

Pupil premium strategy statement

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium funding for the 2025 to 2026 academic year 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 | Blackpool Aspire Academy |
| Number of pupils in school | 814 |
| Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils | 67.8% |
| Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended) | 2024 - 2027 |
| Date this statement was published | November 2025 |
| Date on which it will be reviewed | September 2026 |
| Statement authorised by | John Woods |
| Pupil premium lead | Simon Blackwell |
| Governor / Trustee lead | |

Funding overview

| Detail | Amount |
|---|----------|
| Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year | £598,977 |
| Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year | £0 |
| 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 | £598,977 |

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At Blackpool Aspire Academy, we believe all students have the right to receive the same opportunities, support and experiences to enable them to succeed into the next stage of their education or employment. We aim to reduce barriers, raise aspirations and offer a broad range of opportunities for our disadvantaged students. Research has shown that disadvantaged students have been worst affected by partial school closures and the demands placed upon young people through periods of self-isolation. We have drawn upon the research conducted by the Education Endowment Foundation on the strength of effective practices in creating a robust and effective plan to make a difference to the lives of the young people at Aspire.

Our plan focuses on implementing and reviewing carefully selected provisions that will make a difference: Quality First Teaching underpinned by a rich and broad curriculum, targeted academic support and mentoring, parental/carers engagement, careers and university guidance and a focus on improving literacy and raising reading ages.

Challenges

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

| Challenge number | Detail of challenge |
|------------------|--|
| 1 | <p>Literacy (specifically reading) skills in accessing the curriculum are significantly below national average. Utilising entry assessments, baseline testing (NGRT and CATS) and observations alongside transition discussions indicates that disadvantaged pupils generally have lower levels of reading comprehension than peers. This impacts their progress in all subjects.</p> <p>On entry to year 7 in the last 5 years, between 28-40% of our disadvantaged pupils arrive below age-related expectations compared to their peers.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Attendance: significantly below non-disadvantaged counterparts. The gap between the disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged student attendance is 6.9%. Persistent Absence remains significant with a 25% difference between the disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students.</p> |
| 3 | <p>A number of students who attend our school come from some of the most deprived wards within Britain. The children and families have significant challenges in their social and emotional well-being and behaviours for learning. Over the last two academic years referrals for students in need of additional support to assist them accessing school have increased especially for disadvantaged students.</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <p>This contributes to the fact that some of our children do not have the same access to wider opportunities of the “average” child. There is significant external data that confirms children that are disadvantaged have reduced cultural capital opportunities which can impact negatively on children social and emotional skills.</p> <p>There is extensive evidence associating childhood social and emotional skills with improved outcomes at school and in later life (e.g. Improved academic performance, attitudes, behaviour and relationships with peers).</p> |
| 4 | <p>Closing the academic progress gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students as shown by external assessments have demonstrated an average of a half grade difference. The partial closure of schools and the information gathered via our assessments and welfare teams suggest that this has impacted our disadvantaged students to a greater extent. These findings are backed up by several national studies.</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 Literacy rates, specifically reading ages of disadvantaged students to meet chronological age by the end of Year 9. | <p>By the end of the current plan (July 2027) the GL Assessments, specifically NGRT, will demonstrate a reduced gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged standard age scores alongside reading ages of students showing incremental increases across KS3 when compared to baseline assessments.</p> |
| Improved attendance of all students especially disadvantaged pupils. | <p>Persistent Absence rate for disadvantaged students will be in line, or lower than national averages.</p> <p>Disadvantaged students will achieve, or exceed, attendance percentages in line with national averages.</p> <p>Increased parental engagement demonstrated through home visits log.</p> <p>Attendance matters tracked consistently through Student Panel meetings.</p> <p>Attendance data demonstrating the closing of the attendance gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students from September 2024 and further demonstrated by July 2027 data reviewing the three-year trend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the overall absence rate reducing for all pupils and the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers being reduced by 3%. the percentage of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent compared to non-disadvantaged being below 5%. |
| Provision of a comprehensive personal development programme including | <p>Reduced behaviour incidents for disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>Destination data show 100% in education or employment.</p> |


