

# Pupil premium strategy statement

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 effect that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

## School overview

Detail	Data
School name	Brook Mead Academy
Number of pupils in school	1098
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	29.5%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers ( <b>3 year plans are recommended</b> )	2025-2027
Date this statement was published	31/12/25
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2026
Statement authorised by	T Hague
Pupil premium lead	R Hindocha
Governor / Trustee lead	Suzanne Overton Edwards

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£321,425
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£321,425

## Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

### Statement of intent

As a new free school which privileges pupil premium scholars in its admission criteria, we have the highest aspirations for all our scholars but especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds as we know that if we get our provision right for the most vulnerable, it will be stronger for all. We believe that knowledge is power and access to powerful knowledge is the right of every child. We are determined that our disadvantaged scholars enjoy the riches of our ambitious and carefully crafted curriculum, inheriting all the powerful knowledge from the past to better shape the future by achieving strong outcomes at GCSE. Alongside this, we want to help them cultivate interests, attributes and dispositions which will enable them to thrive in unfamiliar contexts which is where their peers from more advantageous backgrounds often have the confidence to excel.

Our ultimate objective is to ensure that our disadvantaged scholars leave us with lots of rich knowledge which they can use, apply and manipulate fluently which is then translated into high levels of attainment, especially in Ebacc subjects at GCSE or appropriately challenging alternatives which have currency post 16. Our intention is that all pupils, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, make good progress and achieve high attainment across the curriculum, particularly in EBacc subjects. The focus of our pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve that goal, including progress for those who are already high attainers.

We will consider the challenges faced by vulnerable pupils, such as those who have a social worker and young carers. The activity we have outlined in this statement is also intended to support their needs, regardless of whether they are disadvantaged or not.

Our four school wide aims underpin our strategy for disadvantaged scholars:

1. **Powerful knowledge for all:** seen our rich and ambitious curriculum for each subject.
2. **Developing active citizens:** With a wide knowledge of the world, aligned with critical thinking skills, we want our scholars to take their place in society as informed citizens.
3. **Engineering and engendering success:** consistent school wide routines make for an orderly and predictable environment where all can thrive and learn.
4. **Feedback is a gift:** we always want to know how to become better so we ask others to give us kind and specific feedback to help us improve.

As a new Free School in its fifth year, we have got to know our founding cohort and the community we serve. We have a multiplicity of needs and starting points within our disadvantaged cohort: those new to English, those with SEND, those with high prior attainment, those just above the financial eligibility criteria but still vulnerable to underachievement through precarious family circumstances.

The plan is built upon the pillars of a rich well-crafted curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and a calm, orderly environment built upon consistently high expectations which benefit all learners but particularly those who need schools to be well structured and safe places to thrive in.

High-quality teaching is at the heart of our approach, with a focus on areas in which disadvantaged pupils require the most support. To this end, we have developed and consistently apply our Brook Mead Teaching and Learning framework, based on Rosenshine’s principles of direct instruction. This is proven to have the greatest impact on closing the disadvantage attainment gap and at the same time will benefit the non-disadvantaged pupils in our school. Implicit in the intended outcomes detailed below, is the intention that non-disadvantaged pupils’ attainment will be sustained and improved alongside progress for their disadvantaged peers.

In the original bid for the free school, we drew from research and examples from schools across the country and internationally. Key learning has therefore been designed into the operation of the school from the start, such as our longer school day, enrichment sessions for all, the teaching of Latin in year 7 and built-in fortnightly time for professional learning for staff.

It is the right of young person to benefit from a breadth of enriching experiences at school. We believe that a rich co-curricular offer should be taken up by ALL pupils, rather than the few who have the means or the knowledge to take up such offers.

Our approach will be responsive to common challenges and individual needs, rooted in robust diagnostic assessment, not assumptions about the impact of disadvantage. The approaches we have adopted complement each other to help pupils excel. To ensure they are effective we will:

- ensure disadvantaged pupils are challenged in the work that they’re set within our rich and carefully sequenced curriculum
- act early to intervene at the point need is identified
- adopt a whole school approach in which all staff take responsibility for disadvantaged pupils’ outcomes and raise expectations of what they can achieve.

