

Pupil Premium Strategy Statement 2025

This document reflects year 2 of a three-year strategy.

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	Noel-Baker Academy
Number of pupils in school	1220
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	48% (590)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2024/25 (Year 1) – 2026/27 (Year 3)
Date this statement was published	September 2025
Last reviewed	April 2025
Statement authorised by	Paul Greenough (Headteacher)
Pupil premium lead	Ryan Oliver (Assistant Headteacher)
Governor / Trustee lead	Carolyn Marriott (Chair of Governors)

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£638,550
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
Total budget for this academic year If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year	£638,550

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At Noel-Baker Academy, we believe that all children are entitled to the very best breadth and depth of provision irrespective of their background and are supported to make excellent progress.

All students follow an ambitious and coherently planned knowledge rich curriculum that is well sequenced and supported by a varied and rich co-curricular offer, which together provides them with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.

Our ultimate objective is that no child is left behind socially or academically because of disadvantage. We strive to remove barriers to learning whilst raising lifelong aspirations and narrowing the attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged counterparts.

We believe educational disadvantage includes all pupils whose achievement is at risk because of the impact of their social and economic circumstances. These circumstances can include factors such as aspiration, parental engagement, the development of language skill and cultural knowledge, as well as health and welfare considerations like diet, emotional support and living conditions. We therefore take educational disadvantage to incorporate all pupils who are vulnerable, including children with social workers and young carers, whether or not they are in receipt of the Pupil Premium, and whether or not they are classified as high or low prior attaining.

Our Pupil Premium Strategy aims to address the main barriers our students face and through rigorous tracking, careful planning and targeted support and intervention, provide all students the access and opportunities to enjoy academic success and more. To achieve this, it is important that all of our teaching, pastoral and support staff understand the challenges that some of our students face, and they recognise their responsibility in addressing them.

The Pupil Premium Strategy underpins our Academy Improvement Plan priorities:

- Improve pupil behaviour and engagement
- Improve the quality of teaching
- Improve attendance and punctuality

To achieve our priorities, we will focus on the following:

- Provide all teachers with high quality personalised CPD to ensure that all pupils access effective quality first teaching across the Academy. Research suggests that teaching is the greatest lever in improving outcomes.
- Provide targeted intervention and support to quickly address identified gaps in learning, especially in addressing low literacy levels which is a limiting factor on students being able to access the curriculum.
- Provide opportunities for all pupils to participate in enrichment activities.
- Provide appropriate social, emotional and mental health support to enable pupils to access learning within and beyond the classroom and to develop resilience and ability to look after their own MHWB.

We regularly gather pupil and parent voice to inform our understanding of barriers to learning. This aligns with EEF and DfE guidance, which highlights that listening to pupils and families strengthens engagement, informs teaching, and supports targeted interventions for disadvantaged learners.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p>Low levels of literacy</p> <p>Baseline assessments, learning walks, observations and discussions with pupils, shows that disadvantaged pupils have greater challenges than their non-disadvantaged peers with levels of literacy and vocabulary.</p> <p>Standardised reading and baseline assessments, observational data from classroom visits and discussions with pupils indicate that disadvantaged pupils' reading fluency and comprehension is weaker than their non-disadvantaged peers.</p>
2	<p>Low attendance of disadvantaged pupils</p> <p>Since the Covid pandemic, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, for a variety of reasons, has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. Leaders have taken steps to address the non-attendance of individuals and groups of pupils.</p>
3	<p>Lower Self-Study Completion rates</p> <p>Increasingly disadvantaged pupils are completing more self-study than they have in the past. Students have access to weekly self-study tasks to retrieve knowledge. However, there is still a completion gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers.</p> <p>Reflections from staff, pupils and families suggest that challenges of physical space, cognitive ability, parental engagement and independent study habits prevent them from completing work on a regular basis and to a high enough standard to actually improve their learning.</p>
4	<p>Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH)</p> <p>The academy's underpinning performance data shows a clear rise in social and emotional issues for a significant minority of pupils, in particular around mental health issues of anxiety and low self-esteem.</p> <p>These challenges particularly affect disadvantaged pupils and are having an impact on their levels of academic attainment which results in some lesson avoidance and some disengagement.</p>

