

Pupil premium strategy statement

This statement is part of a 2-year strategy statement (2024-2026) and details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery premium for the 2024-26 academic years) 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 funding had within our school.

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	Cockermouth School
Number of pupils in school	Years 7-11 1072 (Dec 24) Years 12-13 210 (Dec 24)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	17.4% in Years 7-11 15.5% in Years 7-13
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2024-5 2025-6
Date this statement was published	December 2024
Date on which it will be reviewed	(Annually) December 2025
Statement authorised by	Richard King - Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Michelle Henley – Senior Deputy Headteacher and Hugh Carter – Assistant Headteacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Sue Moses – PP Governor

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year (23-24)	£182,015
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year (23-24)	£59,395
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
Total budget for this academic year (24-25) If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year	£241,410

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Cockermouth School has at its heart the aim to offer an exceptional learning experience for all. We are a high-performing, truly comprehensive and inclusive school serving a large rural catchment area in the north-west of Cumbria and we value our place at the heart of our local community. As a school we recognise how important it is to develop all students, to enable them to fulfil their potential, regardless of disadvantage or background and to ensure they make good progress and achieve high attainment across the curriculum. We are committed to raising the attainment of all pupil premium students across the curriculum with a clear aim of closing the progress and attainment gaps between pupil premium and other students to ensure that they are in line with non-disadvantaged students with the same starting points.

Our pupil premium strategy is built around promoting our five core school values of aspire, enjoy, include, respect and community. As a school, we use evidence-based approaches based around the 3 pillars from the EEF framework – supporting teaching, targeted academic support, and wider strategies¹. The strategy does not focus solely on Pupil Premium students and we have chosen to focus our efforts on dealing with how particular issues typically impact on the outcomes and experiences of all students.

The central element of our Pupil Premium Strategy lies in Quality First Teaching and providing a high quality of education. We know that if we ensure and maintain high expectations for all students and that we support each individual to work hard in every lesson, we maximise the chances of our Pupil Premium students reaching their full potential. We retain a very broad and balanced curriculum across Key Stage 3 and enable students to study four preference subjects at Key Stage 4, in addition to the compulsory English, Maths and Science components. Every student can access the EBacc curriculum at Key Stage 4 and we believe that if a student is able to cope with both the humanities and language elements of the curriculum that they should be encouraged to study them.

We ensure the provision of high quality CPD programme, working alongside our staff to help them maximise the quality of lesson delivery. The training focuses on maintaining the highest standards of student behaviour and effort in every lesson through a consistent approach to behaviour management. Another key focus is on enhancing our understanding and implementation of reading and literacy strategies to support our learners more effectively. Understanding the needs of our SEND learners forms another strand of our programme, ensuring that we can plan consistently for their needs. The CPD also focuses on how we identify our vulnerable and at-risk students, so that we can then put in place appropriate support for their wellbeing. Underpinning all staff development is the importance of knowing our students to maximise their potential.

