

Pupil premium strategy statement – Weald of Kent Grammar 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	1419 (1738 including sixth form)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	4.3%
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)	2023/24 to 2025/26
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	Mr R Booth, Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Ms A Beasley, AHT
Trustee lead	Alessia Ropkins

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£70,908
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	£70,908

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intention is that all pupils, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, are supported to thrive and to achieve their potential, enjoying their learning and achieving first class qualifications alongside developing as confident, caring and curious individuals. We want them to be well prepared for their future lives and leave Weald empowered to achieve their aspirations.

The focus of our pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve that goal by tackling obstacles to achievement and progress caused by material disadvantage, ensuring full access to the curriculum, ensuring that differences are diminished and narrowing the attainment and progress gap between disadvantaged students and their peers.

High-quality teaching is at the heart of our approach as “evidence indicates...[it] is the most important lever schools have to improve pupil attainment, including for disadvantaged pupils” (EEF, 2022).

Our approach will be responsive to common challenges and individual needs, rooted in robust diagnostic assessment, not assumptions about the impact of disadvantage. We will use funding to provide equality of opportunity for students to broaden their experience and cultural capital outside of the curriculum.

We acknowledge that the only similarity in students eligible for the pupil premium grant is that they have been eligible for free school meals at some point in the last six years. Key to our support is an individualised approach and knowing students really well so we can intervene in a bespoke way for each student.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Our attendance data over the last three years indicates that attendance among disadvantaged pupils has been 2-5% lower than for non-disadvantaged pupils, despite being better than national averages. They are also twice as likely to be late to school. Our assessments and observations indicate that absenteeism is a significant factor that negatively impacts disadvantaged pupils' progress.
2	Our assessments, observations and discussions with pupils and families suggest that the education and wellbeing of many of our disadvantaged pupils were impacted by Covid-19 school closures to a greater extent than for other pupils and they are 2-3 times more likely to have social, emotional and mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. These findings are backed up by several national studies. This leads to students being less likely to attend lessons and to be able to learn at their best at home and at school.

3	<p>Results from the PASS survey in October 2022 showed that, on average, disadvantaged pupils in all year groups had less positive attitudes towards school than their non-disadvantaged peers. This was particularly significant in questions regarding attitudes to attendance, feelings about school, preparedness for learning, perceived learning capabilities and self-regard as a learner.</p> <p>There is a clear link to attainment: where students feel that they belong in school, ‘a sense of belonging gives students feelings of security, identity and community, which, in turn, support academic, psychological and social development’ (Jethwani-Keyser, 2008, cited in OECD, 2017, p.118), and there is also a link between the teacher–family relationship and attainment (Herman, 2017).</p>
4	<p>Although disadvantaged students at Weald of Kent Grammar School make better than average progress, and above the progress of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, they do not make as much progress as their non-disadvantaged peers at Weald of Kent.</p> <p>GCSE outcomes from Summer 2023 had a Progress 8 score of +0.05 for the disadvantaged cohort, compared with +0.83 for the cohort as a whole.</p>
5	<p>Based on the end of year 10 assessments (June 2025), progress of disadvantaged pupils in the current GCSE cohort is ALPS 3, behind that of non-disadvantaged students (ALPS 2). There is also an 15.3% gap in the predicted percentage of grades 7-9 and an 11.6% gap in students predicted to achieve 5 grade 5s including English and Maths.</p>
6	<p>In contrast to the wider context of the school community, our disadvantaged pupils have more limited opportunities and/or access to cultural enrichment activities and experiences, trips and travel.</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
<p>The gap in progress and attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers will be narrowed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved attainment among disadvantaged pupils across the curriculum. P8 score for the disadvantaged cohort will be above +0.13. The gap in P8 scores between the disadvantaged cohort and the year 11 cohort as a whole will be better than -0.8.
<p>All disadvantaged students have access to the necessary resources and equipment to allow them to engage and excel in their education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All eligible students will have access to necessary curriculum resources and equipment, specific uniform items and uninterrupted learning via school-supplied electronic devices, so that any remote learning and online resources are accessible to all.
<p>To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, in order to provide the</p>	<p>Improving levels of wellbeing demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> quantitative and qualitative data from student voice, student and parent surveys and teacher observations

conditions required to engage and excel in their education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an increase in participation in enrichment activities, particularly among disadvantaged pupils • improved attendance and lateness
To enhance the cultural capital and opportunities for social mobility of disadvantaged pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The enrichment programme will continue to grow providing students with greater access to activities that will help them develop character. • Disadvantaged pupils will be financially supported to access a wide range of extra-curricular activities including culturally enriching visits, educational visits, workshops, super-curricular activities and accreditations.
To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	<p>Sustained high attendance demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the overall absence rate for all pupils being no more than 5% • the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers is reduced • the percentage of disadvantage pupils who are persistently absent is reduced

