



Charles Darwin School

Aspire - Endeavour - Achieve

Pupil Premium Statement 2026-27

Pupil premium strategy statement

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery premium for the 2025 - 2026 academic year) 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.

This is a live document and as such will be monitored, reviewed and if necessary adapted on a continual basis. Intended outcomes and activities will be reviewed in March 2027.

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	Charles Darwin School
Number of pupils in school	1308
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	24%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2025 to 2028
Date this statement was published	September 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2027
Statement authorised by	Aston Smith
Pupil premium lead	Lizzie Hamilton/Jon Simpson/Mick Boyden
Governor / Trustee lead	David Dilling

Funding overview (2026-27)

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£316,910
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	£316,910

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our aim is to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their background or the challenges they face, make strong progress, achieve highly across the curriculum, and feel safe, supported and valued within our school community. We are committed to meeting pupils' academic, pastoral, wellbeing and welfare needs so that every child can thrive.

The priorities within our Pupil Premium Strategy are designed to support disadvantaged pupils in achieving these outcomes. We recognise that disadvantage does not determine potential and that many pupils from challenging backgrounds are capable of achieving highly. As such, our approach is ambitious, with high expectations and aspirations at its heart. We are committed to ensuring that all disadvantaged pupils have the opportunities, support and encouragement needed to realise their full potential.

At Charles Darwin School, we adopt a broad understanding of vulnerability and recognise that barriers to success can take many forms. We therefore consider a range of pupils within our wider vulnerable cohort, including:

- 1. Pupils who have a social worker or who are experiencing vulnerable home circumstances, regardless of Pupil Premium eligibility.*
- 2. Pupils with special educational needs, disabilities, or identified social, emotional or mental health needs.*
- 3. Pupils whose family circumstances place them on the threshold of Pupil Premium eligibility or who may experience similar barriers to learning despite not qualifying for funding.*

Our Approach

High-quality teaching, strong relationships and high expectations are at the heart of our approach. We believe that the most effective way to reduce the disadvantage gap is through consistently excellent classroom practice, supported by targeted interventions and pastoral care.

Our approach is founded on three key principles:

- 1. Delivering high-quality teaching across the school.*
- 2. Promoting positive conduct, strong engagement and excellent learning habits.*
- 3. Ensuring that pupils are happy, well supported and able to access the help they need to succeed.*

Our strategy is designed to strengthen each of these areas and remove barriers that may prevent disadvantaged pupils from achieving their potential.

We recognise that disadvantaged pupils are not a homogenous group and that individual barriers to success vary considerably. Therefore, our strategy combines high-quality teaching with targeted academic and pastoral support that is responsive to the needs of each pupil. We will ensure that Pupil Premium students are known by staff, that their progress is closely monitored, and that pupil voice, parental engagement and mentoring are used to identify barriers early and provide timely interventions.

We are committed to ensuring that disadvantaged pupils have access to the same ambitious curriculum, enrichment opportunities and cultural experiences as their peers. Through regular student voice activities, targeted learning walks, careers guidance and aspiration-raising opportunities, we aim to develop confidence, resilience and the knowledge needed to succeed in education, employment and beyond.

High-quality teaching remains the cornerstone of our approach and the most effective means of closing the disadvantage attainment gap.

Challenges

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

Challenge Number	Detail of Challenge
1	Insufficient progress and attainment, particularly amongst disadvantaged boys. Internal assessment data and external examination outcomes indicate that disadvantaged students achieve less well than their non-disadvantaged peers, resulting in gaps in attainment and progress.
2	Disengagement from learning leading to poor conduct, reduced participation and disruption to learning. Observations, behaviour data and student feedback indicate that some disadvantaged pupils demonstrate lower levels of engagement, resilience and motivation within lessons.
3	Weaknesses in literacy and reading comprehension. Assessments, observations and staff feedback indicate that disadvantaged students generally have lower levels of reading comprehension than their peers, impacting their ability to access the curriculum and make progress across subjects.
4	Increasing social, emotional and mental health needs. Assessments, observations and engagement with pupils and families indicate that the wellbeing of some disadvantaged pupils continues to be disproportionately affected, creating barriers to attendance, engagement and achievement.