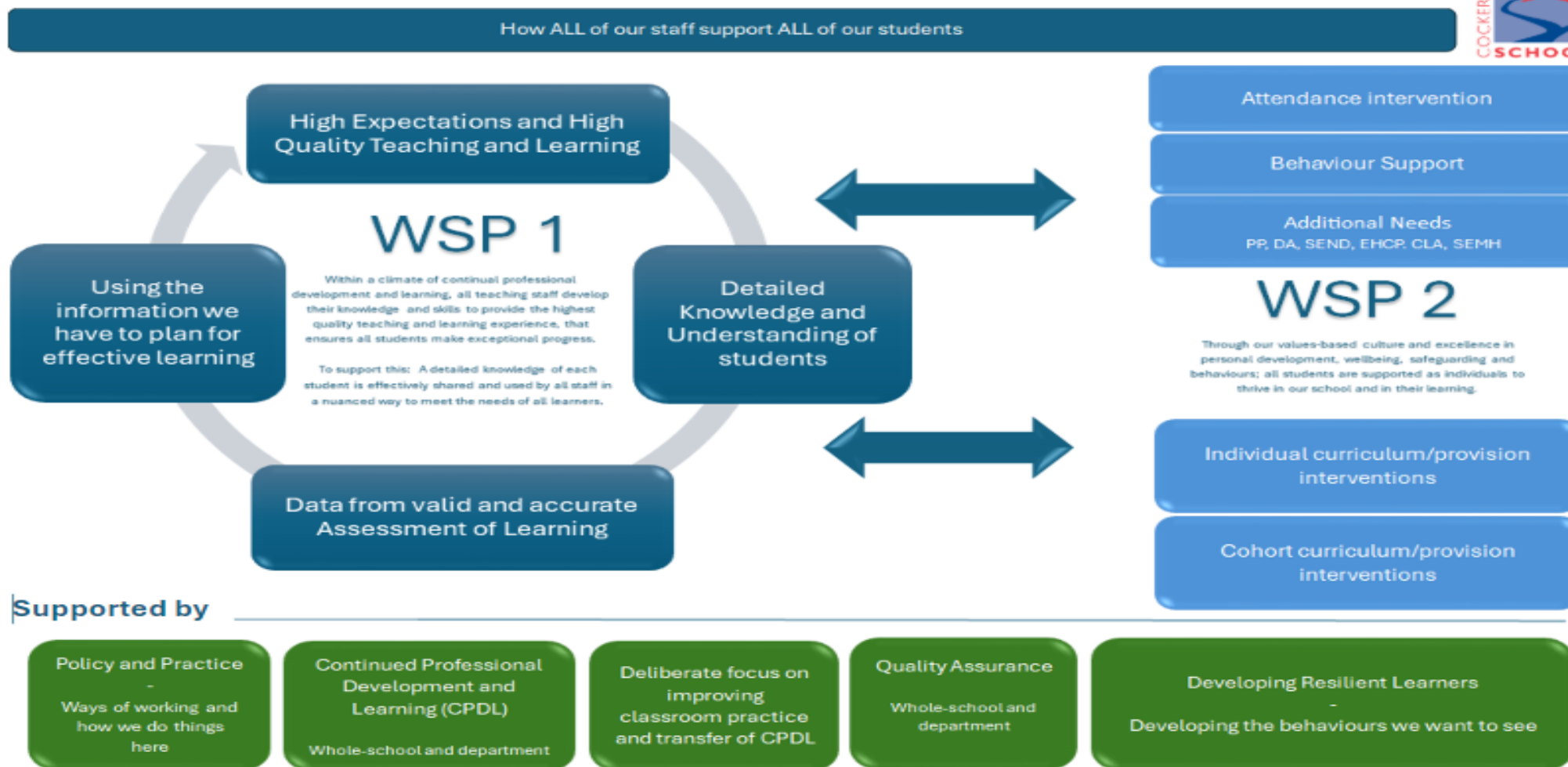
Targeted academic support strategies focus on the use of tutoring, literacy and numeracy interventions to target gaps and challenges that are preventing disadvantaged students from reaching their potential.

Our wider strategies focus on supporting specialist behaviour, wellbeing and attendance teams. Some students require additional, bespoke support. Our aim is also to provide our disadvantaged students with access to a range of enrichment activities and resources, with departments providing appropriate resources for home learning and financial support for key visits.

Our School Development Plan for 2024-2026 is focused on achieving a universal educational provision of excellence and ensuring that every student experiences this excellence, understanding that some of our students will need our support and adjustment to enable them to experience an exceptional educational experience.

