<i>For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information: How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year</i>
N/A
The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils
N/A

Further information (optional)

Use this space to provide any further information about your pupil premium strategy. For example, about your strategy planning, implementation and evaluation, or other activity that you are delivering to support disadvantaged pupils, that is not dependent on pupil premium or recovery premium funding.