

Pupil premium strategy statement – The Priory Witham Academy

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	1071
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	47%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year)	2025-2026 / 2026/2027
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	June 2026
Statement authorised by	M Garner / A Tallentire
Pupil premium lead	M Garner / A Tallentire
Governor / Trustee lead	Elaine Abdul

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£705,883.75
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

To achieve the **Priory Trust's** mission of improving life chances of our pupils so that they become true citizens of the world, we support our academies to act to mitigate the impact of disadvantage on educational outcomes.

The Pupil Premium framework will be at the heart of whole academy and Trust-wide effort, and we endeavour to ensure all staff understand the strategy and their role within it. Leaders ensure that they consider technical and practical definitions of disadvantage and determine to respond to need rather than label.

The following structural principles apply to the use of additional funding in all Priory Academies:

- Effective senior leadership and governance;
- Commitment to a range of ongoing diagnostic assessments of learning need so that actions are based on a range of data and meet the specific needs of all students but particularly those at risk of underachievement due to impact of socio-economic disadvantage;
- The Trust Professional Learning Strategy is built on the knowledge that the most effective lever for addressing disadvantage is inclusive quality first teaching and this will benefit all pupils;
- The strategy is integral to the whole-academy plans for education recovery.

Closely aligned to the Trust mission of creating true citizens of the world, the Priory Witham Academy believes firmly in equity and equality for all children. Our collective sense of mission and our ethos of Believe Together, Achieve Together ensures that all learners, regardless of background or barriers faced, have access to and engage with an **aspirational curriculum that has oracy, literacy, communication and knowledge at its heart**. All learners benefit from a subject focused approach providing authentic and powerful learning experiences. Children take advantage of wide-ranging opportunities to develop **rich language for learning, vocabulary for life and a love of reading**. Progress is strong, children learn more and remember more. Children are empowered to develop their moral compass and become informed, confident members of our wider community through our Personal Development curriculum and enrichment programme. Learners develop a robust and diverse skill set which equips them to respond to the evolving world they live in. Pupils have high levels of self-worth and are ready to successfully embark on the next stage of their education or employment-based journey and become true citizens of the world.

A focus of our Pupil Premium strategy is to ensure that leaders at all levels have a well-informed understanding of the barriers that face our disadvantaged learners and their families, and effectively use this information to inform Academy, phase and subject development plans. Leaders analyse and share where pupils have multiple barriers to learning, particularly our most vulnerable pupils (pupil premium and SEND). We recognise that the priority for these learners is **high quality teaching based on research driven curriculum design and delivery** which allows all learners to secure and retain a coherent body of knowledge. Staff

access **quality development opportunities including personalised CPD, coaching and mentoring and research informed practice**. Staff feel valued, staff well-being is a priority which contributes to low staff absence rates and minimising the impact on disadvantaged learners.

We believe in an individualised approach; timely and accurate **assessment** allows specific barriers to disadvantaged pupils to be identified and their needs addressed precisely. This enables all disadvantaged learners, including those who are higher attaining, to make the necessary progress they need to attain well and not only to close gaps with their non-disadvantaged peers but to move successfully on to the next phase of their lives. The impact of quality first teaching is further enhanced through the use of targeted school led tutoring to support wider curriculum recovery and those, including disadvantaged, who have been significantly impacted by the pandemic.

Our strong focus on **Maximising Values and strong pastoral care** ensures that relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Disadvantaged learners have access to support throughout the Academy Day; we believe in **an entitlement curriculum** comprising of activities which provide equity for disadvantaged pupils. This is further enhanced by a rich range of extended and enrichment learning experiences which develops cultural capital and equips learners with the essential knowledge and experiences to be educated citizens and informed members of our community. A **strong PHSE programme** ensures disadvantaged learners are explicitly taught the non-cognitive skills and characteristics needed to direct and drive their learning, understand the value of failure and have the strategies to adapt when things do not go as planned. This is supported by an understanding that pupils' **mental health and well-being** is a fundamental factor in the pastoral support and care offered.

