

Pupil premium strategy statement – Aldercar High 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	658
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	41%
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)	2025-28
Date this statement was published	10/12/2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	10/12/2026
Statement authorised by	Adam Blake
Pupil premium lead	Sarah Murray
Governor / Trustee lead	Claire Keytes

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£309,000
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	N/A
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>	£309,000

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At Aldercar High School, we are committed to ensuring that all disadvantaged pupils receive an ambitious, inclusive education that enables them to achieve well academically and thrive personally. Over 40% of our pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding, and many enter the school with low prior attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Alongside this, the school supports high levels of SEND, social and emotional need and wider vulnerability. These factors shape both the barriers disadvantaged pupils face and the focus of this strategy.

Aldercar High School secures strong sustained destinations for all groups: in our most recent data, 100% of leavers achieved a sustained EET destination (DfE measure), including all our pupil premium pupils, all our SEND K and EHCP students and all those from other vulnerable groups who can find next steps challenging. This is an improving trend delivered through a deliberate strategy to secure next steps for those who need support the most. Targeted CEIAG, early risk identification, multiple impartial guidance interviews, provider access, and post-results re-brokering ensured every leaver had a recorded next step and was tracked to enrolment.

Our approach is explicitly evidence informed. Research from the Education Endowment Foundation consistently demonstrates that high quality teaching has the greatest impact on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Strengthening classroom practice therefore sits at the core of our strategy, supported by targeted academic intervention, robust pastoral systems and wider approaches that promote attendance, wellbeing and aspiration.

Literacy is a key strategic priority. Assessment information and classroom evidence indicate that a significant proportion of disadvantaged pupils enter Year 7 with weaker reading comprehension, which limits access to the curriculum across subjects and contributes to later attainment gaps. Our strategy therefore places sustained emphasis on early identification, structured reading support and improving disciplinary literacy across the curriculum.

We also recognise that academic success is closely linked to pupils' attendance, conduct and sense of belonging. Disadvantaged pupils are more likely to experience barriers linked to attendance, behaviour and emotional wellbeing. Over recent years, the school has strengthened systems and leadership capacity in these areas, resulting in

improving attendance and reduced suspensions. This strategy builds on what has already proven effective by embedding consistent routines, clear expectations and inclusive pastoral support.

Finally, we are committed to ensuring that disadvantaged pupils are able to access the wider life of the school. Limited cultural capital and lower aspirations can restrict engagement and future pathways. Through curriculum design, enrichment, careers education and targeted financial support, we aim to broaden horizons and raise aspirations so that disadvantaged pupils are well prepared for positive, sustained destinations beyond Aldercar High School.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p>Low academic attainment at the end of KS4, particularly in English and Maths</p> <p>Overall Attainment 8 is below national averages and that the attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils widened between 2024 and 2025. This is most evident in English, where outcomes declined in 2025 for both all pupils and disadvantaged pupils, with disadvantaged outcomes moving from close to national averages to below national.</p> <p>Assessments on entry to year 7 in the last 4 years indicate that 54.8% of our disadvantaged pupils arrive below age-related expectations in Combined Reading and Mathematics compared to 36.9% of their peers. Subsequent internal and external assessments show that this gap widens by around 8% during pupils' time at our school.</p>
2	<p>Weak literacy and reading comprehension on entry to secondary school</p> <p>On entry to year 7 in the last 4 years, 34.3% of our disadvantaged pupils arrive below age-related expectations compared to 22.1% of their peers. Ongoing assessment shows that weaker reading comprehension continues to limit access to the curriculum across subjects if not addressed early.</p>
3	<p>Lower attendance and higher levels of persistent absence</p> <p>Whilst attendance is improving for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, disadvantaged pupils attend less well and are more likely to be persistently absent than non-disadvantaged pupils. In 2024-25 attendance of disadvantaged pupils was 9.5% lower than their non-disadvantaged peers. In the same year 40.4% of disadvantaged pupils were persistently absent compared to 12.2% of their non-disadvantaged peers.</p>
4	<p>Lower aspirations, engagement and access to cultural and enrichment opportunities</p> <p>Pupil and parent voice, alongside participation data, indicates that some disadvantaged pupils show lower aspirations, and engagement with school events and enrichment opportunities. Teacher and pupil voice highlights that some disadvantaged pupils have limited access to cultural experiences and extracurricular activities outside school. This reflects the wider local context of low social mobility and can impact pupils' confidence, aspiration and engagement with education and future pathways.</p>
5	<p>Material deprivation and financial barriers to full participation in school life</p>

