

Pupil premium strategy statement – Hanley Castle High School

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	1161 (937 KS3&4)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	16% (20.5% KS3&4)
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)	2025-2028
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	Mark Stow
Pupil premium lead	Jacqui Burrows
Governor / Trustee lead	Peter Sherwood

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£177,360.00
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>	£177,360.00

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At Hanley Castle High School, our intention is that all pupils, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, make strong progress and achieve highly across the curriculum. Our pupil premium strategy is designed to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve this ambition, including those who are already high attainers.

High-quality teaching is at the heart of our approach, supported by well-targeted intervention in the areas where disadvantaged pupils require the most support. This focus on excellent classroom practice has the greatest impact on closing the attainment gap and benefits all learners across the school.

Our work is underpinned by a key school development priority that runs through everything we do: that all decisions, policies, events and improvement strategies are viewed through the lens of disadvantage. We continually ask ourselves: *How will our most vulnerable children and young people be affected? What can we do to level the playing field?* This principle ensures that equity, inclusion and ambition are central to our school culture.

The new pupil premium strategy builds on a more granular understanding of our disadvantaged cohort. By identifying distinct bands within this group and drawing together data from multiple sources, we can provide precisely targeted support that addresses both academic and wider barriers to engagement in school life. This includes careful consideration of the needs of pupils who have a social worker and young carers.

Our approach is responsive to both common challenges and individual needs, rooted in assessment rather than assumptions about the impact of disadvantage. Through early intervention, high expectations, and a shared sense of responsibility across all staff, we aim to ensure that every pupil—regardless of background—has the opportunity, support and confidence to thrive and succeed.

Implementation

Our pupil premium strategy is implemented through a combination of high-quality teaching, targeted academic support, and wider strategies that promote engagement, wellbeing and aspiration.

High-quality teaching underpins all that we do. We invest time in professional development to ensure that teachers have the skills, knowledge and resources to meet the needs of disadvantaged learners effectively. Subject leaders and classroom teachers use assessment to identify learning gaps and adapt teaching accordingly, ensuring that every pupil is appropriately challenged and supported.

We use our more **granular understanding of the disadvantaged cohort** to identify bands of need and target support proportionately. Data from multiple sources—including attainment,

attendance, pastoral, SEND and engagement indicators—are used to guide intervention. This ensures that pupils receive the right support at the right time, whether through in-class strategies, small group work, mentoring, or tutoring.

Early intervention is central to our approach. Teachers and pastoral staff work collaboratively to identify emerging barriers to learning, enabling prompt, evidence-informed responses.

A **whole-school approach** ensures that all staff take collective responsibility for the progress and wellbeing of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders at every level regularly review outcomes, engagement and participation data to evaluate impact and refine strategies. The lens of disadvantage remains integral to this process—informing all school policies, curriculum planning and enrichment opportunities.

Through this joined-up, evidence-informed implementation, we aim to remove barriers to success, raise aspirations and ensure that all pupils—especially the most vulnerable—are empowered to thrive both academically and personally.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Attainment – Current Progress 8 and attainment data indicate a persistent gap in GCSE outcomes between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students. The implementation of more frequent summative assessments across all year groups from 2025 onwards will enable earlier identification of these gaps and facilitate targeted interventions to close them
2	Attendance – Attendance data demonstrates that absence rates among disadvantaged students are approximately four percentage points higher than those of their non-disadvantaged peers. This is a multifaceted challenge requiring robust strategic tracking, dedicated staffing, and a coordinated whole-school approach to improve attendance and engagement.
3	Reading/vocabulary - STAR reading assessments highlight that a significant proportion of students in Years 7–9 have reading ages substantially below their chronological age. Nearly 50% of the weakest readers in each year group belong to the disadvantaged cohort. Addressing this issue through targeted support and intervention is essential to enhance literacy and secure improved academic outcomes across all subjects.
4	Behaviour gaps – Despite overall improvements in behaviour and homework completion rates, disadvantaged students continue to exhibit disproportionately high levels of non-completion and receive nearly twice as many demerits per student compared to their peers. A detailed analysis of the underlying causes will be critical in developing strategies that promote independent learning, metacognitive skills, and effective information retention.
5	School culture and curriculum - As the proportion of disadvantaged students within the school continues to increase, there is a growing need to refine our understanding of the barriers to success they face. This will enable the provision of tailored, impactful support and ensure that the curriculum and wider school culture foster equity and high achievement for all learners.

