

Pupil Premium Strategy Statement

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium funding to help improve the attainment of our disadvantaged students.

It outlines our pupil premium strategy, how we intend to spend the funding in this academic year and the effect that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

School Overview

Detail	
Number of students in school	1154
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible students	30.5%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2025-2028
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	November 2026
Statement authorised by	Alex Newton, Principal
Pupil premium lead	Paul Sutherland, Assistant Principal
Governor lead	Sam Keegan

Funding Overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£346,260
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£9,972,208

Part A: Pupil Premium Strategy Plan

Statement of Intent

- *What are your ultimate objectives for your disadvantaged pupils?*
- *How does your current pupil premium strategy plan work towards achieving those objectives?*

What are the **key principles** of your strategy plan?

It is our intention that all students, irrespective of background or socio-economic disadvantage, make good progress across the curriculum. All students should attain well to ensure they are able to move to the next phase of their education or training.

Torbay is an area with significant levels of social deprivation. The most recent index of multiple deprivation stated 14 areas of Torbay were in the 10% most deprived in the country: many of these are in the catchment of The Spires College. Torbay is in the 4% most deprived local authorities in the country for employment and income affecting children. The demand for social care across Torbay is high. The challenges of this can be found in schools. This is one of the reasons we place such emphasis on fostering a sense of **belonging** and providing **excellent pastoral care**: so we can remove barriers to achievement for all students. This is also key to improving **attendance**.

High quality teaching of a broad and rich **curriculum** is central to our College. Evidence shows that disadvantaged students benefit more than any others from excellent teaching. We place a high value on pedagogy, supporting teachers to continually develop their practice and ensuring we put the best teachers in front of our students. Teacher recruitment in the UK is in crisis, particularly in the secondary sector. As a College, we prioritise being the employer of choice to ensure we are able to do this. As with the majority of our strategies to improve progress for students at risk of underachievement, this focus benefits all students.

Many students from the College catchment area demonstrate a **cultural capital** deficit in their thinking and their work. As a result, it is vital that all subjects offer a rich curriculum that is underpinned by careful consideration of what knowledge needs to be delivered to enable all students to compete on an equal footing beyond the College. Another specific challenge facing students at the College is historic underachievement on entry. Whilst cohorts are moving closer to the national average in terms of prior attainment, the disadvantage gap remains. This is particularly noticeable in literacy levels of students joining Year 7 in 2024. As a result, **literacy improvement** continues to be an integral part of our work.

The focus of our strategy is to support disadvantaged students to make good progress across the full curriculum. The strategy also aims to support other vulnerable students at risk of underachievement, including those open to social care, regardless of whether or not they are in receipt of pupil premium funding.

Our approach aims to respond to the specific needs of students at the College and is rooted in **effective assessment**. The strategies we use to support students are evidence based, effectively implemented and their impact is regularly reviewed to ensure they are still the most effective methods of support.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Disadvantage gap in outcomes on entry to the College: some disadvantaged students already demonstrate less effective learning behaviours and disadvantaged students are more likely to have deficits in literacy skills.
2	Disadvantaged students are more likely to be absent from school, thus missing learning and wider opportunities.
3	A deficit in cultural capital and cultural literacy is evident in many students' work. This becomes more apparent as students get older and are required to demonstrate independent thought.
4	Disadvantaged students are often more negatively impacted by poor quality classroom practice than non-disadvantaged students. This can be seen through behaviours but also through an absence of learning.
5	Some disadvantaged students may have a less positive attitudes towards school than their peers. This may be reflected in behaviours but also in an absence of engagement with school life or in difficulties forming and maintaining relationships with school staff and/or peers.

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
Every student experiences very high-quality teaching consistently, across subjects and year groups, and thus makes good progress.	Student outcomes evidence that disadvantaged students make progress above the national average. Disadvantaged students progress successfully to aspirational destinations and feel academically confident to do so.
Disadvantaged students attend school regularly.	There is no gap in attendance figures between disadvantaged students and other students. Both groups' attendance is above the national average.
No student is inhibited by weak literacy skills.	NGRT tests indicate that all students have at least age-appropriate reading skills.
All students feel that they are a valued member of the College and engage full in the wider school experience.	Participation rates in extra-curricular activities for disadvantaged students are at least equal to other students. Disadvantaged students are equally represented in all wider opportunities, e.g. student leadership.

Activity in this Academic Year

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

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: [contribution to Lead Practitioner costs, CPD budget, KS3 assessments and tutor reading books] £110,500.