School Development Plan: “On a page” visual

School Development Plan 2024-2026



Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Academic outcomes: Our school trend for the academic outcomes of disadvantaged cohort reflects the national trend. Attainment and progress (P8) of disadvantaged students can be below that of our non-disadvantaged cohort even when based on the same KS2 starting point. As a cohort these students find it more difficult to make progress at the rate of their non-disadvantaged peers. However, it should also be noted that our disadvantaged cohort in a year group is approximately 15% of students. Within that group there are some students who make exceptional progress and conversely some students whose context is atypical and their academic progress is significantly hindered.
2	Behaviour: Although our overall suspension figures remain below the national average, exclusions and behaviour concerns come disproportionately from our disadvantaged cohort. Inclusion philosophy and implications.
3	Attendance: Attendance issues and persistent absenteeism are more prevalent amongst our disadvantaged cohort. We know from our own observations and analysis that this attendance gap negatively impacts on our disadvantaged students' attainment and progress outcomes. Within this cohort, low parental support for school attendance and historical poor attendance are often factors. The impact of Covid-19 has increased this attendance gap. Inclusion philosophy and implications.
4	Social, emotional and mental health issues: Our disadvantaged cohort needs greater SEMH support compared to our non-disadvantaged cohort. At an individual level the extent of support required can be significant. Inclusion philosophy and implications.
5	Inclusion: As a member of the West Cumbria Consortium of Secondary Schools, we take our moral role very seriously in supporting the inclusion of students who have been excluded or at risk of being excluded from other schools. As a school we rarely ask for our own students to be placed with other schools, but we frequently welcome vulnerable students from the Inclusion Panel caseload. We work very hard with every individual to help them become a success at our school irrespective of their likely academic outcomes. This needs a lot of time and resource from our Student Support/Additional Support team; it is challenging for these young people to settle into a new community, as well as evolve their behaviours and approaches. We welcome significantly more of these students into our school, part way through their secondary education, than we ask to be supported by other schools and their success is our priority.
6	Reading: Internal screening, along with our own observations and assessments have flagged up that there are significant gaps in reading ability.
7	Home learning: Risk of more limited access to space, resources and routines to support the effective completion of home learning needed to excel academically in line with non-disadvantaged peers.
8	Extra-curricular: The risk of lower engagement from our disadvantaged cohort with extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities. Our own audits and observations show that our disadvantaged students may not access extra-curricular activities as well as their non-disadvantaged peers.

Intended outcomes

This explains the outcomes we are aiming for **by the end of our current strategy plan**, and how we will measure whether they have been achieved.

Intended outcome	Success criteria
The progress and attainment of our disadvantaged students better than the national average for this cohort and in line with national average for all students regardless of background.	Excellent outcomes for our disadvantaged cohort • P8 score of ≥ 0 for all students in the cohort at GCSE. • The attainment of disadvantaged students at GCSE is above the national average from the same starting point. • Internal report data shows attainment of disadvantaged students in line with our non-disadvantaged cohort. • Disadvantaged students will achieve 5+ in maths and English, in line with non-disadvantaged pupils with the same prior attainment. • All students to be given access to the EBacc pathway, with uptake for disadvantaged students in line with non-disadvantaged students with the same prior attainment.
Behaviour of our disadvantaged students improves and is in line with their non-disadvantaged peers.	• Reduction in fixed period suspension (C5) and internal suspension (C4) incidents involving disadvantaged students to 15% of overall school exclusions. • Reduction in the number of repeat suspensions amongst individual disadvantaged students.
Reduction in persistent absenteeism and an improvement in attendance across the disadvantaged cohort.	• Attendance gap of disadvantaged students to close to within 2% of our non-disadvantaged cohort. • Persistent Absence to be below the national average for disadvantaged students with the percentage of students who are persistently absent being below 15% • Students with clear, staged intervention plans see improved attendance following intervention.
Improve the level of literacy from year 7, which will enable students to access the whole curriculum more effectively.	• Disadvantaged students prioritised for reading and literacy interventions to close gaps for target students to ensure that their reading age matches chronological age when tested following the intervention. • Any gaps identified through English and literacy screening to be narrowed by the end of Year 7.

