

Pupil premium strategy statement – John Taylor Free 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	1319
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	22.6% (299)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2024-2025 2025-2026 2026-2027
Date this statement was published	19 th December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2026
Statement authorised by	Sophie Martin (Head Teacher)
Pupil premium lead	Jodie Bassett
Governor / Trustee lead	Louise Joseph

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£294,030
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
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>	£294,030

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intention is that all pupils, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, can succeed and thrive. We want students to make good progress and achieve well across the curriculum in all 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.

Recognizing the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we will continue to address the challenges faced by a broader range of vulnerable pupils, including those with a social worker and those who are Looked After. We have seen a notable increase in the number of Looked After children choosing our school. The activities outlined in this statement are designed to support their needs, regardless of whether they are disadvantaged.

High-quality teaching is at the heart of our approach, with deliberately planned professional learning focussing on the evidence-based strategies that can support the disadvantaged. High-quality teaching has been proven to have the greatest impact on narrowing 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.

Our strategy is also integral to wider school plan for education recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic in its targeted support through Pastoral intervention for pupils whose education has been worse affected, including non-disadvantaged pupils. This includes attendance, well-being and behaviour for learning.

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 adopted complement each other to help pupils excel. To ensure they are effective we will:

- Ensure disadvantaged pupils are challenged in the work they are set and that this work is personalised to need.
- Act early to intervene at the point need is identified.
- Ensure all pupils receive quality-first teaching.
- Adopt a whole school approach in which all staff take responsibility for disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and raise expectations of what they can achieve.
- Increase attendance of our disadvantaged cohort.
- Reduce persistent absent rates among the disadvantaged cohort.
- Increase parental engagement among the disadvantaged cohort.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	In the last three years, the school has had growing numbers of students eligible for Pupil Premium. The number of students eligible for Pupil Premium in the Year 7 cohort are above national average and we expect these to grow in future cohorts. As the number increases, the school is required to provide more tailored support, such as including additional tutoring and intervention, to close the attainment gap. Teachers and staff may face increased pressure to meet the diverse needs of students.
2	<p>The maths attainment of disadvantaged pupils is generally lower than that of their peers and teacher diagnostic assessments suggest that many pupils particularly struggle with measures and statistics.</p> <p>Assessments on entry to current year 7 indicate that 6% of our disadvantaged pupils arrive below-age related expectations (score of less than 88) compared to 11% of their non-disadvantaged peers, a gap of 13%. Subsequent internal and external (where available) assessments show that this gap narrows to during pupils' time at KS3 (based on assessments from the end of Year 9 2024-2025), but attainment gap remains. This gap is present still in KS4 where 59.6% of disadvantaged students achieve a grade 4 or above, compared to 75.3% of their non-disadvantaged peers.</p>
3	<p>Assessments, observations and discussion with KS3 pupils indicate that disadvantaged pupils generally have lower levels of reading comprehension than their peers. This impacts their progress in all subjects.</p> <p>On entry to year 7, 6% disadvantaged pupils arrive below-age related expectations compared to 1% of their non-disadvantaged peers, a gap of 6%. Further internal GL assessment data shows that the gap for students entering in year 7 (25/26) below-age related expectations are 21% (disadvantaged) compared to 11% (non-disadvantaged). This gap is narrowed significantly into KS4 where 70.2% of disadvantaged students achieve a grade 4 or above, compared to 77.5% of their non-disadvantaged peers.</p>
4	<p>Our attendance data in the last academic year stated that attendance among disadvantaged pupils had been on average 5% lower than for non-disadvantaged pupils. 40.5% of disadvantaged pupils have been 'persistently absent' compared to 21% of non-disadvantaged pupils during that period.</p> <p>Our assessment (including Well-being survey), observations and discussions with pupils and families have identified social and emotional issues for many pupils has been a barrier to school attendance, including anxiety, depression (diagnosed by 4 medical professionals) and low self-esteem. This is partly driven by concern about catching up lost learning, exams and prospects. These challenges particularly affect disadvantaged pupils, including their attainment.</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
To lessen the gaps between PP and non-PP learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will have received personalised interventions. Stakeholder voice is positive and show students feel they are thriving academically. Triangulated data shows gaps between PP students and their peers are diminishing. This may include assessments in class and monitored intervention sessions. It may also take account of academic grades, attitude to learning and attendance. 1.5 hours of Professional Learning per week focusses on effective and innovative teaching and learning strategies with monitoring and reviews supporting the effectiveness.
To remove barriers to learning inside and outside the classroom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are equipped for lessons. Student engagement in homework between PP and non-PP students is comparable. Students have access to revision materials. Students have access to technology. Permanently staffed library: open before, during and after school. Enrichment and revision sessions are offered to engage all learners outside of structured classroom times. Range of Alternative Provision is provided, including OWL, Supported Study and the Engaged Programme. Parental engagement, particularly at parents' evenings, has increased and is comparable to non-PP families.
To ensure that aspirations are high for students and students are successful in gaining appropriate provision for Post-16.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective programme of CEIAG is in the place across all year groups and opportunities for work experience in Year 10. Engagement in Career's Fair and visits to Higher Education centres. Engagement in Enrichment activities, both in school and out of school, for PP students is in line with non-PP students e.g. homework clubs, Duke of Edinburgh, Scholar's Club, Extended Project Qualification. Parent engagement is comparable for PP/ non-PP students e.g. open evenings, celebration evenings, parents' evenings.
The levels of attendance between PP and non-PP learners show negligible differences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance rates are monitored and comparable between PP and non-PP students. Personal Tutor communication with home is frequent, supportive and purposeful.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance team know the barriers that impact attendance and employ strategies to remove these. • Parents know the impact of attendance on pupils' attainment and are communicated to regularly by the attendance team when their child's attendance becomes a concern.
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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: £ 147,015

