

Pupil premium strategy statement

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 effect that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

School overview (based on Oct 2024 census)

Detail	Data
School name	The Blue Coat School
Number of pupils in school	914 (Oct 2024 Census)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	34.7% (Oct 2024 Census)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3-year plans are recommended)	2024/2025 – 2025/26
Date this statement was published	December 2024
Date on which it will be reviewed	October 2025
Statement authorised by	Jane Halsey Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Michelle Pearce Assistant Headteacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Jane Pratt Chair of governing board

Funding overview (based on 7/12 financial year 22/23 & 5/12 financial year 23/24)

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£316,190
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	£316,190

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

The Blue Coat School is committed to supporting all pupils in our care regardless of circumstances and are focused on ensuring the best possible outcomes for all of our students and supporting them to become the happy, safe and empowered young people we know they are all capable of becoming. More than a third of our students are eligible for pupil premium funding and we are aware of the socio-economic insecurities many of our students' experience. We aim to provide all students with a broad and balanced curriculum as well as a comprehensive range of enrichment opportunities that will ensure that every pupil's needs are met irrespective of background.

We focus on areas where teachers, support staff and leaders can have the most impact. Including supporting students with good attendance and ensuring effective Quality First Teaching (QFT) to stretch and challenge our students to make success inevitable. This focus is reflective of the recommendations outlined by the EEF, where the development of high-quality teaching is the primary focus of our pupil premium strategy. This is not unique to disadvantaged students but will benefit the progress and achievement of all our learners. The school aims to improve teaching, learning and outcomes through development of teachers' planning and 'Agile Teaching', this approach supports all students but especially our disadvantaged students, who benefit from our knowledge-rich mastery approach. We are developing a school culture, in which students are committed to making good progress and achieving excellence in all aspects of their lives.

One of our key principles is that all classrooms are inclusive, and we are mindful of individual needs arising as a result of challenges beyond any label or diagnosis. The curriculum offer and our teaching and learning strategy aim to provide consistency and equity for disadvantaged students. We aim for classroom climates to be calm, well-structured, and accessible to all students. We believe good attendance, consistently strong teaching and learning, coupled with secure self-regulation, will disproportionately lift our disadvantaged students. In our strategy, we aim to balance bespoke interventions where needed with work to remove common barriers for all students.

The other areas of our strategy are also in line with the EEF recommendations referenced above, namely targeted academic support and wider student focused strategies. Both are designed to meet our whole school ethos and the selection of these are evidence-based and designed to meet the challenges of our school context.

The school is also committed to continuing professional development for all school staff, working on collaboration and sharing of good practice across the school and as part of the trust. Our pupil premium strategy is integral to our school development plan which is regularly reviewed and adapted.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Standardised reading tests show that our disadvantaged students have a reading age of more than 11 months below their chronological age; and there is a 9-month gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students; disproportionately affecting access to the curriculum for our disadvantaged students.
2	During the 2023-24 academic year, there was an 8.6% gap in attendance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students. The number of pupils who are persistently absent is still increasing and shows no signs of slowing down, this is particularly prevalent amongst our disadvantaged pupils and attendance and progress are synonymous.
3	Classroom climates have benefited from our clear behaviour management strategy, which is well understood by students and teachers. However, lesson observations, and student and teacher interviews, have indicated that disadvantaged students are too often passive, asking too few questions, and do not have enough exposure and opportunities to discuss and reason their thinking and to practice using a rich vocabulary. Whilst we do not misinterpret student engagement as a proxy for deep learning, we know that frequent, high-quality teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interactions positively impact attainment.
4	The school has increasing numbers of students with a whole range of special educational needs. Social emotional and mental health needs and emotional based school avoidance are on an upwards trajectory. A significantly large proportion of these students come from a disadvantaged background and resources are stretched thin in trying to meet this high level of need resulting in poor attendance and attainment for these pupils.
5	Some of our disadvantaged students often come from homes where there are financial pressures, and this is sometimes coupled with challenges when supporting academic progress and home study.. The number of families seeking additional financial support from the school is increasing and has been since the cost-of-living crisis. This currently is showing no signs of slowing and impacts the ability of students and families to manage day to day and ultimately impacts attendance and outcomes over time.
6	The school faces significant challenges around students' ability to self-regulate, to cope with their own emotions and to resolve conflict productively in the moment and throughout the day. Students often lack the strategies and the vocabulary to relate, negotiate and compromise, resulting in frustrations and poor behaviour choices which affect their attainment and outcomes.
7	Students, including those that are disadvantaged in many cases do not have high aspirations for their future and often lack the willingness and skills to challenge themselves and achieve their full potential and make positive lifestyle choices.

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
<p>Improve reading comprehension skills and increased vocabulary among disadvantaged students in all year groups.</p>	<p>Sustained reduction over time in the number of disadvantaged students with a reading age of more than 11 months below their chronological age</p> <p>Closing gap in reading age between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students in all year groups</p> <p>Reduction in students requiring basic phonics intervention beyond Year 7</p> <p>Teachers can recognise an improvement in students' ability to read a broader range of vocabulary, and apply to both verbally and in written work, across all subjects</p>
<p>The attendance of disadvantaged students is increasing sustainably and the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students' attendance is diminishing.</p>	<p>Sustained improvements in attendance in 2024/25 demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased percentage of overall attendance for all groups of pupils including disadvantaged • Reduce the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers • Significantly decreasing number of disadvantaged pupils who fall into the Persistent absence category • Clear and consistent expectations around attendance through improved communication with parents supported with a full range of local authority support
<p>Improved attainment of disadvantaged students with a focus on core subjects.</p>	<p>Outcomes of disadvantaged students will show progress towards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average Attainment 8 score moving to be in line with non-disadvantaged students • A closing attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students, especially in core subjects