5	<p>Underachievement at Key Stage 4 (KS4)</p> <p>Overall, performance data is lower for disadvantaged pupils than for non-disadvantaged pupils in most subjects.</p> <p>The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers for attainment 8 persists.</p>
6	<p>Engagement and motivation concerns</p> <p>Quality assurance reveals some disadvantaged pupils are reluctant to fully participate in their learning. For example, taking longer to settle to activities, or giving up too easily when asked questions or carrying out independent practice.</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
<p>Improve literacy levels (reading, writing and oracy) so that pupils are able to access the whole curriculum.</p>	<p>25/26 evidence on improved literacy to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reading assessments demonstrate that the percentage of students reading below their chronological age will continue to decrease. • the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged closes year on year. • only a small disparity between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils on standardised reading assessments. • attainment for disadvantaged pupils in GCSE English Language is in line with non-disadvantaged pupils.
<p>Improve attendance levels and to ensure that attendance of disadvantaged students is in line with non-disadvantaged students.</p>	<p>25/26 evidence on improved attendance to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disadvantaged students will achieve, or exceed, attendance percentages in line with national averages. • the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers will close. • persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils no more than 20% • severe absence rates among disadvantaged pupils no more than 3%
<p>Provide meaningful support to pupils with Social Emotional Mental Health problems and achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.</p>	<p>25/26 evidence on improved wellbeing to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • qualitative data from pupil voice, pupil and parent surveys and teacher observations focusing on inclusion and a sense of belonging. • a significant increase in participation in enrichment activities, particularly among disadvantaged pupils.
<p>High level of participation in learning in all lessons across the academy.</p>	<p>25/26 evidence on increased learning participation to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quantitative data from lesson observations • survey results from pupils and staff • book reviews, semi-structured pupil interviews

<p>High levels of independent learning through self-study</p>	<p>25/26 evidence on independent learning to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quantitative data homework completion • survey data about all pupils' study habits
<p>Improved attainment among disadvantaged pupils across the curriculum at the end of KS4 and improved progress for students at KS3.</p>	<p>25/26 evidence on improved outcomes to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged will close year on year. • progress and attainment increasing each year for disadvantaged students (when progress measure become available).

Activity in this academic year (2025-2026)

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

Teaching

Budgeted cost: £230,450

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Ensure all teaching and pastoral staff understand the challenges of educational disadvantage and how to meet them in their role.</p> <p>Provide professional development so all staff understand the challenges and the school's strategy.</p>	<p>Evidence from the EEF Implementation Guidance Report and behavioural science suggests underlying values and beliefs need changing to make sustained changes to human behaviour, in this case to teachers' practice in the classroom.</p>	<p>1,2,3,4,5,6</p>
<p>Personalised CPD for teaching staff through Instructional coaching.</p> <p>We will use regular observation and feedback cycles based on instructional coaching to develop teachers' ability to present new material effectively, model and guide high quality independent practice.</p>	<p>EEF research suggests improved feedback may lead to pupil progress gains of up to 8 months.</p> <p>Sutton Trust 2011 report states that the effects of high-quality teaching are especially significant for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p>	<p>1 and 5</p>
<p>Monitor, develop and improve the quality of teaching and learning to ensure professional development is targeted to meet the needs of staff through whole-school and faculty-based weekly training sessions</p>	<p>Evidence that focusing on professional development makes an impact on outcomes is provided by the EEF Guidance Report on Effective Professional Development</p>	<p>2, 5 and 6</p>

<p>Strengthen Teaching and Learning capacity by recruiting additional Trust Leads and deploying them to spend substantial time at Noel-Baker, focusing on staff development and the improvement of classroom practice.</p>	<p>Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) states that improving the quality of teaching is the most effective lever for raising pupil outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Strengthening classroom practice has a greater impact on learning than any other school-level intervention.</p>	<p>5 and 6</p>
<p>Develop and improve staff understanding of social, emotional and mental health issues through effective professional development.</p>	<p>Research suggests teachers want training on how to identify and provide early support for students who are struggling, without taking on the perceived role of a therapist. It also suggests the strong need for practical, interactive and expert-led training that provides resources that can be adapted to individual settings.</p> <p>Lucas Shelemy, Kate Harvey & Polly Waite (2019) 'Supporting students' mental health in schools: what do teachers want and need?' <i>Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties</i>, 24:1, 100-116, DOI: 10.1080/13632752.2019.1582742 (https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13632752.2019.1582742)</p>	<p>4,5 and 6</p>
<p>Introduce whole school strategies and improve the subject-specific teaching and support of reading, writing and oracy in all lessons.</p> <p>We will focus on the development of oracy and the teaching of reading and vocabulary first. We will use professional development time to develop teachers' knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Increase the amount of literacy intervention on offer to pupils who are significantly behind their chronological Reading Age</p>	<p>Acquiring disciplinary literacy is key for students as they learn new, more complex concepts in each subject: Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools</p> <p>There is significant evidence that improving pupils' reading comprehension and vocabulary skills impacts attainment at GCSE.</p> <p>EEF recommends that teachers in every subject should provide explicit vocabulary instruction to help students access and use academic language.</p> <p>EEF evidence shows that improving literacy has the biggest impact on disadvantaged pupils; therefore, literacy underpins our strategy.</p>	<p>1,2,3,4,5.6</p>

