

Pupil premium strategy statement – Solway Community 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	150
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	36.6% (as at September 2025)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers:	2024-25 to 2027-28
Date this statement was published	October 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	Autumn 2026
Statement authorised by	Tom Hailwood
Pupil premium lead	Jennifer Rowlands
Governor / Trustee lead	David Davidson

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£54580
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>	£54580

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intention is that all of our students achieve well, regardless of their advantage or disadvantage, regardless of background and home circumstances, regardless of starting point, ability or aptitude. That students feel belonging within our school community and are valued within it.

Solway is a small rural school. In the local area employment rates are relatively good however the type of employment is often poorly paid which means that while we have a relatively high proportion of students who access FSM there is a wider pool of students that have close to being defined as PP. A high proportion of students are recognised to have had 4+ ACEs. Given this context students often don't have access to models of aspiration from their parents or wider adults in their lives, and perhaps lack agency and confidence. Given the rurality and isolation of the school, students access to enriching activities and a wider range of cultural experiences are lower. The community is small, and students have a smaller field of friends to choose from, while friendships are often strong and long lasting the range of relationship options for students is limited, as is access to wider services including Educational Psychologists, CAMHS and high-quality AP.

From our historical data and current analysis of our students, we have identified literacy as one of our key challenges, and therefore our key building blocks to enable students to access better outcomes for themselves. Together with a focus on addressing barriers to learning, we feel this primary focus will enable us to streamline our approaches to make a real, lasting difference to our students' lives. In line with EEF research, high quality, quality first teaching, and an explicit focus on literacy, will provide the building blocks to support high attainment. The school's size and location provide additional challenges where we recognise the importance for our students to actively participate in the range of expectation on offer at school and engage in enriching activities.

Our approaches will not only focus on the disadvantaged, but because of the relative proportion of disadvantaged students will provide whole-school initiatives to improve outcomes for everyone, raising the bar and expecting more from all our students, many of whom while not categorised as PP are close to disadvantage. In this way, a tide of improvement will bring all students with it, enabling them to challenge and support each other to achieve more. Non-disadvantaged attainment will be sustained and improved alongside that of their disadvantaged peers.

We will ensure that we take a holistic view, addressing issues and gaps as well as tailoring to the individual child. Our small size enables us to know our students well and provide tailored support to them, to ensure they are in the best possible position to learn and learn well. We

will work equally hard for high attainers, ensuring they continue to achieve and thrive, as we do for those who struggle the most.

Our strategy will also link to our school improvement plan, with particular focus on those most disadvantaged in our school population, whether they are in receipt of Pupil Premium or not.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Quality First Teaching Leaders and teachers need to be confident in their assessment of academic progress, so they can improve their knowledge of learner's progress and adapt the curriculum for their needs. Teachers need to improve how they adapt the curriculum to meet needs of the most able students. We need to support the progress of students with SEND need, and in particular SEMH and those who are not in receipt of an EHCP but who are on our SEN register.
2	Literacy Reading ages of our students are sometimes below their real age. Assessments show that in all year groups a relatively large proportion of our students have a reading age which is below their actual age. From recent evidence, this gap appears to widen during their time at our school. Our reading for pleasure focus is helping to identify the causes of this issue.
3	In lessons learning (pastoral input) In previous years, pastoral support has sometimes focused on resolving issues rather than going the step further onto removing barriers to support effective learning. We need to continue to improve our support of students having experienced trauma and experiencing other barriers to learning effectively in the classroom.
4	Participation, Enrichment and Cultural Capital Disadvantaged students attend school less often than non-PP students. We want to ensure that the participation of students with PP in all school events is at least equal to the proportion of PP students in school. To provide an outward-facing curriculum and curriculum experiences that support the personal development and character of all students in school.

