

Pupil premium strategy statement – Brandles 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.

School overview

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school	71
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	70%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3-year plans are recommended)	2025-26 2026-27 2027-28
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date of review	June 2026
Statement authorised by	Paul Smith, Headteacher
Pupil Premium lead	Paul Smith
Trustee lead	Dan Login, Chair of Trustees

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£58,895
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£nil
Pupil premium (and recovery premium) funding carried forward from previous years	£nil
Total budget for this academic year	£58,895

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 able to go into society equipped with the pro-social skills and life skill needed. Students will leave onto a defined pathway of further education and employment and with a fulfilled experience of cultural capital. Students will make good progress academically and achieve high attainment across the curriculum. The focus of our pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve that goal.

The aim of our Pupil Premium strategy is to:

1. Improve levels of literacy in pupil premium students, including reading spelling and handwriting.
2. Increase opportunities for pupil premium students to experience the wider community and improve cultural capital
3. Develop a personal and individualised approach for disadvantaged students to support their progress, attendance, and wellbeing.

We will consider the challenges faced by vulnerable pupils, such as those who have a social worker and young carers.

High-quality teaching is at the heart of our approach, with a focus on areas in which disadvantaged pupils require the most support. This is proven to have the greatest impact on closing the disadvantage attainment gap and at the same time will benefit the non-disadvantaged pupils in our school. Implicit in the intended outcomes detailed below, is the intention that non-disadvantaged pupils' attainment will be sustained and improved alongside progress for their disadvantaged peers.

As can be seen with the challenges below, the needs of our pupils are ever changing. It is essential that our practice and approach is fluid and changes for the individual. Some of our pupils may need support with being prepared for school (uniform, equipment, revision). Others may need additional education or mental health intervention, or staff support in lessons, fidget toys etc. An individualised approach should ensure that all pupils' needs are met, and any intervention is personalised to them.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
	In-school barriers
1	Mental health and wellbeing: Our cohort has a number of complex Social & Emotional needs. These are often issues surrounding mental Health and well-being that contribute significantly to underachievement
2	Prior attainment: Almost all students enter Brandles School with below age-related expectations; therefore, the challenge is to enable students to achieve their expected levels of progress. Whilst data suggests this is difficult, nevertheless we will put in place several strategies to 'bridge the gap' and work with students so that ELP are achieved.
3	Aspirations and motivation: For many of our disadvantaged students, there are issues surrounding long term aspirations derived from gaps in parenting skills/guidance.
4	Literacy and numeracy: Literacy and numeracy levels are in many cases well below age related expectations on arrival at Brandles.
External barriers	
5	Attendance rates for students eligible for PP are SLIGHTLY below the school target for all students. This reduces their school hours and contributes significantly to underachievement. As detailed below, parents often don't value education, and it can be difficult to engage with them to support us.
6	Parental disengagement with the school; not all parents/carers attend parents' evenings and other key events. Poor support and attitude towards education, conflicting values and priorities to the school and low parental aspirations for the achievement of their child.
7	Economic hardship , including lack of employment, low incomes, crowded homes which are not conducive to learning, lack of food, clothing and provisions
8	Gaps in parenting skills , lack of boundaries at home, lack of educational conversation, parents not spending time with their children, or actively educating their children, parents not fostering learning behaviours
9	Parents are overwhelmed by the difficulties their children face, lack of support from outside agencies for their children's syndromes and diagnoses, lack of wider family support . Conflict between time needed to support the school and the need to work and earn money
10	Children whose education has been disrupted by being absent from education prior to coming to Brandles, or in educational environments that have been unsuitable (e.g., mainstream). Children who have attended several different schools before Brandles with negative experiences of education and their own abilities and self-worth
11	Mental health issues of individuals and families , such that it impacts the well-being of the child both at home and school.

12	Lack of cultural capital such as a lack of opportunities to experience new things, for example theatre, cinema, sports, or music events. Lack of access to reading or a culture of being able to be quiet and read at home. A lack of engagement or interest when offered opportunities to develop cultural capital.
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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
Improve levels of literacy in pupil premium students, including reading, spelling, and handwriting.	This should be highlighted in assessment data and increased focus on phonics delivery. An increased number of disadvantaged pupils should be working at age related expectations. We should see improved reading ages compares to chronological ages.
Increase opportunities for pupil premium students to experience the wider community and improve cultural capital.	More opportunities to work with the community, visit museums, libraries and other cultural experiences. Increased uptake in such opportunities.
Disadvantaged pupils will have a personal and individualised approach to support their progress, attendance and wellbeing.	Through attendance of wider activities, observation, discussions, and demonstration of social independence skills. Further development of The Hive to include KS4 provision.

