Pupil premium strategy statement

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	Rivers Academy
Number of pupils in school	1006
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	Number 332 34.6%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers **(3 year plans are recommended)**	September 2024 - July 2027
Date this statement was published	September 2024
Date this version was reviewed	July 2025
Date this statement will be reviewed	July 2026
Statement authorised by	S. Johnson-Scott (Principal)
Pupil premium lead	E.Myton
Governor / Trustee lead	M. Lancey

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£365,200
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	£365,200

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intent as an Academy is to all come together as a community to narrow the attainment, attendance and behaviour gaps. By supporting pupil well-being we create an environment wherein disadvantaged pupils can achieve their full potential. The use of additional funds allows the Academy to have staffing, additional resources, interventions and additional opportunities for extending cultural capital. This intent is to allow an inclusive and supportive environment where regardless of background every pupil feels valued, empowered and supported to succeed academically and personally.

The Academy focuses on having quality first teaching with the use of adaptive teaching techniques to allow an inclusive learning environment to support our PP pupils raising attainment and academic achievement. Targeted intervention with data informed decisions with internal Academy data is used to reduce gaps and ensure maximum impact.

Monitoring the attendance of PP pupils and implementing strategies to improve it ensures that pupils benefit fully. Understanding and addressing the causes for any poor attendance enables us to provide targeted support and encourages a positive view to attendance at the Academy.

Building positive relationships for our disadvantaged pupils to create a supportive and inclusive Academy environment to create a nurturing and empowering ethos, which allows pupils to thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

Parental engagement when issues arise whether positive or negative, with letters , phone calls and parent meetings to gain support in fostering a strong home-school partnership.

Using enrichment opportunities to create an inclusive environment where every pupil feels valued, supported and motivated to engage in achieving their goals. This enhances their sense of belonging and self-confidence within Rivers Academy.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Whilst the average **attendance rates** for disadvantaged pupils have improved they are still currently lower than that of non disadvantaged pupils. This reduces their learning time and impacts their progress.
2	Recent data has suggested an improvement in the **progress and attainment** of our disadvantaged pupils, particularly in KS4 where for the second year in a row they are likely to achieve above national average (once published results are released). However we realise there is still room for improvement.
3	Our observations and discussions with pupils indicate that **motivation and aspirations** among some disadvantaged pupils is low. This is partly due to the pupils coming from homes where education is not a priority. For some pupil premium pupils there are issues around regular positive learning habits which can lower aspiration and accessibility regarding ambitious long-term aspirations.
4	Recent data has suggested that disadvantaged pupils are less likely to attend a club after school or attend an educational visit. Improving **enrichment opportunities** for disadvantaged pupils will help to support their wider cultural capital
5	We understand the negative impact that suspensions can have on Pupil Premium pupils and the gaps in learning that can occur as a result. While we have made progress in reducing the number of suspensions, we recognise the need to continue this work and reduce this number further. To strengthen our approach, we are continuing to develop and improve our **inclusion provision**, ensuring that pupils receive timely, targeted support to address barriers to learning, behaviour and personal development. As part of this commitment, we have recruited an additional **three Pastoral Support Leads** who will provide enhanced pastoral intervention, early identification of need and support for pupils at risk of disengagement or suspension. This increased capacity will enable us to provide more consistent and personalised support, with the aim of improving attendance, behaviour, engagement and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
6	Data has suggested that a significant number of disadvantaged pupils have lower **literacy skills** in KS3. This has been evidenced through reading ages upon entry and our own diagnostic assessments. A key focus will therefore be to improve literacy outcomes for disadvantaged pupils across KS3 through targeted intervention and support.

	To strengthen this provision, we have recruited an additional **teacher of SEN** who will support the identification of specific literacy needs and the delivery of targeted interventions for pupils requiring additional support. This increased capacity will enable us to provide more personalised provision, helping to address literacy gaps at an earlier stage and ensure that disadvantaged pupils are better equipped to access the wider curriculum and make sustained progress.