Purchase of standardised diagnostic assessments.	Standardised tests can 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: Standardised tests Assessing and Monitoring Pupil Progress Education Endowment Foundation EEF	1,4,5,6
SIMS/Class Charts/SISRA	Data platform allows all stakeholders to engage in students' data having it all in one place to support teachers to identify trends/patterns to support the children they teach.	5
All pupils in Years 7-10 experience high quality reading in tutor time to develop their vocabulary knowledge and improve their reading ability. For January 2026 Year 7 students will begin Starling Literacy Programme every morning.	Improving reading comprehension, vocabulary development and fluent reading are strongly correlated to attainment outcomes at GCSE.	1,5,6

Targeted academic support

Budgeted cost: £128,500

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Literacy interventions for low attaining disadvantaged pupils.	<p>EEF research indicates that the average impact of the deployment of teaching assistants is about an additional four months' progress over the course of a year.</p> <p>EEF research indicates that one to one tuition can be effective, providing approximately five additional months' progress on average.</p>	1, 2 and 4
Recruitment of a team of Intervention Leads who will run the additional intervention to support student's progress.	National Literacy Trust - Secondary School Literacy Research and Policy Guide	1,2 and 4
Run a targeted Direct Instruction intervention group for English in years 7 up until Christmas. This is an intense programme that focuses on developing pupils' basic knowledge and fluency so that pupils can access the main curriculums in English.	Internal evidence that DI groups develop core knowledge and skills. Regular feedback each lesson is a key feature of this intervention. See evidence in the EEF Toolkit Feedback about the impact of regular feedback on pupil learning.	1,5 and 6

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

Budgeted cost: £279,600

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Revised staffing structure within behaviour support team to increase capacity for early intervention and restorative practice. Focus upon identifying, understanding and addressing causes of disengagement.</p>	<p>Disadvantaged students are 4 x more likely to be excluded (Peter Humphries Senior HMI Sec Ed Pupil Premium Conference: 23/3/2018)</p> <p>Working effectively with children and their families to shape support and provide an appropriate curriculum to meet their needs will avoid this.</p>	1,4 and 6
<p>Revised staffing structure within Pastoral team (move from Heads of House to Heads of Year with a designated SLT link) team to develop a more effective home-school partnership to work collaboratively in the best interest of the child.</p>		2, 3, 4, 5 and 6
<p>Establishment of EBSA provision to support those children with barriers to attendance to re-engage with school.</p>		3, 4, 5 and 6

Total budgeted cost:

	Budgeted cost
Teaching	£230,450
Targeted academic support	£128,500
Wider strategies	£279,600
Total budgeted cost	£638,550

Monitoring and Implementation

- The strategy will be reviewed **termly** by the Pupil Premium Lead.
- PP strategy reviewed termly by link governor and reported to all Governors.
- Progress will be reviewed termly through SLT PP meetings.
- Data dashboards (behaviour, attendance, data points, literacy, SEMH) will inform any responsive adjustments.
- Progress against targets (literacy, attendance, SEMH, independent learning, attainment) will be monitored using:
 - Standardised reading tests (NGRT, GCSE outcomes).
 - Attendance and persistent absence data.
 - Behaviour logs and SEMH referrals.
 - Self-study completion rates and quality assurance.
- **Adaptations** will be made promptly if interventions are not showing measurable impact. For example, if literacy interventions are not accelerating progress after one term, alternative evidence-based approaches will be trialled. Where interventions are not demonstrating measurable impact within a term, provision will be adapted promptly, with rationale recorded in the PP monitoring log
- Professional development will be ongoing, taking into consideration the 'Effective Professional Development Guidance Report' produced by the EEF with all relevant staff.

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the 2024-25 academic year.

Headlines

The 2025 outcomes indicate that the school continues to make progress in securing improved attainment and progress for all pupils, with particular strengths evident in Maths and English compared with previous years. The overall Attainment 8 score (3.7) shows a steady improvement on 2024 outcomes, and the proportion of pupils achieving the Basics (4+) and Basics (5+) thresholds has also increased.

