

Pupil premium strategy statement – Mercia 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	584
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	40.41% (236 students)
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	September 2025
Statement authorised by	Jackie Cooper Head Teacher
Pupil premium lead	Nick Holmes (SLT)
Governor / Trustee lead	Dr Alan Jones Chair of Academy Council

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£249,900
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£ 0
Total budget for this academic year <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>	£249,900

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intention is that all pupils, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, make good progress and achieve high attainment across the curriculum, enabling them to make a successful transition to the next stage in their education or training.

The focus of our pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve that goal, including progress for those who are already high attainers. We will consider the challenges faced by vulnerable pupils, such as those who have a social worker and young carers. The activity we have outlined in this statement is also intended to support their needs, regardless of whether they are disadvantaged or not.

High-quality teaching is at the heart of our approach, with a focus on areas in which disadvantaged pupils require the most support. This is proven to have the greatest impact on closing the disadvantage attainment gap and at the same time will benefit the non-disadvantaged pupils in our school. Implicit in the intended outcomes detailed below, is the intention that non-disadvantaged pupils' attainment will be sustained and improved alongside progress for their disadvantaged peers.

Our approach will be responsive to common challenges and individual needs, rooted in robust diagnostic assessment, not assumptions about the impact of disadvantage. The approaches we have adopted complement each other to help pupils excel. To ensure they are effective we will:

- ensure disadvantaged pupils are challenged in the work that they're set
- act early to intervene at the point need is identified
- adopt a whole school approach in which all staff take responsibility for disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and raise expectations of what they can achieve

This is a new strategy document which replaces the previous version. Mercia Academy's buildings were closed on 17th November 2024 as a result of structural issues. Following a period of remote education, pupils were educated in a variety of locations including a masonic hall, local pottery museum, performing arts block and a previously mothballed day centre. As a result, the focus was very much on the performance of Y11 pupils using a range of supportive approaches. These were clearly successful given the outcomes: P8 -0.41 (-0.86 in 2023); A8 34.85 (32.35 in 2023); P8 Gap 0.16 (0.41 in 2023). Note the significant improvement in the P8 score and the reduction in the gap to all students. However, we continue to strive to further improve the educational outcomes of our PP students so that they are in line with all students.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Behaviour and attitudes – we have a proportion of our disadvantaged students whose behaviour and attitude to learning is a barrier to their progress. This is demonstrated in the issuing of behaviour points and other sanctions. By developing a positive culture, we aim to change these behaviours.
2	Attendance – this is a focus for the academy. Attendance is currently below national expectation by approximately 5%. A significant proportion of this is disadvantaged students whose attendance is currently 82%. We need to address the culture of attendance through a whole school approach.
3	Metacognition – high quality teaching is the key to success for disadvantaged students. They need to develop the skills of retaining and recalling knowledge, as well as writing stamina, in order to build their resilience and motivation.
4	Low literacy – a significant proportion of disadvantaged students have not developed the reading/literacy skills necessary for success at KS2. This is indicated by their SATs reading scores and our baseline NGRT testing. Nor do many of these students read for pleasure which inhibits the development of vocabulary. These issues are a barrier to success for Level 2 courses.
5	Cultural capital and aspiration deficit – many of our disadvantaged students have a more limited range of opportunities outside school that their non-disadvantaged peers. A number of our disadvantaged students need support to develop their aspirations and to move to appropriate post-16 pathways.

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
Improved attainment/progress among disadvantaged students across the curriculum at the end of KS4, with a focus on the core subjects.	Reduce the P8 gap to below -0.1 A8 score of above 38 for disadvantaged students
Improved behaviour/attitudes among disadvantaged students with a positive impact on academic progress	The proportion of disadvantaged students receiving behaviour points and other

