

# Pupil premium strategy statement – Eckington 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	1138
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	33.6% (345/1026 eligible Y7-11)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers ( <b>3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year</b> )	2025-2026 2026-2027 2027-2028
Date this statement was published	October 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2026
Statement authorised by	R. Cronin Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	C. Horsfield Assistant Headteacher
Governor / Trustee lead	J. Wormleighton

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£346,425
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£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>	£346,425

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

When creating the Eckington Pupil Premium Strategy, we recognise the importance of considering the context of the school and the subsequent challenges that these pupils face. We have used research-based evidence by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and recognised literature (such as 'Addressing Educational Disadvantage by Marc Rowland) to support decisions made around the usefulness and implementation of different strategies.

Common barriers to learning for disadvantaged students can include weak language and communication skills, lack of confidence, attendance and punctuality issues and more frequent behaviour issues. There may be complex situations that prevent children from flourishing. We recognise that the challenges are varied and there is no 'one size fits all'.

As recognised by the EEF we acknowledge that good teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve outcomes for disadvantaged students, and we intend to focus heavily on developing the quality of teaching through focused CPD of teachers and strong recruitment processes. We will adopt the tiered approach set out by the EEF and improve whole school teaching and learning to ensure the greatest impact on our PP cohort.

The key principles of our strategy:

- Promote an ethos of *Ambition for All*
- Quality First Teaching, not bolt-on strategies
- Individualised approach to cater for needs
- Decisions based on data and response to evidence
- Early intervention - Targeting both KS3 and KS4
- Strategic staffing to work with disadvantaged students
- Clear, responsive leadership – setting high aspirations and responsibility for raising attainment to all staff.

The EEF strategy is clear that in order to make the biggest difference, it is essential that focusing on fewer strategies will be more effective and have a greater impact than attempting too many.

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	The <b>progress</b> of the Pupil Premium student cohort is lower than that of the non-Pupil Premium student cohort.
2	Historically lower <b>attendance</b> of the Pupil Premium student cohort than that of the non-Pupil Premium student cohort.
3	Proportionally higher incidents of negative <b>behaviour</b> in the Pupil Premium student cohort than the non-Pupil Premium student cohort.
4	A lower <b>reading age</b> in the Pupil Premium student cohort than the non-Pupil Premium student cohort.
5	Increased consistency of <b>Quality First Teaching</b> in all classrooms.
6	Encourage wider participation in <b>wider-curricular opportunities</b> to gain cultural capital in our Pupil Premium student cohort.

## 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><b>School Improvement Priority 1: Improve Teaching &amp; Learning</b> Quality First Teaching in all classrooms, considering the principles of effective classroom practice.</p>	Following a programme of CPD activities in school developing Quality First Teaching, our Quality Assurance processes identify that all students experience lessons that support progress. Good practice is championed and shared.
<p><b>School Improvement Priority 1: Improve Teaching &amp; Learning</b> The progress of the Pupil Premium student cohort improves in all year groups.</p>	<p>The proportion of the Pupil Premium student cohort identified as working at or beyond expected progress in Key Stage 3 is equal to or greater than the non-Pupil Premium student cohort.</p> <p>In Key Stage 4, the proportion of the Pupil Premium student cohort achieving equal to or greater than the FFT50 estimate is equal to or greater than the non-Pupil Premium student cohort.</p>

