

Pupil premium strategy statement – Woodlands Academy

Before completing this template, read the Education Endowment Foundation's [guide to the pupil premium](#) and DfE's [pupil premium guidance for school leaders](#), which includes the 'menu of approaches'. It is for school leaders to decide what activity to spend their pupil premium on, within the framework set out by the menu.

All schools that receive pupil premium are required to use this template to complete and publish a pupil premium statement on their school website by 31 December every academic year.

If you are starting a new pupil premium strategy plan, use this blank template. If you are continuing a strategy plan from last academic year, you may prefer to edit your existing statement, if that version was published using the template.

Before publishing your completed statement, delete the instructions (text in italics) in this template, and this text box.

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	97
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	68%
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)	2025/26 To 2027/28
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	Autumn 2026
Statement authorised by	Andrew Morgan, Principal
Pupil premium lead	Andrew Morgan
Governor / Trustee lead	Adrian Armstrong

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£64,159.17
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years <i>(enter £0 if not applicable)</i>	£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>	£0

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Woodlands Academy serves some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils from across the City of Nottingham and surrounding local authorities. Every pupil at our academy has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Our mission is to support the holistic development of all pupils, including those identified as disadvantaged under the Pupil Premium Grant criteria. Over two-thirds of our cohort fall into this category. We understand that pupil progress is highly contextual and needs-led, and we are committed to nurturing the whole child—academically, socially, and emotionally.

We use Pupil Premium funding to deliver a broad range of strategies that go beyond academic attainment and attendance. This includes investment in the wider curriculum, enrichment opportunities, and targeted interventions. All approaches are evidence-based and subject to rigorous monitoring to ensure measurable impact.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p>Attainment</p> <p>Our data indicates that disadvantaged pupils typically make less progress from their starting points upon entry to the academy. While the barriers to learning and challenges faced by these pupils vary, overall academic progress is generally lower than that of non-disadvantaged peers across most subjects.</p> <p>This gap is most pronounced in reading and literacy, which remain key priorities for improvement. Mathematics is also a focus area, given its importance as a core skill underpinning wider learning.</p>
2	<p>Attendance</p> <p>Our data and assessments indicate that some disadvantaged pupils experience irregular attendance, often linked to challenging home circumstances and previous educational disruptions. This impacts their ability to access consistent learning opportunities and maintain progress.</p>

	<p>For the academic year 2024/25, attendance for pupils eligible for Pupil Premium stands at 86.83%, compared to 88.69% for non-Pupil Premium pupils. While the gap is relatively small, it remains a priority area for improvement due to the significant influence attendance has on outcomes and engagement.</p>
3	<p>Personal development/life skills/independence</p> <p>Our assessments, observations, and pupil voice indicate that many disadvantaged pupils require additional support to develop essential personal and life skills. These include areas such as independent travel, work experience, and preparation for adulthood. Addressing these needs is a key part of our holistic approach to supporting pupils beyond academic achievement.</p>
4	<p>Communication/social interaction</p> <p>Our assessments, observations, and pupil discussions show that disadvantaged pupils often face greater challenges in communicating and expressing their needs compared to their peers. These difficulties can include non-verbal communication, limited language development, and reduced social interaction skills. Addressing these barriers is essential to ensure pupils can engage fully with learning and access the support they require.</p>
5	<p>Sensory needs</p> <p>Many of our pupils have significant sensory needs. When these needs are not met, pupils can experience barriers to self-regulation, which in turn impacts engagement, learning, and overall wellbeing. Providing appropriate sensory support is therefore a key component of our approach to reducing barriers and enabling pupils to access the curriculum effectively.</p>
6	<p>Cultural Capital</p> <p>Many disadvantaged pupils, particularly those with SEND, have fewer opportunities to experience cultural and enrichment activities compared to their non-disadvantaged peers. This limits their exposure to wider learning contexts and can impact confidence, aspiration, and social development. Expanding access to cultural experiences is therefore a key priority within our Pupil Premium strategy.</p>
7	<p>Outdoor learning</p> <p>Many disadvantaged pupils, particularly those with SEND, have limited access to outdoor play and learning experiences compared to their non-disadvantaged peers. This lack of opportunity can affect physical development, social interaction, and overall wellbeing. Increasing access to high-quality outdoor learning is therefore an important priority within our Pupil Premium strategy.</p>