Challenge Number	Detail of Challenge
5	Loss of key study habits and independent learning skills. Some disadvantaged pupils lack the organisational, metacognitive and independent study skills required to achieve their full academic potential.
6	Higher rates of persistent absence and lower attendance. Attendance data shows that disadvantaged pupils are more likely to be persistently absent than their peers, resulting in lost learning time and reduced academic outcomes.
7	Lower aspirations and reduced confidence in future pathways. Some disadvantaged pupils have limited awareness of post-16, post-18 and career opportunities, which can impact motivation, engagement and long-term outcomes.
8	Reduced cultural capital and participation in enrichment opportunities. Disadvantaged pupils are less likely to access wider learning experiences, educational visits, enrichment activities and cultural opportunities that support personal development and future success.
9	Lower levels of parental engagement and barriers beyond the classroom. Engagement with some families indicates that disadvantaged pupils may experience additional barriers outside school that can affect attendance, wellbeing, aspirations and academic 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
Improve pupil progress and outcomes for all and especially for key cohorts.	Gap closed between pupil premium students and non-pupil premium students as measured by Progress 8 and achievement of Grade 4+ in English and Mathematics. At Charles Darwin School, pupil premium students perform better than equivalent groups nationally. Half-termly designated drop-ins and book looks focused on identified pupil premium students

	demonstrate improved engagement, participation and quality of work.
Improve literacy levels so pupils are able to access the whole curriculum.	80% of KS3 pupils read at or above their chronological reading age. Reading ages are regularly assessed and monitored, with targeted interventions provided for identified students. Progress data demonstrates improved literacy outcomes and increased access to the wider curriculum.
Increase support for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.	All identified students participate in SEMH surveys. Progress of identified students is monitored and analysed through improvements in attendance, behaviour, wellbeing measures, attainment and pupil voice feedback.
Cultivate opportunities for enhancing cultural capital through enrichment and experience and improve aspirations in order to secure positive post-16 destinations.	100% of pupil premium students attend a meeting with the Careers Adviser. NEET figures for pupil premium students remain in line with or lower than the national average. Increased participation in enrichment activities, educational visits and wider school opportunities. All pupil premium students complete a careers aspirations survey to help identify future pathways and support needs.
Improve aspiration, engagement and sense of belonging for disadvantaged pupils.	All pupil premium students complete an annual '<i>I Wish My Teacher Knew</i>' survey and participate in pupil voice activities. Student voice findings inform intervention planning, mentoring and pastoral support. Increased participation in enrichment activities, clubs, leadership opportunities and wider school life. Improved attendance, engagement and wellbeing measures for identified pupils. Pupil surveys demonstrate increased confidence, stronger relationships with staff and a greater sense of belonging within the school community.
Improve attendance and engagement of pupil premium	Attendance data demonstrates a reduction in the proportion of pupil premium students who are

students, particularly those who are persistently absent.	persistently absent. Identified pupils, including those with SEND and/or attendance concerns, receive personalised support and, where appropriate, curriculum adaptations at Key Stage 4 to improve engagement and access to learning. As a result, these pupils demonstrate improved attendance, increased participation in lessons, fewer behaviour incidents and stronger engagement with school. Over time, this contributes to improved progress, attainment and overall educational outcomes for pupil premium students.
Improve engagement, attendance and achievement for identified vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils.	Personalised interventions and curriculum pathways are implemented for identified pupils, including those with SEND and attendance concerns, to remove barriers to learning. Success is evidenced through improved attendance, enhanced engagement in lessons, fewer behaviour incidents and improved progress and achievement over time.

Particular activities for this academic year (2026-27)

This details how we intend to spend additional funds recovery premium funding **this academic year** to also address the challenges listed above.