Intended outcome	Success criteria
<p><b>School Improvement Priority 2: Improve the Quality of Education &amp; Curriculum</b></p> <p>The number of Pupil Premium students accessing enrichment opportunities and educational visits is proportional or greater than that of non-Pupil Premium students.</p>	<p>A tracking system is in place monitor the attendance of the Pupil Premium student cohort. This is used to prioritise and encourage wider Pupil Premium engagement. Each year of the strategy sees an increase in the participation of the Pupil Premium student cohort in proportion to the non-the Pupil Premium student cohort.</p>
<p><b>School Improvement Priority 3: Improve Whole School Attendance</b></p> <p>The attendance gap between the Pupil Premium student cohort and non-Pupil Premium student cohort is reduced. At the end of the three-year plan, the attendance of the Pupil Premium student cohort is in line with the national average.</p>	<p>Following the implementation of a new Chorus Education Trust attendance strategy, the attendance of the Pupil Premium student cohort improves and is equal to or greater than the national average.</p>
<p><b>School Improvement Priority 1: Improve Teaching &amp; Learning / School Improvement Priority 3: Improve Whole School Attendance</b></p> <p>There is a greater awareness of the Pupil Premium student cohort by all form tutors and teachers leading to an increased focus on an individualised approach to students' needs.</p>	<p>Clear lines of communication in school regarding the Pupil Premium student cohort.</p> <p>Prioritised contact home by Form Tutors for the Pupil Premium student cohort leading to engagement of Pupil Premium parents at school events such as Parents' Consultation Evenings that is proportionally equal to our greater than that of non-Pupil Premium parents.</p> <p>Pupil Premium students are clearly identified on seating plans and targeted questioning is directed towards these pupils.</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: £173,125

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Restructure of Senior Leadership Team in September 2025.</p> <p>Identification of a senior leader to oversee Pupil Premium Strategy.</p> <p>Identification of a senior leader to advance Quality First Teaching (and wave one universal teaching in collaboration with SEND senior leader)</p>	<p>Restructure of Senior Leadership Team to re-focus roles in line with School Priorities.</p> <p>Successful schools “have clear, responsive leadership.” DFE <i>Supporting the Attainment of disadvantaged pupils: articulating success and good practice</i>.</p> <p>EEF <i>Implementation Guide</i> states that ‘school leaders play a central role in improving education practices through high-quality implementation’ by ‘defining both a vision for, and standards of, desirable implementation’.</p>	1, 5, 6
<p>Strengthen Quality First Teaching through a programme of focused CPD for teachers, and regular CPD for support staff as appropriate.</p> <p>The programme is delivered through school and Trust INSET days and twilight CPD and online through the National College.</p>	<p>EEF <i>Using Pupil Premium Guidance</i> states that quality first teaching is one of the key elements in students making progress. The <i>Effective Professional Development Guidance Report</i> states, “High quality teaching improves pupil outcomes, and effective professional development offers a crucial tool to develop teaching quality and enhance children’s outcomes in the classroom.”</p> <p>Eckington School has an inclusive and aspirational curriculum offer that enables all our students to be challenged and to succeed. To maintain this breadth of offer, a significant contribution from the pupil premium funding is used. Ongoing evaluation informs planning and priorities</p>	1, 5
<p>Embed Thinking Reading and ‘Thinking School’ strategies.</p>	<p>Whole School Literacy Strategy implemented in September 2024 and updated in Autumn 2025, leading to a vacancy for a whole-school literacy coordinator.</p> <p>Supported by EEF Research: “Studies in England have shown that pupils eligible for free school meals may receive additional benefits from being taught how to use reading comprehension strategies. ... [W]e know that on average, disadvantaged children are less likely to own a book of their own and read at home with family members, and for these reasons may not acquire the necessary skills for reading and understanding challenging texts.”</p>	1, 4, 5

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Sparx Reader and Maths are used to build confidence through regular, personalised practice.	The individualised nature of Sparx Reader and Sparx Maths is supported by the EEF and overcomes the burden for teachers in organising individual activities: "Individualised instruction can be an effective approach to increasing pupil attainment. It can, however, be a challenging approach to implement given the increased requirements on the teacher to organise and monitor individual activities."	1, 4

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

Budgeted cost: £86,606

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Targeted Literacy and Numeracy interventions. Students in Y7-Y10 complete an annual NGRT and NGST (reading and spelling tests) to identify need.	Students with a significantly lower chronological reading age receive 1:1 Thinking Reading intervention. The EEF <i>Teaching and Learning Toolkit</i> supports this: "On average, one to one tuition is very effective at improving pupil outcomes. One to one tuition might be an effective strategy for providing targeted support for pupils that are identified as having low prior attainment or are struggling in particular areas."	1, 4
Targeted Registration Intervention. Small group teaching using the <i>Diagnosis, Therapy, Testing</i> model, delivered by English, maths and science faculty leaders.	EEF Toolkit – Tuition targeted at specific needs and knowledge gaps can be an effective method to support low attaining pupils or those falling behind. The EEF found that when delivered in small groups, this can result in +4 months of extra progress,	1
Targeted 'Period 6' intervention, revision and exam-booster sessions. Bus fare provided for any Pupil Premium student who has transport difficulties.	EEF Toolkit – Tuition targeted at specific needs and knowledge gaps can be an effective method to support low attaining pupils or those falling behind. The EEF found that when delivered in small groups, this can result in +4 months of extra progress,	1, 7