Students provided with hardware, resources and access to key educational visits through pupil premium funding.	• All families have access to a digital device. • All disadvantaged students to attend key educational visits. • Revision guides and material resources provided for students from pupil premium funding to support their learning experience.
Disadvantaged students participate with our extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities at rates in line with their non-disadvantaged peers.	• Attendance registers and records show the % engagement from the PP cohort is in line with, or better than non-PP cohort • Financial support for opportunities is explicitly sign-posted • Key events take place throughout the school year attended by all pupil premium students. • Disadvantaged students prioritised and attend CEIAG interventions with careers adviser.
Disadvantaged students receive the support they need with social, emotional and mental health issues to help them be a position to access the curriculum.	• Students most at risk have support plans through our school counsellor and inclusion and pastoral teams. • Resilience improving and reduction in support needed over time from the pastoral team. • The student population has a good level of awareness of the issues of sexual harassment and violence. Data shows a decrease in negative behaviours and an increase in positive behaviours such as reporting and peer support.
Disadvantaged students are explicitly taught and supported behaviours and habits in metacognition, resilience and self-regulation skills; they apply these to their learning across all subjects.	• Class Charts records show a decrease in the number of homework points issued for disadvantaged students. • Disadvantaged Students with homework points are supported through Study Support intervention rather than detention. • Disadvantaged students are identified for the correct intervention that will enhance their outcomes and they attend those sessions; the school facilitates attendance where needed e.g. transport issues • Student voice indicates that disadvantaged students feel more able to self-regulate.

Activity in this academic year (2024-5)

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

Quality First Teaching and Staff Development

Budgeted cost: £ 80,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
CPD Senior leader with responsibility for staff development and training. High-quality professional development that is steeped in rigorous scholarship with teaching staff continually developing and collaborating to ensure students benefit from the best possible teaching based on the best evidence. All teaching staff adopt a culture of continuous improvement, using evidence-based approaches to deliver high quality learning for all students within and beyond lessons. The CPD programme focuses on the following whole school priorities and revisits each at least termly to sustain focus and progress: • Teaching and Learning • Literacy • SEND • Behaviour • Pastoral Support • Safeguarding	Effective CPD has both a positive impact on student outcomes and a significant role to play in the successful recruitment, retention and well-being of our staff. It is therefore valued and prioritised by our school leadership team to ensure that teaching staff, together with leaders of pastoral and academic teams and with the full support of the senior leadership team can work productively on sustainable, long-term school improvement. EEF evidence: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/effective-professional-development	1, 2, 6, 7
Quality of Education	Progress of students who receive consistently high quality teaching and learning can make accelerated progress of up to +12 months in an academic year.	1,2, 6, 7

QA of curriculum to ensure that it is coherently planned and sequenced to ensure cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment. Regular reviews with Department Leaders follow a clear and thorough process with the expert member of staff for curriculum, assessment and staff development providing feedback and informing subsequent action plans for departments.	Sutton Trust (2011). This is the biggest lever in driving up students' progress EEF: The best available evidence indicates that great teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve outcomes for their pupils. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/support-for-schools/school-improvement-planning/1-high-quality-teaching	
Behaviour Through an established culture and training, developed with staff and students, which incorporate the five core values of the school, staff maintain the highest expectations for all and students show respect for one another and the school environment. All staff are trained to consistently apply the school procedures.	Evidence from the EEF indicates that it is clear that reducing challenging behaviour in schools can have a direct and lasting effect on pupils' learning. This is based on a number of metaanalyses that review robust studies of interventions in schools. The positive behaviours and attitudes of students creates a respectful and safe environment in which students can feel safe and teachers can focus on providing the best possible teaching and learning. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/behaviour	2
Assessment Accurate assessment is used to identify student need and subsequently inform intervention and next steps in teaching and learning and summatively to periodically evidence student attainment and progress. Purchase of standardised diagnostic assessments. Development of staff training plan to ensure assessments are interpreted correctly.	Low stakes formative assessment is occurring regularly in lessons so that teachers and students are checking learning and adapting accordingly. Formal, high stakes assessment is based on the 4 pillars of assessment (purpose, reliability, validity and value).	1, 6, 7