Teaching and learning improvement

Budgeted cost: **£272,000**

Activity	Evidence that Supports this Approach	Challenge Number(s) Addressed
Embedding evidence-informed teaching and learning strategies through the school's Eight Essentials framework to strengthen Quality First Teaching across all classrooms.	The DfE's <i>Supporting the Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils</i> (2015) highlights high-quality teaching as the most effective lever for improving outcomes for disadvantaged students.	1, 2
Consistent implementation of Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction across all key stages.	Research suggests that explicit instruction, retrieval practice and carefully sequenced learning reduce cognitive load, strengthen retention and	1, 2

	particularly benefit disadvantaged learners.	
Improving the quality, consistency and impact of feedback across the curriculum.	The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) identifies effective feedback as having the potential to add up to six months' additional progress.	1, 2
Developing a more explicit focus on metacognitive and self-regulation strategies within teaching and learning.	EEF evidence suggests that metacognitive approaches can add up to seven months' additional progress by helping students to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning more effectively.	1, 2, 5
Fully embedding the school's 3Rs Behaviour System to promote consistency, positive behaviour and high expectations across the school.	EEF research highlights that effective behaviour approaches create calm, purposeful learning environments and can lead to improved academic outcomes.	1, 2, 4
Increasing opportunities for reading through timetabled reading and literacy lessons within English, alongside literacy-focused activities such as Bedrock during tutor time.	Evidence indicates that regular reading practice and explicit literacy instruction improve reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition and access to the wider curriculum.	3
Delivering whole-staff professional development focused on effective reading instruction and the promotion of a whole-school culture of reading.	Improving literacy is a shared responsibility across the curriculum. Research demonstrates that a consistent whole-school approach to reading can positively impact attainment across all subject areas.	3
Delivering whole-staff training on inclusive classroom practice, adaptive teaching and strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners through high-quality classroom provision.	Inclusive teaching approaches, supported by adaptive teaching and Quality First Teaching, improve access to learning and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and other vulnerable groups.	1, 2, 3, 5

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

Budgeted cost: £25,000

Activity	Evidence that Supports this Approach	Challenge Number(s) Addressed
Additional intervention classes in English and Mathematics to address identified knowledge and skills gaps.	The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) indicates that targeted academic support can contribute up to four months of additional progress.	1
Reading recovery interventions for identified students who require additional support with literacy and reading fluency.	Internal assessment data demonstrates the positive impact of targeted reading interventions on reading age, confidence and curriculum access.	3
Additional librarian hours and enhanced library provision to promote reading for pleasure and independent reading.	The Department for Education's <i>Reading for Pleasure</i> research highlights the significant impact reading has on both educational attainment and personal development.	3
Targeted reading intervention programmes delivered by Learning Support Assistants for students with SEND and low reading ages.	Evidence demonstrates that structured literacy interventions can improve reading comprehension, vocabulary development and access to the wider curriculum.	3
Dedicated Key Skills lessons for students in Years 7-11, focusing on the development of literacy and numeracy skills for students with low reading ages and/or SEND.	Targeted support in literacy and numeracy helps students secure the foundational skills required to access learning across the curriculum and improve long-term outcomes.	1, 3
Attendance support led by the Assistant Headteacher for Attendance, including targeted intervention for students with low	Research consistently demonstrates a strong correlation between attendance and academic achievement. Early intervention and targeted support can improve	6

attendance, Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) and persistent absence. Staff training will also be provided to strengthen attendance-focused practice across the school.	attendance, engagement and attainment.	
Monitoring and tracking participation in co-curricular activities, with targeted encouragement and support to increase participation among pupil premium students.	Participation in enrichment activities has been shown to improve engagement, confidence, aspirations and a sense of belonging within the school community.	8
Financial support provided for educational resources and equipment, including revision guides, study materials, flashcards, calculators, practical resources for the arts, PE kit and school uniform where required.	Removing financial barriers helps ensure equitable access to learning, enrichment opportunities and the wider curriculum.	1, 7, 8
Access to the Unifrog careers platform and a personalised careers education programme for all students, with additional guidance and support for disadvantaged learners where appropriate.	High-quality careers education and guidance supports aspiration raising, informed decision-making and positive post-16 and post-18 destinations.	7, 8