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1.	The standardized vocabulary MIDYIS (University of Durham CEM) test conducted at the beginning each year shows that a high proportion of our disadvantaged cohort are weak in underlying <b>reading skills</b> . This is further confirmed in the GL NGRT assessment undertaken each year which shows that mean Standard Age Score for this group is significantly below the national average. We have a much higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the very low and below average bands. This has been borne out by

	further teacher observations. With an ambitious curriculum, reading skills are critical for access to all subjects.
2.	Teacher assessments show a delay in <b>underlying mathematical skills</b> with our disadvantaged cohort. This was confirmed by MIDYIS (University of Durham CEM) test conducted at the beginning of each year.
3.	As a new school in an area of high deprivation, it is even more important to establish a highly <b>structured and calm climate for learning</b> . We aim to ensure high expectations, consistency of routines, and high-quality teaching prevail to prevent a “within school effect” which impacts in a disproportionate way on disadvantaged pupils.
4.	Transition work with primary schools and discussions with parents have identified a greater prevalence of <b>social and emotional issues</b> since the pandemic for many disadvantaged pupils, such as anxiety, low mood (diagnosed by medical professionals) and low self-esteem. This has led to sometimes heightened behaviours which need addressing in school.
5.	Our disadvantaged scholars have access to fewer <b>enrichment opportunities</b> due to the recent cost of living pressures faced by families. Those new to the UK and seeking asylum without recourse to public funds also have less opportunity to take up enrichment activities. This is becoming apparent in subjects such as art, history and geography.
6.	Our <b>attendance</b> data indicates that attendance among disadvantaged pupils is lower than for non-disadvantaged pupils. Our assessments and observations indicate that absenteeism is negatively impacting disadvantaged pupils’ progress.
7.	Access to <b>technology and broadband</b> and support to complete homework. Our initial homework returns, consequences data and structured interviews with disadvantaged scholars shows that many face barriers to completing homework, particularly that which is set online.

## 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 <b>reading</b> decoding, fluency and comprehension among disadvantaged pupils across KS3.	<p>NGRT retests show an improvement in average score for disadvantaged pupils and the gap between them and other closing.</p> <p>Teachers noticing more disadvantaged pupils able to access their curriculum and this is evident in work sampling and in talking to scholars about what they have learnt and understood.</p>
Improved performance by disadvantaged scholars in maths assessments.	Internal tracking data shows disadvantaged pupils making good progress in the curriculum in maths and closing the gap with their more advantages peers.
A highly positive <b>school culture</b> where school wide routines are granular, taught and consistently applied in every classroom and learning time is maximised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school has high expectations for scholars’ behaviour and conduct. These expectations are commonly understood and applied consistently and fairly. This is reflected in scholars’ positive behaviour and conduct.</li> <li>All staff are united, empowered and skilled in upholding clear routines and expectations for the behaviour of pupils across all aspects of school life.</li> <li>Clear school wide routines in place, consistently implemented by all.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scholars' behaviour does not disrupt lessons, or the day-to-day life of the school as seen through monitoring of consequences data, including reduction in persistence of negative behaviours.</li> </ul>
Disadvantaged scholars targeted for <b>SEMH interventions</b> showing better self-regulation, better relationships with staff and peers, better motivation and higher scholarship grades in internal reporting or they have access to high quality alternative provision and are thriving there.	<p>Fewer incidents of SEMH impacting on learning evident in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>smaller disparity between the demerit and scholarship grades of disadvantaged pupils with SEMH and their non-disadvantaged peers.</li> <li>DA scholars with SEMH making good progress.</li> <li>qualitative data from scholar voice, parent interviews and teacher observations.</li> <li>Those on AP are attending and thriving.</li> </ul>
Disadvantaged scholars take part in a range of high-quality <b>extracurricular activities and enrichment</b> experiences, building their cultural and social capital and wider "soft skills."	<p>Range of high-quality enrichment activities offered and disadvantaged scholars take part in at least proportionate numbers to others.</p> <p>Our music scholarship programme enables disadvantaged scholars to take up instrument tuition and benefit from the well documented advantages which accrue from playing a musical instrument.</p>
To achieve and sustain <b>improved attendance</b> for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	<p>Sustained high attendance demonstrated in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the overall absence rate for all pupils being at least at national average and the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers being reduced by 2%.</li> <li>Overall attendance rate for disadvantaged scholars being higher than for disadvantaged scholars nationally and closer to the average for national others.</li> <li>the percentage of all pupils who are persistently absent being below national average and the figure among disadvantaged pupils being no more than 3% higher than their other peers.</li> </ul>