	<p>School-level knowledge, pupil and family engagement, and requests for support indicate that some disadvantaged pupils experience material and financial barriers which limit their full participation in school. These include difficulty affording uniform, basic learning equipment, food, transport and enrichment activities. Cost-of-living pressures can create additional stress for pupils and families, impacting engagement, wellbeing and readiness to learn if not addressed proactively.</p>
6	<p>Social and emotional needs</p> <p>Our assessments, observations and discussions with pupils and their families tell us that disadvantaged pupils are more likely to require support with a wide range of social and emotional issues. These issues impact on wellbeing, attendance and attainment. The school has made a commitment to provide timely and effective support and resources to ensure the most disadvantaged pupils thrive.</p>

Intended outcomes

This explains the outcomes we are aiming for **by the end of our current strategy plan**, and how we will measure whether they have been achieved.

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Improved outcomes among disadvantaged pupils across the curriculum at the end of KS4, particularly in English and maths.	Attainment and progress measures for disadvantaged pupils improve over time, with the gap to national outcomes narrowing, particularly in English. Disadvantaged pupils make stronger progress across KS4, reflected in improving Attainment 8 and subject level outcomes.
Improved reading comprehension among disadvantaged pupils across KS3.	Reading age and standardised literacy scores for disadvantaged pupils improve, as measured through internal assessments. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils entering KS4 with reading skills that allow full access to the curriculum increases year on year.
Improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	Attendance for disadvantaged pupils continues to improve and persistent absence reduces to become in line with national averages. The attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non disadvantaged peers narrows further over the life of the strategy.
Improved engagement, conduct and inclusion for disadvantaged pupils.	Reduced suspensions for disadvantaged pupils are sustained over time. Behaviour and engagement data shows improving trends, supporting more consistent access to learning and wellbeing.
Sustain trends in progression to positive and sustained destinations for disadvantaged pupils.	All disadvantaged pupils progress to sustained education, employment or training destinations that reflect their attainment and aspirations.
Increased participation of disadvantaged pupils in enrichment and wider curriculum opportunities.	Disadvantaged pupils are represented at least proportionately in enrichment activities, trips and extracurricular provision. Financial barriers to participation are reduced, and pupil voice indicates increased confidence and engagement.

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: £269,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Focused professional development to improve teaching quality A structured CPD programme aligned to whole school teaching and learning priorities, including inclusive planning, literacy across the curriculum, effective assessment and supporting pupils with SEND. CPD draws on school and trust expertise, NPQs and ECF provision, and targets consistent classroom practice.	EEF guidance identifies high quality teaching as the most effective use of pupil premium funding, with particular benefits for disadvantaged pupils. Professional development that is sustained, subject specific and aligned to school priorities is most likely to improve outcomes.	1,2,6
Strengthening literacy and reading across the curriculum Whole-school strategies to improve disciplinary literacy, including explicit vocabulary instruction, regular exposure to fluent reading and structured reading for pleasure. These approaches are complemented by targeted reading interventions where need is identified.	EEF research shows that improving literacy in secondary schools has a significant impact on attainment across subjects. Evidence indicates that disadvantaged pupils benefit most from systematic, explicit literacy instruction embedded within subject teaching.	1,2
Targeted use of diagnostic assessment to inform teaching Regular use of nationally recognised reading assessments to identify literacy need, inform classroom strategies and target	EEF guidance highlights that diagnostic assessment, when used to inform teaching and intervention, can support more precise and impactful support for pupils with identified gaps in knowledge and skills.	1, 6