	sanctions is reduced, whilst rewards increase. Improvement in progress of PP students as indicated by data drops and exam results.
To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all students, particularly our disadvantaged students.	<p>The overall absence rate for all students being no more than 5% and the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers being reduced, with PP attendance increasing to at least 92%.</p> <p>The percentage of all students who are persistently absent being below 15% and the figure among disadvantaged pupils being no more than 5% lower than their peers, using the 92% threshold.</p>
Teachers consistently deliver high quality lessons which demonstrate the embedding of the “Principles of Instruction”. The curriculum transition to the Lionheart Trust model is successfully completed.	Evidenced through the range of QA processes: learning walks, work scrutiny, student voice and academy/trust reviews. Disadvantaged students are able to demonstrate that they know how to learn and show greater resilience, thereby making improved progress.
Improved reading comprehension/literacy skills among disadvantaged students at KS3.	<p>Data from literacy interventions shows an improvement in scores.</p> <p>Disadvantaged students making more regular use of the LRC to read for pleasure</p> <p>Long term desired outcome: disadvantaged students will meet national average in Basic measures at 4+ and 5+ by the end of Year 11.</p>
Disadvantaged students demonstrate higher aspirations and their experiences outside school are broadened. Students are more motivated to aim high and accelerate their progress so that they can attain well.	Disadvantaged students’ post-Mercia destinations are appropriate, and our NEET figure remains low. Data shows that disadvantaged students are proportionally represented in visits to universities, trips, visits, talks, and are given priority with careers advice, support and guidance.

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: £120,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
CPD focus on: (a) Positive routines – Meet and Greet; SLANT; Silence is Golden; End and Send (b) Positive framing (c) Retrieval	“Good teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Using the Pupil Premium strategy to improve teaching quality benefits all students and has a particularly positive effect on children eligible for the Pupil Premium”. <i>The EEF guide to the Pupil Premium: Key Principles</i>	3
Introduction of instructional coaching triads with planned implementation of IRIS Connect	https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/guidanceFor-Teachers/EEF-Guide-to-the-Pupil-Premium-Autumn-2021.pdf	3
Weekly Teaching and Learning briefing sessions		3
Bespoke programme of ECT/UQT development		3
Continued implementation of Rosenshine’s “Principles of Instruction”		3
Development of Feedback Policy, with specific focus on written feedback		EEF: feedback (+ 6 months) https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit
Provision of laptops for every student; initially Y7 followed by Y11	Lessons learned from school closure during the pandemic showed that those students with no or very limited ICT access at home were further dis-	3

	<p>advantaged. PP student work engagement figures improved significantly once support with ICT was provided.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/digital</p>	
Homework Policy finalised which includes Sparx Maths; application submitted for Sparx English; LRC homework club	<p>EEF: homework (+ 5 months)</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit</p> <p>Some disadvantaged students need a quiet place to complete homework</p>	3
<p>Promotion of reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form time reading • Book fairs - £5 voucher for KS3 students • Reciprocal reading • Reading intervention through direct instruction 	<p>EEF: Reading comprehension strategies +6 months</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/literacy-ks3-ks4</p>	4
Provision of GCSEPod as revision tool	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/digital	3

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

Budgeted cost: £40,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Focus on Y11 PP as part of RAB programme	To identify quickly when progress is slipping and to address.	3,5
Y11 PP mentor (NPH) to provide support/home link	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit	3,5

PP scrutiny/home contact following data drops	EEF: individualised instruction (+2 months) Feedback (+8 months) Parental involvement (+ 3 months)	3,5
After-school intervention: En; Ma; Sc; Hi; Ge; Sp; Art; Eng.	EEF – 1:1 tuition (+5 months) https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition	1,5
Holiday intervention school: Feb/Easter/May		1, 5

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

Budgeted cost: £90,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Attendance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form tutor: Attendance Matters Daily phone calls Letters at x% Learning Manager intervention Appointment of full-time attendance officer/PP mentor from December 2024 	EEF: Attendance interventions rapid evidence assessment Attendance interventions rapid evidence assessment EEF	2
Positive behaviours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reward system Head of House interventions 	EEF: Behaviour interventions +4 months https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/behaviour-interventions	1
Parental engagement	EEF: Parental engagement +3 months	1