| | |
|---|--|
| meaningful support to pupils with SEMH concerns. | Established in school support for students with students reporting, via student voice, positive influence of personal development interventions. |
| Improved attainment among disadvantaged pupils across the curriculum at the end of KS4. Attainment 8 achieve National Average for all students. | Incremental gains for disadvantaged and whole school Attainment 8 at each data collection. Annual KS4 outcomes demonstrate that disadvantaged pupils achieve improving Attainment 8 and/or progress 8 score by July 2027. |



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: £300,000

| Activity | Evidence that supports this approach | Challenge number(s) addressed |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| Quality of Education Groups focusing on Checking for Understanding. | <p>The EEF has conducted significant research and trials into the implementation of the Embedding Formative Assessment (EFA) programme which has shown pupils made the equivalent of two months' additional progress, with attainment measured using Attainment 8 GCSE scores, compared to schools delivering business as usual teaching. This is roughly equivalent to an improvement of one GCSE grade in one subject. This result has a very high security rating. The EFA programme aims to create a culture of continuous improvement in schools by embedding formative assessment practices. These practices help teachers understand pupil learning, identify areas for improvement, and adapt teaching strategies to individual needs, thereby enhancing pupil attainment. EFA is delivered through The Schools, Students and Teachers network (SSAT) and focuses on five key strategies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarifying and sharing learning intentions and success criteria. 2. Using classroom discussions, questions, and tasks to gather evidence of learning. 3. Encouraging students to support each other's learning. 4. Empowering students to take ownership of their learning. 5. Providing feedback that promotes progress. <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/promising-programmes/embedding-formative-assessment</p> <p>Metacognition and self-regulation</p> <p>Very high impact for very low cost based on extensive evidence</p>  | 1, 2, 3 & 4 |
| Literacy CPL for all classroom | The EEF suggests that schools should focus first on developing core classroom teaching strategies that improve the literacy capabilities of the whole class. The EEF Secondary Literacy Guidance Report pays | 1, 2, 3 & 4 |

| | | |
|--|--|----------|
| based staff to support embedding wider reading and disciplinary literacy strategies. | <p>particular focus to disciplinary literacy as an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum. It recognises that literacy skills are both general and subject specific, emphasising the value of supporting teachers in every subject to teach students how to read, write and communicate effectively in their subjects. Reading comprehension strategies focus on learners' understanding of the text. They teach a range of techniques that enable pupils to comprehend the meaning of what is written, such as inferring the meaning from context, summarising or identifying key points, using graphic or semantic organisers, developing questioning strategies, and monitoring their own comprehension and identifying difficulties themselves.</p> <p>https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/guidance-reports/improving-literacy-in-secondary-schools/EEF_KS3_KS4_LITERACY_GUIDANCE.pdf</p>  | |
| Retention of Disciplinary Literacy Lead to embed the delivery of disciplinary literacy. | <p>EEF Secondary Literacy guidance report guidance challenges the notion that literacy in secondary school is solely the preserve of English teachers, or literacy coordinators. The emphasis on disciplinary literacy makes clear that every teacher communicates their subject through academic language, and that reading, writing, speaking and listening are at the heart of knowing and doing Science, Art, History, and every other subject in secondary school. School leaders can help teachers by ensuring training related to literacy prioritises subject specificity over general approaches.</p> <p>https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/guidance-reports/improving-literacy-in-secondary-schools/EEF_KS3_KS4_LITERACY_GUIDANCE.pdf</p> | 1 & 4 |
| Continuing Professional Learning (including facilitation of support for NPQs) for teaching staff to further develop the GOLD standard of teaching. | <p>The EEF's Effective Professional Development guidance states that supporting high quality teaching is pivotal in improving children's outcomes. Research tells us that high quality teaching can narrow the disadvantage gap by adapting a professional development programme that aligns with the needs of the school (Literacy, Quality First Teaching and Personal Development) and is fully supported by the school leadership. Programmes must recognise the time constraints faced by teachers and adapt accordingly maximising the time available to provide significant development opportunities. Design and selection must take care to understand how professional development fits in with the school routine. Programmes should maximise the opportunities for teachers to collaborate within subject areas and the wider school where appropriate. Additionally the development of an instructional coaching programme to support the development of teaching across the academy.</p> <p>https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/guidance-reports/effective-professional-development/eeef-effective-pd-report.pdf</p>  | 3 & 4 |
| Literary Canon | EEF Secondary Literacy guidance report suggests that in order for students to comprehend complex texts, students need to actively engage with what they are reading and use their existing subject | 1, 3 & 4 |

