

# The Bicester School Equity Strategy (Pupil Premium Strategy)

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	1180 (Y7-13)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	21.6% (Y7-11)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2024-25 <b>2025-26</b> 2026-27
Date this statement was published	1/11/2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	1/11/2026
Statement authorised by	Mrs S Knowlton
Pupil premium lead	Mr M Brown
Governor / Trustee lead	Adele Wallis

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£249,475
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years ( <i>enter £0 if not applicable</i> )	£0
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b> <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>	£249,475

## Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan Statement of intent

### What are your ultimate objectives for your disadvantaged pupils?

For all disadvantaged students to play a full and successful part in the academic and wider school community. To achieve this, we aim to:

1. Ensure that all disadvantaged **participate in** the academic and wider curriculum to the same extent as their peers.
2. Ensure that disadvantaged (PP) students on average make **increasingly good progress** year on year and that the Progress 8 gap to their peers is reduced year on year.
3. Increasingly address and **remove the barriers** faced by our disadvantaged students e.g. literacy, poor attendance, lack of social capital, etc.
4. Ensure that an increasing number of our disadvantaged (PP) students access level 3 pathways and strive for none of our disadvantaged students to be classed as NEET at the end of KS4

### How does our current pupil premium strategy plan work towards achieving these objectives?

To achieve these objectives the school is adopting the tiered approach recommended by the EEF, which places the greatest focus on promoting high quality teaching, supported by academic interventions and wider non-teaching strategies. Therefore, underpinning this three-year plan is the development of high-quality teaching CPD aided by the recruitment/ retention of high-quality teaching staff, especially in the core subjects.

However, internal data, suggests that weak literacy is a substantial barrier for many of our students, especially our disadvantaged (PP), and therefore developing literacy is core to this plan, alongside other specific interventions based on identified need.

Finally, there is both internal data and academic literature that highlights the need for high quality pastoral/ behavioural support and attendance intervention to meet the needs of our disadvantaged students. As such, funding is directed to ensuring that high quality pastoral care is available to all students, including a specific specialist team to support the most vulnerable students.

### What are the key principles of our strategy plan?

The strategy plan is based on the following principles:

- That we promote an ethos that promotes the school's motto of "**Aspire and Achieve**" for all, regardless of disadvantage or need.
- That we are an **evidence-based school** and that decisions and interventions should be based on research and data.

- That the most effective method of addressing disadvantage is through a strong focus **on improving teaching and learning**, as advocated by the EEF.
- That **developing literacy** of students, especially where literacy is below chronological age is essential so that students can access the wider curriculum.
- That providing **high quality pastoral and CEIAG support** is essential to meet the wider needs of all students.
- That the use of a robust monitoring system, **focused on outcomes**, that can identify barriers and effectively inform and evaluate interventions is essential to maximise the impact of PP funding.
- That specific interventions should be based on **identified need**.
- That PP funding is leveraged to benefit **as many students as possible**, including non-disadvantaged students.

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Disadvantaged (PP) students have lower levels of achievement than their peers on entry to the school and this gap continues to grow during KS 3 & 4
2	Disadvantaged (PP) students' attendance is lower than their peers
3	Disadvantaged (PP) students' reading ages are lower on average than their peers on entry to the school
4	Disadvantaged (PP) students' attitude to learning is on average lower than their peers, which is reflected both in behaviour, effort in class and homework completion
5	Disadvantaged (PP) students' Home Learning Environment, social capital and parental engagement (e.g. attendance at parents' evenings) is on average lower than their peers, with many students living in areas of significant deprivation, especially educational deprivation.
6	The school has a number of refugee students who face a variety of complex challenges.
7	Disadvantaged (Service) Students are significantly more likely to have moved schools than their peers and are less likely to aspire to level 3 qualifications and further education

