

Pupil premium strategy statement – Linwood School

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery premium) funding to help improve the attainment of our disadvantaged students. It outlines our pupil premium strategy, how we intend to spend the funding in this academic year and the outcomes for disadvantaged students last academic year.

School overview

Detail	Data
Number of students in school	425
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible students	43%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2025/2026 to 2027/2028
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2026
Statement authorised by	Gemma Talbot, Executive Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Kate Tuck, Director, LTSA
Governor / Trustee lead	The Learning & Achievement Committee of the Governing Body take this as a collective area of interest

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£170,800
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£170,800

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Linwood School is a day special school which welcomes students from a wide geographical area, supporting a comprehensive range of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Our school is made up of a number of campuses, each with varying areas of specialism.

We are highly aspirational for all of our students. We believe in working in partnership with parents, carers and the families of our students. We also work closely and collaboratively with a range of stakeholders to ensure our students have the best possible support and opportunities both in and out of school.

Our aim is to use pupil premium funding to help us achieve and sustain positive outcomes for our disadvantaged students. Whilst socio-economic disadvantage is not always the primary challenge our students face, we do see a variance in outcomes for disadvantaged students across the school when compared to their peers (and those who join us at similar starting points), particularly in terms of:

- Academic attainment
- Progression to further and higher education
- Employability
- Social opportunities

At the heart of our approach is high-quality teaching focussed on areas where disadvantaged students require it most, targeted support based on robust diagnostic assessment of need, and helping students to access a broad and balanced curriculum.

Although our strategy is focused on the needs of disadvantaged students, it will benefit all students in our school where funding is spent on whole-school approaches, such as high-quality teaching. Implicit in the intended outcomes detailed below, is the intention that outcomes for non-disadvantaged students will be improved alongside progress for their disadvantaged peers.

We will also provide disadvantaged students with support to develop independent life and social skills and continue to ensure that high-quality work experience, careers guidance and further and higher education guidance is available to all.

Our strategy will continue to consider where additional support is required for pupils whose education and wellbeing were impacted by the long term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our strategy will be driven by the needs and strengths of each young person, based on observations, formal and informal

assessments, not assumptions or labels. This will help us to ensure that we offer them the relevant skills and experience they require to be prepared for adulthood.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Our assessments, observations and discussions with students show that disadvantaged students are generally more likely to have SEMH needs than non-disadvantaged students in our school – this presents in difficulties regulating themselves.
2	Internal and external assessments show that, historically, disadvantaged students generally make less progress from their starting points when entering the school. Whilst the types of barriers to learning and the difficulties disadvantaged students experience vary, their overall academic progress has tended to be lower in most subjects compared to non-disadvantaged students.
3	Our assessments, observations and discussions with students show that disadvantaged students generally have greater challenges around communicating and expressing their needs than their peers, including non-verbal, limited language and social interaction difficulties.
4	Through observations and conversations with students and their families, we find that disadvantaged students generally have fewer opportunities to develop cultural capital outside of school.
5	Our assessments, observations and discussions with pupils and families demonstrate that the education, wellbeing and wider aspects of development of many of our disadvantaged pupils have been impacted by the long term effects of the pandemic to a greater extent than for other pupils. Limited opportunities provided outside of school, and limited engagement from some disadvantaged families in supporting pupils at home and in wider life-experiences contributes to a lack of engagement in school

	learning. Whilst the benefits of technology are widely acknowledged for educational purposes, an over use of technology increasingly being used for leisure purposes is impacting on student presentation within school.
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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 abilities to manage their own SEMH needs, such as self-regulation strategies, calming, mindfulness, music therapy, music interventions	Observations & records indicate fewer serious incidents, EHCP reviews, student feedback, staff feedback, student progress as a result of increased engagement. Reduced suspensions or permanent exclusions
Improved attainment for disadvantaged students in all subjects, relative to their starting points as identified through baseline assessments.	Through achievement of improved performance, as demonstrated by our end of year assessments at the end of our strategy in 2027/28. An increase in the percentage of disadvantaged students progressing in all curriculum areas and where appropriate achieving formal exam qualifications.
Students can use a range of communication systems to aid their understanding and to develop expressive communication skills.	Through analysis of achievement of EHC plan termly outcomes, SALT reviews, students' level of engagement as a result of improved understanding and communication.
Families are better supported to access appropriate services, to enable the development of the whole child	Families able to access the family outreach team, & through them the wider services available

Activity in this academic year

This details how we intend to spend our pupil premium (and recovery premium) funding **this academic year** to address the challenges listed above.