Intended outcomes

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

Intended outcome	Success criteria
To achieve a sustained increase in attendance for disadvantaged pupils.	● The overall attendance rate of disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national average for that group. ● To reduce the attendance gap between the disadvantaged and non disadvantaged to no more than 2%. ● Persistent absenteeism is reduced and below the national average for that group
To lower the gap between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils, particularly in Maths and English To focus on key groups within the school community containing disadvantaged pupils to reduce the gaps of attainment.	. ● Improve progress and attainment for our disadvantaged pupils in English and Maths. ● Achieve at least national average for progress and attainment in E+M for disadvantaged pupils. ● Improve progress and attainment for disadvantaged pupils in KS5.
To increase motivation, attitude towards learning and give aspirations to disadvantaged pupils.	● To further deliver a robust reward system in place that includes achievement points and reward trips based on those points. ● To further increase the amount of extracurricular activities and pupils attending educational trips. ● Teacher reports and class observations suggest disadvantaged pupils are confident learners with positive attitudes to learning. As a result,

	they are better at regulating their own learning resulting in a reduction in disadvantaged pupil's negative behaviour points. ● Work in books shows a high level of challenge and resilience, where pupils are not afraid to make mistakes, and there is a culture of learning from mistakes.
To increase the attendance data of PP pupils to extra curricular activities and clubs.	● A significant increase in participation in enrichment activities, particularly among disadvantaged pupils.
To achieve sustained improvement in behaviour for all pupils, particularly leading to reducing incidents by disadvantaged pupils.	● Behaviour policy of CCC (chance choice and consequence) with restorative conversations, allowing pupils to build relationships with peers and staff. This should allow socialisation back into the academy and create a positive environment. ● To further reduce the disadvantaged pupil suspension rate by re-engaging pupils in the enjoyment of learning and Academy life leading to excellent attitudes to learning (clear routines, positive behaviours, high attendance and punctuality).
High levels of literacy including improving reading ages among disadvantaged pupils across KS3, specifically focusing on those pupils below their chronological reading age.	● Reading tests demonstrate improved fluency and comprehension skills among disadvantaged pupils and will be in line or above their chronological age ● Internal quality assurance and work in books will demonstrate extended writing which is well structured, 'word rich' and uses subject specific vocabulary appropriately. ● Pupils will have the skills to tackle challenging texts suitable for their chronological reading ages and in summative assessments. ● Year 7 Reading targeted intervention with the Year 7 pupil

	premium pupils to support reducing the gap of the disadvantaged pupils and smooth transition into secondary school. ● By the end of our current plan in 2027, literacy tests demonstrate a 10% improvement in literacy levels among disadvantaged pupils and a smaller disparity between the scores of disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers.

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: £172,420

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Using CPD/INSETs and staff briefing to inform staff and encourage a growth mind set to support our pupil premium pupils with effective strategies. Such as: pedagogical skills, adaptive teaching, feedback techniques and building positive relationships. Development of knowledge-rich curriculum as research indicates well structured curriculum can lead to improved understanding and retention of knowledge. Having whole school diagnostics in key disadvantaged groups. Professional development to support improving behaviour in the classroom and around the school with various and effective techniques. ITT and ECT programme with a specific focus on supporting disadvantaged pupils. In school mentoring where experienced teachers support those new to teaching.	Training with staff on supporting the pupils with their metacognition and self-regulation to support pupils to understand their own learning styles. Staff using quality first teaching and adaptive teaching such as modelling (+7 months of progress).Metacognition and self-regulation | Toolkit Strand | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF Providing **feedback** is well-evidenced and has a high impact on learning outcome. Feedback redirects or refocuses the learners' to achieve a goal, by aligning effort and activity with an outcome, Feedback can be verbal, written or can be given through tests via digital technology. Studies of verbal feedback show a slightly higher impact overall (+7 months). Feedback | Toolkit Strand | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF "Mastery learning", "teaching for mastery" aims to support all pupils to achieve deep understanding and competence in the relevant topic, including common lesson content for all pupils; and use of manipulatives and representations. Mastery learning | Toolkit Strand | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF	2,3,5,6

Member of staff given responsibility as Lead Practitioner of Pupil Premium. Member of staff given responsibility for EAL (as new migrants pupils are PP pupils). Members of staff given responsibility for Pupil Premium in Year 11 including K30. To support data analysis of diagnostics, the sharing of good practice, targeting areas of improvements. Lead Practitioners within subjects to develop CPD / Pedagogy. Member of staff given responsibility for supporting ITT and ECT staff.		