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| | <p>knowledge. Reading strategies, such as activating prior knowledge, prediction and questioning can improve students' comprehension. Strategies can be introduced through modelling and group work, before support is gradually removed to promote independence.</p> <p>https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/guidance-reports/improving-literacy-in-secondary-schools/EEF_KS3_KS4_LITERACY_GUIDANCE.pdf</p> <p>https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/guidance-reports/effective-professional-development/eef-effective-pd-report.pdf</p> | |
| Additional Maths teacher | To build capacity to provide high quality teaching and learning including targeted intervention groups within these subjects. The DfE report Supporting the Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils (DFE, 2015) suggests high quality teaching as a key aspect of successful schools. | 4 |

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

Budgeted cost: £125,000

| Activity | Evidence that supports this approach | Challenge number(s) addressed |
|----------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| WIKI Literacy intervention | <p>EEF Secondary Literacy guidance report's recommendation targeted intervention Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students. Schools should expect and proactively plan to support students with the weakest levels of literacy, particularly in Year 7 and develop model of tiered support, which increases in intensity in line with need is a promising approach</p> <p>https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/guidance-reports/improving-literacy-in-secondary-schools/EEF_KS3_KS4_LITERACY_GUIDANCE.pdf</p> | 1 |
| Compass Curriculum KS4 | <p>In partnership with Blackpool and the Fylde College and Myerscough College the Academy is enriching our curriculum offers at KS4. This allows pupils to choose 1 option to be studied at either of these institutions. Level1 and Level 2 pathways are both available. To be on a level 2 pathway the pupil will, ideally, be on track for a grade 4 in Maths and English. The partnership and experience will support a positive transition into post 16 courses, ensuring employability prospects are maximised. There is a wide selection of courses on offer.</p> <p>Aspire and the Fylde Coast Academy Trust (FCAT) are guided by our values of 'the best we can be' in everything we do and recognise that being a diverse and inclusive educational organisation helps us fulfil our responsibility to make a difference in transforming the lives of our students. Fostering an inclusive culture helps each of us to benefit from a wide range of different perspectives, experiences and skills. This creates a healthier, happier, more productive environment where all members of our school community can thrive.</p> | 2, 3 & 4 |

