

Pupil premium strategy statement – Staffordshire University Academy

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	712 (669 Years 7 – 11)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	47%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2025 - 2028
Date this statement was published	31/12/2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	01/10/2026
Statement authorised by	Rowena Hillier, Principal
Pupil premium lead	Lucy Hastings
Governor / Trustee lead	

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£297 683
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£297 683

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our vision at Staffordshire University Academy to be relentless in our mission to achieve the best outcomes for our students to ensure that success becomes inevitable. We recognise that socio-economic disadvantages mean some learners require specific, additional support to fully realise this vision. Therefore, we are wholly committed to providing the necessary resources and interventions to close attainment gaps and guarantee equitable opportunities for all students.

High-quality teaching is central to our approach, particularly focusing on areas where disadvantaged students require the most support. This strategy is proven to have the greatest impact on closing the attainment gap and simultaneously benefits all other students in our academy. Implicit in the outcomes detailed below is our commitment that non-disadvantaged students' attainment will be sustained and improved alongside the progress made by their disadvantaged peers.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	There remains a significant Pupil Premium gap in student outcomes in KS4. (2025: a PP gap of -8.68 in Attainment 8 score)
2	Students enter the academy with a Pupil Premium gap which widens over time. (2025: students enter the academy with an average PP gap of 4 points in KS2 SATs scaled scores and leave with a gap close to a GCSE grade (see above))
3	Attendance rates for disadvantaged students are lower compared to other students, particularly when persistently absent. These students have, as a result, missed opportunities to build schema from each subject area to thrive within their curriculum. 2024/2025 PP attendance figures year to date (non-PP): Year 7 = 93% (96%), Year 8 = 92% (95%), Year 9 = 90% (95%), Year 10 = 91% (92%), Year 11 = 90% (93%)
4	Low aspirations and lack of exposure to culturally rich experiences.
5	The need for wellbeing and mental health support has increased among disadvantaged students.

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
Close the KS4 attainment gap	By the end of the strategy (2028), the Attainment 8 gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students will be reduced to 3.0 or less (current gap of 8.86)
Mitigate the KS3/KS4 entrant gap	The in-school attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students (as measured by internal GL assessments and internal assessment data) will not widen between entry at Year 7 and the start of KS4.
Improve attendance and reduced persistent absence	Disadvantaged students' attendance figures will improve by 2% (see last academic year's attendance figures above) year-on-year, and the attendance gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students will be reduced across all year groups.
Enhance cultural capital and aspirations	100% of disadvantaged students will be offered and encouraged to participate in a minimum of two culturally rich, experientially led activities per year, tracked via extra-curricular participation data.
Improve student wellbeing and mental health	We will observe a measurable reduction (e.g. 10% reduction over the strategy period) in safeguarding referrals related to students' mental health and wellbeing, indicating that embedded support is effective.

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: £192, 654

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
To improve the quality of first wave teaching of all lessons to help disadvantaged students succeed (ADP Priority 1)	Use of evidence informed teaching strategies such as TLAC, Metacognition, and retrieval practice (+7 Month increase EEF (Metacognition)).	1, 2
To ensure in-house cover is delivered by teaching staff where possible.	This strategy maintains the quality of first wave teaching and minimises learning disruption, which disproportionately affects disadvantaged students. Minimising lost learning time is key to closing the attainment gap.	1, 2
Ensuring that all classes are mixed ability and that there is an even distribution of disadvantaged students, as well as other groups such as SEND.	Evidence indicates that setting or streaming has a negative impact on low-attaining pupils (approx. -3 months progress). Disadvantaged pupils are disproportionately placed in these lower sets.	1, 2
CPD for staff on delivering whole school priorities equitably for disadvantaged students (see ADP for priorities), including utilisation of RADY and the Thinking Differently resources	High-quality teaching is the top priority for Pupil Premium spending. The EEF Toolkit highlights that improving the quality of teaching is the most effective and cost-effective way to raise attainment, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, who benefit most from expert delivery and high expectations. Effective CPD is essential for improving high-quality teaching.	1, 2
Equitable target setting for students to ensure that disadvantaged students are not targeted for lesser outcomes than their non-disadvantaged peers.	According to EEF evidence, rigid tracking systems often disproportionately place disadvantaged students in pathways with lower expectations, leading to a reduced curriculum and a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' of lower achievement. To counter this, target setting must be equitable and dynamic, ensuring that prior attainment data (which may reflect disadvantage) does not act as a permanent cap on a student's future potential.	1, 2
Early identification of students' needs through	The EEF's tiered model for Pupil Premium spending starts with "Diagnosing your pupils' needs. Schools that	1,2

assessment tracking (see ADP)	successfully close the attainment gap do not just use "labels" (like FSM or SEN). Instead, they use data tracking to identify specific barriers (e.g., poor vocabulary, lack of phonics knowledge, attendance issues) and intervene immediately.	
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support, structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £ 55, 000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Academic mentoring by members of the inclusion team.	Targeted academic support is consistently one of the most effective interventions for closing attainment gaps, with the EEF Toolkit rating it as having a high impact (average of +4 months' progress).	1, 4
Focused intervention programme for KS4 including Brain Boost and holiday revision sessions	This is a highly focused form of targeted academic support and extended learning time, consistently proven by the EEF to have a high impact (average of +4 months' progress).	1, 4
Targeted intervention in KS3 (see ADP for further details)	Early intervention is critical. Addressing academic deficits at Key Stage 3, particularly in core areas like literacy and numeracy, is vital as it prevents foundational gaps from becoming entrenched and hindering access to the challenging KS4 curriculum.	2
To offer provision to ensure that disadvantaged students are supported to complete independent study.	The EEF's research on 'homework' (specifically structured homework clubs or support) suggests a benefit, particularly in secondary schools, often yielding +5 months' progress when it is well-managed and focused.	1,2
Literacy intervention strategies, including the use of Lexonik Leap and Lexia Core 5 to support students with the lowest reading ages, Accelerated Reader quizzes, reading for pleasure, STAR reading assessments, SUA6 Readers	Research cited by the EEF shows that only 1 in 10 students who arrive at secondary school without having reached the expected reading standard will go on to achieve well in their GCSE's. Reading ability is also strong predictor of outcomes in later life. This is why the EEF prioritises literacy development from the early years right through to age 19. Reading comprehension strategies have an average impact of 7 months progress and small group tuition enables students to make an average of 4 months progress.	1, 2