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
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<p>Improved Academic Progress and Attainment at KS4 for Disadvantaged Students</p> <p>Progress 8 and attainment gaps will demonstrate measurable reduction, indicating that disadvantaged students are achieving outcomes closer to those of their non-disadvantaged peers. <i>(Baseline: -0.4)</i></p>	<p>Progress 8 and attainment data demonstrate a clear trend toward closing the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students, with baseline measures showing sustained improvement.</p>
<p>Improved Attendance for All Students, Particularly the Disadvantaged Cohort</p> <p>Overall attendance rates will improve, with the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students narrowing significantly. <i>(Baseline: 3.5 percentage points)</i></p>	<p>The attendance gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students reduces significantly, moving toward parity with whole-school averages. <i>(Baseline: 3.5 percentage points)</i></p>
<p>Enhanced Reading Ages and Literacy Confidence Among Disadvantaged Students</p> <p>Targeted small-group interventions will lead to notable improvements in the reading ages of the weakest readers. STAR reading assessments will reflect progress in line with non-disadvantaged peers, supporting literacy development across the curriculum.</p>	<p>Targeted small-group interventions result in measurable gains in reading ages for the weakest readers. STAR reading assessments confirm progress that aligns disadvantaged students more closely with their peers.</p>
<p>Reduction in Behaviour Gaps, Particularly Homework Completion</p> <p>Disadvantaged students will demonstrate increased homework completion rates and reduced behaviour-related sanctions. This will be supported by improved metacognitive strategies and memory techniques, fostering long-term academic success.</p>	<p>Disadvantaged students consistently complete homework at higher rates, reflected in reduced behaviour sanctions and improved engagement. Evidence of enhanced metacognitive and memory strategies supports long-term learning.</p>
<p>Strengthened School Culture and Curriculum Equity</p> <p>Curriculum design and classroom practice will consistently reflect an inclusive approach that prioritises the needs of disadvantaged learners. Student voice feedback, parental engagement, and behaviour data will indicate positive perceptions of belonging and value. Resource allocation will be systematically aligned to areas of greatest need through effective banding.</p>	<p>Student voice feedback, parental engagement, and behaviour data indicate positive perceptions of inclusion and belonging. Curriculum planning and resource allocation demonstrate systematic consideration of disadvantage, with banding processes effectively guiding targeted support.</p>

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: £ 81 180

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Whole-Staff Professional Development</p> <p>Investment in a comprehensive CPD programme focused on cognitive science principles. This includes weekly sessions, instructional drop-ins, and collaborative development of effective teaching strategies, underpinned by a</p>	<p>https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/guidance/Cognitive_science_approaches_in_the_classroom - A review of the evidence.pdf?v=1744271851</p>	<p>1</p>

shared language of high-quality pedagogy.		
<p>Assessment and Memory Strategy Integration</p> <p>Development and implementation of a robust summative assessment framework aligned with the school's memory strategy. Drawing on Dunlosky's research, this approach will prepare students from Year 7 onwards to embed knowledge and strengthen retrieval skills for long-term learning and assessment readiness.</p>	<p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/effective-professional-development</p>	1

<p>Curriculum Development with an Equity Lens</p> <p>Whole-staff engagement in curriculum review and redesign to ensure inclusivity and equity. This process will prioritise “poverty-proofing” the curriculum, embedding the disadvantaged lens into planning and decision-making to guarantee access to a broad, ambitious curriculum for all learners.</p>	<p>EEF – Guide to the Pupil Premium</p> <p>This guide explains that high-quality teaching and curriculum planning are the most powerful levers for improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. It recommends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritising curriculum adaptation to ensure disadvantaged pupils access a broad, ambitious curriculum. • Embedding diagnostic assessment and retrieval practice to support knowledge retention. • Using evidence-informed approaches like explicit instruction, scaffolding, and metacognitive strategies within subject-specific contexts 	1
<p>Behaviour and</p>	<p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/behaviour</p>	3, 4

