

# Pupil premium strategy statement – Saffron Walden County High School

This statement details our school’s use of pupil premium (and recovery 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	1502 Years 7-11
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	14%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers ( <b>3 year plans are recommended</b> )	2025/26 2024/25 - 2026/27
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	Katie Vanderpere-Brown Assistant Headteacher
Pupil premium leads	Tachya Brobbey (Year 7) Fiona Muir (Year 8) Mark Kimberly (Year 9) Anna Hosking (Year 10) Andrew Osborne (Year 11)
Governor / Trustee lead	Linda Vincent

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£233,370
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	0
Pupil premium (and recovery premium*) funding carried forward from previous years ( <i>enter £0 if not applicable</i> )	0
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b>	<b>£233,370</b>

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

Our intention is to ensure all students, irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds or the challenges they may face, continue to achieve high attainment across the curriculum. The Saffron Walden County High School (SWCHS) Pupil Premium strategy looks to support vulnerable students to achieve their goals in line with all students at SWCHS, including the progress for those who are already high attainers.

We understand the challenges to learning faced by our disadvantaged students, such as students adopted from care, looked after, young carers and those who have a social worker. We also acknowledge the barriers to learning for some of our students from low-income families. The activities outlined in this strategy intend to support their needs regardless of whether a student is at a disadvantage or not.

SWCHS continues to have a tiered approach to Pupil Premium spending, high quality teaching, targeted academic support and the use of wider strategies. We have an adaptive approach to teaching and learning with a focus on a teaching and learning toolkit that supports all learners. Research has proven that this has the most positive impact on closing the disadvantaged attainment gap. Quality first teaching will continue to be at the forefront of our approach, as we know it will sustain and improve all students' attainment. We also continue to develop and grow our extracurricular and super curricular activities and experiences. Streamline our robust wellbeing support and continue to evaluate and refine our positive behaviour systems. For this academic year, we will continue to embed these systems and evaluate and refine them accordingly.

It has been over four years since the pandemic and the issues that this has brought about continue to be a priority for SWCHS. The pandemic created a range of issues for many young people and significantly impacted disadvantaged students the most, not just academically but also with aspects of their personal and social development. The cost-of-living crises has also exacerbated some of these issues. For 2025-2026, the school will continue to use the pupil premium for academic recovery and for social and emotional recovery. Our activities for this academic year have been responsive to the diagnostic assessment of GCSE results over time, attendance, KS3/4 progress, achievement, and behaviour data. We will continue to review and refine our strategy using diagnostic assessments throughout the academic year, to ensure we address these national challenges and the individual needs of all our students. The planned approaches will work in tandem with each other to support students in adopting a love for learning and achieving high attainment. To ensure they are effective, we will:

- Act early to intervene at the point when an academic or personal need is identified through refining our bespoke PPG & SEND planning systems.
- Continue to build on our whole school SEND/PPG approach through building positive relationships and provide equitable access to extracurricular and super curricular clubs, trips and visits, to close the experience gap and support all students in accessing these opportunities.
- To have high expectations of all students and to celebrate their achievements.

- Deliver a thorough and reactive PSHE programme.
- Ensure students continue to have access to a range of pastoral wellbeing support mechanisms.
- To keep a tight focus on school attendance and to introduce and embed strategies that help our cohort to have a sense of belonging in our school community.

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1. Improving attainment and progress for disadvantaged students across English and Maths	Although we had seen an improvement in the progress of Disadvantaged students in Maths prior to the pandemic (Progress 8 was -0.9 for Disadvantaged students in Maths in 2017, improving to -0.5 in 2018 and – 0.1 in 2019), due to the challenges outlined in this report, we have seen a dip in this progress measure. We are determined to achieve positive progress for all students in both English and Maths and significantly reduce the basics gap.
2. Improving the attendance among our disadvantaged students	SWCHS aim is to bring attendance figures back to pre-pandemic levels, for 2024-25 our overall attendance was 92.6% this was above the national average for secondary schools. Our aspirational target is 96% and we are making steady progress toward this goal. Attendance for FSM6 pupils was 83.3% this was -3.1% below the national average.
3. Improving behaviour for learning among our disadvantaged cohort	<p>A higher proportion of disadvantaged students have been issued with internal isolation placements compared to non-disadvantaged students.(11% non PPG and 24% of PPG) this is a slight increase on the previous year (22% of PPG).</p> <p>The total number of students suspended in 2024/25 was 68 and of those 29 were PPG (43%). This is an increase from 29% of suspended students being PPG in 2023/24. This remains an area of focus especially at ensuring positive interventions remain an active part of our strategy at preventing suspensions.</p>
4. Planning for PPG/SEND Students	A high proportion of the disadvantaged cohort also have a special educational need (SEND). The SEND cohort at SWCHS continues to be above the national average.