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 for disadvantaged pupils in all subjects, relative to their starting points, notably in Literacy and Maths.	Increased number of disadvantaged pupils achieving accreditation in line with the ambitious end point for their curriculum pathway. Termly data capture shows improved progress, particularly in Literacy and Maths.
Pupils to have improved language comprehension to access the curriculum in their pathway.	Assessment data shows a reduction in the language comprehension gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.
Disadvantaged pupils to have better functional mathematics skills.	Termly data capture demonstrates improved achievement in functional maths.
Disadvantaged pupils will have greater confidence and independence skills in school and the wider community, preparing them for adulthood.	Evidence from staff, pupil, and family discussions. Pupils meet independence targets outlined in their EHCPs
To improve attendance of all Pupil Premium pupils.	Attendance for disadvantaged pupils aligns with peers and national benchmarks.
Pupils will use appropriate communication systems to aid understanding and self-expression	Increased curriculum access across pathways. Pupils meet communication targets outlined in their EHCPs.
Improved attainment and independence of pupils with sensory needs	Observations and feedback from staff and families show improved access to the curriculum for pupils with sensory needs.
Disadvantaged pupils to have more experiences that develop cultural capital	Increased number of offsite visits and participation in arts activities, including performances.
Disadvantaged pupils will have access to more outdoor learning activities.	Successful implementation of Forest School and OPAL strategies.

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: £32,265.32

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Widening Arts participation through Music, Drama and Art lessons to include performance.</p>	<p>EEF Research: Overall, the average impact of arts participation on other areas of academic learning appears to be positive. Improved outcomes have been identified in English, mathematics and science. Benefits have been found in both primary and secondary schools. Some arts activities have been linked with improvements in specific outcomes. For example, there is some evidence of the impact of drama on writing and potential link between music and spatial awareness.</p>	<p>1, 4, 5</p>
<p>Primary-aged pupils and those in Yellow and Green pathways will be taught using the RET Phenomenal Phonics Programme, which is fully compliant with DfE guidance. This will include comprehensive staff CPD and provision of appropriate resources to ensure high-quality delivery</p>	<p>EEF research on Phonics: <i>“Phonics has a positive impact overall (+5 months) with very extensive evidence and is an important component in the development of early reading skills, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.”</i></p>	<p>1, 4</p>

<p>Enhance the teaching of mathematics through targeted CPD for staff and the provision of high-quality concrete resources and manipulatives, including Numicon, to support conceptual understanding and fluency.</p>	<p>Improved Conceptual Understanding: Numicon’s structured imagery and tactile components help students understand numerical relationships and basic operations, aligning with the Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract (CPA) approach. This progression from hands-on manipulation to abstract reasoning is especially effective for students struggling with math concepts, including those with SEND Nottingham ePrints</p> <p>Increased Engagement and Confidence: By turning abstract numbers into tangible forms, Numicon reduces anxiety around mathematics. Activities such as counting holes, ordering shapes, and creating patterns make learning interactive and enjoyable, fostering a positive attitude towards numeracy Early Years Resources News</p> <p>Support for Diverse Learning Needs: Numicon’s flexibility allows it to be tailored for different abilities and ages. For example, it aids early learners in foundational skills and supports older students in exploring more complex concepts like number bonds, place value, and arithmetic Learn and Thrive</p>	<p>1</p>
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support, structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £16,791.03

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Targeted drama-based interventions to support oracy, self-confidence and determination through 'finding your voice'. This will also support life skills, PSHE and careers/next steps through role-play-based activities	EEF Research: Overall, the average impact of arts participation on other areas of academic learning appears to be positive. Wider benefits such as more positive attitudes to learning and increased well-being have also consistently been reported. There is intrinsic value in teaching pupils creative and performance skills and ensuring disadvantaged pupils access a rich and stimulating arts education.	1,3, 4
Metacognition and self-regulation approaches to teaching support pupils to think about their own learning more explicitly, often by teaching them specific strategies for planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning. To include ELSA and Zones of Regulation.	EEF Research: 1. The potential impact of metacognition and self-regulation approaches is high (+7 months additional progress), although it can be difficult to realise this impact in practice as such methods require pupils to take greater responsibility for their learning and develop their understanding of what is required to succeed. 2. The evidence indicates that explicitly teaching strategies to help plan, monitor and evaluate specific aspects of their learning can be effective.	1, 2, 3, 4

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

Budgeted cost: £15,102.82

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Trust Attendance & Welfare Team	The introduction of the Trust Attendance and Welfare Team has had a positive effect with a year-on-year reduction in absence rates with a	2