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 by disadvantaged group of students across the curriculum at the end of KS4	<p>By the end of our current plan 2027-28, disadvantaged students will have consistently achieved as well as non-disadvantaged students in our school and that both groups are achieving well compared to national cohorts. In each academic year, our success criteria will be that outcomes demonstrate that disadvantaged students (and non-disadvantaged students too) achieve a progress 8 score of 0 or greater.</p> <p>As well as improved outcomes for disadvantaged students, the quality of assessments at KDPs will improve teachers understanding of progress made and provides opportunities for teacher to adapt the curriculum. Teachers will be able to discuss their understanding with confidence. The scaffolding in place for students to make rapid progress will be more consistently in place.</p> <p>This will be observed through the schools monitoring schedule as well and KDPs.</p> <p>In 2025, we are using GL assessments to support the improved accuracy of assessments.</p>
Improved literacy scores across all year groups	<p>Reading assessment scores demonstrate improved reading ages compared to actual age for disadvantaged students.</p> <p>Literacy interventions are clearly linked to carefully identified gaps in learning, are being addressed comprehensively and consistently, and are making a difference.</p> <p>From 2025 onwards, the school will develop a greater focus on reading for pleasure.</p> <p>School monitoring identifies improvement in key focused aspects of the EEF 'Improving literacy in Education'.</p>
In lessons learning	<p>More students are in school and in lessons more regularly, and are better able to deal with the rigour of classroom life.</p> <p>Pastoral support is focused not only on resolving issues but also on supporting in-lesson progress and achievement by proactively focusing on being in and engaging with lessons, learning actively and participating fully in all aspects of their education, including delivering appropriate aspects of the 'five a day' EEF approach. Our trauma informed & Unconditional Positive Regard (UPR) approach will also support inclusion of disadvantaged, and all, students.</p>
Improved participation and engagement with learning opportunities	<p>Disadvantaged students' uptake in enrichment activities is in at least proportion to their proportion in the school.</p>

	<p>Barriers to uptake are successfully identified and systematically broken, in effective and resource efficient ways, in order to ensure equal access to opportunities.</p> <p>MIS Payments system will be used to support tracking of student trip attendance and support detailed evaluation of the uptake on trips of disadvantaged students</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: £25,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Implementation of Literacy Improvement strategies	EEF research clearly shows that a focus on literacy is key in secondary schools. The EEF Guidance Report ' Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools ' outlines the interventions that are recommended. Our approach incorporates implementing many of the elements of the guidance report.	1, 2
<p>Our literacy improvement strategies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary literacy – improving the way we teach and use literacy in our curriculum • Clear roadmaps and long term plans robustly communicated and utilised with students for each subject, including clarity on key vocabulary required • Topic overviews used to inform day to day teaching of vocabulary (tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary) • A clear and developing understanding and implementation of what effective reading, writing and talk looks like in subjects. Improving how students engage with reading for pleasure. • Use of GL assessments to support greater accuracy of assessments and improve intervention or curriculum adaptation. • See also our School Improvement Plan for further details of how we are moving literacy forward; this is applicable to disadvantaged as well as non-disadvantaged students. 		
Quality First Teaching	Quality First Teaching must include appropriate responses and adaptations to teaching as needed by students but without unnecessarily elaborate or individualised approaches. Our approach focuses on high	1, 2, 3

	<p>prior attaining students, but will also benefit all.</p> <p>Our SIP also includes initiatives to prioritise quality first teaching including checking understanding, identifying and identifying and resolving misconceptions.</p> <p>This year we will turn our attention to ensuring pastoral staff can support successful learning through appropriate parts of the Five a Day EEF Report.</p>	
<p>Our approach to improving quality first teaching includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using data to identify specific subject areas and trends where students are underachieving. • Targeting support strategies to specific students • Providing professional development for teachers to adapt teaching methods • Considering curriculum reviews and modification • Rigorous quality assurance • Review of assessment practice • Review 5 a day and identify where pastoral staff can support learning • See also our School Improvement Plan for further details of how we are moving quality-first-teaching forward; this is applicable to disadvantaged as well as non-disadvantaged students. 		

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
Focused support on improving literacy by specific interventions and in-lesson teaching.	EEF research clearly shows that a focus on literacy is key in secondary schools. The EEF Guidance Report ‘Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools’ outlines the interventions that are recommended. Our approach incorporates implementing many of the elements of the guidance report.	1, 2
<p>In order to improve literacy for those students that need additional support and interventions we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to use assessments to inform student need, including GL assessments • Deliver interventions to fill gaps and improve literacy, reading, phonics etc • Manage and monitor testing regularly and robustly in order to gauge progress and identify further gaps • Implement complimentary classroom strategies to support development of individual students • Ensure staff are fully trained to deliver effective interventions, progress is tracked and robust evaluations are carried out of both delivery and outcomes of interventions. 		