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
SEN-focused Teaching Assistants	Teaching assistants to support the learning needs of SEN pupils. TAs provide support for individual pupils with SEN or small groups of SEN pupils, as well as in class support. EEF evidence suggests that working with TAs can lead to improvements in pupils' attitudes, and to positive effects in terms of teacher morale and reduced stress. Whilst in-class support provides less of an impact on the progress of pupils (1 month of progress), research which focuses on teaching assistants who provide one to one or small group support shows a stronger positive benefit of between 3-5 additional months of progress a year	1, 4
Removing financial barriers surrounding equipment and resources (including uniform, revision guides, calculators, ingredients, etc)	EEF Using Pupil Premium Guidance states removing of barriers to learning is a key element in making progress. The research undertaken by 'A New Direction' illustrated the importance of cultural and arts opportunities to support the wider learning of pupil premium students.	1, 2

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

Budgeted cost: £86,606

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Implement and embed a new Trust-wide attendance strategy, co-constructed by senior leads in all secondary schools.</p> <p>Including attendance mentoring with a focus on Pupil Premium cohort.</p>	<p>A team of Attendance Officers are employed. Attendance Officer closely monitor all PP students' attendance, build relationships with families and implement strategies where needed.</p> <p>DFE 2016 – found that the higher the overall absence rate across KS4 the lower the likely level of attainment at the end of KS4: “Overall absence had a statistically negative link to attainment.” This is supported by our own internal data when attendance is tracked alongside outcomes.</p> <p>The EEF’s <i>Summary of Evidence – Supporting Attendance</i> found that, “interventions that combine tracking/monitoring attendance, parental communication &amp; engagement, and responsive strategies tailored to individual pupils have promise.”</p>	2
<p>Pastoral Support Assistants.</p>	<p>A team of non-teaching specialist staff who oversee behaviour and attendance in each year group. Addressing behaviour and attendance is a key NFER building block. Success with disadvantaged pupils requires effective behaviour strategies: communicating simple, clear rules and training all staff in behaviour management.</p>	2, 3,
<p>Enhanced Early Help Offer to support vulnerable students.</p>	<p>A newly appointed Family Resource Worker and a SEMH Support worker.</p> <p>Early help, also known as early intervention, is support given to a family when a problem first emerges. Parental engagement was found by the EEF to be of high impact. The EEF <i>Parental Engagement Toolkit</i> found that, “Parental engagement has been found to deliver ~ +4 months’ progress, especially when schools involve parents in supporting learning, tailoring communications, etc.” The UK Government found that early intervention can eliminate or reduce costly and damaging social problems.</p>	2, 3
<p>Safeguarding Manager to support vulnerable students.</p>	<p>The Safeguarding Officer works with individual children and their families and provides support to the pupils who might be having difficulties regarding child protection, social and learning skills, as well providing support to the whole family including signposting to other services.</p> <p>Parental engagement was found by the EEF to be of high impact. The UK Government found that early intervention can eliminate or reduce costly and damaging social problems.</p>	2, 3