## 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
1. To sustain Improvement in attainment and progress for disadvantaged students in English and Maths	A positive Progress 8 score for Disadvantaged pupils in Maths and English. A higher Attainment 8 score for Disadvantaged pupils in Maths and English.
2. Improving attendance among disadvantaged students	A higher percentage of our Disadvantaged students were recorded as having persistent absence (PA). Our overall attendance figures have continued to improve since the pandemic. We are determined to continue to make positive improvements in attendance, through our wellbeing services and fulltime Inclusion Officer.
3. Improved behaviour for learning among disadvantaged students	Improved behaviour from Disadvantaged students leading to fewer suspensions, fewer periods in Isolation and fewer detentions. Suspensions and Isolation data to be analysed to track gaps. Wellbeing provision for Disadvantaged students ensures that students have access to appropriate support, referrals to external agencies, alternative curriculum provision and home liaison/intervention is timely and conducive to improving the educational experience of those in need. All students are supported to manage behaviour more positively through accessing a range of pastoral support options.
4. Improved outcomes for all disadvantaged and students including those with a special educational need.	Disadvantaged and SEND students receive the support they need to engage and progress positively. Ongoing liaison between Year Achievement Coordinators (YACs) and Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCO) to ensure correct support is in place. Subject specialist TAs working in subject areas can support individuals with subject specific knowledge and skills. PPG/SEND students engage and progress positively. Joint PPG/SEND planning documents are impactful and enable high quality teaching for all.

## Activity in this academic year 2025/26

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

### CPD and Teaching

Budgeted cost: £74,950

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>TLCE on modelling with over-arching implementation structure that is based on evidence</p> <p>Continuing to promote questioning that is inclusive to all</p> <p>Sustaining longer-term projects around a broad, knowledge-based curriculum, adaptative teaching and personalised planning for all students with SEND or eligible for PPG</p> <p>Additional time for mentoring and coaching for those new to teachers and those who require additional support</p> <p>Trauma perceptive training for all staff continues for 2024/25</p> <p>Investment in online platforms that specifically intend to support independent learning amongst PPG students (e.g. Educake and Dr Frost)</p> <p>Improving retention through curriculum days, professional development opportunities, Aspiring Leaders and staff consultation</p>	<p>These activities have all been informed by the EEF Guide to the Pupil Premium and the strategies suggested here:  <a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/using-pupil-premium">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/using-pupil-premium</a></p> <p>It is based on the EEF tiered approach to Pupil Premium spending with a focus on delivering high quality teaching and the five pillars of:</p> <p>Developing high quality teaching, assessments and a broad and balanced, knowledge-based curriculum that responds to the needs of pupils</p> <p>Professional development to support the implementation of evidence-based approaches</p> <p>Mentoring and coaching for teachers</p> <p>Recruitment and retention of teaching staff</p> <p>Technology and other resources to support high quality teaching and learning</p>	<p>1,2,3</p>
<p>Extra Maths and English group in all years with TA support (an additional 68 periods in total). This allows for smaller group sizes, especially for lower prior attainers.</p>	<p><a href="#">Small group tuition</a></p> <p>Evidence of benefits of smaller groups. EEF / Sutton Trust Toolkit findings: small group tuition: +4 months progress.</p>	<p>1</p>

Additional study support groups for Years 9-11 with English/Maths specialist teachers supporting sessions on a fortnightly basis.		
Year 7 Literacy programme  Year 8 Literacy programme  Form time reading programme	Disadvantaged students generally have lower literacy levels than their peers on entry to Year 7. This is evident through KS2 data, our own baseline assessment and through discussion with students. This impacts their progress across the curriculum.  <a href="#">Reading comprehension strategies</a>  Acquiring disciplinary literacy is key for students as they learn new, more complex concepts in each subject.  <a href="#">Improving Literacy in secondary schools</a>  Reading comprehension, vocabulary and other literacy skills are heavily linked with attainment in maths and English.	1,2,3,4
Timetabled PSHE lessons for Years 7-11 delivered by specialist teachers	<a href="#">PSHE Programme of study</a> PSHE education helps children and young people to stay safe, healthy and prepared for life's challenges and opportunities. PSHE Association  <a href="#">Programmes to Practice identifying effective, evidence-based social and emotional learning strategies for teachers and schools.</a>	1,2,3,4