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: £30,908

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Improving teaching and learning to ensure cognitively active and supportive classrooms across all subject areas. This will involve ongoing teacher training and support and release time.	The Sutton Trust have identified quality first teaching and learning as having the biggest impact upon the progress of disadvantaged (and all) pupils: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/educationevidence/teaching-learning-toolkit	4, 5
Recruitment and retention of high quality teaching staff Funding and cover for staff to attend CPD	Particular training focus on explicit vocabulary instruction and other strategies to address vocabulary and cultural knowledge gaps (Gross, 2021) EEF guidance report on Effective Professional Development used to design CPD programme.	
Developing metacognitive and self-regulation	Teaching metacognitive strategies to pupils can be an inexpensive method to help pupils become more independent learners. There is particularly strong	3, 4, 5

and oracy skills in all pupils. Including dedicated 'Scholarship' lessons within the KS3 curriculum. This will involve ongoing teacher training and support and release time.	evidence that it can have a positive impact on maths attainment: Metacognition and self-regulation Teaching and Learning Toolkit EEF 'Young people with poor communication skills are one and a half times more likely to have mental health difficulties, even after taking account of a range of other factors that might have played a part.' (Gascoigne & Gross, 2017) Oracy improves a student's sense of self-efficacy, which has been identified as a significant factor in attainment for disadvantaged students (Gross 2022)	
Introduction of ALPS Connect platform including staff training.	Improving diagnostic ability based on students' prior attainment and progress to make interventions more pertinent and targeted. https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/eef-guidance-reports/digital/EEF_Digital_Technology_Guidance_Report.pdf?v=1635355216	4, 5
Purchase of visualisers to improve opportunities for modelling in lessons.	Technology can help teachers model in new ways and provide opportunities to highlight how experts think as well as what they do. Explanations and modelling are the foundations of effective teaching. High-quality explanations and models enable teachers to introduce and explain new ideas, knowledge, and skills to pupils in a way that is accessible, memorable and clear. EEF Using Digital Technology to Improve Learning Guidance Report	4, 5

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

Budgeted cost: £10,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Targeted interventions and resources to meet the specific needs of disadvantaged pupils with SEND	Disadvantaged pupils with SEND have the greatest need for excellent teaching. Specific approaches to support these pupils may include SEND assessments, explicit instruction, cognitive	4, 5

	<p>and metacognitive strategies, scaffolding and the targeted use of technology.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/send</p>	
<p>GCSE Pod subscription available to all students, including disadvantaged pupil</p>	<p>Hague & Patyon (2010) argue that ‘considering how digital literacy supports subject knowledge can help to ensure that technology-use enhances teaching and learning rather than simply becoming an ‘add-on.’”</p> <p>EEF Using Digital Technology to Improve Learning Guidance Report</p> <p>Using technology to support retrieval practice and self-quizzing can increase retention of key ideas and knowledge.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technology offers ways to improve the impact of pupil practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology can play a role in improving assessment and feedback. <p>GCSE Pod focusses on embedding metacognitive strategies such as active recall and retrieval practice into curriculum content. Our initial trial of the platform demonstrated that it had a particularly positive impact on student engagement and confidence for the disadvantaged and SEND pupils.</p>	<p>2, 3, 4, 5</p>

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

Budgeted cost: £30,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Embedding principles of good practice set out in DfE’s Improving School Attendance advice.</p> <p>Increased funding for FSM to allow purchase of breakfast.</p>	<p>We cannot improve the attainment of pupils if they are not attending, identified as a key step in the NFER briefing for school leaders.</p> <p>Our school findings alongside the EEF guide on Pupil Premium (wider strategies) identifies that one of the most significant non-academic barriers to pupil success in school is attendance.</p> <p>Findings from how to best support parents using the guidance report by the EEF on Working with Parents to Support Children’s Learning will also be incorporated as part of this strategy.</p>	<p>1</p>