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Alternative Provision	<p>Specialist Off-site provision for our most vulnerable students. KRS education and Real Education.</p> <p>We use the DfE's <i>Arranging Alternative Provision: A Guide for Local Authorities and Schools</i> to ensure our AP is fit for purpose.</p>	2, 3
Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance and Work Experience.	<p>The Employer Engagement Manager provides information, advice and guidance to students and co-ordinates work experience. We hold the Quality in Careers Standard and Platinum Career Mark.</p> <p>The DfE's <i>Independent review of careers guidance in schools and further education and skills providers</i> found that a wide range of socio-economic factors results in disadvantaged pupils being 5 times less likely to enter university than their more advantaged peers. The DfE also recommended that schools employ specialist, knowledgeable staff with specific responsibility for university access, building relationships and visits with universities.</p>	1, 6
Transition	<p>Appointment of a Y6/Y7 Key Phase Leader, with a focus on weekly primary visits, promoting good attendance and developing strong relationships with parents (especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds).</p> <p>'Head start program' - Vulnerable &amp; Disadvantaged students have an extended transition into Secondary school, to ensure success in Yr7.</p> <p>The EEF promotes the importance of supported transition plans to avoid a dip in attainment: "By anticipating the risk points around times of transition, schools, parents and young people can work together to deliberately build support around significant moves. Additionally, good communication across schools can help foster curriculum continuity, intelligent use of diagnostic assessment, along with specific planning to address pastoral needs and academic support."</p>	1, 2, 3,4, 6

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>100% funding for all educational day trips and visits and enhanced subsidy for residential trips to be offered to Pupil Premium students to ensure that no student is excluded from any opportunity because of financial restraints.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All single-day visits will be fully funded.</li> </ul> <p>All residential visits will receive a 20% contribution.</p>	<p>The research undertaken by 'A New Direction' illustrated the importance of cultural and arts opportunities to support the wider learning of pupil premium students. Schools can have a role in enhancing cultural capital to remove barriers to accessing and understanding the wider curriculum.</p>	<p>1, 2, 6</p>

**Total budgeted cost: £346,425**

## **Part B: Review of the previous academic year**

### **Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils**

The 2024–2025 GCSE outcomes at our school continue to reflect a persistent attainment gap between Pupil Premium (PP) and non-Pupil Premium students. Our PP cohort achieved an average Attainment 8 score of 34.84, compared to 42.45 for their non-PP peers. This 7.61-point gap is consistent with national trends, where disadvantaged pupils remain significantly behind their peers. According to the Department for Education's latest Key Stage 4 performance data, the national Attainment 8 score for disadvantaged pupils was 37.2, compared to 48.3 for non-disadvantaged pupils. A positive point to consider is that our 2024-2025 Year 11 cohort was 88% white British and our white British Pupil Premium cohort achieved an average Attainment 8 of 33.32; this is above the national average for white British Pupil Premium students of 30.3 (2023-2024).

Despite targeted interventions, the gap has proven difficult to close. In response, we have undertaken a comprehensive review of our Pupil Premium Strategy. This document marks the first year of a new three-year plan, aligned more closely with our Whole School Improvement Priorities. By embedding PP strategies within our broader school development framework, we anticipate measurable improvement in outcomes for the current Year 11 cohort, with a more sustained impact on future year groups.

Attendance remains a critical area of concern. Our internal data for 2024–2025 shows a gap in attendance between PP and non-PP students, mirroring national patterns. Our PP cohort had an average attendance of 86.28% compared to that of 93.18% for non-PP students. Nationally, disadvantaged pupils have significantly higher rates of absence, which the Education Policy Institute identifies as a key driver of the attainment gap. Addressing attendance is therefore central to our revised strategy, which now integrates attendance improvement measures within our whole-school approach.

Enrichment and cultural capital development have been a major focus of our PP strategy. Last year, 392 students participated in lunchtime or after-school enrichment activities, of which 92 were PP students—representing 28.4% of the PP cohort. This is a significant achievement given the logistical barriers to participation, including reliance on school transport and 40-minute lunch break. These activities have provided PP students with access to experiences and skill development opportunities that they may not otherwise encounter, contributing to their personal growth and engagement.

We remain committed to ensuring equity of opportunity and outcomes for all learners. Our revised strategy is informed by national evidence, including the Education Endowment Foundation's guidance on effective use of Pupil Premium funding, and is designed to deliver high-impact, sustainable change.

## 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

## Service pupil premium funding (optional)

<i>For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information: <b>How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year</b></i>
<b>The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils</b>

## 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.*