As an all through Academy we pay particular focus to the **transition** of our learners from one phase to another in their education journey and beyond. Transition between all key stages is a critical time for disadvantaged pupils, we pay particular attention to EYFS, transition in and out of reception and across Key Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p>Early Language Development</p> <p>Our assessments and internal observations indicate that many pupils are working below age-related expectations when they start reception, they have not met the expected milestones for language development. This makes it increasingly difficult for pupils to communicate effectively and engage in meaningful social interactions – these challenges particularly affect disadvantaged pupils.</p>
2	<p>GAPs in performance and outcomes are narrowed</p>

	<p>Internal and external assessments indicate that reading and writing attainment among disadvantaged pupils is significantly below that of non-disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>Whilst GAPS are narrowing in some subject areas, this is not yet consistent across the wider curriculum.</p>
3	<p>Attendance of students</p> <p>Our attendance data indicates that whilst our PP attendance improving, PP attendance remains a concern. Internal and external assessment indicates that absenteeism is negatively impacting progress for disadvantaged pupils.</p>
4	<p>Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>Outcomes from QA, Safeguarding and Attendance and pastoral interventions indicate an increase in social and emotional issues for many students, including anxiety and low self-esteem. In Key Stage 4 and 5 some of this anxiety is linked to academic progress and attainment which impacts disadvantaged learners.</p>
5	<p>Enrichment – Cultural Capital</p> <p>Through enrichment data analysis, parental engagement, feedback at parents' evenings and the numbers of children arriving at school lacking basic skills, we have identified the need to further support engagement in extra-curricular activities. This is compounded by a reduced number of opportunities / experiences and support outside the Academy which creates limits to self-efficacy, aspiration and resilience necessitating the development of social and cultural capital.</p>
6	<p>Behaviour</p> <p>Internal data shows that whilst behaviour is improving, suspension rates for disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.</p> <p>Behaviour records demonstrate that disadvantaged learners have lower levels of self-regulation which impacts upon their ability to manage conflict and impacts on their behaviour.</p>

Intended Outcomes

Intended Outcome	Success Criteria
Improved oral language skills and vocabulary among disadvantaged pupils.	Assessments and observations indicate improved oral language amongst disadvantaged pupils. This is evident when triangulated with other sources of evidence such as engagement in lessons and improved outcomes.
GAPs outcomes are narrowed and engagement in reading and writing is increased.	Outcomes show that attainment in reading and English for disadvantaged pupils are narrowing. GAPS in performance measures are narrowed across the wider curriculum.
Narrowed GAPs in attendance	Continued improvements to Increase attendance and reduce PA for disadvantaged pupils.
Health, well-being and low socio-economic status are not barriers to learning	Families engage well with support and pupils have access to a range of services within and beyond the Academy.
Improved engagement in enrichment opportunities for disadvantaged pupils	Disadvantaged pupils experience opportunities that provide cultural capital.

Narrowed GAPs in behaviour logs, incidences and suspension rates for disadvantaged pupils.	Disadvantaged pupils' behaviour is effectively managed and is improving in comparison to their non-dis peers with a focus on the suspension rate.
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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: £351,602.50

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Increase staffing capacity for Inclusion team to enable the implementation of evidence-based intervention programmes.	Approaches are evidenced in the EEF Guide to Pupil Premium and tiered menu of strategies Teacher recruitment and retention strategy – DfE 2019 Trust Inclusion Framework	1-6
Implement the Teaching Framework, including the associated resources (GTT/Trust Frameworks) to improve quality first teaching, including support for Early Career teachers.	Approaches are evidenced in the EEF Guide to Pupil Premium and tiered menu of strategies Our Trust professional development, lodged in our Maximising Learning Programme, focuses on SEND, Metacognition, Language for Learning, Assessment and Behaviour. The Trust has reviewed the evidence and produced operational <u>frameworks</u> to enable effective implementation. Additional sessions planned and delivered at Witham to ensure that ECTs are well supported in applying practice to the Witham context.	1-6
Work with Literacy Specialist to further strengthen the implementation of the writing curriculum focusing on writing composition strategies.	DFE Writing Framework EEF Improving Literacy	1-2
Strengthen approaches to Reading and the development of the wider reading team, including identification of a Reading Lead and SLT link.	EEF Improving Secondary Reading. The Literacy Trust EEF Phonics Guide	1-2