For Pupil Premium (PP) learners, attainment remains below that of their peers, reflecting the ongoing national picture. However, there are encouraging signs of improvement, particularly in the Maths 4+ measure (43.7%) and a broadly stable trend in English outcomes over time (4+ 50.60%). This suggests that targeted teaching and intervention strategies are having a positive impact in securing foundational understanding for a larger proportion of disadvantaged learners.

Despite this progress, gaps remain between PP and non-PP pupils across most key indicators. The largest variations are seen in the Basics 4+/5+ measures and the Attainment 8 (Maths) element, where further work is needed to ensure consistency of progress and outcomes. These gaps highlight the importance of continued focus on early identification, precision teaching, and responsive intervention for disadvantaged pupils.

KS3

The school internal assessment model at KS3 for 2024-2025 remained the same as the previous academic year. The school's internal assessment policy is being developed for 2025-26 as we move towards an aligned assessment model. We believe our new assessment model will allow us more reliability to identify the reasons for these issues and plan for intervention. Our new CPD model will support teachers in planning and adaptive for those who find learning the hardest.

Reading Age (RA) data

Reading assessment data indicates that while overall reading standards across the academy have improved slightly year on year, disadvantaged students continue to perform below their non-disadvantaged peers in terms of chronological reading age and standardised scores.

The average SAS score for 2024/25 is 100.4, representing a small improvement from 99.7 in 2023/24 (+0.7), demonstrating overall positive movement in whole-school reading attainment. However, a gap remains between FSM (99.1) and non-FSM (101.2) students. Although this difference is modest, it reflects a persistent pattern where disadvantaged students, on average, have lower reading ages than their peers. The average reading age

gap of approximately 4 points is most notable among higher-ability students (those with an SAS of 115+), suggesting that stretching and challenging confident PP readers remains an area for focus.

The school continues to prioritise literacy as a key driver for equity and progress. Pupils have structured access to NBA Reads, a timetabled reading programme designed to develop fluency, comprehension, and engagement with texts. Targeted intervention through Direct Instruction has been highly effective: students participating in this literacy support programme made an average of 27 months' progress in reading age over a 10-month period, with approximately 68% of this group identified as Pupil Premium.

This evidence demonstrates that while attainment gaps persist, intervention and structured reading programmes are having a measurable impact, particularly for the weakest readers.

Quality of teaching learning and feedback in lessons.

Teachers and leaders receive ongoing training in the development of their subject specific curricula within faculty meetings and through whole school and cross-trust professional development. Sequences of learning have continued to be reviewed, refined and aligned where appropriate across the trust secondary schools. This includes specific training on the importance of these documents and their identification of the component and composite knowledge that will be learned by all pupils.

Quality assurance (QA) has taken place by the trust to ensure effectiveness. All students are now being taught an improved curriculum offer which has entitlement as its driving force.

Teachers consider their pedagogical choices carefully to ensure that knowledge can be applied and remembered more effectively planning for the student who finds learning the hardest. The 'L.E.A.D. Teaching Excellence Framework' is used to provide teaching staff with personalised feedback in a precise and timely manner with clear actionable steps for improvement.

Development of knowledge rich curriculum

All staff have contributed to the ongoing development of their subject-specific curricula, ensuring that each area reflects the school's ambition for a broad, balanced, and knowledge-rich education. Curriculum design remains a dynamic process — sequences of learning and supporting resources continue to evolve as part of our commitment to continual improvement.

Revised curriculum intent maps have been introduced across all subjects. These clearly set out what knowledge pupils are expected to learn, when it should be taught, and how it builds over time. In addition, sequence of learning documentation has been updated to promote consistency across both the academy and Trust secondary academies. These sequences are detailed, showing deliberate choices in content selection and the rationale for sequencing to ensure coherent knowledge progression.

Subject areas have actively engaged in the trust-wide curriculum alignment process, working collaboratively with colleagues across schools to refine and strengthen documentation. This process has provided valuable opportunities for professional dialogue,

subject-specific collaboration, and the sharing of expertise, ensuring that curriculum materials are as robust and coherent as possible.

As a result, students are now accessing an enhanced and more equitable curriculum offer, driven by the principle of entitlement for all learners. The focus is now shifting towards strengthening pedagogical decision-making, ensuring that teaching enables pupils to apply and retain knowledge more effectively.

Self-study

Self-study was completed by all year groups throughout the year, with a completion rate of 71%. This year, there was a reduction in overall completion rates across all students following the introduction of tighter success criteria within the Self-Study Policy. Previously, students were only sanctioned for failing to complete three or more tasks per week. The revised criteria now require 100% completion of all assigned tasks each week for a student to be considered successful.