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

Budgeted cost: £ 151,011

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Intervention and extra support. Having a member of staff having responsibility with the Key 30 who are the disadvantaged pupils. Increasing extra support opportunities for Year 11 offering after school intervention. Holiday/Weekend interventions. Academic Mentors support attendance and behaviour issues.	Improving outcomes by disadvantaged pupils in English & Maths so that greater numbers of pupils achieve their target grades 9-4 and 9-5. To increase the likelihood of additional school time benefitting disadvantaged pupils, school leaders should consider how to secure engagement and attendance among those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Extending school time| Toolkit Strand | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF	3,4

Having extra support in Maths and English for EAL pupils. Having extra with subject specialists. Meeting with SENDCo to identify and highlight key pupils and put in place targeted intervention with extra support with Maths and English. Targeted review of the pupils during subject diagnostics. Sharing pupil profiles and effective teaching strategies with teaching staff. Targeting disadvantaged pupils for extra tutoring support.	Using Teaching Assistants with intervention to small groups or individuals shows a positive impact on learner outcomes. Also using high quality teaching has been noted from research as the most important lever schools have to improve outcomes for their pupils. Teaching Assistant interventions | Toolkit Strand | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF	

The use of teaching assistants to support to give personalised support Having additional support across some of the key subjects to work with PP pupils. (Key Sponsors) Members of staff are given responsibility for mentoring Pupil Premium in Year 11 including K30.	Small group tuition is most likely to be effective if it is targeted at pupils' specific needs. Small group tuition has an average impact of four months of additional progress over the course of the year. Small group tuition | Toolkit Strand | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF	
Extra intervention to support increasing Year 7 reading ages with the initiative 'reading buddies' supported by a lead practitioner. The focus on reading and comprehension strategies is important for pupils to enable them to access the curriculum and to be able to read and understand text.	Reading comprehension strategies have a high impact on average (+6 months). Alongside phonics it is a crucial component of early reading instruction. Reading Comprehension Strategies | Toolkit Strand | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF	2

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

Budgeted cost: £41,769

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Improving the attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils by the use of data tracking on Arbor. PP Reward/support Plan focusing on the group of PP pupils to support them to increase their attendance (trips/rewards) .	There is large variation in the strategies that have been researched with the aim of improving pupil attendance. Attendance Interventions | Rapid Evidence Assessment | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF	1,6
Tracking of behaviour points to support behaviour intervention to improve attainment to allow a positive school ethos, improve classroom behaviour and targeted pupils. Sponsored pupils are a group of the academy's high profile and disadvantaged pupils where SLT , heads of departments and the lead practitioners have weekly check-ins for support or a point of contact for any issues.	Both targeted interventions and universal approaches (whole school policy) have positive overall effects (+ 4 months). Schools should consider the appropriate combination of behaviour approaches to reduce overall disruption and provide tailored support where required. Behaviour Interventions | Toolkit Strand | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF Wellbeing surveys and attendance data support that an individualised	2,3,5

Wellbeing support through targeted one to one pastoral support across year groups which include a focus on attendance, referral to internal & external agencies and increased parental contact to reduce barriers to learning.	approach has a positive impact on achievement and learning behaviours	
Having a member of staff that oversees Careers.; dedicated weekly tutor time focused on careers. Career advice and talks from outside agencies. The use of UNIFROG which is to support pupils with universities and finding their future in their career. Visits to colleges/universities Guest speakers / external workshops Apprenticeships UNIFROG	To meet their aspirations about careers, university, and further education, pupils often require good educational outcomes. Raising aspirations is therefore often believed to incentivise improved attainment. Aspiration Interventions | Toolkit Strand | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF	4

Total budgeted cost: 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 2025 to 2026 academic year.

Previous Pupil Pupil Premium Strategy Outcomes

The overall average attendance of PP pupils during 2025-26 was 89.6%. This is a slight increase compared to 2024-25. The overall attendance of non PP pupils during 2025-26 was 94.26%. In 2025-26 the gap between PP and non PP attendance was 4.6% which is in line with 2024-25. The % of PP pupils persistently absent in 2025-26 was 30.21% which was over a 3% decrease compared to 2024-25. The gap between PP/non PP has dropped slightly to 16.74%, compared to 17% last year.

We realise there is still much work to do to ensure that average attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils are no lower than that of other pupils.

Several strategies have been put in place to support increasing the attendance and attainment of our Pupil Premium pupils.

Quality First Teaching, all staff are expected to:

- Maintain the highest expectations of all pupils and do not equate disadvantage with low ability
- Promote an inclusive and collaborative classroom ethos that enables disadvantaged pupils to thrive
- Plan and deliver high-quality curricula and lessons that accelerate progress, narrow gaps and sustain improvements.