	<p>significant reduction in absence in 2024/25 to below National Levels. The Attendance and Welfare Team will continue to work to improve attendance, keeping absence below national figures for special schools.</p> <p>Research; how attendance can impact attainment; Key for School Leaders, 2019 Supporting School Attendance - Reflection and Planning Tool Education Endowment Foundation</p>	
<p>Enhanced outdoor learning experiences for all pupils to include Allotment Education, Forest School and OPAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95 per cent of children surveyed said outdoor learning makes lessons more enjoyable • 90 per cent said they felt happier and healthier • 93 per cent of schools said outdoor learning improves pupils' social skills • 92 per cent of schools said it improves pupils' health and wellbeing and engages them with learning • 85 per cent of schools saw a positive impact on behaviour <p>www.gov.uk / University of Plymouth research</p>	<p>3, 4, 5, 6, 7</p>

Total budgeted cost: £64,159.17

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Impact Evaluation Summary

All aspects of the Pupil Premium plan were implemented successfully, with strong evidence of positive impact across teaching, targeted academic support, and wider strategies. Due to these successes, the majority of approaches will continue into the next three-year cycle, with refinements based on evaluation data.

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Arts Participation: Music, Drama, and Art provision significantly enriched the curriculum. External partnerships (e.g., Nottingham Music Hub) enabled pupils to participate in performances such as A Taste of Woodlands and Christmas in the City. Drama and art projects culminated in high-quality showcases and an in-school gallery, increasing cultural capital and parental engagement.

Phonics Programme: Full staff training on the RET Phenomenal Phonics Programme ensured compliance with DfE guidance. Ofsted (Dec 2024) praised the systematic approach to early reading and phonics. Assessment data shows 76% of Pupil Premium pupils improved their phonics score between summer 2024 and 2025, with 50% achieving the expected standard (score 32+) compared to 30% of non-PP peers. Reading progress was strong overall, with 80% meeting and 36% exceeding end-of-year targets.

Maths Development: Investment in Numicon and manipulatives, alongside CPD, improved lesson quality and conceptual understanding. Ofsted noted ambitious, well-adapted teaching. End-of-year data shows 83% of PP pupils on the Yellow Pathway made accelerated progress (slightly below non-PP at 100%), while Green Pathway PP pupils slightly outperformed non-PP peers (26% vs 25%). Overall, 76% met and 35% exceeded maths targets.

Communication Training: All staff achieved Level 1 Makaton training, embedding its use across the academy. TEACCH training for ASD support is now well established in the Yellow Pathway, despite one planned external training being partially completed due to staff turnover.

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

Drama-Based Interventions: Increased pupil confidence and oracy, with notable progress for elective mute pupils—one pupil now participates in choir and singing activities.

Metacognition and Self-Regulation: Strategies (including ELSA and Zones of Regulation) are embedded, contributing to a reduction in behaviour incidents, suspensions, and RPI. Ofsted highlighted excellent behaviour and strong SEMH support.

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

Attendance and Welfare: Collaboration with the Trust Attendance & Welfare Team has had a measurable impact. Absence rates reduced significantly in 2024/25 to 8.7%, outperforming the national average for special schools (12.6%). This demonstrates the effectiveness of attendance interventions and wider school improvements. Ofsted highlighted the academy's high expectations and proactive approach:

“An atmosphere of calm and purpose permeates the school... Leaders work highly effectively as a team to monitor and reduce absences, involving external professionals when appropriate.”

Next steps will focus on sustaining improvements and closing the gap between PP and non-PP attendance.

Sensory Provision: The academy commissioned a Sensory OT review in partnership with the local authority, leading to enhanced sensory spaces and additional resources. This has improved access for pupils with sensory needs, including autism, supporting regulation and engagement.

Community-Based Learning and Independence: The academy delivered an extensive off-site learning programme, supported by the strategic use of the school minibus. In 2024/25, 167 off-site visits took place across all pathways, including activities such as swimming, financial literacy trips (e.g., Lidl, Asda), and careers exposure (e.g., Atkins Realis). Yellow Pathway pupils accessed destinations previously considered unsuitable, reflecting improved planning and inclusion. These experiences strengthened independence, social skills, and curriculum links.

Outdoor Learning and Allotment Education: Outdoor learning was prioritised, with Allotment Education embedded for all pupils. Engagement was high across pathways, and Yellow Pathway pupils benefited from increased opportunities. This contributed to improved behaviour, confidence, and overall engagement.

Total Allocation £72,455

Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider
Bike Maintenance (City and Guilds)	Nottingham Bike Works
Gardening Programme	Allotment Education
Music Lessons	Nottingham Music Hub
Drama Lessons	Contracted drama tutor
Supported Internship	Coca Cola
Supported Internship	Direct Education Business Partnership