## 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 outcomes at GCSE	<p>The gap between P8 scores as reported by DFE / FFT of disadvantaged (PP Ev6) and their peers is in line with or better than the national average by August 2027</p> <p>The gap between A8 scores as reported by DFE of disadvantaged (PP Ev6) and their peers is in line with or better than the national average by August 2027</p>
Provide high quality teaching	<p>95%+ of observed lessons show that aspects of BLIMPS (where appropriate) are effectively incorporated into teaching by July 2027</p> <p>All core subjects to be taught by subject specialists by July 2027</p>
Provide high quality CEIAG to improve aspirations and post 16 destination data.	<p>No students are classed as NEET at the end of KS 4</p> <p>The gap in students (taking into account prior levels of attainment) accessing level 3 courses between disadvantaged (PP) students and their peers is reduced by August 2027</p>
Improve attendance of PP students	<p>Attendance of disadvantaged (PP) students increases year on year and is in line with or above national average by end of July 2027</p> <p>The attendance gap between disadvantaged (PP) students and their peers is to be in line with or better than the national average by July 2027</p>
Improve literacy	<p>To close the reading gap between disadvantaged (PP) students and their peers.</p> <p>To close the gap between KS3 disadvantaged (PP) students' reading and the national average.</p>
Improve parental engagement	<p>Attendance by parents of disadvantaged (PP) students to parents' evenings and other events increases year on year, and the gap narrows between the parents of</p>

	disadvantaged (PP) and non-disadvantaged (PP) parents
Increase access to full curriculum – including, trips, extra curricular and wider curriculum	<p>Recorded participation in extra curricular activities by disadvantaged (PP) students increases year on year and the gap between disadvantaged (PP) students and their peers is reduced based on 2023 baseline</p> <p>To ensure that all disadvantaged (FSM) students have access to paid for resources such as ingredients and revision guides in KS 4</p> <p>To ensure that no disadvantaged student lacks the IT equipment to fully engage with the online curriculum</p>
Improve attitude to learning and behaviour	<p>The gap in reported attitude to learning between disadvantaged (PP) students and their peers falls year on year</p> <p>The gap in the number of C's issued, internal isolation and FTE continues to fall between disadvantaged (PP) students and their peers</p> <p>To ensure that the number of disadvantaged (PP) students who are permanently excluded is in line with or below the school average across the three years.</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: £ 118,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Recruitment and retention of key specialist teachers, including funding additional TLR posts in core subjects	DFE research (2016) suggests that student's attainment in core subjects such as maths is greater when delivered by a specialist teacher	1,4
Continued teaching and Learning focus on evidence-based strategies to support Quality First Teaching linked to Lemov's 'Teach Like a Champion' and whole school BLIMPS approach.	Supporting the Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils (DFE, 2015) suggests high quality teaching as a key aspect of successful schools.  Wider educational literature e.g. Lemov (2010) & Sherrington, (2019) suggests that selected methodologies are most effective at improving student outcomes. This is further supported by the EEF Tool Kit (2021) which claims significant improvement in learning e.g. Interleaving and questioning +7 Months Assessment for learning / feedback + 6 Months	1,4
QA led by expanded Teaching and Learning Team, SLT and HoDs to provide developmental feedback, identify (and fund as appropriate) training & resource needs and to share best practice.	DFE guidance on Teacher Standards states that 'Systems of appraisal and monitoring of teaching are necessary and can help to determine starting points for professional development'.  Collected teacher efficacy is highlighted by Hattie (2016) as the most effective influence on student achievement (+1.57) and therefore supports strategy of sharing good practice.	1,4
Funding of literacy co-ordinator to further embed whole school literacy strategy to explicitly teach literacy in lessons and tutor time	EEF guidance report (Improving literacy in secondary schools, 2021) recommends prioritising "disciplinary literacy" and developing students' ability to read complex texts as key aspects of improving literacy	1,3,4

focusing on tier 2 vocabulary.		
CPD programme linked to BLIMPS enabling teaching staff to choose sessions in liaison with department heads. Continued use of NPQs to improve student outcomes	Supporting the Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils (DFE, 2015) suggests high quality teaching as a key aspect of successful schools.  The EEF's guide "Putting Evidence to Work, A Guide for Implementation" (Sharples, Albers, & Fraser, 2018) – highlights the importance of building leadership capacity to deliver school improvement	1,4
Expanded use of online homework platforms e.g. Educake to improve effectiveness of homework	These platforms enhance student learning by providing immediate feedback, which has been shown to improve understanding and retention of material (Koedinger et al., 2013).	1,4