Differentiated Support:

- Provide targeted support for disadvantaged pupils through differentiated planning and teaching, particularly for those at risk of falling behind
- Keep up to date with evidence-based teaching strategies proven to narrow attainment and achievement gaps
- Provide tailored professional development opportunities to help staff implement successful strategies for accelerating pupil progress

Enrichment and Extended Learning Opportunities

We will offer a range of initiatives to support learning beyond the classroom:

- Extra-curricular participation, including intervention in core subjects
- Free breakfast provision with embedded literacy and numeracy support and peer mentoring
- Extended school time for intervention and educational trips
- Reading strategies supported by enhanced library resources
- Rewards systems that promote academic achievement, positive behaviour and character development

Parental Engagement

We will prioritise strong partnerships with families through:

- Education workshops for parents/carers
- Regular parents' evenings and support meetings
- Early engagement with Year 7 families and pupils
- Ensuring parents can engage with school at every appropriate opportunity

Attendance Initiatives, Incentives and Recognition

- Reward trips for good attendance
- Vouchers and achievement points
- Canteen passes for Pupil Premium pupils on attendance reward reports

Proactive Monitoring

- Weekly dedicated time during Academic Mentoring to reward attendance and follow up with absent pupils
- Increased communication with families and earlier engagement with parents/carers when concerns arise
- Regular tracking and intervention for pupils at risk of persistent absence

Attainment 8 Score

	2024	**2025**	**2026**
PP	40.57	47.66	40.85
Non-PP	47.69	56.48	52.14
Gap	7.12	8.82	11.29

The overall attainment 8 score did decrease in the exam series 2026, as did that of non disadvantaged pupils. This is in part due to the cohort context and it should be noted that the attainment 8 score of disadvantaged pupils remains 5.95 points higher than in 2024 and above the national average from 2024/25 (this year's average has not yet been published) of 34.9. Therefore it can be concluded that disadvantaged pupils are performing above national average in terms of attainment 8 outcomes.

Outcomes in English and Maths

	2024	**2025**	**2026**

% E&M 4+ (PP)	62	64	60
% E&M 4+ (Non PP)	66	75	78
% E&M 5+ (PP)	48	50	36
% E&M 5+ (Non PP)	55	62	57

Disadvantaged pupils achieving 4+ in E&M have remained broadly in line with previous years. Although the % of disadvantaged pupils has dropped in terms of those achieving 5+, this mirrors the trend of non-disadvantaged pupils and in part can be attributed to the different cohort context compared to last academic year. It is worth noting that the 36% figure for disadvantaged pupils achieving 5+ in E&M remains over 10% points above the latest published national average figures which is 25.8%. Therefore it can be concluded that disadvantaged pupils are performing above national average in relation to outcomes at 5+ in E&M.

KS5 Disadvantaged pupils:

KS5 Rivers Academy	2023-24 Average Grade	2024-25 Average Grade	2025-26 Average Grade
All pupils	C-	C	C+
Disadvantaged pupils	B-	C-	C

While disadvantaged pupils at KS5 are performing slightly below their peers, outcomes for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have improved compared to 2025. Achievement of disadvantaged pupils at the end of KS5 remains a priority for the academy.

Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities and Trips

In 2025-26, disadvantaged pupil participation was as follows:

- **20%** attended an extra-curricular club
- **41%** participated in a trip or enrichment activity (up from 30% in 2024-25)
- **5%** participated in a residential activity

The academy funded 9 places for disadvantaged pupils to attend a Year 8 maths residential at PGL and continues to fund places for disadvantaged pupils to attend both Year 11 English and Maths residentials.

A key improvement from last year was the increase in disadvantaged pupils attending trips, rising from 30% in 2024-25 to 41% in 2025-26. Increasing participation in extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities remains a focus. Our strategy for 2026-27 has been informed by stakeholder feedback from staff, students and parents.

Pastoral Support and Inclusion

Some disadvantaged pupils require additional support to address barriers to progress and ensure their attitudes to learning and behaviour support success. The academy uses a tiered interventions approach to provide this support.

To further strengthen our inclusion provision for 2026-27, the academy has appointed three additional pastoral support leads.

% of all suspensions that were PP pupils

2023-24 - 62.7%
2024-25 - 65.3%
2025-26 - 65.1%

Permanent Exclusions (PP students)

2023-24 - 2
2024-25 - 1
2025-26 - 1

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
N/A	