

Pupil premium strategy statement Princes Risborough 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	1092 (whole school) 922 (excluding 6 th form)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	19.3%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year)	2024-2025, 2025-2026, 2026-2027
Date this statement was published	18.12.2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	18.12.2026
Statement authorised by	Mr V Forshaw
Pupil premium lead	Mrs A Tuffin
Governor / Trustee lead	Mr K Hewitt

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£187,050
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£
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>	£187,050

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At Princes Risborough School, we recognise that education has the power to improve students' life chances, choices and opportunities. The aim of our Pupil Premium Strategy is to ensure that all students, irrespective of their background, leave Princes Risborough School with **excellent academic outcomes** and go on to be:

- Positive in their future choices and ambitions
- Responsible and active citizens in their communities
- Successful in the world beyond the school gates

Our current strategy is working towards achieving this goal through a relentless focus on high-quality teaching and learning, a culture of high expectations and the development of a broad and ambitious curriculum. In addition to the curriculum on offer in school, we are committed to providing our students with inspirational opportunities beyond the classroom to enrich their educational experience and develop their cultural capital.

It is our aim to recruit, retain and train teachers who are subject experts and have a deep understanding of how to support the needs of all learners.

Our approach will be responsive to the individual challenges and needs of our pupils. It is our intention to provide timely academic and pastoral interventions that supplement our curriculum offer. Our ambition is to ensure that our disadvantaged students 'aspire & achieve' and reach, or exceed, their academic potential and thrive in every element of their school life.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Assessments and observations indicate that our disadvantaged pupils generally have lower levels of reading comprehension than that of their peers. This affects their confidence, knowledge and progress across a range of subjects. NGRT assessments on entry to year 7 indicate that 23% of our disadvantaged pupils join us with below age-related reading expectations compared to 16% of their peers. This gap tends to widen as they progress through school. Current Year 8 43% below compared with 18% (non-disadvantaged). Current Year 9 38% below compared with 15% (non-disadvantaged). (Autumn 2024 data)
2	Our attendance data over the last 2 years indicates that the attendance among disadvantaged pupils has been on average 7.62% lower than for non-disadvantaged pupils. During the period of 2022 – 2024, 66.06% of disadvantaged pupils were 'persistently absent' (below 90% attendance) compared 44.85% of non-disadvantaged students. Our data also recognises a growing pattern of students who have difficulty attending school due to emotional factors. (EBSNA)
3	Our assessments, observations and discussions with staff, pupils and families have identified that our disadvantaged pupils do not always have the sufficient background knowledge and cultural capital to make connections with learning.

	Consequently, students do not always have the prior learning, vocabulary and building blocks necessary to make the same progress as their peers.
4	Our observations suggest that many of our disadvantaged pupils lack metacognitive / self-regulation strategies when faced with challenging tasks, notably in their monitoring and evaluation of their answers and their confidence and resilience when responding to teacher feedback and questioning.
5	Despite an upward trajectory in the progress of disadvantaged students (excluding 2023-2024), the attainment and Progress 8 score of disadvantaged students remain below those of their peers, with a persistent gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students.

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>1.Reduce the reading gap between disadvantaged students and their peers, ensuring all students are equipped with the necessary skills and confidence to access the full curriculum. Our aim is for all students to be reading at their chronological age or above.</p>	<p>Improvement in Reading Assessment Results: By the end of 2026, the percentage of disadvantaged students performing below age-related expectations in reading (as measured by NGRT assessments or equivalent) will decrease significantly. Year 7(2024-5) students show a reduction in the gap from 23% below to 10% or less. Year 8 gap reduces from 43% below to 30% below. Year 9 gap reduces from 38% below to 25% below. By the end of this 3-year strategy, disadvantaged students show a narrowing of the reading age gap relative to their peers, with a focus on reaching or exceeding year-level expectations for reading. By the end of this three year strategy, reading comprehension strategies will be consistently explicitly taught across all subjects.</p>
<p>2.Our intended outcome is to reduce the attendance gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils, with a particular focus on reducing the number of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent or exhibit Emotional Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA).</p>	<p>By the end of this academic year, decrease the attendance gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils from 7.62% to below 5%. By the end of this 3 year strategy, bring disadvantaged students' attendance in line with or above the national average for disadvantaged pupils. By the end of this academic year, reduce the percentage of disadvantaged pupils classified as persistently absent (below 90% attendance) to below 50%. By the end of this 3 year strategy, bring the persistent absenteeism in line with the national average for disadvantaged pupils or better.</p>