TLR role to support with Enrichment and House opportunities supporting the tracking of participation to support with removal of barriers and targeted intervention.	EEF Guide to Pupil Premium	3, 5, 6
Recruitment of Technical and Vocational Lead to broaden curriculum pathways at post-16 and strengthen them throughout the curriculum.	CST – Impact of the curriculum The impact of high-quality teaching and recruitment is clearly shown through the Tier One research published by the Education Endowment fund highlighting that high quality teaching and learning ensures students life chances are enhanced. Evidenced in the PP guidance and menu of approaches therein: High Quality Teaching, Recruitment and retention of teaching staff	2,5
Dedicated data manager to provide clear report methods for all stakeholders	EEF – Quality first teaching. Impact of assessment	1-6
Resources to promote independent learning.	Approaches are evidenced in the EEF Guide to Pupil Premium and tiered menu of strategies	2 / 5
Lead Practitioner in Maths focusing on curriculum development and Transition	In school provision following the guidance provided by the EEF will support students across their learning in mathematics and English.	2
Use of diagnostic tools to analyse, identify and respond to the needs of disadvantaged pupils academically and pastorally including 4 Matrix, Edurio & SIMs	Approaches are evidenced in the EEF Guide to Pupil Premium and tiered menu of strategies A range of evidence indicates the importance of effective diagnostic assessment to identify the needs of students and provide appropriate intervention and support. Particularly in response to the uneven experience of students during the pandemic. EEF Blog: Learning recovery and the role of diagnostic... EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	1-6

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

Budgeted cost: £ 288,661.14

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
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Increased provision for the delivery of targeted interventions for Reading, Writing and Maths and targeted Secondary subjects.	Approaches are evidenced in the EEF Guide to Pupil Premium and tiered menu of strategies	1-2 3-6
Literacy and numeracy interventions and assessments for low attaining disadvantaged pupils, focusing on the lowest 20% of readers and at key transition points.	Approaches are evidenced in the EEF Guide to Pupil Premium and tiered menu of strategies Tuition targeted at specific needs and knowledge gaps can be an effective method to support low attaining students or those falling behind, both one-to-one: One to one tuition EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) And in small groups: Small group tuition Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF	1-2

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

Budgeted cost: £ 65756.04

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Creation of all-through 'Inclusion' leadership roles to lead on all-through attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.	Approaches are evidenced in the EEF Guide to Pupil Premium and tiered menu of strategies Attendance interventions rapid evidence assessment EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Research articles linked to ACES and deprivation including ACE Index: mapping childhood adversity in England Journal of Public Health Oxford Academic (oup.com) ACEs - Adverse Childhood Experiences - ACAMH	1-6
EBSA support officer to help develop attendance and support vulnerable students	Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and follow the attendance ladder and protocols set out by the Local Authority based on substantial evidence and work with other local authorities - Introduction (local-offer.org)	3-4

Dedicated data manager to provide clear report methods for all stakeholders	EEF – Quality first teaching. Impact of assessment	1-6
High quality intervention through the Pastoral Structure and the role of the Pastoral Managers supports a robust referral process and timely intervention to support disadvantaged pupils' social and emotional needs as well as their mental health and well-being.	Approaches are evidenced in the EEF Guide to Pupil Premium and tiered menu of strategies Drivers of human development: How relationships and context shape learning and development1 (tandfonline.com) PASS and Edurio analysis allows the academy to find the hidden children and allows staff to understand why pupils may be reluctant, disengaged or even disruptive learners by sensitively exploring social and emotional wellbeing.	2-6
Careers provision: prioritisation of disadvantaged students through the work of the Careers Advisor, Academy Strategic Careers Lead and Careers Manager	High quality career guidance supports pupils to make informed choices and this reduce the potential of a young person becoming a NEET. This is crucial for young people where there are gaps in social and cultural capital. Trust strategy Good Career Guidance Education Gatsby	2 / 4 / 5
Increased funding for external support including the Nurture Garden, counselling and mentoring (eg Psycho-Therapist) to support disadvantaged pupils with mental health and behaviour challenges.	Approaches are evidenced in the EEF Guide to Pupil Premium and tiered menu of strategies Our designated mental health lead and other staff have worked closely with the local Mental Health Support Team to develop our provision to support young people's mental health. Quick read: Transforming children and young people's mental health provision - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) adolescent-mental-health-summary.pdf (priorityacademies.co.uk)	4
Breakfast club to support living cost and attendance.	Evidence seen throughout the guidance given by the DfE. Maximising Programme - Using pupil premium guidance for school leaders (1).pdf - All Documents (sharepoint.com)	2 / 3 / 4 / 6
Lifeguard and Swim Instructor used to develop swimming proficiency and offer further opportunities to the community	Evidence seen throughout the guidance given by the DfE. Maximising Programme - Using pupil premium guidance for school leaders (1).pdf - All Documents (sharepoint.com)	4 / 5