<p>Learning Habits</p> <p>Establishment of a clear, consistent behaviour policy and curriculum that promotes routines, character development, and mutual respect. The approach will incorporate “warm strict” principles to foster positive relationships and support the development of strong learning habits across the school.</p>		

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

Budgeted cost: £ 40 590

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Banding of Disadvantaged Students Introduction of a structured banding system for disadvantaged learners to enable more precise targeting of support and resources as cohort numbers increase.		5
Reading and Literacy Interventions Implementation of strategies to improve reading fluency and comprehension, including staff training in phonics and fluency techniques. Whole-school CPD will reinforce the importance of reading, while curriculum review will embed explicit vocabulary instruction and reading opportunities across subjects.	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies	3
SEND Provision Enhancement Comprehensive overhaul of SEND provision through the establishment of a new team and SENDCO. This will ensure consistent, planned support for students with both SEND and disadvantage, aligning interventions with individual needs.	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/send	5
Focused Year 11 Intervention Coordinated intervention programme led by Heads of English, Maths, and Science, providing targeted sessions for identified groups and whole-year cohorts based on assessment gaps. This approach builds on the successful maths intervention trial, which demonstrated significant impact between mock and final GCSE outcomes. Additional investment in external programmes, such as Elevate Education, will complement in-school strategies.	https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/guidance/Cognitive_science_approaches_in_the_classroom_-_A_review_of_the_evidence.pdf?v=1744271851	1

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

Budgeted cost: £ 40 590

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Homework Interventions Conduct a detailed analysis of homework completion data to identify patterns and barriers. Use findings to design targeted support strategies that promote consistent engagement and independent learning among disadvantaged students	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/homework	4
Extra-Curricular Provision Continue to expand and refine extra-curricular opportunities through the lens of disadvantage, ensuring equitable access and participation for all students.	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/arts-participation https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/physical-activity	3
Parental Engagement Review the impact of parent information evenings and strengthen SLT-led initiatives to engage and support families, fostering collaborative approaches to student success.	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/parental-engagement	3
Monitoring and Evaluation Hold regular Pupil Premium review meetings to monitor progress, evaluate impact, and adjust strategies based on evidence and emerging needs. Focus QA discussions at planned intervals on Pupil Premium reviews.		

<p>Attendance Improvement</p> <p>Maintain a whole-school focus on improving attendance, with targeted strategies to address persistent absence among disadvantaged students and ensure alignment with wider engagement initiatives.</p>	<p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/leadership-and-planning/supporting-attendance</p>	<p>3</p>
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Budget for contingency: £15 000

Total budgeted cost: £ 177 360

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Academic Outcomes

- GCSE results for 2024 show an attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students.
- **Attainment 8:** 48 (all students) vs. 37 (Pupil Premium students)
- This represents a slight improvement on the previous year, though the gap remains significant. National and local comparative data are pending publication (November 2025).

Enrichment and Inclusion

- To increase access to enrichment, the school extended the lunch break from 30 to 40 minutes, enabling students without after-school transport to participate in extra-curricular activities.
- **Epraise sign-ups:** Average of 1.6 activities per student, rising to 1.7 for disadvantaged students.
- Activities Week was restructured with clear financial support signposting, ensuring no student was excluded. A significant financial commitment supported this initiative.

School Culture

- Student survey data indicates progress in fostering belonging and inclusion:
- **Ease of making friends:** 59% (all students) vs. 58% (disadvantaged students)
- **Feeling valued:** 31% (all students) vs. 34% (disadvantaged students)
- These improvements reflect targeted staff training and scripted approaches to welcome students back after absence.

Attendance

- Attendance has shown a modest improvement at the start of the current academic year, following the implementation of a comprehensive attendance strategy.

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
Elevate Education	Elevate Education

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