

# Pupil premium strategy statement – Cockermouth 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 (@ 5/11/2025)	Years 7-11 = 1051 Years 12-13 = 212  Total = 1263
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	Years 7-11 = 18.5% Years 12-13 = unfunded
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers ( <b>3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year</b> )	2024-2027
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	Richard King – Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Michelle Henley -Senior Deputy Headteacher Hugh Carter – Assistant Headteacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Sue Moses – PP Governor

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£ 178,450
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£0
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b>	£ 178,450

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

Cockermouth School aims to offer an exceptional learning experience for *all* students. We are a high-performing, truly comprehensive and inclusive school serving a large rural catchment area in the north-west of Cumbria. We value our place at the heart of our local community. We recognise how important it is to develop *all* students to ensure they make excellent academic and social progress, achieving well across the curriculum. We recognise that poverty and low income can disproportionately impact the educational experience and outcomes of children. Every one of our students is an individual and we are committed to work with each student and their family so that they can thrive at our school and leave us at the end of Year 11 or Year 13 with excellent progression on to the next stage in life with strong qualifications, a sense of a values-based community and enjoyable, memorable experiences along the way.

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 tiers from the EEF framework – high-quality teaching, targeted academic support, and wider strategies.<sup>1</sup> The strategy focuses on Pupil Premium students, as well as other disadvantaged and vulnerable students such as those with SEND or previously known to children's social care. Our School Development Priorities are consonant with this strategy (see diagram on the next page). Whole School Priority 1 (WSP1) focuses on universal high-quality teaching and learning for all students. Whole School Priority 2 (WSP2) focuses on targeted academic support and wider strategies. Our Pupil Premium funding is used to financially support our Additional Support Model (WSP2), enabling *all* students to access the highest quality of teaching in our universal provision.

We know that if we ensure and maintain high expectations for all students and that we support each individual to work effectively in every lesson, we maximise the chances of our Pupil Premium students reaching their full potential. We retain a deliberately 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 this aspirational pathway.

We ensure the provision of high quality, high frequency CPD programme, working alongside our staff to help them maximise the quality of lesson delivery and pastoral care. Our golden threads running across the year include teaching and learning, safeguarding and pastoral care, SEND and disciplinary literacy. The CPD also focuses on how we identify our vulnerable and at-risk students, so that we can then put in place appropriate support. Underpinning all staff development is the importance of knowing our students and adapting our practice to meet their need in order 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 behavioural needs, well-being and attendance. Some students require additional, bespoke support. Every student at Cockermouth School should have equal access to the rich experiences on offer, within and beyond the school day. We understand that some of our students require additional support or adapted approaches to ensure their opportunity to thrive is truly equal.