<p>Regular priority home contact from form tutor and/or HOY</p> <p>Priority booking for parent consultations.</p>	<p>Creating a Team Around the Child approach and involving parents as active partners</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/parental-engagement</p> <p>Evidence links ‘a sense of belonging gives students feelings of security, identity and community, which, in turn, support academic, psychological and social development’ (OECD, 2017) and attainment (Gross, 2022)</p>	<p>1, 2, 3</p>
<p>Targeted support, including access to CBT, for pupils whose low self-esteem and emotional resilience has significant impact on their academic progress.</p>	<p>Research on the Covid-19 mental health and wellbeing survey (chapter 4) indicates that, during the pandemic, disadvantaged young people have reported poorer mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>There is evidence to suggest that CBT can have a high impact on risk behaviours and behavioural difficulties: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy - Youth Endowment Fund</p> <p>EIF’s report on adolescent mental health found good evidence that CBT interventions support young people’s social and emotional skills and can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression: Adolescent mental health: A systematic review on the effectiveness of school-based interventions Early Intervention Foundation (eif.org.uk)</p>	<p>1, 2, 3</p>
<p>A comprehensive programme to enhance the curriculum which includes financial support to ensure participation in school trips and visits, curriculum activities and extra-curricular clubs including team building, exposure and involvement with the arts, enterprise, Duke of Edinburgh and sporting activities.</p>	<p>Many disadvantaged pupils lack the opportunities of their non-disadvantaged peers and exposure to wider cultural capital. Enhancing pupils’ cultural capital in school will have a positive impact on pupils’ aspirations and self-esteem. Recent research argues that extracurricular activities may enhance children’s intellectual creativity, breadth and scope (Kaufman and Gabler, 2004) and moreover that cultural participation may lead to a genuine increase in analytical and academic competence (Kisida et al., 2014).</p> <p>Offering a wide range of high-quality extracurricular activities to boost wellbeing, behaviour, attendance and aspiration as well as to build life skills such as confidence, resilience and socialising. Disadvantaged pupils will be encouraged and supported to participate.</p> <p>Arts Participation Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF</p> <p>Physical Activity Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF</p>	<p>3, 6</p>
<p>Financial support for families to aim to</p>	<p>Research by Young Minds shows that worry about financial pressures is the leading cause of</p>	<p>2, 3</p>

<p>counteract the cost-of-living crisis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uplift to daily FSM allowance • Contribution towards uniform costs • Supermarket vouchers • Contribution towards travel 	<p>anxiety in children rising with the current cost of living crisis. Children reported disruption to their daily lives including sleep and diet which in turn will have an impact on their capacity to learn at their best in school.</p>	
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Total budgeted cost: £70,908

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Key headline measures from Summer 2024 results show that disadvantaged pupils at Weald of Kent Grammar School now make well above average progress (P8 +0.32) and that the Progress 8 gap has narrowed significantly (by 0.34) from their non-disadvantaged peers. They far outperform disadvantaged students nationally (P8 -0.57) and locally (Kent P8 -0.85) as well as all students including their non-disadvantaged peers in other schools nationally (P8-0.03) in Kent (P8 -0.14). Progress 8 data will not be released by the DfE for Summer 2025 but we believe that would have been the same or higher than Summer 2024. ALPS analysis for the Summer 2025 results indicated that disadvantage students achieved an ALPS 2 (alongside the whole cohort) for the first time, putting their progress in the top 10% nationally.

Disadvantaged students continue to be behind their peers in terms of attainment, despite generally entering with broadly the same KS2 prior attainment. The Attainment 8 (A8) gap widened in Summer 2023 but then returned to previous levels in Summer 2024 but with a much larger gap in the 5 grades 9-5 including English and Maths measure which widened considerably to 29.3%. Successful interventions meant that this gap narrowed to 4.8% in Summer 2025 despite the PP cohort being weaker than their peers in terms of prior attainment.

In Summer 2023, PP students (21.4%) were half as likely to be entered for the EBacc than the rest of the cohort (54.8%). This gap narrowed significantly to 13.6% in Summer 2024 with the difference continuing to be almost solely due to the modern foreign language (MFL) element. The school moved to a compulsory MFL model at GCSE and therefore this was no longer a limiting factor in Summer 2025. In fact, a greater percentage of PP students (86.7%) were entered than non-disadvantaged pupils (83.6%).

Whilst Pupil Premium students at Weald of Kent represent a significantly smaller proportion than the national average, the needs of this cohort are unique and differ from the challenges of the majority of disadvantaged students both locally and nationally. As such, strategies which are widely considered to be best practice do not necessarily apply in this setting.

We know that pupil wellbeing, mental health and attitudes to school have a considerable impact on attendance with social, emotional and mental health concerns being the most cited reasons for persistent absence. In 2023/24, whole school attendance rate dropped (part of a national picture) and the gap between pupil premium attendance rates widened slightly to 90.5%, 3.2% lower than the school average. Despite whole school attendance remaining at similar levels in 2024/25, the gap with pupil premium attendance narrowed by 2.1%. Pupil premium students remain more likely to be persistently absent than their non-disadvantaged peers and 1.8% more likely to be late. Attendance and wellbeing remain a high priority in this year's plan.

All year 11 Pupil Premium students were given the opportunity to have tutoring in a core subject through the National Tutoring Programme in 2022/23. It was clear that pupils benefitted from this additional tutoring only if they engaged fully with the programme, in which cases it did help to improve their attainment and progress. Due to a reduction in funding, tutoring was offered only for particular pupils in 2023/24 and onwards. This targeted support must be done in

full collaboration with parents/carers and students in order to gain engagement and commitment to ensure that this intervention is as beneficial as possible.

Summer 2025 outcomes demonstrate that our strategy is having a positive impact and that the PP gap has narrowed considerably since the start of this 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