<p>Improved internal and external support systems and strategies in place to meet the needs of disadvantaged students and their families' experiencing challenges with SEMH and EBSA as well as other SEN needs</p>	<p>Over the 3 year plan significant changes will be seen to the way the school is able to meet the needs of pupils including....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructuring of the SEN department with a focus on interventions and targeted support will decrease the need for as many external alternative provision placements • Development of the SEMH unit to increase capacity and a sense of belonging • Implementation of a student support centre • Increase capacity to support students through internal and external alternative provisions
<p>Ensuring that the support the school can provide to disadvantaged students and families is regularly reviewed and adapted to meet the current climate and that it is easily accessible to those in need.</p>	<p>The collection of data will be used to review the effectiveness and impact of the following services and additional services will be added as necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Food Hub • Uniform Bank • Winter coats donation • Christmas present offer • Household Support Fund • Personalised curriculum support fund
<p>Improved self-regulation, resilience and improved behaviour choices for all learners, especially those who are disadvantaged.</p>	<p>Data across several areas will show sustained and continual improvement as will the sense of belonging and pride in the school felt by all stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving attitude data across all year groups year on year, including for disadvantaged students • Significant reduction in the number of behaviour incidents for all pupils including the disadvantaged across the school, improving over time • Decreased suspension, reciprocals and managed moves required for disadvantaged pupils • The number of disadvantaged students participating in extra-curricular activities will have increased • Stakeholders voice will suggest an overall improvement in support areas

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: £140,528

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Increase staffing in English to teach a dedicated oracy curriculum</p>	<p>Students need a broad, rich vocabulary to access content in all subject areas. Being able to verbally reason and successfully grapple with complex content improves students' self-belief and positively affects attainment.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/oral-language-interventions</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/literacy-ks3-ks4</p>	<p>1,3,7</p>
<p>CPD focused on planning for clear explicit direct instruction and active student participation and engagement in their own learning through well-structured lessons</p>	<p>Supporting high quality teaching is pivotal in improving outcomes and can narrow the disadvantage gap.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/effective-professional-development</p>	<p>1,3,7</p>
<p>Enhancement of teacher modelling of content.</p>	<p>Technology can be used to improve the quality of explanations and modelling. To get the most out of visualisers, they should be used for effective writing instruction and clear examples. To help students to structure their presentation, ideas and thinking.</p> <p>https://researchschool.org.uk/bradford/news/should-i-use-a-visualiser-to-model-writing</p>	<p>1,3,7</p>

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

Budgeted cost: £105,398

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Increase staffing in Maths to allow for effective interventions to take place alongside the curriculum.</p>	<p>Staff support students in flexible groupings, following the same content; addressing lack of confidence and attainment.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/guidance-for-teachers/using-pupil-premium</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/maths-ks-2-3</p>	<p>3,4,7</p>
<p>Increase staffing in English and upskill the SEN department staff to facilitate effective reading intervention.</p>	<p>Reading comprehension strategies, alongside phonics are a crucial component of early reading instruction. Effective diagnosis of reading difficulties is important in identifying possible solutions, particularly for older struggling readers.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies</p>	<p>1,3,4,7</p>
<p>School-based alternative provision to support attendance and engagement in lessons.</p>	<p>Specialist provision is targeted to meet individual needs and allow students to access the curriculum.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/send</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/behaviour</p>	<p>1,2,3,4,7</p>
<p>School based tutoring for small groups in core subjects.</p>	<p>Small group tuition is effective when targeted at pupils' specific needs.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-tutoring-programme-guidance-for-schools-2022-to-2023/national-tutoring-programme-guidance-for-schools-2022-to-2023#School-led-tutoring</p>	<p>1,4,7</p>

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

Budgeted cost: £70,264

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
SEMH provision to support attendance to school and lessons	<p>In line with the updated guidance on emotional based school avoidance (EBSA), support focused on building resilience and coping mechanisms are effective in helping students to attend school and lessons.</p> <p>https://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/EBSA-good-practice-guidance.pdf</p>	2,5,6
Pastoral support to improve students' emotional resilience and social skills	<p>In line with CAMHS guidance support focused on building resilience and self-regulation skills are effective in helping students to manage challenges and develop strategies for resolving conflict effectively allowing for more positive behaviour choices.</p> <p>https://www.eif.org.uk/report/adolescent-mental-health-a-systematic-review-on-the-effectiveness-of-school-based-interventions</p>	2,3,4,5
Creation of a new Student Support Centre to allow support to be more accessible when required	<p>Student wellbeing is at the heart of improving students' resilience, empathy and understanding of themselves. This in turn will support the improvement of attendance and there is evidence that this may positively impact exclusion rates particularly in the younger years</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/new-evaluation-of-wellbeing-programme-finds-positive-impact-on-absence-levels?utm_source=/news/new-evaluation-of-wellbeing-programme-finds-positive-impact-on-absence-levels&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=site_search&search_term=wellbeing</p>	2,4,6

<p>Additional and strategic staffing to improve attendance and diagnostic of attendance barriers.</p>	<p>Good attendance is critical to attainment. School-based evidence, embedding the principles of good practice set out in the DfE's 'working together to improve school attendance' guidance, has shown that a swift, responsive approach to absence, with parent engagement and a careful diagnosis of underlying causes can effectively reduce absence.</p> <p><u>DfE: Working together to improve school attendance</u> <u>EEF: Attendance Interventions</u></p>	<p>1,2,3,7</p>
<p>Fund for discretionary spending.</p>	<p>Based on our experiences and those of similar schools to ours, we have identified a need to set a small amount of funding aside to respond quickly to needs that have not yet been identified.</p>	<p>1,2,3,4,5,6,7</p>

Total budgeted cost: £316,190