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: **£84,962**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Development of PACE (Playful, Accepting, Curious, Empathetic) approach & team of practitioners	<p>Braveheart 'Attachment and Trauma in Educational Settings': https://www.bravehearteducation.co.uk/freeresources/</p> <p>Creating Loving Attachments: Parenting with PACE to Nurture Confidence and Security in the Troubled Child. K.S Golding and D.A. Hughes (2012). Jessica Kingsley Publishers. London.</p> <p>DDP Network - PACE summary: https://ddpnetwork.org/about-ddp/meant-pace/</p> <p>EP Insight - https://www.epinsight.com/post/the-p-in-pace-playfulness</p> <p>Purple House Clinic: https://www.purplehouseclinic.co.uk/relationships/finding-your-place</p> <p>See https://i2.wp.com/nibblesandbubbles.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/New-PACE-poster.jpg for a useful visual illustration of the PACE principles.</p>	1

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

Budgeted cost: **£42,481**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed

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Targeted reading interventions alongside quality first teaching	<p>Effective Professional Development EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p> <p>'The best available evidence indicates that great teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve pupil attainment. Ensuring every teacher is supported in delivering high-quality teaching is essential to achieving the best outcomes for all pupils, particularly the most disadvantaged among them.' EEF Sept 2022</p> <p>Ongoing professional development for our teachers and TAs is key to providing our students with the highest quality learning experiences. Teaching phonics and reading comprehension strategies continue to be the focus for targeted interventions.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/phonics</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies</p>	2
Daily reading for pleasure activities, or pre-reading as appropriate	<p>https://natlib.govt.nz/schools/reading-engagement/understanding-reading-engagement/reading-for-pleasure-a-door-to-success#:~:text=As%20well%20as%20academic%20benefits,enjoyment%20and%20stimulating%20the%20imagination</p> <p>Observations of our students indicate an effective way for them to develop a love of reading is to access reading / pre-reading activities through daily, targeted activities with trusted adults. Ensuring that staffing levels are consistent is key to enabling this approach to be effective, as the behaviour of adults is a key part of the approach.</p>	2
Focus on improving communication across our school	<p>For some of our students, Augmentative and Alternative Communication strategies are more appropriate and relevant.</p> <p>The Communication Trust worked with the Better Communication Research Programme to develop the What Works database of evidenced</p>	3, 4

	<p>interventions to support children's speech, language and communication.</p> <p>What works database (ican.org.uk)</p> <p>This is endorsed by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists.</p> <p>Our speech therapy team offer expert guidance the classroom-based staff with resources and strategies to support student progress.</p>	
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Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: **£42,481**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Programme working with parents and carers to develop effective home learning environments and increased self-expression – Family outreach team	<p>The NSPCC recommends parents and carers work with children to create routines that provide structure to their day, partake in activities together, and assist children in expressing their emotions:</p> <p>Supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities NSPCC</p>	4, 5
Review ways in which connection are built and information is shared	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/supporting-parents	4, 5

with parents		
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Total budgeted cost: £170,800

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged students

Education outcomes for primary students:

The differences in progress for students with pupil premium vs those without pupil premium are negligible. We have examined the differences for some students who historically did not make as much progress who were pupil premium; we have identified the main factor is improved engagement in lessons. This is due to PACE intervention and the PACE team support given in lessons, individualised training for classes and through PREPs.

Another significant factor is the family support we have provided for these families; this has helped us take a more holistic approach to the child and their education both at home and school.

The final factor is the ongoing effect of the lead practitioners and both the support they are providing for teachers and advice they are providing around individual students.