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular Beehive communication • Commitment to Success Evening • Post-16 Evening • Revision Evening 	<p>EEF – Working with parents to support children’s learning</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/supporting-parents</p>	
<p>Careers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time Careers Lead • Widening Participation Programme 	<p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/careers-education</p>	5
<p>Y6 Transition Programme including Summer School</p>	<p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/support-for-schools/school-planning-support/3-wider-strategies</p>	5

Total budgeted cost: £250,000

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

It is difficult to provide a full report in this section due to the school closure in 2023 and subsequently working over multiple sites. The key objective for the last academic year was to provide a good standard of education for all students, given the challenging circumstances. Mercia Academy joined the Lionheart Educational Trust on 1 July 2024 and moved into a new temporary school on 9th September 2024. This now provides a platform for us to move forward with the Pupil Premium Strategy.

Outcomes for disadvantaged Y11 students were considerably improved in 2024, despite the issues facing the academy. A full analysis is shown below:

	All (91 students)	Pupil Premium (38 students)	Gap
A8	38.16	34.85	-3.31
P8	-0.25	-0.41	-0.16
Positive P8	39.5%	36.8%	-2.7%
9-7 English	8.8%	7.9%	-0.9%
9-7 Maths	6.6%	5.3%	-1.3%
99-77 Science	2.3%	5.7%	+3.4%
9-5 English	44%	42.1%	-1.9%
9-5 Maths	36.3%	31.6%	-4.7%
99-55 Science	17.2%	20%	+2.8%
9-4 English	60.4%	52.6%	-7.8%
9-4 Maths	54.9%	50%	-4.9%
99-44 Science	37.9%	37.1%	-0.8%

Points	All	Pupil Premium	Gap
English	4.1	3.79	-0.31

Maths	3.77	3.45	-0.32
2 Sciences	3.2	3.00	-0.2
Languages	0.71	0.45	-0.26
Humanities	2.96	2.76	-0.2

P8	All	Pupil Premium	Gap
English	-0.37	-0.49	-0.12
Maths	-0.24	-0.38	-0.14
Ebacc	-0.67	-0.84	-0.17
Open	0.20	-0.08	-0.28

To achieve these results, a range of strategies was implemented:

- Collegiate approach taken with Y11 following move to Ashfield House with positive culture emphasised
- Daily assemblies/information sessions
- One-to-one careers guidance whilst at Ashfield House
- Single point-of-contact for parental/student issues
- “Big Teach” sessions for the core subjects
- Early introduction of “Golden Ticket” reward system
- Creation of Y11 space on return to main site in PA block
- Provision of breakfast and early morning teaching sessions
- Weekly programme of post-academy revision sessions
- Holiday school: February, Easter, May
- Re-arranged Y11 timetable during the exam season
- Close monitoring of exam attendance with missing students brought in from home
- Additional staffing and interventions provided in Maths which was identified as a target area

KS3 Performance – Summer 2024

- Y7: Pupil Premium at Above/On is 63%; Rise is the strongest subject (82%); all other subjects are lower with the greatest impact in Spanish (54%) and Maths (37%)

- Y8: Pupil Premium at Above/On is 55% - this mirrors the situation in Y7 with a 10% reduction from All students; Art, Dance, Drama and Rise are the strongest subjects; English (34%) and Maths (39%) are the lowest performing subject for this student group
- Y9: Pupil Premium at Above/On is 55% (as it is in Y8), again following the pattern of roughly a 10% reduction against All students; Art, English, Rise and Science are the strongest subjects; Maths (31%) and Spanish (26%) are the lowest performing subject for this student group

Attendance Data 2023/24

	Cohort	Attendance %
PP	242	78.5%
Non - PP	340	89.2%
Overall	582	84.7%

Y7 = 87.94%

Y8 = 80.32%

Y9 = 74.92%

Y10 = 70.48%

Y11 = 72.77%

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.

Programme	Provider
Y7 Maths Booster	Third Space
Y11 Maths Revision	Third Space

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 funding.