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

Budgeted cost: £ 80,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
1:1 and small group academic support CLA / PP+ / PP students identified for 1:1 tuition or small group tuition with in-school tutors. 1:1 tuition / NTP to be used with cohorts of KS4 students identified in English, Maths and Science (My Tutor) in the spring term following a data capture. Literacy Team employed to deliver literacy strategy, in particular to implement Reciprocal Reading as an intervention to identified cohorts of students through 1:1 and small group intervention. Thinking Reading programme as a strategy to improve reading and literacy skills with our weakest readers at Key Stages 3 and 4. Subscription to Sparx Maths (was Hegarty) and Carousel (Science)	There is extensive high-quality evidence demonstrating the potential of one-to-one and small-group tuition as a cost-effective way to support pupils who are falling behind. The Sutton Trust-EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit suggests it can boost progress by up to +5 months. Short, regular sessions over a set period of time appear to result in optimum impact. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/one-to-one-tuition EEF: The average impact of reading comprehension strategies is an additional six months' progress over the course of a year. Successful reading comprehension approaches allow activities to be carefully tailored to pupils' reading capabilities, and involve activities and texts that provide an effective, but not overwhelming, challenge. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies All students are screened in literacy to identify any below age-related expectations with further probe testing done to diagnose specific needs. Thinking Reading programme as a strategy to improve reading and literacy skills with our weakest readers at Key Stages 3 and 4. On average, reading comprehension approaches can deliver an additional six months' progress. https://www.thinkingreading.com/ Maths and Science leaders have identified these platforms as successful tools to support independent learning and inform teachers and students of gaps. The Nesta NFER report on flipped learning indicated the benefits of	1, 6, 7

Academic Mentoring/Study Support – Lead Teachers & “Academic Weapons”	using software like HegartyMaths to support what happens in the classroom. https://www.nfer.ac.uk/flipped-learning-research-report Each student is an individual whose circumstances and barriers need to be understood on a case-by-case basis. Relationships are crucial to students being willing to accept support to overcome barriers. Students who have not responded positively to the universal offer, need bespoke support to tailor the approaches for their specific needs	
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Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £ 81, 410

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Attendance Interventions: Attendance Lead employed with a focus on the attendance of our disadvantaged cohort. Attendance monitoring and support to improve overall attendance figure for pupil premium students. Embedding principles of good practice set out in DfE's Improving School Attendance advice.	Attendance Lead has been effective at working with difficult families and other agencies to improve the attendance of our disadvantaged cohort. Reviewing the results of students who whose attendance falls below 90%, it is clear how important it is to get our disadvantaged students to attend well. There is a clear link between attendance and subsequent attainment and progress. The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced persistent absence levels.	3
Wellbeing: Inclusion Centre support and student counselling. Targeted behaviour support through the Behaviour Lead deployed in our Behaviour Centre to work with individual students to improve behaviour and engagement.	EEF: Social and emotional learning approaches can have a positive impact, on average, of 4 months' additional progress in academic outcomes over the course of an academic year. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/social-and-emotional-learning?utm_source=/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/social-and-emotional-learning&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=site_search&search_term=social Many of our disadvantaged students have complex backgrounds and need bespoke support in school. 1:1 counselling provided for many of our most vulnerable disadvantaged learners.	3, 4, 5

Enrichment / Provision of resources: Continue to prioritise pupil premium students for enrichment activities, provision of resources and providing financial support to enable students to take part in trips and activities. Digital audit ensures that all families are given access to a digital device to support remote learning. Financial support given to students wishing to engage with music tuition. Ring fencing of funding for PP+ students to support with both academic and extra-curricular interests.	EEF studies have shown that enrichment approaches can directly improve pupils' attainment. The EEF thinks that enriching education has intrinsic benefits. We think all children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, deserve a well-rounded, culturally rich, education. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/guidance-for-teachers/life-skills-enrichment?utm_source=/guidance-for-teachers/life-skills-enrichment&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=site_search&search_term=enrich	8
Aspiration Continued work to ensure that we maintain high aspirations disadvantaged students and support them effectively in preparing them for the next steps with effective careers guidance. Disadvantaged students prioritised for careers interviews. Engagement with HE / FE providers to highlight the opportunities and benefits of Higher Education.	EEF: Careers education can be crucial in developing the knowledge, confidence and skills young people need to make well-informed, relevant choices and plans for their future. This is especially true of students from poorer backgrounds, who are less likely to have family or friends with the insight and expertise to offer advice. High quality careers education can help them progress smoothly into further learning and work. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/careers-education	8