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

Budgeted cost: £ 60,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Year 7 & 8 Accelerated Reader – class readers, targeted support from teacher	Accelerated reader has been reported (Baye, Slavin, & Haslam, 2019) to have a significant effect size of +0.24 ( $p < .05$ ).	1,3
Increase the amount of 1:1 literacy intervention to support students with low levels of literacy in KS3	Education Endowment Foundation. (2021) reports that on average, one-to-one tuition is associated with approximately <b>+ 5 months' additional progress</b> compared to similar pupils not receiving it.	1,3
Year 9 Reader Plus – promote engagement at home	EEF report into Literacy programmes (Baye, Slavin, & Haslam, 2019) suggest that they commonly have a significant positive effect size.	1,3
Small group tuition during tutor time to key yr 11 students	EEF Toolkit (Education Endowment Foundation, 2021) suggests that small group tuition has +4 months benefit and 1:1 tuition can have a benefit of +5 months	1,6
Funding to provide academic mentoring by	Academic mentoring enhances student motivation, and improves academic	1,3

AHOY to select students in all years	outcomes. (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Karcher, 2008).	
Funding for Assistant Head teacher to lead interventions	Effective leadership in educational interventions is crucial for ensuring successful implementation, and promoting positive outcomes, (Hallinger, 2011; Robinson et al., 2008)	1,3,4
Provide increased bespoke EAL support for disadvantaged EAL students	Evidence indicates that proficiency in English is the strongest predictor of academic attainment for EAL learners, and refugee and late-arrival children often lag without targeted language support. (Strand and Lindorff, 2021)	6

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

Budgeted cost: £ 71,425

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Provide high quality pastoral care e.g. by funding Pastoral Managers and AHOY to provide support including mentoring and support of all disadvantaged students	High-quality pastoral care has been linked to improved academic performance. A study by Roffey (2012) found that students who receive effective pastoral support tend to have better motivation, increased school engagement, and higher academic achievement.	1,2,4
Provide high quality behavioural management support by funding Behaviour Managers.	Research by Simonsen et al. (2008) highlights that proactive behaviour interventions reduce disruptive behaviours, promote positive school climates, and enhance students' social skills, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes and overall well-being.	1,4
Provide quality bespoke "RISE" provision support to vulnerable students, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Career guidance and skills sessions to support aspirations and target setting.</li> <li>Use of Thrive program to upskill</li> </ul>	Research by Berridge et al. (2012) demonstrates that this type of support can improve engagement, reduce exclusion rates, and provide tailored support, helping vulnerable students achieve better educational and social outcomes	1,4

<p>RISE staff to support behaviour for learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of GCC and RISE specific curriculum to prevent issues with loss of learning.</li> </ul>		
<p>Continue to provide 1:1 career adviser Interviews</p>	<p>CEC report (2020): highlights the importance of careers guidance. Effect sizes reported by Hattie (2016) show that Careers interventions have an effect size of +0.38 and are likely to have positive effect on student achievement</p>	<p>1,4</p>
<p>Increase number of careers events attended by PP students.</p>	<p>CEC report (2020): highlights the importance of careers guidance. Effect sizes reported by Hattie (2016) show that Careers interventions have an effect size of +0.38 and are likely to have positive effect on student achievement</p>	<p>1 ,4.</p>
<p>Promote positive mental health and wellbeing of students and provide clear routes for additional support if required.</p> <p>To be achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff Training of key staff by MIND for MHFA.</li> <li>Development of PSHE curriculum.</li> </ul>	<p>Help-seeking behaviours for mental health involve reaching out for support, yet adolescents in greatest need often don't seek help (Divin et al., 2018). Key facilitators include mental health literacy and trusting relationships with adults, particularly school staff (Aguire Velasco et al., 2020). Long-term research shows teachers' positive relationships with students can significantly impact mental health, often more persistently than academic outcomes. For effective support, prioritising staff well-being is also crucial.</p>	<p>2,4,6</p>
<p>Provide funding towards Attendance manager and Associate members of SLT to allow targeted attendance activities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement new attendance policy to more effectively reintegrate students</li> </ul>	<p>Research presented by organisations such as Welsh Assembly Government (2011) &amp; Durrington Research School (2018) suggest that the identified activities all have a significant impact on attendance outcomes for PP students</p>	<p>1, 2</p>