- See also our School Improvement Plan for further details of how we are moving literacy interventions forward; this is applicable to disadvantaged as well as non-disadvantaged students.

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

Budgeted cost: £20,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Pastoral support focusing on attendance, behaviour for learning and engagement with learning as a priority	Children need to be in school to engage with learning. We therefore focus a lot of effort on supporting students to get into, and stay in, school. In addition to this, we also focus on improving learning behaviours in school. EEF research supports focusing on improving learning behaviours as well as managing misbehaviour . A focus on pastoral support that enables good learning to happen successfully is key to supporting good attainment.	3
<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue our proactive engagement with agencies to support SEMH issues. Using funding to support Always Another Way (AAW), Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) on programmes focusing on Ways to Wellbeing • Continue to develop and deliver strategies to ensure PP students attend in line with national • Expansion of ELSA for those students requiring support, including development of environments, to support intervention success • Provide staff with CPD opportunities to support wider school culture development. Training such as NPQLBC & Diploma is Trauma Informed School • Develop opportunities to make sure pastoral staff are able to make links with curriculum staff to ensure that any interventions are outcome-focused in terms of good learning in lessons in addition to supporting students' wellbeing and attendance. Our trauma informed approach will also support this. 		
Improved participation and engagement with learning opportunities	We will ensure that students who are disadvantaged have the same opportunity to take part in enrichment and capital-developing activities and interventions as non-disadvantaged students. We will do this through carefully monitoring uptake and take-up of clubs, activities, trips, visits and other events, and proactively encourage attendance and uptake through minimising barriers of cost, travel and other issues faced by our students.	4
We will:		

- Monitor and encourage disadvantaged students' uptake in enrichment activities is in at least proportion to their proportion in the school.
- Use of our MIS to monitor more closely participation in trips and clubs
- Barriers to uptake are successfully identified and systematically broken, in effective and resource efficient ways.

Total budgeted cost: £55,000

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Summer 2025 marked the end of the first year of our new strategy.

Outcomes for GCSE students were not as good as we had hoped. We cannot measure progress for these students as they did not sit their KS2 SATS due to Covid, and therefore the comparison cannot be made. We know that a significant proportion of our students were badly affected by the effects of the disruption caused by the pandemic, and this should also be taken into account. Despite this, disadvantaged students in our school achieved as well as other students who were not disadvantaged when we measure against the targets that were set for them. Compared to national attainment, however, our disadvantaged students did not achieve well, nor did they achieve as well as our non-disadvantaged students. Our cohort included disadvantaged students who also had SEND needs as well as difficulties with achieving good attendance despite significant work with them to improve attendance. Nevertheless, all of our students achieved well enough to move to their next steps and are now attending college courses or apprenticeships.

However, we can see some indications of our disadvantaged students (and non-disadvantaged too) are achieving much better lower down the school, with significant progress being made in core subjects over the last academic year.

In 2024-25, our whole school attendance finished at 1.1% above the national. Whereas our disadvantaged cohort finished 2.4% above their national disadvantaged counterparts, showing we are making good progress in ensuring our students have access to more lessons, every year.

In terms of Persistent Absence (PA), our whole school PA was 8% below national. However, we were significantly below national disadvantage, by 13.3%

During the last academic year, we have worked towards supporting disadvantaged students regulate and modify their behaviour. We saw a reduction in the percentage of incidents disadvantaged students were responsible in comparison to the school total (49% in 2024-25, to 47% in 2024-25). We saw an increase in Level 3 incidents for disadvantaged students in the last year. However, 34% of these incidents last year were made up by 2 students.

We have worked extensively to develop a culture that supports staff and student wellbeing. Pupil & parent voice has noted there has been an improvement, with the school being recognised as the safest school in the Northwest, based on Parent View feedback collected and analysed by Ofsted. We have seen a reduction in cases of

EBSA, as well as those children and families sat at Early Help, Child In Need & Child Protection.

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

Further information (optional)

Use this space to provide any further information about your pupil premium strategy. For example, about your strategy planning, implementation and evaluation, or other activity that you are delivering to support disadvantaged pupils that is not dependent on pupil premium funding.