## Targeted academic support

Budgeted cost: £44,935

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
School-led tutoring.  The school will also fund Additional catch-up interventions (such as Easter and May half term booster sessions) and this will primarily be	<a href="#">One to one tuition</a>  Tuition targeted at specific needs and knowledge gaps can be an effective method to support low attaining pupils or those falling behind, both one-to-one: and in small groups.  <a href="#">Small group tuition</a>	1,2,3,4

aimed at Disadvantaged students.		
Years 9-10 Brilliant club mobilises PhD Researchers to support students who are less advantaged to access the most competitive universities and succeed when they get there.	<a href="#">University equality and entry rates</a> To challenge high attaining PPG students in Years 9-10. Only 1 in 50 of the most Disadvantaged pupils progress to higher education, compared to 1 in 4 of the most advantaged.	1,2,3,4
To promote involvement in extra-curricular activities and the wider life of the school and ensure that PPG students are at least proportionately represented in all activities, trips and roles. (Including Student Voice, Prefects). Funds made available to support with trips, DofE, music lessons etc.  Best practice guidance given to all staff.	<a href="#">EEF teaching and learning tool kit</a>  EEF / Sutton Trust Toolkit findings: Sports and Arts participation: +2 months progress.  Experience shows that individual conversations with students is the best way to overcome a 'it's not for the likes of us' attitude which prevails amongst some students. These conversations take place during form tutor mentoring sessions and PPG coordinator mentoring sessions with selected PPG students with higher needs.	1,2,3,4
Annual Disadvantaged/SEND deep dive reviews (Joined-up thinking around Disadvantaged/SEND  Collaborative planning with teachers and subject specialist teaching assistants. Planning documents accessible to all teaching staff to ensure best practice is shared across the school.	<a href="#">EEF putting evidence to work</a> High proportion of PPG and SEND crossover.	1,2,3,4
Direct financial support	<a href="#">Arts participation</a> <a href="#">Extending school time</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Breakfast Club</li> <li>- Trips/visits</li> <li>- Uniform bursary vouchers</li> <li>- Dictionary free school meals</li> <li>- Subject specific resources and revision materials</li> <li>- Music tuition</li> </ul>	1,2,3,4

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dance lessons</li> <li>- Drama lessons</li> <li>- Additional activities in or out of school</li> <li>- Financial support for year group activities</li> </ul>	
--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

## Wider strategies Attendance, behaviour and wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £87,298

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Additional Deputy Year Achievement Coordinators for Years 7-11 (DY-ACs) with oversight of disadvantaged students in each year group.</p> <p>Students Support Officers attached to each year group.</p>	<p><a href="#">EEF parental engagement</a></p> <p>To build positive working relationships with students and parents. Parental engagement +4 months progress.</p>	1,2,3,4,
<p>Inclusion/Attendance Officer.</p> <p>Deputy Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher to hold fortnightly meetings with Inclusion Officer to monitor attendance/discuss individual attendance concerns.</p> <p>Attendance Officer to share attendance data at the start of each week and to meet with YACs on a fortnightly basis.</p> <p>Form tutors to use allocated pastoral time to contact parents for day one phone calls.</p> <p>Fortnightly line management meetings with YACs for specific year</p>	<p><a href="#">DFE Improving school attendance</a></p> <p>To offer a clear vision for attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by staff, pupils, and families.</p>	1,2,3,4

groups including PPG attendance update.		
School Councillors (both therapeutic and CBT) intervention for specific pupils who require support with regulating their behaviour and emotions.	<p><a href="#">Cognitive Behavioural Therapy</a></p> <p>There is evidence to suggest that CBT can have a high impact on risk behaviours and behavioural difficulties:</p> <p>EIF's report on adolescent mental health found good evidence that CBT interventions support young people's social and emotional skills and can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression.</p> <p><a href="#">Adolescent mental health: A systematic review on the effectiveness of school-based interventions</a></p>	1,2,3,4
The Pastoral Hub in B16 is part of Crocus Wellbeing at SWCHS. The Pastoral Hub's core function is to support the academic reintegration of pupils back into the school whilst offering a calm environment for them to work. A Learning Recovery Lead and Deputy Learning Recovery Lead are employed.	<p><a href="#">Cognitive Behavioural Therapy</a></p> <p>There is evidence to suggest that CBT can have a high impact on risk behaviours and behavioural difficulties:</p> <p>EIF's report on adolescent mental health found good evidence that CBT interventions support young people's social and emotional skills and can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression.</p> <p><a href="#">Adolescent mental health: A systematic review on the effectiveness of school-based interventions</a></p>	1,2,3,4
Designated mental health and wellbeing lead delivering wellbeing and coaching sessions for students across years 7-13.	<p><a href="#">How to improve your mental health (Mind)</a></p> <p><a href="#">DFE Senior mental health lead training</a></p>	1,2,3,4
Continued staff training on trauma perceptive training.		
Primary Transition activities, in person primary school visits, bridging day for smaller feeder schools and a taster day for all new prospective Year 7 students.	<p><a href="#">EEF School Transitions Tool</a></p> <p>Successful school transitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Curricular continuity</li> <li>- School routines and expectations</li> <li>- Healthy peer networks</li> </ul>	1,2,3,4