## Activity in this academic year

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

## Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £ 164569

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Purchase of standardised testing packages (MIDYIS, developed by University of Durham CEM and GL assessment suite) to help identify needs and target cohort with staff trained in interpretation and use of	<u>EEF Implementation Guidance Report 2019</u> recommends using a "robust diagnostic process" to define a problem" which the MIDYIS and GL tools enable us to do. They provide reliable insights into the specific strengths and weaknesses of each pupil to help ensure they receive the correct additional support through interventions or teacher instruction. MIDYIS has also been used successfully for many	1 and 2.

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<p>results to inform planning, teaching and feedback. Enhanced staffing in English from April 2025.</p>	<p>years at our main trust secondary school, enabling local comparisons of cohorts.</p>	
<p>High quality maths curriculum and homework platform.</p>	<p>EEF research reports tell us that high quality teaching is the most effective intervention for disadvantaged pupils. <a href="https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk">High-quality teaching   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a></p> <p>High quality teaching is necessary to implement the EEF research on improving teaching of maths. To this end, we have adapted a highly regarded Trust wide maths curriculum and bought into the Sparx maths homework platform. <a href="https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/EEF-Improving-Mathematics-in-Key-Stages-2-and-3-2022-Update.pdf">EEF-Improving-Mathematics-in-Key-Stages-2-and-3-2022-Update.pdf (d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net)</a></p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Fortnightly <b>professional learning</b> time during the school day to promote direct instruction pedagogy, understanding of cognitive load theory and consistent routines to ensure optimum conditions prevail; discovery-based pedagogy and low level disruption impact more highly on attainment of disadvantaged pupils. This also reduces in school variation with collaborative planning of a centralised curriculum with lessons planned to the detail. All staff receive <b>instructional coaching</b> once a fortnight to ensure we are all getting better and the highest quality teaching is pursued constantly in every room.</p>	<p>Most of the gap in progress between low-income pupils and their peers stems from differences in achievement between pupils in the same school, rather than differences between schools. These differences are influenced by ... variations in pupils' experiences of secondary school itself (such as lower teacher expectations for low-income pupils, or the impact of setting). <i>Low-income pupils' progress at secondary school 27 February 2017 Social Mobility Commission</i></p> <p>Use of Barak Rosenshine's Direct Instruction and John Sweller's work on cognitive load theory to inform teaching.</p> <p>Also, EEF research on high quality teaching "<i>Ensuring every teacher is supported in delivering high-quality teaching is essential to achieving the best outcomes for all pupils, particularly the most disadvantaged among them.</i>" <a href="https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk">High-quality teaching   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a></p>	<p>1, 2, 3</p>
<p>Promoting reading for all disadvantaged scholars through <b>universal tutor time reading</b>: a coherent school wide canon of powerful reading curated which builds cultural literacy and background knowledge where texts link to each other and with curriculum content in all subjects, with judicious balance between 'classics' and new voices, and information texts.</p>	<p>Daily tutor time reading facilitates a faster than 'normal practice' read of challenging whole texts and explicit teaching of comprehension can benefit poorer adolescent readers.</p> <p><i>'Just reading': the impact of a faster pace of reading narratives on the comprehension of poorer adolescent readers in English classrooms</i> <a href="#">Jo Westbrook, Julia Sutherland, Jane Oakhill, Susan Sullivan</a></p>	<p>1, 3.</p>
<p>Staffing <b>homework club</b>.</p>	<p>A homework club is staffed at some lunchtimes to ensure scholars are not held back by lack of IT and other resources at home. There is also morning and afterschool study support, a 7.45am -4.50pm offer.</p>	<p>1, 2, 7</p>