	Student voice and data tracking implemented to check whether the improvements in attendance rates, reduction in persistent absence and EBSNA cases are maintained.
3. Disadvantaged pupils will develop broader knowledge , a richer vocabulary and foundational skills to engage more effectively with the curriculum. This will enable them to make progress on progress comparable to their peers and increase their confidence and engagement in learning.	Observations, feedback and data would show students engage more confidently in the curriculum, actively participate in lessons and close the gap in progress compared to their peers.
4. Students will be equipped with metacognitive and self-regulation strategies, helping them to effectively monitor, evaluate and adjust their learning when faced with challenges. This will enhance their confidence, resilience, and ability to respond constructively to teacher feedback, ultimately improving their academic performance and independence.	Observations show that pupils demonstrate better resilience and persistence in the face of academic challenges. Disadvantaged pupils show more confidence in participating in class discussions, responding to questioning, and tackling difficult problems.
<p>5. Close the Attainment Gap: Disadvantaged students will achieve higher attainment levels, with their results matching or exceeding the national average for disadvantaged students.</p> <p>Improve Progress 8 Scores (2026-7): The Progress 8 scores for disadvantaged students will improve, ensuring that their progress is closer to level with their peers.</p> <p>Sustained Academic Growth: Disadvantaged pupils will continue to make steady academic progress, with a focus on closing the gap in key subjects, particularly those that have historically shown the greatest disparity.</p> <p>Increased Confidence and Aspirations: Disadvantaged pupils will develop greater confidence in their academic abilities and aspirations, resulting in higher engagement and investment in their learning.</p>	<p>Attainment: Increase the percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving key benchmarks (GCSE grades, Level 4+ or 5+)</p> <p>Monitor Progress 8 data for disadvantaged pupils, with the aim to reduce the gap to within 0.1-0.2 points between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils by the end of the strategy.</p> <p>Reduce the gap in key subject areas where disadvantaged pupils have historically underperformed (science, business studies, product design). Where appropriate, more students setting higher academic and career goals, evidenced by progression to A Level or equivalent study and later on to university or further education.</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: £ 110,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
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<p>Development of a broad and ambitious curriculum. Weekly co-planning and teaching & learning briefings to support staff training and CPD. Protected time allocated for senior and middle leaders. Directed time for collaborative planning and curriculum discussion and development.</p>	<p>Bromley: Curriculum impact: The right end-points? (part 1/2), September 2020a: https://bit.ly/351YRBo Bromley: Curriculum design, SecEd Best Practice Focus, January 2020b: http://bit.ly/36RliHs Bromley: Curriculum implementation: Part 1, SecEd, May 2020c: https://bit.ly/3hBRCDE Bromley: Curriculum implementation: Part 2, SecEd, May 2020d: https://bit.ly/35Waiqj Ofsted: Education Inspection Framework, May 2019: http://bit.ly/2M3ttuj Mary Myatt and John Tomsett: Huh: Curriculum Conversations between subject and senior leaders EEF</p>	All
<p>CPD – Inquiry Questions A sharper focus on evidence-informed Teaching & Learning Time to research, plan, resource and implement independent evidence-informed research in the classroom. (Whole school CPD, protected time with SLT, ML, teachers)</p>	<p>Teacher Development Trust. (2020). <i>Putting Staff First: A Blueprint for Developing Our School.</i> when schools invest in teacher development and give educators the tools and time to engage in inquiry and action research, teachers are better able to understand and address the needs of disadvantaged learners. Huntington Research School. (2019). <i>Evidence Informed Practice and Teacher Inquiry.</i> Education Endowment Foundation (2017). <i>Improving Teaching: What Works and Why.</i> According to the EEF, teacher inquiry provides a powerful method for addressing the specific needs of disadvantaged learners. By systematically testing different approaches and reflecting on their impact, teachers can find more effective ways to support these students, closing the achievement gap. The EEF has also stressed the importance of ongoing professional development, including inquiry, for enhancing teacher effectiveness. Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2012). <i>Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School.</i> Hargreaves argues that teacher inquiry, particularly when embedded in a culture of collaboration and shared learning, can have a significant impact on improving outcomes for disadvantaged students. Teachers working together on inquiry projects can develop new strategies to address equity challenges and ensure that all students receive the support they need.</p>	All
<p>Development of effective assessment and feedback strategies. Strengthen assessment and feedback strategies, focusing on formative assessment, to enable responsive teaching</p>	<p>EEF Toolkit: Effective Implementation of feedback strategies was associated with +6 months of progress. There is evidence to suggest that feedback involving metacognitive and self-regulatory approaches may have a greater impact on disadvantaged pupils and lower prior attainers than other pupils. Pupils require clear and actionable feedback to employ metacognitive strategies as they learn, as this information informs their understanding of their specific strengths and areas for improvement, thereby indicating which learning strategies have been effective for them in previously completed work.</p>	4