Ensure that all Year 10 students have access to a positive work placement next year.		
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Total budgeted cost: £ 241, 410

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year (2024-25)

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

Outcomes from 2024 exams:

Disadvantaged Students	2019	2022	2023	2024
Total number of students	29	24	28	29
Progress 8	-0.21	-0.49	-0.52	-0.59
Average Total Attainment 8	36.17	42.58	38.4	35.1

Examination outcomes

The performance of students who were attending regularly, engaging with the teaching and learning and taking advantage of the support provided was very strong. A minority of our disadvantaged cohort had individual circumstances which made regular school attendance difficult. These students were fully supported throughout their time in education at our school. The majority of our disadvantaged cohort students attended well and many made excellent progress with positive P8 scores. The student with the strongest progress score in the whole of Year 11 was from this disadvantaged cohort,

Careers and transitions

IDSR shows our destinations data is strong with students securing education employment or training. We specifically focus on prioritising disadvantaged students. We employ our own in-house Careers Officer. In addition to our whole school careers and transition provision - Every disadvantaged Year 9 student is offered an independent careers interview as part of the GCSE preference process. Every disadvantaged Year 10 student is offered an independent careers interview to support them getting organised for their week-long Work Experience placement. Every Year 11 is offered an independent careers interview to support post-16 transition; disadvantaged students are prioritised.

Enrichment

Enrichment is deliberately planned to include all students and is subsidised where needed to ensure maximum participation. SLT approve proposals for enrichment subject to poverty proofing principles. All students in years 7 to 9 had the same enriched residential experience opportunity in July in school time, including a city visit and outward-bound activity; the school contributes approx. £3000 annually to ensure inclusive access. All Year 7 students experience a free poet and author visit with additional workshops for the disadvantaged and signed books purchased for them. All of Year 8 and 9 students are able to engage in external Science and Geography enrichment. We actively seek additional opportunity and funding to support the enrichment of our disadvantaged cohort. In 2022-23 we were a pilot project for the Arts Council's Curious Citizens project to enhance engagement and experience of the arts in deprived rural areas. In March 2025 we will take a group of Year 9 students with disadvantage to Sri Lanka for a community project, fully funded.

Behaviour

Students are supported effectively by the safeguarding, pastoral and behaviour support teams. These students receive additional support from trained adults in school and through prioritised access to outside agencies, facilitated through

school. With behaviour, proactive work is done deliberately with students to reduce the likelihood of them repeatedly receiving high-level sanctions.

Attendance

We continue to focus our efforts on our disadvantaged students and remove any barriers to students attending in school, working closely with students, parents and other agencies. We are using the EBSA toolkit and providing positive support through our Inclusion Centre to support students' return to school following absence.

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
1:1 and NTP Tuition	My Tutor
CEIAG online support	Unifrog
Reading intervention	Thinking Reading
Maths online support	Sparx Maths
Science online support	Carousel
Results analysis	Sisra
Literacy Assessment	TES online
Behaviour Management Software	ClassCharts
FFT Literacy Reciprocal Reading	FFT

Further information (optional)

We have read a number of reports and studies about the effective use of pupil premium, the impact of disadvantage on education outcomes and how to address challenges to learning presented by socio-economic disadvantage. We also looked at a number of studies about the impact of the pandemic on disadvantaged students.

Use of EEF reports and guidance have helped us develop our strategy and we will continue to use it through the implementation of our activities. We engage with the different WELL initiatives (Western Excellence in Learning and Leadership), aimed at improving the outcomes of disadvantaged students in the West Cumbria, collaborating with other local schools.

We will ensure we evaluate the progress of our plans and adjust them as appropriate to secure better outcomes for our disadvantaged students.

The following publications have been most important when planning our strategy:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/guidance-for-teachers/using-pupil-premium>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-effective-use-and-accountability>

We have also identified best practice from other successful schools and implemented these practices in a way that fits in with our school ethos. We will continue to look outward to ensure we are using our pupil premium funding in the most effective way.