Total budgeted cost: £ 706, 019.68

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

EYFS

At the end of the academic year 57% of pupils in reception achieved a GLD. **52% of PP pupils achieved a GLD, which is 2% higher than last year.**

Compare your GLD data – DfE VYED reports:

In the academic year 23/24 our actual percentage GLD was 63.2%, which is **+10.5ppt higher than our contextual GLD score** of 52.7%. Our actual percentage GLD was better than predicted as determined by context.

In the academic year 24/25 our actual percentage GLD based on a three-year average was 61.5%, which is **+8.0ppt higher than our contextual GLD score** of 53.4%. Our actual percentage GLD was better than predicted as determined by context.

Phonics screening check

Year 1

Nationally 80% of pupils met the expected standard in year 1. This has stayed the same as last year.

86% of pupils at Witham met the expected standard.

At Witham, 88% of PP pupils met the expected standard, whereas nationally this is only 67%.

Year 2

Nationally, 89% of pupils met the expected standard in the phonics screen check by the end of year 2. This has remained the same since 2023.

At Witham, overall, 90% of pupils met the expected standard and **86% of PP pupils met the expected standard.**

KS2 outcomes

78% of the cohort were Pupil Premium and 69% were SEN.

PP pupils achieving the expected outcomes at the end of KS2:

Reading – 42% (All pupils National 75%)

Writing – 42% (All pupils National 72%)

Maths – 49% (All pupils National 74%)

Strategies to improve outcomes in English and maths remain a priority on the Pupil Premium strategy for 2025/26.

- Speech and Language – implementation of NELI (Nuffield Early language Intervention)
- Rapid catch up for the pupils who are not yet reading at ARE – Little Wandle Letters and Sounds
- Implementation of Little Wandle Reading Fluency
- Focus on writing transcription skills, spelling and handwriting. Implementation of Little Wandle Handwriting programme.
- Continue work with NCETM – embedding mastery programme.

Key Stage Four: 2025 Outcomes

Overall basics measure shows an improvement from 2024 with 45% of students achieving a 4+ - this continues to be a focus for the Academy in ensuring at a higher proportion of students are achieving the basics measure across English and Maths. This continues to be driven through the collaborative work of standards leads and middle leaders through RAP where increased provision is allocated to support targeted interventions.

Pupil premium outcomes show that they have outperformed their non-PP peers by 5% at 4+ and 2% at 5+. This trend is evident across English and maths, with Maths showing a significant increase of 61.7% of PP students achieving 4+ compared to 49% non-PP. PP pupils have also outperformed their non-PP peers for EBACC subjects.

Overall attainment has also increased by 2.7%.

The focus of high-quality targeted interventions and the on-going development of the curriculum and its implementation is contributing to improved outcomes. The investment in home learning platforms has continued to strengthen in uptake and engagement from pupils and continues to be a focus in establishing those positive routines for learning and working independently. The Academy focus for QFT on stretch and challenge has strengthened the implementation of the curriculum and is now shifting to mirror the positive impact seen in and beyond maths.

Improvements moving forwards include a focus on removing barriers, improving standards and increasing engagement with a focus on:

- Implementation of the Inclusion Framework
- Adaptive teaching
- Engagement in enrichment, careers provision and access to high quality PD.
- Accessing high quality interventions – increasing provision for subjects beyond the core.
- RIP to improve QFT in target subjects

Attendance

Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year
The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils

Further information (optional)