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	<i>Sutton Trust: Poorer Pupils Get Less Homework Help, 2017</i>	
Recruitment of Academic Mentors in English and maths for targeted study support.	To provide individual and small group tuition to improve outcomes and progress in English and maths. <i>Sutton Trust: Poorer Pupils Get Less Homework Help, 2017</i>	1, 2

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

Budgeted cost: £ 129438

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Recruitment of trained early years reading recovery teacher and purchase of Switch On programme to teach early reading skills to those with low reading ages on entry. Enhanced staffing in English from April 2025.	There is a wealth of evidence to support systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) in the teaching of reading. The DfE prescribes this approach for all primary schools. (See <i>Teaching the Foundations of literacy July 2021</i> ) We are also researching other effective ways to teach reading those well below chronological age.	1

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

Budgeted cost: £ 27418

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Support pupils' mental health with provision of on-site counsellor for five hours per week. 50% of referrals typically accessed by pupils who are disadvantaged.	Support of pupils' social and emotional well being is shown to have had a positive impact on the achievement of pupils eligible for pupil premium. <a href="https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk">Social and emotional learning   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a>	3, 6
Embedding principles of good practice set out in DfE's <a href="#">Improving School Attendance</a> advice. A <b>family support worker</b> has been appointed to ensure families are given resources they need to ensure their children can attend school and implement recommendations from DfE reports.	The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced persistent absence levels. <a href="https://www.gov.uk">Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>	6
Contingency fund for acute issues.	Based on our experiences and those of similar schools to ours, we have identified a need to set a small amount of funding aside to respond quickly to needs that have not yet been identified.	All

**Total budgeted cost:** £321.425

## Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year, 2024-25

### Pupil premium strategy outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the 2024 to 2025 academic year. The Pupil premium & recovery plan 2024-2025 was effective in ensuring that the common challenges and individual needs of disadvantaged scholars were met. The whole-school focus on a well sequenced and rich curriculum, a warm routines rich culture and high-quality teaching & learning along with individual targeted academic and non-academic support ensured that disadvantaged scholars made good progress.

#### **All benefitted from our longer school day.**

NB: Targets are aspirational, based on the top 1% for progress nationally.

### PP Scholars Progress – from 2024-25 DD3 – All Years

- Majority of PP Scholars making Exceptional Progress in Maths (32%), followed by Good Progress (31%)
- Majority of PP Scholars making Exceptional Progress in Art (32%)
- Majority of Scholars in Core PE making Exceptional Progress (36%)
- Majority of Scholars in Science (KS3 and Combined and Triple for KS4) making Exceptional Progress (32%), followed by Good Progress (30%)
- Majority of Scholars in English (KS3 and Lang and Lit for KS4) making Exceptional Progress (37%)
- Majority of Scholars in RE making Exceptional Progress (34%)

### PP vs. Non PP Scholars Progress – from 2024-25 DD3 – All Years

- Higher proportion of PP Scholars making Good Progress in Maths (31%) than Non PP Scholars (29%)
- Higher proportion of PP Scholars making Exceptional Progress in Art (32%) than Non PP Scholars (26%)
- Higher proportion of PP Scholars making Exceptional Progress in Core PE (36%) than Non PP Scholars (27%)
- Higher proportion of PP Scholars making Good Progress in Science Subjects (30%) than Non PP Scholars (29%)
- Higher proportion of PP Scholars making Exceptional Progress in English Subjects (37%) than Non PP Scholars (36%)

### Year 11 PP Attainment vs. Others

- PP and non PP in line for 9-7 for English Language (13.8%) than Non PP (13.5%)
- Higher Proportion achieve 9-7 for Physics (38.9%) than Non PP (35.7%)
- Higher Proportion achieve 9-7 for Chemistry (33.3%) than Non PP (26.2%)
- Higher Proportion achieve 9-7 for Computer Science (33.3%) than Non PP (31%)
- Higher Proportion achieve 9-7 for Music (50%) than Non PP (40%)
- Higher Proportion achieve 9-5 for Biology (100%) than Non PP (95.2%)
- Higher Proportion achieve 9-5 for Chemistry (94.4%) than Non PP (90.5%)
- Higher Proportion achieve 9-5 for Physics (94.4%) than Non PP (90.5%)
- Higher Proportion achieve 9-5 for GCSE PE (88.9%) than Non PP (84.2%)