As a special school we only have students on roll who have a learning disability and who are working way behind their chronological age. For this reason our Key Stage 2 DfE data return is Nil, however there were some returns, albeit a small number, for the phonics assessment.

Every student's progress is recorded against their academic targets and EHCP outcomes are recorded throughout the academic year and analysed by the teachers and curriculum leaders. For students who have made good or excellent progress we ensure that the evidence is present to substantiate these results; where students are not meeting their targets then we agree an individual intervention plan dependent upon their needs. When we analyse this progress data we have already identified if the student is in receipt of pupil premium and this is recorded alongside their personal intervention plan/PLP. Each student's plan is then checked termly to ensure that the interventions are effective and to reassess the next steps.

We are still seeing significant levels of mental health issues, in particular anxiety, in our students.

Education outcomes for secondary students:

We have analysed the performance of our school's disadvantaged students during the 2024/25 academic year using key stage 4 performance data (Formal accreditation routes) and our own internal assessments.

As a special school we do not report on a progress 8 score for our students as they are working so far behind their chronological age. We base their individual progress based upon their start and end points.

Key stage 4 results and our internal assessments for KS3 suggest that the difference in rates of progress between pupil premium students and non-pupil

premium students was negligible; in some areas, pupil premium students outperformed their non-pupil premium peers. This represents real progress from 12 months ago.

Wider outcomes, for primary and secondary students:

Our assessments and observations during 2024/25 suggested that wider development outcomes for our disadvantaged students varied.

Attendance 2024 - 25

PP eligible 88.7%

Non-PP eligible 88.5%

We have identified that, for our disadvantaged students particularly, having a trusted member of staff available is crucial to their engagement with learning, & consequently their progress.

Since the introduction and consolidation of PACE approaches, we have identified that there is a downward trend in the numbers of serious incidents of student dysregulation, and that the incidents that do take place are lower in intensity. This has also had an effect on staff absence trends, which are decreasing. This in turn supports our students, as their trusted staff members are in school more consistently.

We have analysed the educational performance of our school's disadvantaged pupils during the previous academic year, drawing on our own internal summative and formative assessments. The data demonstrated that our pupil premium students are beginning to achieve in line with their peers. We have also analysed our disadvantaged pupils' wider development outcomes, drawing on our own assessments and observations. The data demonstrates that this is also improving for our disadvantaged students. Based on all the information above, the performance of our disadvantaged pupils met our expectations, and we are at present on course to achieve the outcomes we set out to achieve by 2026/27, as stated in the Intended Outcomes section above. Our evaluation of the approaches delivered last academic year indicates that PACE approaches continue to be the most effective support structure for our disadvantaged students. We have reviewed our strategy plan and made changes to how we intend to use some of our budget this academic year. The Further Information section below provides more details about our planning, implementation, and evaluation processes.

Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year

No Students eligible

The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible students

Further information (optional)

Additional activity

Our pupil premium strategy will be supplemented by additional activity that we are not funding using pupil premium or recovery premium. That will include:

- Working in partnership with local colleges to provide opportunities such as taster courses, link programmes and mentoring to enable young people with SEND to familiarise themselves with the college environment and gain some experience of college life and study.
- Arranging work-based learning that enables students to have first-hand experience of work, such as apprenticeships, traineeships, and supported internships.

Planning, implementation and evaluation

In planning our new pupil premium strategy, we evaluated why activity undertaken in previous years had not had the degree of impact that we had expected. We reviewed the online records of local special schools and those from further afield with strong outcomes for disadvantaged pupils to see what we could learn from their approach. We looked at several reports, studies, and research papers about effective use of pupil premium and the intersection between socio-economic disadvantage and SEND. In addition to the pupil premium funded activity outlined above, we have put in place stronger expectations around areas of effective practice, notably feedback given the impact of this identified by the EEF Toolkit. We have also put a sharp focus on supporting teachers to develop their professional practice and train in specialist areas, allowing them to develop expertise and share them with other staff. We have used the EEF's implementation guidance to set out our plans and put in place a robust evaluation framework for the duration of our three-year approach. This will help us to make adjustments and quality improvements to secure better outcomes for pupils over time.