tailored to student needs.	EEF Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/feedback Diagnostic Assessment Evidence Insights: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Diagnostic_Assessment_Tool.pdf	
Additional Staffing Additional staffing in maths to create smaller teaching groups, facilitating more frequent opportunities for questioning, feedback and interaction, helping to identify misunderstandings earlier and provide the necessary support. Administrative support for SLT.	EEF - Reducing group sizes can lead to better outcomes for disadvantaged students, particularly when the groups are small enough to allow for more focused instruction and personalised support, and form part of a wider strategy.	2,5

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

Budgeted cost: £ 39,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
1:1 Online Tuition in core subjects (10 week cycle) Non-teaching staff member to facilitate.	EEF: 1:1 tutoring can lead to substantial improvements, especially when delivered in focused, structured interventions. The EEF cites that 1:1 tuition has an average impact of approximately +5 months of progress , particularly when tutoring is targeted at students who are falling behind academically. This is especially beneficial for disadvantaged students who may not have access to the same resources outside of school. Sutton Trust reports on one-to-one tuition consistently highlight the potential for 1:1 online tuition to support disadvantaged learners . The Sutton Trust's " What Makes Great Teaching? " report (2014) emphasizes that personalised learning through 1:1 tutoring has a positive impact on student engagement and progress. Online tutoring has been shown to be a solution for providing consistent, personalised support	2, 3, 5

	for disadvantaged students who might otherwise lack access to in-person interventions.	
Small group tuition and interventions (led by core HoDs) during morning registration.	The research from the EEF, Sutton Trust, Nuffield Foundation and NTP supports the effectiveness of small group tuition in improving outcomes for disadvantaged students, particularly in core subjects like Maths and English . Small group tuition allows for more personalised support , targeted intervention, and greater engagement with learning, all of which are essential for narrowing the achievement gap	All
Lexonic Literacy Interventions	There is robust evidence, including the EEF, Sutton Trust, Nuffield Foundation, National Tutoring Programme , and others, supporting the effectiveness of structured literacy interventions like Lexonic for disadvantaged students . These interventions, particularly those focusing on phonics, decoding, and reading comprehension , have been shown to significantly improve literacy outcomes , especially for students who are struggling to keep up with their peers. Lexonic , as a phonics-based program , is aligned with these successful strategies and is recognised as an effective means of narrowing the literacy gap for disadvantaged learners.	All
1:1 Academic mentoring	The EEF suggests that academic mentoring can help build self-regulation and study skills , which are critical for students from disadvantaged backgrounds who may lack the resources or strategies to succeed independently. Evidence from various studies points to +2 months of progress on average when mentoring programs are well-implemented. In addition, NTP evidence shows that academic mentoring programmes have been effective in raising the academic performance of disadvantaged students, particularly when the mentoring involves regular meetings, personalised academic support, and target setting	All
Reading Plus (Dream-Box) Targeted Years 10 & 11 (significantly low reading)	EEF: Research indicates that reading comprehension strategies have a high impact on average (+6 months' progress). This is crucial for students with a 'word gap' compared to their peers. GCSE Rigour & Fluency: The DfE and research into cognitive load theory highlight that reading fluency (measured in words per minute) is essential for accessing the curriculum. When students read slowly, their working memory is consumed by decoding	1