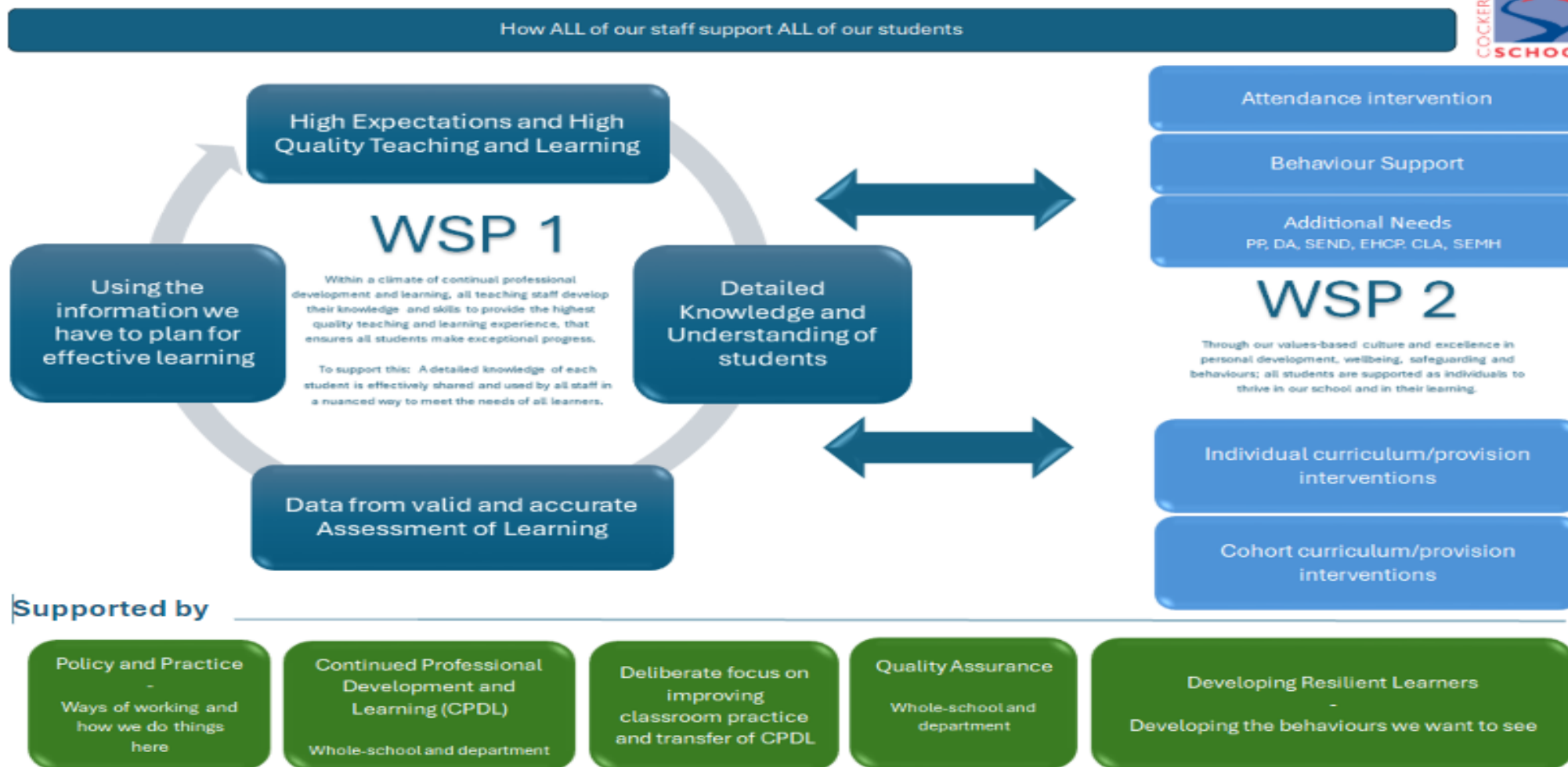
---

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/guidance-for-teachers/using-pupil-premium> and [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68e661e3dadf7616351e4f5b/Using\\_pupil\\_premium\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68e661e3dadf7616351e4f5b/Using_pupil_premium_guidance.pdf)