intervention. Training ensures teachers and support staff use assessment evidence effectively to adapt teaching and check impact.		
Accelerated Reader to support reading engagement and comprehension Use of Accelerated Reader to support structured reading time, monitor reading age progression and increase reading motivation among disadvantaged pupils.	EEF evaluation of Accelerated Reader found positive impacts on reading outcomes, with greater gains for pupils from low-income backgrounds when used as part of a wider literacy strategy.	1, 2
Leadership capacity to drive improvement in teaching and inclusion Dedicated leadership capacity to oversee teaching quality, literacy, inclusion and the use of the pupil premium, ensuring delivery is monitored, evaluated and refined based on impact.	EEF guidance indicates that effective schools have clear leadership responsibility for pupil premium strategy, with senior leaders actively monitoring its implementation and impact.	1, 2, 6
Development of curriculum planning to embed high-quality opportunities that develop cultural capital and employability skills for all pupils and particularly for disadvantaged pupils.	EEF guidance states that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural activities increase pupils' familiarity with institutions, language and behaviours valued in education and society. • Impact is strongest for disadvantaged pupils who have limited access outside school. • Programmes work best when high-quality, frequent and explicitly linked to learning rather than one-off events. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED625466.pdf	4,5

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

Budgeted cost: £15,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Targeted small group tutoring for Y11 in English and Maths Weekly small group tuition focused	EEF research indicates that small group tuition can provide up to four months' additional progress when targeted at specific academic gaps and delivered by trained staff.	1
Structured mentoring for targeted Y11 disadvantaged pupils Academic mentoring focused on attendance, engagement, coursework completion and exam preparation. Support is personalised and reviewed	EEF guidance suggests mentoring can have a positive impact on academic outcomes when focused on goalsetting, self regulation and engagement, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.	1,3,4
Direct Instruction programmes	EEF evidence identifies Direct Instruction as an effective approach for supporting pupils with significant gaps in foundational knowledge, particularly where prior attainment is low.	1,2
Reading intervention delivered by trained teaching assistants Targeted small group and one to one reading interventions for disadvantaged pupils below age related expectations, with entry and exit criteria informed by regular assessment	EEF evidence shows that well trained teaching assistants delivering structured interventions can lead to positive gains in reading, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.	1,2,6
Year 7 early intervention and transition support Targeted academic support	EEF guidance highlights the transition period as a key opportunity to address gaps early and prevent later underachievement.	1,2,6

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

Budgeted cost: £25,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Strengthening systems and leadership to improve attendance Sustaining and refining attendance systems that have contributed to improving overall and disadvantaged pupils' attendance. This includes clear expectations, early identification of risk, targeted support for disadvantaged pupils and close monitoring of impact.	IDSR and internal data show improving attendance for disadvantaged pupils and a narrowing gap to national figures. DfE evidence highlights the strong relationship between attendance and attainment, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, and supports sustained, whole-school approaches.	3
Embedding a consistent conduct approach to support inclusion	Data shows historically high suspension rates; internal data for 2024–25 and TYD shows a significant and sustained reduction, indicating that strengthened systems and expectations are having a positive impact. EEF guidance highlights the importance of consistent behaviour approaches in supporting disadvantaged pupils.	6
Dedicated pastoral leadership to support disadvantaged pupils Non-teaching Heads of Year and pastoral leaders provide targeted support to disadvantaged pupils	EEF evidence indicates that targeted pastoral support can improve attendance, behaviour and engagement, creating conditions that enable pupils to access learning more effectively.	3,6
Removing financial and practical barriers to participation Subsidised or fully funded access to uniform, equipment, trips, enrichment and extracurricular activities to ensure disadvantaged pupils can participate fully in school life.	EEF research indicates that removing financial barriers supports participation and engagement for disadvantaged pupils. Internal tracking shows that targeted funding supports proportionate representation of disadvantaged pupils in enrichment activity.	3,4,6
Promoting aspiration, enrichment and careers engagement Targeted careers guidance, enrichment opportunities and employer	Research indicates that high-quality careers education and enrichment can improve aspiration and	4, 5

engagement to broaden pupils' knowledge of post-16	support positive transitions. Evaluation of the school's CEIAG programme and participation data inform ongoing development of this work.	
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Total budgeted cost: £309,000