This change has significantly increased accountability and raised expectations for all learners. While overall completion rates dipped due to the more rigorous criteria, the total number of self-study tasks completed has risen substantially, reflecting an improvement in consistency and engagement with independent learning.

The Self-Study Policy has been updated to reflect these expectations, supported by a clear communication plan. This included whole-school assemblies, staff training during INSET, and letters sent to parents and carers explaining the new approach and its rationale.

Analysis of participation data shows that Pupil Premium (PP) students had lower completion rates compared with their non-PP peers. This was often linked to limited access to appropriate technology for completing tasks at home. To address this, the school provided targeted support by loaning laptops, offering paper copies of work where appropriate, and increasing communication with families to reinforce expectations and remove barriers to completion.

Despite these challenges, students are now habitually engaging with independent study, and a total of 120,262 self-study tasks were completed throughout 24/25 — demonstrating a marked increase in independent work and commitment to learning beyond the classroom.

Parental engagement

Efforts have been made to enhance attendance at parent evenings by rebranding them as 'Parent Partnership Evenings.' This has been supported by improved communication beforehand and the inclusion of valuable resources during the events, such as guidance on supporting self-study and assessment information. Additionally, the provision of food and opportunities to meet with pastoral staff have contributed to the increased attendance and engagement.

Attendance

Attendance for disadvantaged pupils continues to be a key priority across the academy. Over recent years, attendance rates for Pupil Premium (PP) students have remained below those of their non-PP peers, reflecting both local and national trends. While this remains an

area for focused improvement, systems to monitor, analyse, and respond to attendance concerns are now established and consistently applied.

There has been a clear strengthening of attendance processes across the academy, including more regular communication with families, early identification of concerns, and a tiered approach to intervention. Attendance reviews are now part of a structured monitoring cycle, ensuring that support and accountability are balanced effectively. Increased collaboration between pastoral teams, the Attendance team, and external partners (such as the Education Welfare Service) has resulted in earlier, more targeted support for families where barriers to attendance exist.

However, attendance for disadvantaged students remains below non-disadvantaged peers, with gaps widening in some cohorts. The reasons for absence are often complex and linked to wider barriers such as health, family circumstances, or disengagement from learning. Addressing these challenges remains a key priority.

Looking ahead, the focus will be on sustaining improved attendance through prevention and culture change — ensuring that every PP student feels supported, and motivated to attend regularly. Continued emphasis on parental partnerships, multi-agency collaboration, and consistent routines will be central to improving attendance and narrowing the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged learners.

Supporting the wellbeing of students

The academy continues to place a strong emphasis on supporting the wellbeing, mental health, and pastoral needs of all students, recognising that these are key enablers of engagement, attendance, and academic success. Provision is inclusive and responsive, with targeted support in place to meet the needs of disadvantaged learners.

Breakfast Club provision continues to play a valuable role in supporting student welfare, attendance, and readiness to learn. This year, 70% of pupils attending Breakfast Club are Pupil Premium, ensuring that those who most benefit from a structured start to the school day are being reached effectively.

In addition to universal provision, a range of targeted wellbeing and mental health interventions have supported students this year:

- 95 students were referred to pastoral, mental health, or counselling services, with 43 (46%) identified as PP.
- Wellbeing and mentoring programmes have seen similar participation rates, with nearly half of attendees eligible for PP support.
- 59 PP students accessed external services such as CAMHS, school nursing, or community-based support, reflecting close collaboration with external agencies.
- Of the 27 students accessing school counselling, 13 (48%) were PP, showing that disadvantaged learners are being prioritised for emotional and therapeutic support where need is identified.

These figures demonstrate that PP students are well represented across all wellbeing interventions, indicating that systems for identifying and supporting vulnerable learners are effective. Staff awareness of wellbeing needs has improved through CPD and structured referral processes, ensuring timely and appropriate support.

Across all wellbeing interventions, the proportion of PP students supported is broadly in line with their representation in the school population (47%), demonstrating that access to provision is both equitable and needs-based. This indicates that identification systems and referral processes are effectively targeting the right pupils at the right time.

Moving forward, the academy aims to further develop a joined-up approach to wellbeing and attendance, ensuring that barriers to engagement are addressed holistically. Strengthening links between pastoral teams, curriculum staff, and external partners will continue to enhance early identification and intervention, supporting both the academic progress and emotional resilience of disadvantaged pupils.