<p>with poor attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate attendance into transition planning.</li> <li>• Work with Disadvantage (PP) parents and students to identify specific barriers to attendance.</li> </ul> <p>Provide targeted bespoke support based on specific barriers</p>		
<p>Work with partners (Getting Oxfordshire online etc) to provide laptops and ICT access for all students</p>	<p>Wider literature e.g. Colman (2021) shows that PP students significantly affected by digital divide, especially during pandemic.</p>	<p>5,6</p>
<p>Funding for behaviour managers to provide a range of support and sanctions to reduce the risk of PEX and FTE</p>	<p>Effect sizes reported by Hattie (2016) show that reducing disruptive behaviour has an effect size of +0.32 and is likely to have a positive outcome on student outcomes.</p>	<p>1,4</p>
<p>Provide twice termly young carers support meeting</p>	<p>Becker (2007) highlights that “Young carers often face additional emotional and practical challenges that can negatively impact their academic achievement and wellbeing”</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Develop improved support for disadvantaged students transitioning from KS 2 to 3</p>	<p>Improving KS2–KS3 transition supports academic progress, wellbeing, and engagement—especially for disadvantaged pupils—by reducing disruption and fostering belonging, which boosts attainment and narrows inequality. (Education Endowment Foundation, 2021)</p>	<p>1,3,4</p>
<p>Work towards achieving the Schools of Sanctuary Award to ensure that our support for refugee students and other disadvantaged EAL students meets nationally recognised standards</p>	<p>UK-based research shows that refugee and asylum-seeking children often lag behind their peers academically and experience additional barriers in education; moreover, a sense of belonging and being welcomed in school is strongly linked to better engagement and outcomes (Education Policy Institute, 2021; Sobitan, 2021).</p>	<p>6</p>

**Total budgeted cost: £ 249,475**

## Part B: Review of the previous academic year

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

### Key Stage 4 Data

In 2025, the average Attainment 8 (A8) score reported by the DFE for disadvantaged students was 3.67, up significantly from the 3.37 achieved in 2024. Likewise, the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students has continued to narrow, falling from -1.29 in 2024 to -1.09 in 2025 and is now significantly below the reported 2024 national average of -1.53.

Due to the absence of KS 2 testing for the cohort, the Progress 8 (P8) scores for 2025 are based on FFT data using CAT testing, so must be treated with significant caution when compared to previous DFE data. However, they suggest the disadvantaged students (FSM6) achieved a P8 score of -0.25 a significant improvement on the -0.77 achieved in 2024. Furthermore, FFT reports that the estimated P8 gap has reduced from -0.75 in 2024, to -0.40 in 2025. This compares positively with the 2024 national average of -0.73.

This data suggests that we are currently meeting our targets for the 3 Year disadvantaged plan, although consolidating on and building on this progress will continue to be a priority of the disadvantaged plan going forward.

### Quality of teaching

A wide range of internal and external reviews into the quality of teaching over the last academic year, including those conducted by the Cambrian Trust, ALET and senior leaders, have confirmed that the overall quality of teaching remains consistently good. Feedback from these reviews highlights that lessons are calm, purposeful, and challenging, with teachers demonstrating clear and effective pedagogy through the school's BLIMPS strategy.

Lesson visits carried out by the Cambrian Trust observed that students are 'engaged in their learning' with an atmosphere 'conducive to good learning' (November 2024) and a more recent ALET review noted that 'pedagogical development is paying dividends with more consistently high-quality practice observed than last year. Engagement is higher and students are responding to the consistently applied routines'. (October 2025).