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

The school serves a community with a high and rising proportion of disadvantaged pupils. The percentage of pupils eligible for FSM6 has increased from 38.4% in 2023 to 43% in 2025, above national averages and in line with a local context which is significantly higher still. IDSR prior attainment data shows a high proportion of low prior attainers across the cohort, including disadvantaged pupils, alongside elevated levels of SEND, EHCPs and children in need. This context informs the evaluation of outcomes and the focus of the pupil premium strategy.

Attendance remains below national averages but shows sustained improvement. Overall attendance increased from 88.5% in 2023–24 to 89.6% in 2024–25, with disadvantaged pupils' attendance improving from 82.6% to 84.5% over the same period. The gap to national attendance narrowed from 3.4 to 2.8 percentage points (IDSR). Current in-year data continues this trend, with overall attendance at 90.8% and disadvantaged attendance at 87.6%. This improvement reflects the impact of strengthened attendance systems and shared expectations, which are being embedded further through the current strategy.

Behavioural outcomes show a similar pattern. Historic suspension rates were significantly above national figures, particularly for disadvantaged pupils (IDSR up to 2023–24). However, internal data for 2024–25 shows a substantial reduction in suspensions and very low levels of exclusion, with further improvement year to date. The most recent IDSR indicates no pupils attending alternative provision during the census period, compared to small numbers in previous years. This demonstrates that improved systems and inclusive practices are enabling the school to meet pupils' needs increasingly within mainstream provision. These approaches are being extended as part of the current strategy.

Despite these improvements in attendance, behaviour and engagement, academic outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4 remain a priority. Overall Attainment 8 is below national averages, and the disadvantage gap widened between 2024 and 2025 (IDSR). This is particularly evident in English, where outcomes declined in 2025 for both all pupils and disadvantaged pupils, with disadvantaged pupils moving from close to national averages in 2024 to below national in 2025 (IDSR). Maths outcomes are also below national averages, with a widening disadvantage gap, though less pronounced than in English.

There are, however, subject-level strengths which inform the refinement of the strategy. In Science, disadvantaged pupils' outcomes improved between 2024 and 2025, with the gap to national outcomes narrowing across both years (IDSR). A similar pattern is evident in Humanities, where disadvantaged pupils' outcomes improved year on year, moving from significantly below national figures in 2024 to below national but nonsignificant in 2025. Although some cohorts are small, these subjects demonstrate that targeted teaching approaches and effective intervention can improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. The current strategy builds on this evidence by applying successful teaching and learning practices more consistently, particularly in English and Maths, alongside a sustained focus on literacy.

Published destinations data for recent Year 11 cohorts are strong, with 100% securing sustained destinations reflecting the strengths of the CEIAG programme and support provided for individuals. The current strategy builds on this success to support more pupils, and particularly disadvantaged pupils, to target and succeed in securing sustained aspirational destinations that measurably reflect their potential.

Overall, the pupil premium strategy has been effective in strengthening attendance, behaviour and inclusion for disadvantaged pupils, as evidenced in both IDSR and internal data. These improvements are creating more secure conditions for learning. However, academic outcomes, particularly in English and overall attainment, have not yet improved sufficiently. The strategy has therefore been refined to consolidate improvements in engagement and conduct, while sharpening its focus on high quality teaching, literacy and curriculum access, drawing explicitly on evidence of effective practice within the school.

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)

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

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The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils

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.