## Year 11 PP Attainment vs. 2024 PP National

- DD3 2024-25 Yr 10 Attainment 8 = 42.13  
National 2024 = 34.6  
7.53 Greater than National
- DD3 2024-25 Yr 10 EBACC APS = 4.02  
National 2024 = 2.99  
1.03 Greater than National
- DD3 2024-25 Yr 10 English & Maths 4+ = 47.8%  
National 2024 = 43.4%  
4.4% Greater than National
- DD3 2024-25 Yr 10 English & Maths 5+ = 31.9%  
National 2024 = 25.8%  
6.1% Greater than National
- DD3 2024-25 Yr 10 EBACC 5+ = 23.2%  
National 2024 = 8%  
15.2% Greater than National
- DD3 2024-25 Yr 10 EBACC 4+ = 36.2%  
National 2024 = 12.9%  
23.3% Greater than National
- DD3 2024-25 Yr 10 EBACC Entry = 75.4%  
National 2024 = 28.6%  
46.8% Greater than National

## PP Attendance & Persistent Absence

- 2024-25 PP Attendance = 91.0% - 4.7% higher than the 2024-25 National for FSM (86.3%) & only 0.4% lower than the 2024-25 National for all (91.4%) – FSM is most suitable National as no national for PP/DA
- 2024-25 PP Persistent Absence = 30.0% - 11.2% better than the FSM National for 2024-25 of 41.2%

Reading Progress:

NGRT progress – October 2025

We use the GL NGRT assessment which enables national bench marking against their large sample. The national mean SAS is 100.

Our current year 11 scholars were last tested in April 2024. The mean SAS for those eligible for FSM rose from 94.1 to 99.5 bringing them closer to the national mean SAS.

In our current year 10, they were last tested in April 2025. The mean SAS for Pupil Premium scholars rose from 94.5 to 98.8.

In our current year 9 there was a slight dip in the mean SAS of Pupil Premium scholars from 104.9 to 102.9, however, they are still above the national mean score of 100. This is attributed to a rise in numbers in this year group with many scholars who are new to English.

Our current year 8 scholars show a mean of 96.3, below the whole cohort score of 101.8. They will be tested again this academic year.

Our new year 7 scholars have recently been tested and are showing a whole cohort score of 106.2. Scholars who are eligible for free school meals have a mean SAS of 102.8 compared to 107.4 for those who are not pupil premium.

The **music scholarship** continues to be promoted to those eligible for FSM to ensure that they are able to benefit from individual lessons on classical instruments and ensemble playing with the loan of an instrument, all costs of tuition paid for and all examination fees paid for. Of the 57 pupils enrolled, 12 are eligible for FSM.

All disadvantaged scholars have participated in **tutor time reading aloud** and have learnt our school poem, The Brook by Tennyson and Hope by Emily Dickinson off by heart and Daffodils by W Wordsworth.

All disadvantaged scholars have taken part in **six extracurricular activities** sustained over a term each as part of our extended school day.

**Library borrowing data** shows that all disadvantaged scholars borrowed book each term.

All have benefited from our free Breakfast Club each morning.

**Homework Club** continued to operate and was open to all scholars. This was run by teachers during lunchtimes, where access to Chromebooks is available. The need for a daily homework club has arisen from the proportion of scholars:

- that do not have an English-speaking parent to help them with homework.
- that do not have a device/Wi-Fi at home, or share a device with a sibling, or only use a mobile phone to complete homework.
- who have accumulated detentions due to incomplete homework.

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- New scholars who have joined the school late and need help to catch up.

## Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider

## Service pupil premium funding (optional)

Measure	Details
How did you spend your service pupil premium allocation last academic year?	N/A
What was the impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils?	N/A

## Further information (optional)

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