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Developing excellent practice across all teachers and in all pupils.</p> <p>This will involve ongoing teacher training and support our increased PPA time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High quality, personalised teaching and learning across the school evidence in Learning Evaluations. - Bespoke programmes for based on individual teacher need, e.g. ITTs, ECTs, Returning to Teaching. - All Professional Learning is research informed, for example based on EEF guidance, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Feedback, o Putting Evidence to Work o Metacognition - Deliberately planned and reviewed professional learning for 1.5 hours per week with a differing half termly focus- reviewed via Schoolip on a weekly basis and feedback for improvements. <p>Effective Professional Development EEF</p>	1,2 & 3
<p>Enhancement of our maths teaching and curriculum planning in line with DfE KS3 and EEF guidance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching of Mathematics, drawing on evidence-based approaches: Teaching mathematics at key stage 3 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) 	1 & 2

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To teach maths well, teachers need to assess pupils' prior knowledge and understanding effectively, employ manipulatives and representations, teach problem solving strategies, and help pupils to develop more complex mental models: <p>Improving Mathematics in Key Stages 2 and 3 EEF</p>	
<p>Improving literacy in all subject areas in line with recommendations in the EEF Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools guidance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Half termly data from last academic year showing consistent improvement. - GL Assessments showing that the year group was 'above' average. - Acquiring disciplinary literacy is key for students as they learn new, more complex concepts in each subject: Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools - Reading comprehension, vocabulary and other literacy skills are heavily linked with attainment in maths and English: - word-gap.pdf (oup.com.cn) 	1 & 3

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

Budgeted cost: £ 19,150

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Adopting a targeted reciprocal teaching programme as a reading intervention for disadvantaged pupils who need additional help to comprehend texts and address vocabulary gaps.</p> <p><i>Reading mentors for pupils with a KS2 Reading Score of less than 100.</i></p>	<p>Reading comprehension strategies can have a positive impact on pupils' ability to understand a text, and this is particularly the case when interventions are delivered over a shorter timespan:</p> <p>Reading comprehension strategies Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF</p>	3

Personalised pathways and wider curriculum choice to maintain curriculum inclusivity.	A personalised approach and an inclusive curriculum with a broad range of subjects is essential to ensure all pupils have the chance to succeed.	1
<p>Adopting a targeted numeracy intervention program for disadvantaged pupils who need additional help address numeracy gaps.</p> <p><i>Numeracy mentors for pupils with a KS2 Reading Score of less than 90.</i></p>	<p>Mentoring can build trust, self-confidence and motivation, which is extremely valuable for disadvantaged students who are disengaged.</p> <p>Mathematics in Key Stages 3 and 4 EEF</p> <p>Mentoring EEF</p>	2