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

Budgeted cost: £173,977

| Activity | Evidence that supports this approach | Challenge number(s) addressed |
|---|--|-------------------------------|
| Full Time Pupil Welfare Officer and an additional in school Attendance Officer | Aspire employs a Pupil Welfare Officer and an Attendance Officer whose sole focus is to raise student attendance; this is achieved through a range of intervention methods including student and parent contact in school and at home. Students attendance has shown an improving picture post 2020 and this can be attributed to the work of the Pupil Welfare Officer, the leadership within the academy and what the staff as a whole do, day-to-day to ensure students are in school to access the teaching and learning provision on offer. | 2 |
| Director for Personal Development, Deputy Headteacher for Behaviour and Attendance, Assistant Headteacher for Attendance, an additional behaviour support TA, HIVE and Bridge in school provision, School Counsellor, in school Caseworker and mentoring support. | <p>The average impact of successful Social and emotional learning (SEL) interventions is an additional four months' progress over the course of a year. The security of this evidence is, however, very low, so schools should carefully monitor the efficacy of approaches in their own settings. Alongside academic outcomes, SEL interventions have an identifiable and valuable impact on attitudes to learning and social relationships in school.</p> <p>Although SEL interventions are almost always perceived to improve emotional or attitudinal outcomes, not all interventions are equally effective at raising attainment. Improvements appear more likely when SEL approaches are embedded into routine educational practices and supported by professional development and training for staff. In addition, the implementation of the programme and the degree to which teachers are committed to the approach appear to be important. Local evidence bases and in school experience of what works to liaise with students, parents and teachers ensures that students maximise their achievement whilst receiving the support they need. The Academy also liaises closely with external agencies to support students including: CAMHS, School Home Support, Families in Need and other agencies. According to the EEF regular contact and encouraging dialogue between school and home has been proven to have up to 3 month's impact on students' progress.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/social-and-emotional-learning</p> <p>The EEF reports that on average, mentoring appears to have a small positive impact on academic outcomes. The impacts of individual programmes vary. Some studies have found more positive impacts for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, and for non-academic outcomes such as attitudes to school, attendance and behaviour. The impact of mentoring (Student Voice) at Aspire in previous years has been positive. Some evidence suggests that some pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds show low engagement with or have low expectations of schooling. Mentoring interventions may be more beneficial for these pupils, as the development of trusting relationships with an adult or older peer can provide a different source of support.</p> | 1, 2, 3 & 4 |

| | | |
|---------------------|---|---|
| | <p>Parental engagement Moderate impact for very low cost based on extensive evidence</p> <p>£ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ +4</p> <p>Mentoring Low impact for moderate cost based on moderate evidence</p> <p>£ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ +2</p> <p>Behaviour interventions Moderate impact for low cost based on limited evidence</p> <p>£ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ +4</p> <p>Social and emotional learning Moderate impact for very low cost based on very limited evidence</p> <p>£ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ +4</p> | |
| Extended Curriculum | <p>The EEF suggests that there is limited evidence to support aspirational interventions. The extended curriculum intervention builds on the development of Social and Emotional Learning where the evidence indicates that there is particular promise for approaches that focus on improving social interaction between pupils.</p> <p>There is a small positive impact of physical activity on academic attainment (+1 month). While this evidence summary focuses on the link between physical activity and academic performance, it is crucial to ensure that pupils' access to high quality physical activity for the other benefits and opportunities it provides.</p> <p>Impact on attainment varies considerably between different interventions, and participation in sports does not straightforwardly transfer to academic learning. It is likely that the quality of the programme and the emphasis on or connection with academic learning may make more difference than the specific type of approach or activities involved.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit</p> <p>Arts participation Moderate impact for very low cost based on moderate evidence</p> <p>£ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ +3</p> <p>Aspiration interventions Unclear impact for very low cost based on insufficient evidence</p> <p>£ £ £ £ £ £ £ £</p> <p>Outdoor adventure learning Unclear impact for moderate cost based on insufficient evidence</p> <p>£ £ £ £ £ £ £ £</p> <p>Physical activity Low impact for very low cost based on moderate evidence</p> <p>£ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ +1</p> | 3 |

Total budgeted cost: £598,977

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 2023 to 2024 academic year.

The academy continues to invest in teaching and learning through a collaborative approach, especially around the high quality evidence based professional learning related to curriculum development, checking for understanding and the teaching of literacy, which is leading to more effective implementation within the classroom.

Year 11 progress measures for English and Maths at grades 4+ have shown an improvement in 2024-25 with a significantly higher percentage of Disadvantaged students achieving English and Maths 4+ compared to the Local Authority average however this remains below the national average measures for non-disadvantaged students. Achievements in English and Maths grades 5+ are in line with national averages for disadvantaged students they remain below the national average for non-disadvantaged students.