Collaborative work with KS3 subject coordinators and primary school colleagues.		
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--

**Total budgeted cost: £207,183**

(‘overspend’ will be covered by wider school funding.)

## Part B: Review of the previous academic year

### Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

#### Improvement in attainment and progress for disadvantaged students in English and Maths:

##### Reading programme/interventions

Of the 24 disadvantaged students in Year 7-9 whose reading ages were re-tested at the end of the academic year, 63% of students has made progress in their reading skill.

In last year's Year 7 cohort, 70% of our key weak readers made some improvement their reading ages between the start of Year 7 and when they were re-tested at the end of the year; 59% improved by nearly a year, or above. In last year's Year 8 cohort, 71% of the students retested at the end of the year had an improved reading age from their final reading test in Year 7.

The number of students making significant progress through interventions, resulting in their reading age matching, or being close to matching, their chronological age is evidence of the ongoing impact of interventions. In Year 7, of our Tier 3 students (those with a reading age above nine, but below the chronological age of 11), 56% improved their reading age to this degree, 53% by 1 year, 13% by 2 years, and 33% by 3 years or above. Similarly, 44% of our Tier 2 students (those with a reading age above five, but below the chronological age of 9) also improved to a point where they are no longer in need of further intervention. In last year's Year 8 cohort, 39% of student re-tested after interventions had reached a point where they would no longer need to receive interventions.

Early intervention has proved key in having significant impact, and last year further use of Lexia with a greater number of Year 7 students in a targeted withdraw programme was successful.

As a result of the above activities outlined in this report, the Disadvantaged Progress 8 measure in Maths improved from 2023 (-0.79) - 2024 (-0.67), data from FFT shows a significant further improvement in 2025 (-0.03)

Overall, disadvantaged students have improved to -0.11 progress 8 measure (FFT data) in 2025 from results of (-0.41) in 2023 and (-0.68) in 2024. Factors, such as low attendance and poor mental health continued to have an impact on progress for some disadvantaged students. We are confident that above activities will continue to improve the outcomes for all our students and enable a positive disadvantaged figure.

The improvement in the results of students entitled to the PPG grant is shown below

English and Maths at 4 plus:

Year	Cohort Size	Comparison to National for disadvantaged students		Gap trend
		National	SWCHS	
2025	33	43.5%	60.6%	Narrowing
2024	39	43.4%	56.4%	Narrowing

English and Maths at 5 plus

Year	Cohort Size	Comparison to National for disadvantaged students		Gap trend
		National	SWCHS	
2025	33	25.6%	30.3%	Narrowing
2024	39	25.8%	28.2%	Narrowing

### Post 16 progression

53% of our disadvantaged cohort progressed to our Sixth Form; 27% have progressed to college courses; 13% have progressed to employment/apprenticeships.

### Attendance

The school's overall attendance figure for 2024/25 was 92.6% +1.2% above the national average. However, attendance for our pupil premium cohort was marginally lower than the national average at 83.3% compared to 86.4% a -3.1% difference. Persistent absenteeism (PA) across years 7-11 was lower compared to the national average (17.3% vs 23.2%), however persistence absence amongst our disadvantaged cohort continues to be an area of priority in 2025/26. We continue to support a number of students with poor mental health through our wellbeing services, pastoral support and working with wider agencies to support these individuals and their families.

### Behaviour for learning

Fixed term suspensions and isolations placements in 2024/25.

Number & percentage of PP students that have been issued with isolation placements:

Year	PPG in Isolation

<b>2024/25</b>	57 - 25% of the PP cohort
<b>2023/24</b>	53 - 24% of the PP cohort
<b>2022/23</b>	48 - 22% of the PP cohort

Time in isolation is spent completing the work set by each class and reflecting on the issues that led to the sanction.