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

Budgeted cost: £ 50 029

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Enhanced pastoral and attendance support including our inclusion support and attendance officer	Funding additional time or resource for attendance and pastoral staff to conduct targeted home visits, bespoke support plans, and early intervention for persistently absent PP students.	3
Increased wellbeing and mental health provision	Counselling provision by the inclusion team using their skills to meet the increased demand for SEMH support and create a safe environment (+5 Month increase EEF for social/emotional learning).	5
Response to financial hardship	Addressing financial barriers by providing discreet support for uniform, equipment, and curriculum materials, ensuring all students are fully equipped to learn.	3, 4, 5
Provision of Breakfast Club	Offering a free, nutritious breakfast removes financial barriers, encourages prompt attendance, provides a calm start to the day, and supports social development.	3, 5
Careers learner journey implemented by a recently appointed teacher in charge to lead the careers strategy and track our students' journey	High-quality Careers Information, Education, Advice, and Guidance (CEIAG) is essential to close the information gap. Disadvantaged students often lack the social capital and professional networks at home to inform their post-16 and post-18 choices, making school provision critical. The strategy is key to building cultural capital by providing students with immersive experiences (e.g., trips to universities or professional settings). This directly supports the successful progression to appropriate destinations and ensures NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) figures remain low, see academy website for policies and further details.	4
To continue to offer provision to ensure increased attendance to school through targeted interventions (see ADP and academy website) and use Attend to implement the wave system of intervention. Our Year 10 disadvantaged students will be a focus due to having the lowest attendance last year.	The EEF consistently finds a strong correlation between attendance and attainment. Reducing persistent absence is essential, as every missed lesson represents a learning opportunity lost, particularly for disadvantaged students who need to catch up. Targeted interventions address the non-academic barriers (e.g., health, parental engagement, or acute poverty issues) that cause absence.	3, 5

To ensure proactive strategies are utilised to support proportional representation in all areas of academy life through communication, support (including financial) and tracking to monitor; this includes extracurricular activities, trips/visits, rewards	Proactively removing the cost-of-the-school-day barriers through tracking and financial support directly closes the participation gap in extracurricular activities and trips. Increased engagement helps build cultural capital and fosters a strong sense of belonging, which the EEF links to positive Social and Emotional Learning (average impact: +4 months' progress).	4, 5
To enrich the life chances of disadvantaged students, by offering opportunities to enhance their education.	Student and parental voice suggest that costs are a barrier (+3 month increase EEF (Arts Participation)).	4

Total budgeted cost: £ 297, 683

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

The following data reflects the final, validated Key Stage 4 (KS4) performance of our disadvantaged students in the previous academic year.

Measure	Disadvantaged (PP)	Non-Disadvantaged (Non-PP)	Attainment Gap (Non-PP minus PP)
Average Attainment 8 score	27.72	36.4	8.68
Students achieving 5+ in English & maths	6.90%	11.90%	5.00%
Students achieving 4+ in English & maths	20.70%	38.10%	17.40%

The Attainment 8 (A8) gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students has shown a positive trend of reduction, moving from 10.95 points in 2023/2024 to 8.68 points in the latest reviewed year. However, the overall attainment of the disadvantaged cohort remains a significant challenge.

Student attendance is paramount to improve outcomes for all learners, ensuring that students are in lessons, learning and tackling misconceptions. The attendance of our Pupil Premium students remains behind their non- Pupil Premium peers:

2024/2025 PP attendance figures year to date (non-PP):

- Year 7 = 93% (96%)
- Year 8 = 92% (95%)
- Year 9 = 90% (95%)*
- Year 10 = 91% (92%)
- Year 11 = 90% (93%)

**The current Year 10 have been identified as a focus group for attendance based on this data (see strategy for details).*

The academic year 2024/2025 marked the conclusion of our previous three-year Pupil Premium Strategy. Our assessment confirms that whilst the overall strategy achieved several intended outcomes, particularly in addressing wider barriers to learning, a significant PP gap remains in academic outcomes, which necessitates a revised focus for the new strategy.

Achievements:

- Wider Participation: Successfully supported disadvantaged student participation in all areas of academy life, including enrichment and cultural experiences.

- Attendance: Targeted interventions have ensured that the attendance and PP gap improved in all year groups.

Continued challenges:

- Key Stage 4 outcomes: A notable attainment gap persists in KS4 outcomes, indicating a need for sustained high-quality teaching and targeted support to lift final attainment.
- Key Stage 3 Foundations: Analysis of KS3 data (GL data) confirm a persistent gap in students' foundational literacy and numeracy skills, necessitating earlier and more intensive intervention.

The new strategy will focus on translating improved engagement and attendance into sustained, measurable academic progress to reduce the significant attainment gaps at both KS3 and KS4.

Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider
Lexonik Leap/Lexia Core 5	Lexonik
Maths Whizz	Whizz Education
Thinking Differently	Challenging Education
RADY	Challenging Education
Sparx Maths	Sparx
Seneca	Seneca Learning
Accelerated reader/Star reading	Renaissance
GL maths, reading and English assessments	GL Assessment