2024-25 has seen further investment in the implementation of the Literary Canon at Aspire as part of our plan to improve literacy within the academy. All disadvantaged students from Years 7 to 10 partake in 30 minutes of guided reading each day developing reading skills as well as wider cultural capital through exposure to high quality challenging literature. This is further complimented by a strategic approach to disciplinary literacy and additional literacy strategies including WIKI interventions as well as a Literary canon delivered in English lessons. Aspire students continue to progress with their reading. Numbers of students within stanine 1 and 2 of the New Group Reading Tests have reduced from 22% in 2022 to 12% in 2025 with an increasing number of students progressing to the upper stanines (7-9) from 28% in 2022 to 38% in 2025. Within the disadvantaged student cohort there has been statistically significant improvements with Standard Age Scores using the NGRT nationally benchmarked assessments.

Literacy interventions utilising the WIKI programme and completed over the academic year have seen the cohort of students make an average reading gain of 30 months (expected 12 months) with 79% of the students reporting they felt more confident when reading and spelling challenging words after completing the intervention. Fluency interventions have seen 80% improvement in reading fluency for students who completed the full intervention.

As a focus of increasing attendance at Blackpool Aspire Academy a range of initiatives have been undertaken leading to the academy's overall attendance reducing from 2023 5.9% below national attendance to being 1.7% below the national attendance figure for

2024-25. Disadvantaged student attendance has reduced from 8.9% below national attendance figures to 3.4% below the national attendance figure. Ongoing targeted attendance interventions utilise the skill set of our Heads of Year. By including these individuals in such mediation, they are able to understand the child as a whole (i.e. barriers to attendance, issues at home etc) and cultivate their intervention appropriately.

Targeted use of Pupil Premium funding to strengthen our proactive, educational approach to behaviour has had a measurable and substantial impact. External suspensions have reduced from 267 in 2022–2023 to 16 in 2024–2025, a raw decrease of 251 suspensions, which represents a 94.0% reduction. Similarly, Days Lost to Learning have fallen from 325.5 in 2022–2023 to 40.5 in 2023–2024, a reduction of 285 days, equating to an 87.6% decrease. These improvements illustrate the strong impact of Pupil Premium investment in improving behaviour, reducing exclusions, and keeping disadvantaged pupils engaged in learning.

In tandem with the above, the development of SEND and SEMH interventions, alongside specialist support like counselling and mentoring, ensure that disadvantaged students receive the tools they need to overcome barriers to attendance and behaviour.

A number of disadvantaged students have been further supported by partaking in alternative provisions within the town. These students have been able to access a personalised curriculum which has led to them reducing the number of behaviour incidents and improved attendance. Year 11 disadvantaged students have been successful in completing programmes leading to them being in education, employment and training.

All students within the academy have experienced high quality careers education and guidance aligned to the international Gatsby Benchmarks. There have been numerous workshops, assemblies, university visits for our students from Year 7 to Year 11. All Year 11 students receive a 1 to 1 careers interview with an independent careers advisor with some students accessing multiple sessions and support from our Engagement Coach to aid their transition to post 16 destinations. The investment in this area has seen a significant reduction in overall NEET figures as students leave the academy from 2021 -13% of leavers were NEET to this figure currently projecting to decrease to 5.2% in 2025%.

Externally provided programmes

Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you purchased in the previous academic year. This will help the Department for Education identify which ones are popular in England

| Programme | Provider |
|--------------------------------|---|
| WIKI Reading Intervention | FCAT |
| Embedding Formative Assessment | The Schools, Students and Teachers Network (SSAT) |
| Compass Curriculum | Blackpool & The Fylde College Myerscough College |
| Blackpool Football Club | Blackpool Football Club |