Number & percentage of pupil premium students that have been suspended

<b>Year</b>	<b>PPG Suspended</b>
<b>2024/25</b>	29 – 13%
<b>2023/24</b>	19 – 9%
<b>2022/23</b>	17 – 8%

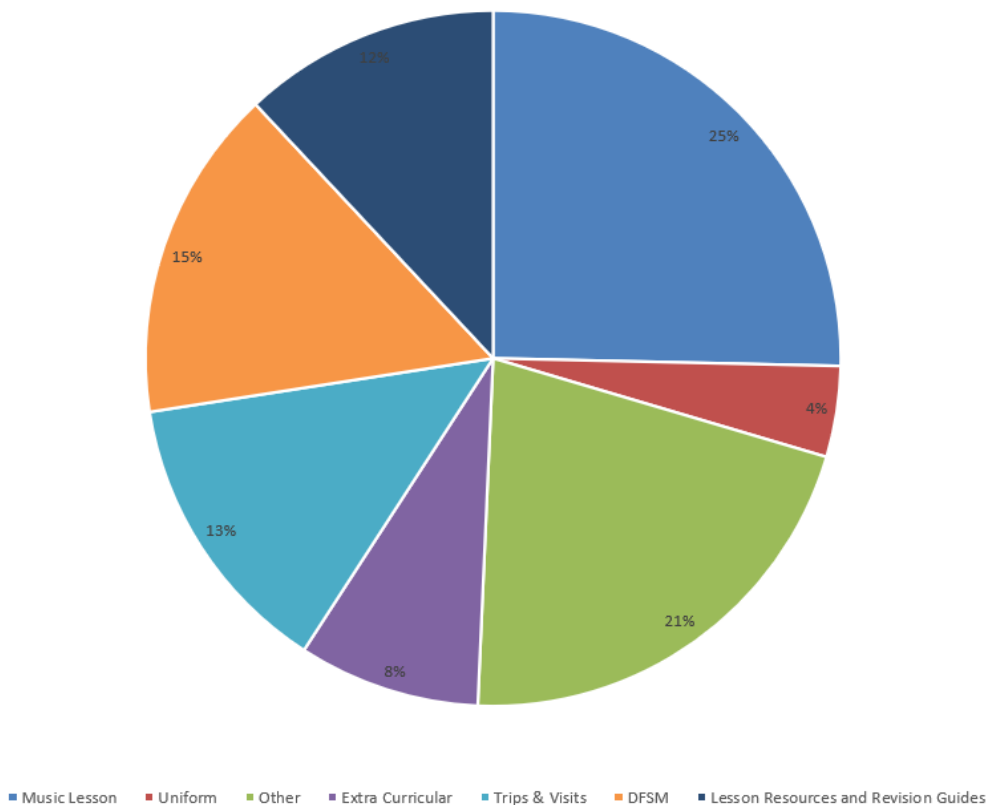
For 2024/25 64 of our PPG students accessed wellbeing sessions. These sessions consist of activities such as counselling, talk therapy and Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

## Direct support

The below pie chart and table illustrate how part of the pupil premium grant was used for direct support. PPG Income 2024/25 was £233,370 of which £20,356 was used for direct support.

### PPG Direct Support breakdown

PPG Direct Support Breakdown 2024/25



Support	Total cost	Activities
Therapy	£1461.75	Therapy for a Year 9 student (LAC).
Music Lessons	£7326.51	Guitar, Singing, Drums, Flute and Piano lessons Years 7-11.
DFSM	£7289.24	Discretionary free school meals (DFSM) years 7-11
Trips & Visits	£3572.20	USA, Ski Trip, Dry Ski, Cambridge Macbeth, Maths Circle, France.  Curriculum trip support, Music Tour, Battlefields, Normandy and Rhineland.

Lesson Resources & Revision Guides	£3251.87	Food Tech ingredients, History revision guides, Maths revision guides Yr10 &Yr11, calculators & geometry sets, English poetry/Macbeth revision guides and additional reading books.
Uniform	£3933.17	Up to £80 Uniform Bursary voucher, Mid-year support with additional items
Extra-Curricular activities	£3690.00	Step into dance, Sports award, Drama club, Musical Theatre club  ASU Club
Other	£996.00	Medical Supplies and Printing

N.B not all PPG claims were fulfilled form the PPG budget 2024/25 the Hardship Trip Fund was used to cover additional costs such as activities week and the year seven trip to France.

## Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider
School-led tutoring	Saffron Walden Academy Trust
The Scholars Programme 17 students across years 8 and 9 will complete the Scholars Programme in 2024/25	Brilliant Club