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

Budgeted cost: **£20,000**

Activity	Evidence that Supports this Approach	Challenge Number(s) Addressed
Provision of an additional school counsellor to enhance access to targeted mental health and wellbeing support.	Research indicates that access to school-based counselling can play a significant role in supporting pupils' emotional wellbeing, improving engagement with education and reducing barriers to learning.	4
Consistent implementation of the whole-school behaviour policy to promote positive behaviour, high expectations and a calm learning environment.	The EEF's <i>Improving Behaviour in Schools</i> guidance highlights the importance of a predictable, orderly and supportive environment as the foundation for effective teaching and learning.	2
Targeted monitoring and support for identified pupil premium students with low attendance, delivered through pastoral teams and key staff.	Department for Education research demonstrates a strong link between attendance and attainment, with higher levels of absence associated with lower academic outcomes at Key Stage 4.	1, 6
Financial support and additional resources allocated to Duke of Edinburgh Award participation and other enrichment activities to increase engagement amongst disadvantaged pupils.	Research commissioned by the Social Mobility Commission found that participation in extra-curricular activities can improve confidence, develop social skills and raise aspirations towards further and higher education.	7, 8
Dedicated curriculum time allocated to the explicit teaching of effective study skills, revision techniques and independent learning strategies across all year groups.	The EEF identifies metacognition and self-regulation strategies as having the potential to generate up to seven months of additional progress.	5
Enhanced careers mentoring and guidance, with pupil premium students prioritised for	The Gatsby Benchmarks provide a nationally recognised framework for effective careers education and guidance, supporting aspiration, informed decision-making and successful post-16 destinations.	1, 6, 7

additional support where appropriate.		
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Total budgeted cost: £316,910

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the 2024 to 2025 academic year.

The gap between PP and non-PP students gaining 4+ in both subjects has reduced marginally from last year and continues the trend in reduction (-29%, -24% and now -23%). For English and Maths 5+ the figure has risen (-13%, 22% and now 26%). In only Maths the gap is -2% and the PP figure in just English is higher than non-PP (+3%)

Gap between progress of PP (based on internal data) and non-PP students is -0.79 which has increased by 0.2. This compares to national figures of -0.55 and a local figure of -0.88 (2021 lagged figures). The progress figure for the 47 PP students was -0.69.

The reading recovery scheme has had a positive impact with now over 80% students expected or above reading age at the end of Year 9 (KS3). An even higher percentage of students have improved on their initial reading age at the start Year 7 (90+%)

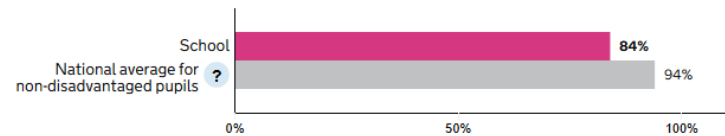
There has also been a positive impact resulting from all Year 11, 10 and 9 PP students receiving at least one careers appointment. Not only has there been positive feedback from the majority of students (evidenced through surveys). NEET figures show that for PP students, 84% stayed in education or entered employment after KS4. This compares to 83% nationally. More students chose to take up apprenticeships than nationally.

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils staying in education or entering employment after key stage 4 ?

This is provisional data for 2023/24 (2022/23 leavers)

Number of disadvantaged pupils = 43

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Overall % going to sustained education or employment / training	School %	93	92	94	84	96	85	95
	National % ?	91	90	92	83	94	85	92

Apprenticeships ?	School %	2	2	3	5	2	0	3
	National % ?	3	4	2	2	4	3	3

Tuition offered to students during the year, such as lunch sessions, am registration Maths intervention and after school support sessions have had some positive impact on disadvantaged learners e.g. Maths PP lunchtime targeting 5+ all managed to secure at least a grade 4 in the subject.

Opportunities to help engage PP students and improve progress has been tracked across all years with revision materials, trips, transition and uniform all offered