Activity in the academic year 2025-26

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

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: **£23,200** (Pupil Premium funds a proportion of this)

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Appointing staff (£20,000)	Appointment of a part time music teacher to provide small group mentoring and expand pupils' opportunities in Music Technology.	1,2,3, 12
Increase the curriculum offer	Introduce the NCFE Music Technology Course.	1,3,5
Purchase of standardised diagnostic assessments. Training will be provided for staff to ensure assessments are interpreted correctly. NGRT £8.50 per pupil twice yearly. (£1,200)	Standardised tests such as Cat4 and NGRT are providing reliable insights into the specific strengths and weaknesses of each pupil to help ensure they receive the correct additional support through interventions or teacher instruction: Standardised Tests Assessing and Monitoring Pupil Progress Education Endowment Foundation EEF	2,4
Continued Staff Training-responding to the needs arising (CPD) (£2,000)	NCETM Maths Secondary Mastery course put into place for Maths Teacher. ET Foundation has been used to facilitate QTS for a Science Teacher. Impact to be monitored via the appraisal process.	1,2,3,4,11,12

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

Budgeted cost: **£75,000** (Pupil Premium funds a proportion of this)

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Continue to fund one dedicated assistant to literacy invention. Boys requiring support with	NGRT testing is conducted in the first two weeks of the Autumn and Spring Terms. Data from these tests is used to determine what additional 1-1 provision is required	4,3

<p>literacy are identified and interventions put in place. Progress is monitored and outcomes measured. (£30,000)</p>	<p>and to provide personalised strategies for classroom teachers to use in lessons. A report detailing individual progress over the academic year is generated at the start of the Spring Term and further informs what additional literacy support may be required for the remainder of the year. Data from individual tests is used to inform the focus of 1-1 interventions. The English Lead and Literacy Intervention team review 1-1 support half-termly to decide whether adjustments to provision are required.</p>	
<p>Further development of the Hive to include a specific area for KS4 intervention and support. (£15,000)</p>	<p>Studies in England have shown that pupils eligible for free school meals typically receive additional benefits from one-to-one tuition. Low attaining pupils are particularly likely to benefit.” (Education Endowment Foundation, 2021). One to one tuition allows for 1,3 6 greater communications, relationship building and will address gaps in knowledge for individual pupils.</p>	1,2,3,4
<p>Appointment of an additional Hive support staff member to assist students in regulating and understanding emotions when in crisis. (£30,000)</p>	<p>From the EEF: <i>There is evidence that teaching awareness of emotions and feelings can improve young children’s emotional understanding and related skills such as positive emotional expression and regulation. Multiple randomised controlled trials (RCTs) and impact studies show the efficacy of interventions that teach pupils to label emotions with specific words, recognise facial expressions and link events with their emotional consequences (Izard et al., 2004; Izard et al., 2008; LaForge et al., 2008; Deitcher et al., 2020; Ogren and Sandhofer, 2022).</i></p>	1,5, 8,10, 11

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

Budgeted cost: **£4,000**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Breakfast and snacks available for all pupils. (£500)</p>	<p>Our own research has seen an improvement when breakfast has been provided to pupils. We also know that some</p>	7,8,9,11

	pupils are not provided with a breakfast from home (Evidence from Family Engagement Worker Visits)	
To continue to provide a wide range of therapeutic strategies to support students with mental health or wellbeing concerns. Provide HLTA training to two more LASAs (New appointments) (£1,000)	Sutton Report concludes this is a high impact, low-cost strategy.	1,2,3,4,11
Continue to fund uniform where needed (£500)		7,3
Contingency fund for acute issues (£2,000)	Based on our experiences and those of similar schools to ours, we have identified a need to set a small amount of funding aside to respond quickly to needs that have not yet been identified.	All

Total budgeted cost: £102,200

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Over the past academic year, attendance for disadvantaged pupils has improved significantly compared to previous years. This improvement reflects the success of targeted interventions, including family engagement strategies and the development of bespoke support plans to address barriers to attendance.

Pupils have also benefited from an increased range of opportunities to experience cultural capital and participate in extra-curricular activities. These include visits to museums, libraries, and theatres, as well as outdoor education experiences such as kayaking and paddle boarding. Such activities have helped pupils to broaden their horizons, develop confidence, and build resilience. Additionally, lunchtime clubs and enrichment programmes have provided further opportunities for pupils to explore new interests and develop social skills beyond the classroom.

Specific interventions that have contributed to these outcomes include:

- **The Hive Development:** Expanded provision for KS4 pupils, offering a safe space for one-to-one support and emotional regulation. This has been instrumental in improving engagement and reducing crisis incidents.
- **Targeted Literacy Support:** A dedicated teaching assistant focused on literacy interventions, supported by NGRT assessments to monitor progress and tailor strategies. This has led to measurable improvements in reading ages and overall literacy levels.
- **Curriculum Enrichment:** Introduction of the NCFE Music Technology course and appointment of a specialist mentor to deliver small group sessions, boosting motivation and aspirations among pupils.
- **Therapeutic Strategies:** Provision of HLTA training for LASAs and additional Hive staff to support pupils with mental health and wellbeing needs, ensuring timely intervention during emotional crises.
- **Basic Needs Support:** Initiatives such as providing breakfast, snacks, and uniform assistance have helped alleviate economic hardship and improve readiness for learning.

The combination of improved attendance, enhanced cultural experiences, and strong external validation demonstrates that our approach is having a measurable and positive impact on the life chances of disadvantaged pupils.

Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider
Get Work Ready	ELSA
Work Experience	Herts SfYP

Further information

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 pupils to have first-hand experience of work, such as apprenticeships, traineeships, and supported internships.
- Major revamp of curriculum facilities in construction, creating a vocational centre on-site to prepare students for college.

Planning, implementation, and evaluation

In planning our new pupil premium strategy, we evaluated where spending had made positive impact and aimed to sustain those areas. (For example expansion of the HIVE)

We contacted special schools with strong outcomes for disadvantaged pupils to see what we could learn from their approach.

We took guidance from our Hertfordshire Improvement partner and responded to targets that had been set.

In addition to the pupil premium funded activity outlined above, we will continue to support stronger expectations around areas of effective practice, notably feedback given the impact of this identified by the EEF Toolkit. We continue to have 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.