

Pupil Premium Strategy Statement

This statement details how The Priory School, Hitchin, will use pupil premium funding for the 2025-2026 academic year 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.

Throughout this document, our students who receive pupil premium funding are referred to as disadvantaged pupils (DA).

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	The Priory School
Number of pupils in school	1269
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	25% Year 7-11 inclusive 21% Year 7-14 inclusive
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3-year plans are recommended)	2024-2026
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	Matt Blayney
Pupil premium lead	Katie Dolling/Rachael Buchanan
Governor / Trustee lead	Kirsty Turner

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£236,117
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	£236,117

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our whole school vision of "Excellence in education for every young person, every day" underpins our Pupil Premium Strategy Plan.

We recognise that our disadvantaged and vulnerable students face additional challenges in their lives. This plan goes beyond simply "narrowing the gap" as we aim to ensure that all students, irrespective of their background and prior attainment, receive outstanding teaching so that they achieve their full academic potential and leave The Priory School with the skills, knowledge and attributes to empower them to lead happy and successful lives.

In line with EEF guidance on implementation we will focus on "fewer, strategic choices and pursue these diligently." Our current pupils' premium strategy plan focuses on three strands:

- High-Quality Teaching
- Targeted Academic Support
- Wider Strategies

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	From pupil interviews, observations and progress checks, a number of our disadvantaged students are " passive learners " - pupils who allow learning to take place around them without engaging with the teaching.
2	Through monitoring attendance, we observed that some disadvantaged students have " poor attendance " creating an additional barrier to their learning.
3	From pupil interviews, teacher observations and wellbeing surveys, it is noted that self-esteem, mental health, wellbeing and aspirations in some of our disadvantaged pupils are lower than their non-disadvantaged peers.
4	Through monitoring parent consultations and attendance on school trips, a number of disadvantaged students have " poor parental engagement " - pupils whose parents fail to engage with the school and do not attend parent consultation or information evenings.
5	Gaps in learning due to the disruption in education. The impact of the pandemic on early language acquisition and systematic teaching of phonics has contributed to a proportion of our disadvantaged students having below expected reading ages thus causing an additional barrier to making strong progress.

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 engagement by passive DA learners in their lessons.	Learners are more engaged with their lessons showing a greater enjoyment for a range of subjects as seen through targeted learning walks and work scrutinies, teacher observations and pupil voice activities. Progress checks will show an improved 'effort' grade over time.
Improve our engagement with parents of DA students.	Parents are more engaged as demonstrated by a more positive involvement with their child's schooling, for example increased attendance at parent consultation /information evenings. Positive relationships established with parents of new year 7 students in summer term.
Improved attendance at school and improved engagement in school trips and enrichment activities.	Consistent high levels of attendance of DA students. Increased numbers of DA students attending educational trips and being given additional opportunities for enrichment activities , which have increased their cultural capital and engagement in the curriculum.
Disadvantaged students with below expected reading age on entry are identified and an individual package of support put into place. Increase in Reading ages.	Reading assessments show an improved rate of progress. Reading ages are more in line with chronological age.
Disadvantaged students experiencing poor self esteem, anxiety, poor mental health or low aspirations are identified and provision put in place to support them allowing them to be successful and enjoy their school experience.	Wellbeing surveys, progress checks, wellbeing and AHOYs team observations indicate improvements. More disadvantaged pupils engaging in "Raising Aspirations" activities.

Activity in this academic year

This details how we intend to spend our pupil premium this academic year to address the challenges listed above.

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £174,506

Activity	Outcomes and Success Criteria	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Priority 1</p> <p>Ensure that all teachers are supported in the delivery of high quality teaching across the curriculum.</p>	<p>SLT targeted learning walks, work scrutiny, pupil voice and progress checks will show that within class, disadvantaged students are challenged through use of targeted whole school effective pedagogical strategies (EEF Embedding Formative Assessment) and timely effective feedback. Disadvantaged students will make progress and are engaged in their lessons.</p> <p>The best available evidence indicates that great teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve pupil attainment.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/support-for-schools/school-improvement-planning/1-high-quality-teaching</p> <p>Effective feedback can affect performance by 6+ months.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit</p>	<p>1,5</p>
<p>Priority 2</p> <p>Improve tracking of Disadvantaged students to ensure a more rapid response to poor attainment.</p>	<p>Through robust assessments, students underachieving are quickly identified. Teachers will use information to inform future planning and curriculum intervention.</p> <p>Additional data drops throughout the year have been added to address skills gaps</p>	<p>1, 5</p>