<p>age/SAS) and all of Years 7-9.</p> <p>Completed 4x weekly during AM registration.</p>	<p>rather than analysis. By increasing silent reading fluency, Reading Plus ensures students have the stamina to process dense text in GCSE exam papers across all subjects, not just English.</p> <p>DreamBox Efficacy: Evidence shows the software adapts to the learner's current level, explicitly teaching Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary which is vital for narrowing the attainment gap for disadvantaged learners.</p>	
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Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £ 39,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Raising Achievement Officers and Attendance Mentors providing individual support</p>	<p>The EEF, Sutton Trust, NTP, Nuffield Foundation, and others, provide robust evidence supporting the effectiveness of attendance mentoring in improving school attendance and, by extension, academic outcomes for disadvantaged students. Attendance mentoring has been shown to help students overcome the underlying barriers to attendance, including motivation, engagement, family issues, and mental health challenges. These interventions contribute to reduced absenteeism, increased academic performance, and ultimately help to close the achievement gap for disadvantaged learners.</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Strategic 'Future Path' Career Interventions</p> <p>Target: Selected cohort of Year 9 & 10 students identified as at-risk of attendance drop-off.</p> <p>Leads: Laura Redrup (Careers Lead) & HoYs & RAOs (Y9/10).</p> <p>Format: A planned 2 academic years of targeted employer encounters, aspirational work-place/university visits,</p>	<p>Impact on Attendance & Motivation:</p> <p>Research from the Careers & Enterprise Company demonstrates that young people who have 4 or more meaningful encounters with employers are 86% less likely to become NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and show improved attendance rates. The Gatsby Benchmarks (specifically 5 & 7) provide the framework for this, as evidence shows that students with a clear "line of sight" to their future are more motivated to attend school.</p> <p>Addressing Disengagement: The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)</p>	<p>2,3,5</p>

<p>and 'future-self' workshops.</p>	<p>highlights that "Aspiration Interventions" are most effective when they link clearly to <i>how</i> to achieve goals, rather than just vague "dreaming." By connecting current attendance to future earnings and opportunities, we tackle the "relevance gap" that often causes Year 9/10 disengagement.</p> <p>Social Mobility: The Sutton Trust reports that disadvantaged students are less likely to have access to professional networks. This programme actively bridges that gap, which is a key driver for improving long-term academic outcomes.</p>	
<p>Support with Uniform and Equipment</p>	<p>EEF, Sutton Trust, Nuffield Foundation, and IFS, supports the effectiveness of investing in IT equipment, uniforms, and other educational resources to support disadvantaged students. Providing access to IT equipment enables equal access to digital learning, while ensuring uniforms help reduce stigma and foster a sense of belonging, which is crucial for improving engagement and academic performance. These resources are essential for helping disadvantaged students overcome the barriers posed by financial disadvantage, increasing their confidence, engagement, and sense of inclusion in the school community.</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Support for Enrichment Opportunities</p>	<p>Research from the EEF, Sutton Trust, Nuffield Foundation, and IFS shows that enrichment opportunities and cultural capital are key to improving outcomes for disadvantaged learners. Access to arts, sports, cultural experiences, and extracurricular activities boosts engagement, self-confidence, and social skills, while fostering aspirations. These activities help narrow the attainment gap, promote inclusion, and motivate disadvantaged students to reach their full potential.</p>	<p>All</p>

Total budgeted cost: £ 188,000

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

2024-2025 Progress and Attainment

The attainment of our disadvantaged cohort has highlighted the need for earlier intervention. Disadvantaged students achieved an **Attainment 8 score of 31.47**, representing an **improvement** on the previous year's score of **25.31**. While this remains below both the National Average for disadvantaged students (34.9) and our non-FSM cohort (42.19), there is a clear narrative of impact within the data. We observed a **significant lift in performance** from Mock 2 (23.45) to final exams (31.47). This creates a strong evidence base that our "intensive" interventions work; however, the starting point at Mock 2 was too low to fully close the gap. Moving forward, these successful interventions will be deployed earlier in the academic cycle to maximise impact.

Literacy Interventions & Reading Comprehension

Evidence confirms that funding allocated to literacy is providing value for money and effectively addressing the 'word gap' and 'comprehension gap' the primary barrier to accessing the curriculum.

- **Impact:** The introduction of **Reading Plus** for Year 7 was highly effective. **70.37%** of the disadvantaged cohort increased their reading age, and notably, **33% made more than two years of progress** between assessments. Individual successes included jumps of 3-4 years in reading age.
- **Next Steps:** We will now roll out Reading Plus across Years 7 and 9 during AM registration (continuing with a hybrid model in Year 8) and will implement it with selected Year 10 and 11 students to support GCSE rigour.