## Academic interventions

Due to the removal of NTP funding there was a reduction in the number of academic interventions that could be offered, however, despite this, a total of 84 students (including 66% of Yr 11 disadvantaged (PP Ev6) ) were supported. The majority of these interventions were shown to have a significant impact on students' final achievement, compared to their mock grades, for example:

- Subject based tutor time (80 students)
  - Maths (34 students) +0.74
  - English (22 students) + 1.09
  - Science (29 Students) +0.1
- Easter Revision day Geography (23) +0.3 grades

As in previous years this data will inform the nature of interventions this year, with English and Maths retaining a focus on 4/5 boarder line students, but with Science changing their focus to supporting students with SEN.

## Attendance

Since 2023-24 a significant investment was made into the leadership of attendance at TBS, with two associate members of SLT appointed to oversee the area. While overall attendance figures for disadvantaged (PPEv6) improved slightly to 85.3% from 85.0%, it is still slightly below the national average by 0.9%. Likewise, the attendance gap between disadvantaged (PP Ev6) and their peers remained at 7%

## Mental Health Plan

There is continued evidence that in a significant number of cases where students have poor attendance and/or attainment that this is often linked to poor mental health – hence the significant mental health component of the current plan, with the funding of a part time MIND Counsellor at its core. While due to its nature quantifying the impact of our Mental Health Plan is problematic, there is clear evidence that our partnership with MIND has had a positive impact.

In total 33 supported through counselling, The MIND Counsellor delivered 21 student workshops reaching 352 yr 9 and 10 students and mental health themed assemblies were delivered to all of KS 3 and 4.

Where students had sessions with the mind worker, there was significant evidence of impact: 100% of the students would recommend the support to other students and

78% had an improved Mental Wellbeing Score, based on the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale

While it has not been possible to continue the work with the counsellor, this year has seen fifteen key pastoral staff trained by MIND in Mental health First Aid, with the intention of expanding our mental health support for students.

## Behaviour

The number of C's recorded by disadvantaged (PP) students continues to be significantly higher than their peers, with the gap widening in 2024-25, with disadvantaged (PP) students obtaining on average 65 Cs compared to 26 Cs by their peers. This pattern is also reflected in Isolations and fixed term exclusions where disadvantaged (PP) students were approximately 2.7 times more likely to be isolated or excluded than their peers.

Furthermore, in a change from the long-term trend, which had seen the number of disadvantaged Students permanently excluded decline compared to their peers, the two students permanently excluded during 2024-25 were both disadvantaged (PP).

Consequently, behaviour continues to be a significant priority for the school and has led the school to reorganise its approach with the introduction of the RISE Programme, which has been introduced this year and which will be our key approach to address this issue going forward.

## Literacy

Disadvantaged (PP) students continue to enter TBS with significantly lower reading abilities than their peers and this gap has widened in recent years, for example the current yr7 cohort shows a 6.6% gap in Nationalised Standardised Score, which is substantially higher compared to their yr 9 peers, where there is a 3.7% gap.

Regular testing shows that our disadvantaged (PP) are making above expected progress in KS 3, suggesting our current strategy is having a positive impact. However, the gap between disadvantaged (PP) and their peers has closed in Years 8 and 9, but not in Year 7. This possibly reflects the impact of reducing curriculum time for literacy in KS3 and as such has led to a greater focus on targeted literacy intervention in Yr 7 this year.

## CEIAG

As in previous years, the aim that all students experienced at least one careers related trip or event per year was achieved. Likewise, careers guidance and support continued to be prioritised for all disadvantaged (PP) students and students deemed at risk of being NEET. There is clear evidence of success, with currently no recorded students classed as NEET.

This year 41% of disadvantaged (PP) students went on to access level 3 courses, an increase from 34% in 2024. However, more detailed analysis of the 2025 data suggests that there is still a significant gap between the numbers of disadvantaged students, especially Middle Prior Attainers accessing level 3 courses (50% compared to 80%) compared to their peers, so this will continue to be a focus for this 3 year period.

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