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Continuous development of the quality of teaching through the College's Teacher Development Cycle and CPD programme.	Characteristics of Effective Teacher Professional Development EEF	1,3,4
Recruit expert teachers to the College to support the professional development of others.	Teacher-professional-development.pdf	4, 5
Ongoing curriculum review and development.	Research for education inspection framework Closing the disadvantage gap Curriculum as the lever Dan Nicholls	3,4
Tutor reading programme for all students.	Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools EEF GL-Assessment.pdf	1,3
KS3 Progress Tests in English, Maths and Science.	The EEF Guide to the Pupil Premium Research to understand successful approaches to supporting the most academically able disadvantaged pupils DfE	1,4

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

Budgeted cost: [contribution to costs for Head of Literacy, designated teacher, Lexia, Brilliant Club] £50,500

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Targeted reading interventions for students identified as being significantly below SAS in KS3.	Reading comprehension strategies EEF Phonics EEF Lexia PowerUp Literacy Efficacy Research Lexia	1

Targeted literacy interventions for students identified as having wider literacy deficits.	Teaching Assistant Interventions EEF EEF blog: Improving whole-class reading in the secondary... EEF	1
Brilliant Club project for HPA students in Years 9 and 10.	Small group tuition EEF Programme Overview - Schools - The Brilliant Club PotentialForSuccess.pdf Research to understand successful approaches to supporting the most academically able disadvantaged pupils	1,2,3,5
Additional time allocated for Designated Teacher for Children in Care to support most vulnerable.		5

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

Budgeted cost: [contributions towards costs of attendance officer, pastoral team, inclusion team, A Star Attendance, residential trips, breakfast club and hardship fund] £214,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Dedicated attendance team led by SLT	Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)	2,5
Pastoral and Family Support Workers hold caseload for students and families struggling to engage with school	Parental engagement EEF	1,2,5
Early intervention for Year 7 to create sense of belonging, set expectations and establish strategies for academic catch-up (including Summer School and Residential)	Summer schools EEF Social and emotional learning EEF Behaviour interventions EEF	1,2,5
Improve oversight of extra-curricular offer, including student leadership, to ensure equality of participation	Arts participation EEF An Unequal Playing Field report.pdf	2,3,5
Inclusion Team to work with those students at risk of exclusion to reset learning behaviours	Behaviour interventions EEF	1,2,5
Free breakfast available to all students in receipt of FSM	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a81cd62e5274a2e8ab55e78/Evaluation_of_Breakfast_Clubs_-_Final_Report.pdf	2,5

Total budgeted cost: £ 375,000

Part B: Review of the Previous Academic Year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

The College's new pupil premium strategy began in 2025 and will run until 2028. The intended outcomes by the end of this period are:

- Every student experiences very high-quality teaching consistently, across subjects and year groups, and thus makes good progress. Improve reading and comprehension of disadvantaged students across KS3.
- Disadvantaged students attend school regularly.
- No student is inhibited by weak literacy skills.
- All students feel that they are a valued member of the College and engage full in the wider school experience.

Assessment of success:

Every student experiences very high-quality teaching consistently, across subjects and year groups, and thus makes good progress. Improve reading and comprehension of disadvantaged students across KS3.

Post-pandemic, the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students has increased. This has remained the case in 2025, however attainment of disadvantaged students at the College has improved and is now above those nationally in every measure. 31.7% of disadvantaged students achieved a 5 or more in English and maths compared to 25.6% nationally. The average attainment 8 score was 36.03, 1.13 points higher than nationally. Internal tracking suggests further improvement in the attainment 8 scores of disadvantaged students in 2026.

Disadvantaged students attend school regularly.

Last year the College's overall attendance continued the improvements since the covid pandemic; attendance was around the national average above the local authority average. In 2024 attendance of students on FSM was 0.2% above national and 7% above the local authority average.

No student is inhibited by weak literacy skills.

All year groups have SAS reading scores above the national average. Disadvantaged students in the older year groups have all made progress to the extent that the average SAS for each year group sits within the upper end of the 'average' band. The proportion of disadvantaged students with 'very high' reading scores increases year on year following students tests in Year 7.

All students feel that they are a valued member of the College and engage full in the wider school experience.

From the start of the 2025-26 academic year, attendance at extra-curricular clubs has improved for all students, including those who are disadvantaged. Attendance at extra-curricular clubs for disadvantaged students is in proportion with other students. A higher proportion of disadvantaged students are involved in student leadership roles than last year.

Summary evaluation

The intended outcome that has been the most challenging is to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged students at Key Stage 4. Evidence suggests that quality of teaching can have the most impact here and improvements are now making an impact on outcomes for all. Although outcomes data is disproportionately impacted by a relatively small number of students who have disengaged from school, attainment thresholds at 5+ are above national for the first time.

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
N/A	