	<p>EEF Guidance November 21</p> <p><i>“knowledge of your disadvantaged pupils’ levels of attainment is the first step in developing an effective pupil premium strategy.”</i></p>	
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<p>Priority 3</p> <p>Ensure that disadvantaged students have the necessary support to make informed decisions about their post 14 and 16 pathways</p>	<p>Enable students to consider their longer term goals and make supported choices for their post 14 option subjects</p> <p>Encourage and enable students to have high aspirations for their futures, including access to further and higher education opportunities and guidance to ensure they are aware of the pathways available to them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Poverty Proofing audit highlighted that: ‘Some students seem to have a lack of knowledge about the options available to them beyond school and many felt ill prepared to make choices about their chosen GCSE subjects.’ 	<p>1, 5</p>
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support, structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £23,611

Activity	Outcomes and Success Criteria	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Priority 1</p> <p>Continued focus for English and maths interventions such as Lexonic, small group teaching and 1 to 1 reading times in KS3 to address gaps in knowledge and skills.</p>	<p>Students' reading skills improve.</p> <p>Gap narrowed between disadvantaged and non disadvantaged peers</p> <p>boost reading / Maths skills in students identified as working below age related expectations on entry to KS3.</p> <p>EEF Guidance Nov 21 “linking structured small group interventions to classroom teaching essential ingredient of an effective pupil premium strategy.”</p> <p>EEF Toolkit Small group tuition can add 4+ months progress. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit</p>	<p>1, 5</p>

<p>Priority 2</p> <p>Activity days to address passivity in learning and help develop metacognition and self regulation.</p>	<p>Learning walks, observations, pupils voice, progress checks and assessments will show that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pupils have an improved self-regulation when learning in class. ● Pupils adopt a range of learning techniques and study techniques. ● Pupils adopt a more positive mindset and develop resilience in learning. <p>EEF Toolkit</p> <p>Activities aimed at developing metacognition and self regulation can improve attainment by 7+ months</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit</p>	<p>1</p>
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Wider strategies(for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £38,000

Activity	Outcomes and Success Criteria	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Priority 1</p> <p>Improve the attendance of Disadvantaged students with attendance of less than 94%.</p>	<p>Absence monitored weekly to improve their attendance.</p> <p>Reduced levels of absence among disadvantaged students.</p> <p>Engagement of harder to reach families with improving attendance and communication with subject teachers</p>	<p>2</p>

<p>Priority 2</p> <p>Improved attendance of parents of disadvantaged pupils at parent consultation / Information meetings.</p>	<p>Monitoring of attendance will show high levels of attendance for parent consultations.</p> <p>Feedback from parents will show that parents feel informed about their children's progress and understand the feedback they receive</p> <p>EEF Toolkit</p> <p>Parental engagement can have a positive effect on children's learning and attainment. Progress can improve by 4+ months</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit</p>	<p>4</p>
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<p>Priority 3</p> <p>Activities to improve engagement of parents at year 6 to 7 transition to develop engagement with their child's learning and provide opportunities to develop cultural capital and relationships</p>	<p>Feedback and responses from parents and pupil voice will show that parents had a positive learning experience with their child and that they have a positive relationship with school.</p> <p>Feedback forms completed by parents after first trips indicate that they feel more positive about school and are interested in attending more school led sessions.</p> <p>EEF Toolkit</p> <p>Parental engagement can have a positive effect on children's learning and attainment. Progress can improve by 4+ months</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit</p>	<p>4</p>
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<p>Priority 4</p> <p>Establish a year 6 to year 8 transition program for parents and pupils to improve engagement with their child’s learning and provide opportunities to develop cultural capital and relationships</p>	<p>Observations from current year 7 and 8 pupils, plus reflection on parental queries and interactions show that the disadvantaged families find the transition to KS3 challenging. A successful program would prepare Year 6 pupils and their families for such transition. Observations and feedback from teachers, pupils and parents would show that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● pupils would successfully participate in summer learning activities and are more KS3 ready ● pupils have improved confidence to access learning after the school holidays ● Parents have developed a positive relationship with school prior to child starting. ● Parents are equipped with strategies to support their child’s learning at KS3. <p>EEF Toolkit</p> <p>Parental engagement can have a positive effect on children's learning and attainment. Progress can improve by 4+ months</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit</p>	<p>4</p>
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Total budgeted cost: £236,117