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

Budgeted cost: £ 19,150

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Providing equipment and uniform for students to ensure that they can take full part in lessons and extend their learning outside of the classroom.	Based on our experiences and stakeholder voice, students who have the necessary equipment and uniform feel a part of the school community.	4
<p>Embedding principles of good practice set out in DfE's Improving School Attendance advice.</p> <p>Staff will get training and release time to develop and implement new procedures. Newly appointed attendance/support officers to improve attendance. The Family</p>	The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced persistent absence levels.	4

Liaison Officer helps to tackle underachievement by working in partnership with families, the school and pupils.		
To establish an effective peer-tutoring programme that supports the social and personal development of pupils and boost their self- confidence and motivation for learning.	<p>Peer tutoring approaches have been shown to have a positive impact on learning, with an average positive effect equivalent to approximately five additional months' progress within one academic year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Peer Educators Programme o Forest Schools o Engage Programme <p>Peer tutoring EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p>	1, 2, 3 & 4

Total budgeted cost: £ 294,030

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

We have analysed the performance of our school's disadvantaged pupils during the 2024/25 academic year using GL Assessment performance data, KS4 assessment data and our own internal assessments.

For 2025, the average English scores of students in Year 9 in the GL Assessments was 104.8, however disadvantaged students did not achieve as high as their non-disadvantaged peers. The average Maths scores of students GL Assessments was 104.8, however again disadvantaged students did not achieve as high as their non-disadvantaged peers. GL average scores for all students nationally is set at 100, so by way of comparator our disadvantaged cohort are achieving less than the non-disadvantaged cohort within the school and against the national average.

The Attainment 8 score of our non-disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 was 47.71 and the Attainment 8 score for the disadvantaged was 40.84 a difference of 6.9 (which is an improved gap from previous year of 12.2). The Progress 8 score of our non-disadvantaged pupils was 0.04 compared to 0.23 of disadvantaged pupils. This shows that despite the attainment gap showing a difference, disadvantaged students are making good progress, and in terms of Progress 8 are exceeding non-disadvantaged. In maths, the average point score for non-disadvantaged pupils was 4.78 and 3.96 for disadvantaged pupils, indicating the gap in maths attainment at KS4 grows as addressed in challenge 2. In English, the average Attainment 8 grade for non-disadvantaged pupils was 5.09 and 4.62 for disadvantaged pupils.

Our analysis suggests that the reason for this is primarily the ongoing impact of COVID-19, and this is reflective of national figures demonstrating the additional impact of the pandemic on disadvantaged pupils. However, we also identified that some of the approaches we used to boost outcomes for disadvantaged pupils had a big impact on the cohort and this will be continued into 2025/2026.

EBacc entry for disadvantaged pupils was 74.5% in Year 11 which was below that for non-disadvantaged pupils (91.6%), but significantly higher than national figures (40.4%).

Absence among disadvantaged pupils was 5% higher than their peers in 2024/25, with disadvantaged attendance at 86.6% and non-disadvantaged at 91.7%. The attendance figure for disadvantaged was above the FFT national figure of 85.4% suggesting that our attendance intervention and strategies had a positive impact on our disadvantaged students. Specifically,

our current (25/26) YTD figures for disadvantaged pupils are 1.1% higher than the same time last year showing the sustained effort and progress of our attendance strategies.

Persistent absence of disadvantaged was 20% higher than non-disadvantaged students in 2024/2025. We recognised that this gap was large which is why raising the attendance of our disadvantaged pupils, and the emphasis on parental engagement within each activity, has continued as a focus in our current plan. It accounts for our responsive recruitment drive for wellbeing, attendance, inclusion support and home links.

Our assessments demonstrated that pupil behaviour declined last year, with challenges around wellbeing and mental health remaining significantly higher than before the pandemic. The impact on disadvantaged pupils has been particularly acute. Last years' figures indicated that there were 23.5 behaviour events per pupil across the school, but 37.06 behaviour events per pupil for the disadvantaged. This increase could be a result of our new, more robust behaviour system that now accounts for more negative events, including incomplete homework, missing equipment and uniform. However, our analysis indicates that a higher proportion of negative events for disadvantaged students are being issued for disruptive behaviour.

We have reviewed our strategy plan and made changes to how we intend to use some of our budget this academic year, as set out in the Activity in This Academic Year section above. We have allowed ourselves two academic years to ensure that sufficient time is given to allow for the impact, particularly for roles that were only established last year. This will be reviewed in July 2026.

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