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	<p><b>Attendance:</b> Our attendance data over the last 2 years indicates that attendance among disadvantaged pupils has been, on average, between 8% lower than for non-disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>50% of disadvantaged pupils have been 'persistently absent' compared to 17% of their peers during that period. Our assessments and observations indicate that absenteeism is negatively impacting disadvantaged pupils' progress.</p>
2	<p><b>Social, emotional and mental health issues/safeguarding:</b> our pastoral and Safeguarding Team caseloads show a significantly higher referral and on-going support rate for our disadvantaged cohort. The safety, stability and well-being of a student underpins their achievement.</p>
3	<p><b>Behaviour:</b> Although our overall suspension figures remain below the national average, our PP students are represented disproportionately in our behaviour data. Persistent disruptive behaviour represents the top challenge and impacts positive engagement with learning and therefore achievement.</p>
4	<p><b>Reading:</b> Our screening data shows that our PP students entering Year 7 disproportionately have reader profiles that show they require additional support to read at a level in line with their chronological age. Reading ability, fluency and confidence impacts understanding of the curriculum and therefore can impede academic and social achievement.</p>
5	<p><b>Home learning:</b> staff observations and discussions with students and families indicate that there can be a greater risk for our disadvantaged students of limited access to space, resources and support needed for the effective completion of home learning; the work done beyond the classroom supports enhanced attainment for students and directly affects engagement and confidence within the school day.</p>
6	<p><b>Extra-curricular involvement:</b> our participation data over time has shown us that the participation of disadvantaged pupils in extra-curricular clubs, activities and events can be lower than their non-disadvantaged peers if we do not deliberately encourage and enable access.</p>
7	<p><b>New starters and students under FAP/managed move support:</b> we take seriously our moral role in supporting the inclusion of students who have been excluded or at risk of being excluded from other schools. We rarely ask for our own students to be placed with other schools, but we frequently welcome vulnerable students from the Inclusion Panel caseload. PP students dominate this cohort. We work with positive regard for every individual, over time, to help them become a success at our school irrespective of their likely academic outcomes. This requires significant time and resource from our Student Support/Additional Support teams to support the attendance, safeguarding and behaviour that is a foundation for strong achievement.</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. We lead with an overarching intended outcome (academic achievement) and follow with our challenge areas which will support achievement.

Intended outcome	Success criteria
To achieve and sustain improved academic outcomes for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	<p>Excellent outcomes for our disadvantaged cohort</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The attainment of disadvantaged students at GCSE is above the national average from the same starting point.</li><li>• Internal report data shows attainment of disadvantaged students in line with our non-disadvantaged cohort.</li><li>• Disadvantaged students will achieve 5+ in maths and English, in line with non-disadvantaged pupils with the same prior attainment.</li><li>• 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.</li></ul>
To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	<p>Sustained high attendance by 2027/28 demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the overall unauthorised absence rate for all pupils being no more than 5% and the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers being reduced by 50%.</li><li>• the percentage of all pupils who are persistently absent being below 10% and the figure among disadvantaged pupils being no more than 20% lower than their peers.</li></ul>
To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.	<p>Sustained high levels of wellbeing by 2027/28 demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• qualitative data from student voice, student and parent surveys and teacher observations.</li><li>• high participation rates in enrichment activities in line with our whole cohort</li></ul>
To achieve and sustain a reduction in persistent disruptive behaviours for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduction in the number of repeat suspensions amongst individual disadvantaged students.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers notice the improved engagement and reduced disruptive behaviour of students who benefit from additional support.</li> </ul>
Improved reading comprehension among disadvantaged pupils across KS3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>
To achieve improved rates of homework completion amongst our disadvantaged cohort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A trend of declining homework points awarded to disadvantaged students as a result of their engagement.</li> </ul>
To achieve and sustain participation in extra-curricular activity for our disadvantaged pupils which is in-line with their non-disadvantaged peers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>high participation rates in enrichment activities in line with our whole cohort</li> </ul>
To achieve and sustain the attendance and positive educational engagement of vulnerable new starters, so that they leave school with an aspirational career next step.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Every student leaves school at 16 or 18 with an aspirational career next step.</li> <li>Students in this cohort sustain at least 90% attendance</li> <li>Students in this cohort attend all interventions and lessons</li> <li>Students in this cohort report feeling valued in the school over time</li> </ul>

## 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: £ 50,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<b>CPDL</b>  High-quality professional development that is steeped in rigorous scholarship with teaching	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	All