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

Achievement Overview for 2023/24

	All	Male	Female	Disadv - Yes	Disadv - No	SEND - Unknown	EAL - Unknown
5x 9-4 including English and Mathematics - (%)	58.6 ↓	53.7 ↑	63.5 ↓	36.1 ↑	63.9 ↓	58.6	58.6
5x 9-5 including English and Mathematics - (%)	36.6 ↓	33.7 ↑	39.6 ↓	13.9 ↓	41.9 ↓	36.6	36.6
EBacc Achievement 9-4 - (%)	18.3 ↓	15.8 ↑	20.8 ↓	11.1 ↑	20.0 ↓	18.3	18.3
EBacc Achievement 9-5 - (%)	13.6 ↓	12.6 ↓	14.6 =	5.6 ↑	15.5 ↓	13.6	13.6

Achievement Overview for 2024/25

	All	Male	Female	Disadv - Yes	Disadv - No	SEND - Unknown	EAL - Unknown
5x 9-4 including English and Mathematics - (%)	61.70 ↑	57.70 ↑	67.10 ↑	37.80 ↑	68.60 ↑	61.70	61.70
5x 9-5 including English and Mathematics - (%)	46.10 ↑	43.20 ↑	50.00 ↑	18.90 ↑	53.60 ↑	46.10	46.10
EBacc Achievement 9-4 - (%)	21.20 ↑	19.80 ↑	23.20 ↑	2.70 ↓	26.10 ↑	21.20	21.20
EBacc Achievement 9-5 - (%)	16.60 ↑	16.20 ↑	17.10 ↑	0.00 ↓	20.90 ↑	16.60	16.60

Data from 2024 to 2025 indicates an upward trend in the percentage of DA students achieving 5 or more GCSEs at Grade 4-9 (including in English and Maths) and at Grade 5-9 (including in English and Maths).

Disadvantaged pupils - Overall A8

Year	Cohort	School disadvantaged compared to national disadvantaged			School disadvantaged compared to national non-disadvantaged			Year group context
		School	National	National distribution banding	National (non dis)	Gap	Gap Trend	
2025	36	36.2	34.9	Close to average (non-sig)	50.3	-14.1	Narrowing	-
2024	38	35.5	34.6	Close to average (non-sig)	50.0	-14.5	Narrowing	-
2023	35	35.2	35.0	Close to average (non-sig)	50.3	-15.2	Not available	-

Overall A8 for our DA students is slowly increasing year-on-year and is slightly above national average. The Gap trend shows that we are steadily narrowing the gap

between the attainment of our DA cohort compared to our Non-DA cohort.

Disadvantaged pupils - Overall P8

Year	Cohort	School disadvantaged compared to national disadvantaged			School disadvantaged compared to national non-disadvantaged			Year group context
		School	National	National distribution banding	National (non dis)	Gap	Gap Trend	
2024	38	-0.44	-0.57	Close to average (non-sig)	0.16	-0.61	Narrowing	-
2023	34	-0.50	-0.57	Close to average (non-sig)	0.17	-0.67	Not applicable	-

The progress of our DA students has improved from 2023-2024 (currently not updated with 2025 data), and shows that we are narrowing the gap between DA and non-DA students.

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
Literacy Gold	Literacy Gold
Lexonik and Lexonik Leap	Lexonik

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information:

Measure	Details
How did you spend your service pupil premium allocation last academic year?	N/A

What was the impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils?	N/A
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