Targeted Tuition Impact Our strategy to utilise external tuition partners has been validated. A cohort of 14 students completed a 10-week block of **1:1 tuition (My Tutor)**, resulting in measurable gains. In English, most students improved by at least one grade (some by two), and in Maths, students generally improved by one grade. This confirms that short-term, intensive intervention is effective. However, to meet National Average attainment targets, we recognise that students must access this support earlier.

Attendance

Attendance remains a complex challenge, reflecting broader national trends regarding engagement in upper Key Stage 3. While our early intervention strategies have successfully maintained strong attendance at the start of secondary school (HT1: Year 7: 96.2% and Year 8: 90.1%), data highlights a critical drop-off in engagement as disadvantaged students transition into Year 9 and 10. We recognise that for this specific cohort, traditional monitoring is insufficient; students need to clearly see the relevance of their education to their future. Consequently, we have evolved our strategy to actively integrate pastoral support with aspirational career links. Led by the Careers Lead and Heads of Year, a new 'Future Path' initiative is being deployed to tackle disengagement proactively. By connecting attendance directly to future career opportunities and meaningful employer encounters, we aim to rebuild motivation and reduce persistent absenteeism in these priority year groups.

Previous Year: 2023-2024

Progress and Attainment

This year, the impact of Pupil Premium funding has shown both challenges and positive signs of progress. Since 2019, our disadvantaged students' Progress 8 score has steadily improved,

with a score of **-0.3** in 2023, outperforming the national average of **-0.53**. However, the **2023-2024 cohort** is projected to have a validated Progress 8 score of **-0.95**, largely due to issues with **attendance, persistent absenteeism, and students, studying an alternative curriculum in alternative provision**. Additionally, **7 out of 28 students** didn't have **KS2 data**, so their progress 'did not count' in the Progress 8 measure.

Like many secondary schools in Buckinghamshire, our disadvantaged cohort saw a dip in outcomes compared to the previous year. While concerning, this decline aligns with broader regional trends and we acknowledge the impact of **disrupted learning** during the pandemic on **attendance, engagement** and overall **student well-being**.

Literacy Interventions & Reading Comprehension

Progress with Year 10

Over the past year, our literacy interventions, including **Lexonic, Lexonic Leap, Bedrock, Form Time Reading Programme** and the **Peer Reading Programme**, have shown positive results with our current Year 10 cohort. Students are making gains in reading comprehension and are better able to engage with the curriculum.

Focus on Year 8 and Year 9

This year, our primary focus is on Year 8 and Year 9 students. These cohorts remain a priority as we work to close the reading gap before they enter their GCSE years. We have created additional capacity in English department to intensify existing interventions and introduce more tailored support to improve their reading and comprehension skills.

Next Steps: Explicit Reading Comprehension Instruction

We are also introducing explicit **reading comprehension teaching** across History and Geography. By embedding targeted reading strategies into these subjects, we aim to improve literacy while helping students access key content.

Attendance

Despite our ongoing efforts, attendance rates for our disadvantaged students continue to fall behind their non-disadvantaged peers. We recognise the crucial link between attendance and academic success and we are committed to improving this as a matter of urgency. Led by our Deputy Headteacher and supported by a non-teaching Raising Achievement Officer, a **whole-school strategy is in place to narrow the attendance gap**. In addition, we have **increased the staffing further in this area to enhance outreach and strengthen communication between school, feeder schools and home**. We recognise the challenges posed by COVID have heightened this national concern, emphasising the need for our focused efforts on addressing attendance disparities, particularly persistent absenteeism.

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
1:1 Tuition	MyTutor
Lexonik Lexonik Leap Lexonik Advance	Lexonik
Reading Plus	Dreambox
Online revision platforms	GCSE Pod Seneca Learning

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

<i>For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information: How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year</i>	
Academic mentoring AM/PM interventions Raising Achievement Officers assigned to every year group MYTutor 1:1 tuition 1:1 Careers advice and guidance – IAG interviews Counselling	
The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils	
2020-2021:	Progress 8: +0.61 Attainment 8: 49
2021-2022:	Progress 8: +1.18 Attainment 8: 52.67
2022-2023:	Progress 8: + 0.48 Attainment 8: 51.46
2023-2024:	Progress 8: +0.58 Attainment 8: 55.75
2024-2025:	Progress 8: N/A Attainment 8: N/A