<p>staff given time to continually develop and collaborate to ensure students benefit from the best possible teaching based on the best evidence.</p> <p>The CPD programme focuses on the following whole school priorities and revisits each at least termly to sustain focus and progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching and Learning</li> <li>• Literacy</li> <li>• SEND</li> <li>• Behaviour</li> <li>• Pastoral Support</li> <li>• Safeguarding</li> </ul> <p>StepLab, an online coaching platform, is being thoughtfully implemented to enhance the focus and dialogue around high quality teaching at all levels.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>EEF evidence:  <a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/effective-professional-development">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/effective-professional-development</a></p> <p>Progress of students who receive consistently high-quality teaching and learning can make accelerated progress of up to +12 months in an academic year. Sutton Trust (2011). This is the biggest lever in driving up students' progress</p>	
<p><b>Behaviour</b></p> <p>Through an established culture and training, which incorporate the five core values of the school, staff maintain positive regard and 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 and live our school values.</p>	<p>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 meta-analyses 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.</p> <p><a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/behaviour">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/behaviour</a></p>	3



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

Budgeted cost: £ 50,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p><b>1:1 and small group academic support</b></p> <p>CLA / PP+ / PP students identified for 1:1 tuition or small group tuition with in-school tutors.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Thinking Reading programme as a strategy to improve reading and literacy skills with our weakest readers at Key Stages 3 and 4.</p>	<p>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.  <a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/one-to-one-tuition">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/one-to-one-tuition</a></p> <p><b>EEF:</b> 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.  <a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies</a></p> <p>All students are screened in literacy to identify any below age-related expectations with further probe testing done to diagnose specific needs.</p> <p>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. <a href="https://www.thinkingreading.com/">https://www.thinkingreading.com/</a></p> <p>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</p>	<p><b>4, 5, 7</b></p>



Academic Mentoring/Study Support – Lead Teachers & “Academic Weapons”		

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

Budgeted cost: £ 78,450

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<b>Food:</b> Full school meal deal for every PP/FSM student	Every child should have a nutritious meal to support their health, well-being and engagement with school. We top-up the FSM income to ensure every pupil gets the meal deal in full, including where funding is lagged (we have a rising FSM cohort therefore a lag deficit)	All
<p><b>Attendance Interventions:</b></p> <p>Attendance Leads employed with a focus on the attendance of our disadvantaged cohort.</p> <p>Attendance monitoring and support to improve overall attendance figure for pupil premium students.</p> <p>Embedding principles of good practice set out in DfE's <a href="#">Improving School Attendance</a> advice.</p>	<p>Attendance Lead has been effective at working with families and other agencies to improve the attendance of our disadvantaged cohort.</p> <p>Reviewing the results of students 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.</p> <p>The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced persistent absence levels.</p>	1
<p><b>Wellbeing:</b></p> <p>Inclusion Centre support, intervention (inc ELSA) and student counselling.</p> <p>Targeted behaviour support through the Behaviour Lead deployed in our Student Support Centre to work with</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/social-and-emotional-">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/social-and-emotional-</a></p>	2, 3, 7

<p>individual students to understand and improve behaviour and engagement.</p> <p>Full-time, non-teaching Deputy DSL to support growing safeguarding caseload</p>	<p><a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/social-and-emotional-learning&amp;utm_medium=search&amp;utm_campaign=site_search&amp;search_term=social-learning">learning?utm_source=/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/social-and-emotional-learning&amp;utm_medium=search&amp;utm_campaign=site_search&amp;search_term=social</a></p> <p>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.</p>	
<p><b>Enrichment / Provision of resources:</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Financial support given to students to encourage with music tuition.</p> <p>Ring fencing of funding for PP+ students to support with both academic and extra-curricular interests.</p>	<p>EEF studies have shown that enrichment approaches can directly improve pupils' attainment. The EEF thinks that enriching education has intrinsic benefits.</p> <p>We think all children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, deserve a well-rounded, culturally rich, education.</p> <p><a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/guidance-for-teachers/life-skills-enrichment?utm_source=/guidance-for-teachers/life-skills-enrichment&amp;utm_medium=search&amp;utm_campaign=site_search&amp;search_term=enrich">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/guidance-for-teachers/life-skills-enrichment?utm_source=/guidance-for-teachers/life-skills-enrichment&amp;utm_medium=search&amp;utm_campaign=site_search&amp;search_term=enrich</a></p>	6
<p><b>Aspiration</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Disadvantaged students prioritised for careers interviews.</p> <p>Engagement with HE / FE providers to highlight the opportunities and benefits of Higher Education.</p> <p>Ensure that all Year 10 students have access to a positive work placement next year.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/careers-education">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/careers-education</a></p>	3, 7

**Total budgeted cost: £178, 450**

## Part B: Review of the previous academic year

### Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

#### Academic performance and qualifications

The table below shows the GCSE outcomes of our disadvantaged cohort for the last 7 years. The trend over time and the 2025 outcomes show that we are returning to pre-pandemic levels of achievement for this cohort. In particular, the 2025 results show significant improvement in attainment in the basic measures (English and Maths, and EBacc both 4+ and 5+).

Disadvantaged Students	2018	2019		2022		2023	2024	2025
Total number of students	29	29		29		28	31	29
% Students Achieving 9-5 in English and Maths	34.5	27.6		34.5		30	15.6	27.6
% Students Achieving 9-4 in English and Maths	48.3	58.6		58.6		40	37.5	44.8
% Students achieving 5 Strong Passes (5+) inc English and Maths	27.6	17.2		34.5		20	15.6	27.6
% Students achieving 5 Standard Passes (4+) inc English and Maths	48.3	37.9		55.2		33.3	28.1	41.4
% Students in COHORT Achieving the EBacc Strong Pass (5+)	3.4	10.3		10.3		13.3	15.6	17.2
% Students in COHORT Achieving the EBacc Standard Pass (4+)	10.3	17.2		17.2		13.3	15.6	27.6

The 2025 GCSE results cohort were the first year group of ours to benefit from reading screening and subsequent targeted intervention. In addition to these outcomes, we note that 2 of the 5 students from Cockermouth School who secured places at Oxford University were from our Pupil Premium cohort. And, 8 of the students who received reading intervention for literacy gaps from 2020 went on to study A level in our 6<sup>th</sup> Form in 2025.

#### Attendance

We have recently strengthened our attendance team by investing in additional resources specifically focused on improving attendance among our pupil premium students. This

enhanced support is designed to identify and remove barriers to school attendance through close collaboration with students, families, and external agencies. As part of our approach, we are actively using the EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) toolkit and offering tailored support from a range of teams in school. This is complemented by input from external professionals and the Local Authority to help students successfully reintegrate into school following periods of absence. Overall pupil premium attendance has improved compared to the same point in 2024—an encouraging sign that our targeted strategies are making a positive impact.

### **Behaviour**

Since 2023 we have employed and developed staff skilled in supporting the behaviour of students who face challenges in this area. We have seen a reduction in high level incidents amongst the PP cohort from 59 in 2023 to 35 in 2025. Staff work 1-1 with students to help them regulate and develop strategies to deal more appropriately with the emotions. Impact in this area takes time and commitment. We are encouraged by the changes we are seeing.

### **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. In 2023-2024 36% of PP students participated in extra-curricular activities. In 2025-2026 this had risen to 79%. 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. In March 2025 we took a group of Year 9 students with disadvantage to Sri Lanka for a community project, fully funded. We contributed approximately £10,000 in hardship grants to facilitate access to enrichment trips including subsidising students to go on the GCSE trips to language schools in France and Spain. PP students in key stage 3 were given priority access to workshops with the Royal Northern Music College and music tuition is heavily subsidised for PP students to encourage access to learning an instrument. It was a pleasure to watch one of our Y7 PP/SEND students perform in a violin group at the summer concert, having started 6 months previously and benefited from the subsidy to access lessons.

## **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.*

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Provider</b>
1:1 and NTP Tuition	My Tutor
CEIAG online support	Unifrog
Reading intervention	Thinking Reading

Maths online support	Sparx Maths (now Mathswatch)
Science online support	Carousel
Results analysis	Sisra
Literacy Assessment	NGRT
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.