

Pupil premium strategy statement – The Downley 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	354
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	55 (15.53%)
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 2027-2028
Date this statement was published	November 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	October 2026
Statement authorised by	Leanne Dandridge
Pupil premium lead	Jo Perrottet
Governor / Trustee lead	Sally Perkins

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£91,741.46
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£ 0
Total budget for this academic year	£91,741.46

Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Along with the ODBST, The Downley School (TDS) is committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment where all pupils—regardless of faith, culture, ability, or background—are accepted, supported, and empowered. We recognise that some of our pupils come from diverse home contexts, and that each pupil is on their own academic and spiritual journey. This includes those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and those facing disadvantage. We ensure that every child receives the support, guidance, and challenge they need to thrive.

Safety and wellbeing are at the heart of everything we do.

We work tirelessly to ensure that all pupils feel secure, respected, and free from harm—emotionally, physically, and socially. We foster a culture of kindness, courage, and ambition, where pupils are encouraged to be the best they can be.

We embody the experience of an inclusive community:

- Where everyone contributes according to their gifts and receives according to their needs.
- Where difference is celebrated and diversity enriches us all.
- Where barriers are removed and opportunities are created for every learner to flourish.

We have considered the challenges faced by all disadvantaged pupils, including those who have a social worker and/or are young carers. The activity we have outlined in this statement is also intended to support their needs, regardless of whether they are otherwise disadvantaged or not.

High-quality teaching is at the heart of our approach, with a focus on areas in which disadvantaged pupils require the most support. This is proven to have the greatest impact on closing the disadvantage attainment gap and at the same time will benefit the non-disadvantaged pupils in our school. Implicit in the intended outcomes detailed below, is the intention that non-disadvantaged pupils' attainment will be sustained and improved alongside progress for their disadvantaged peers.

Our strategy identifies where additional support is required for pupils whose education and wellbeing were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and how a MAT based approach can support them.

To ensure we are effective we will:

- work strategically to ensure that our school curriculum, and its implementation, is robust and has disadvantaged learners at its heart;
- monitor data strategically and act early, intervening at the point need is first identified
- adopt an approach in which all staff take responsibility for disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and raise expectations of what they can achieve.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p>Scrutiny of assessments, observations and discussions with school staff indicate underdeveloped oral language skills and vocabulary gaps among many disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>These are evident from entry into Reception where some disadvantaged pupils do not have the oral skills necessary for effective communication and are reliant on non-verbal communication techniques.</p> <p>Funding to support pupils who have delayed speech and language needs is reducing for schools and more resources need to be found internally.</p> <p>Oracy remains a barrier to effective learning to the end of KS2 and, in general, is more prevalent among our disadvantaged pupils than their peers.</p>
2	<p>Assessments, observations and discussions with school staff suggest disadvantaged pupils generally have greater difficulties with early writing and later extended writing, than their peers.</p> <p>Although significant progress has been made, writing remains a core reason why some disadvantaged pupils do not achieve GLD at the end of EYFS.</p> <p>By the end of key stage 2, writing remains an obstacle to achieving EXS, and GDS, RWM combined for some disadvantaged pupils in particular.</p>
3	<p>Internal and external assessments indicate that Maths attainment among disadvantaged pupils is sometimes below that of non-disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>Despite positive GLD outcomes, fewer disadvantaged pupils reach the MTC standards at the end of Year 4 than non-disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>By the end of key stage 2, Maths can be an obstacle to achieving EXS RWM combined.</p>
4	<p>Our attendance data over the last 3 years indicates that attendance among disadvantaged pupils is rising and is well within national attendance data for disadvantaged pupils. This is a significant positive.</p> <p>Persistent absenteeism remains a challenge for disadvantaged, and we want to continue to close this gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.</p>
5	<p>SEMH challenges are sometimes more prevalent in disadvantaged ODBST families than in non-disadvantaged families. Some disadvantaged pupils show higher levels of anxiety and are at higher risk of EBSA. Some disadvantaged pupils find it harder to complete formal assessments than non-disadvantaged pupils, compromising their final assessment outcomes and transition to secondary school.</p>

Intended outcomes

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

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Improved oral language skills and vocabulary among disadvantaged pupils.	<p>More disadvantaged pupils in EYFS can communicate their needs orally, or through the use of good non-verbal techniques such as sign language, so reducing the number of behaviour incidences. No pupil is unable to communicate effectively due to disadvantage alone.</p> <p>Assessments, observations and feedback from school staff indicate more disadvantaged pupils have effective communication skills and orally use more formal academic vocabulary by the end of key stage 2.</p>
Improved writing attainment among disadvantaged pupils.	KS2 writing outcomes in 2026/27 and beyond, for EXS and for GDS, in 2026/27 show that more disadvantaged pupils meet the expected standard and are closing the gap with all pupils nationally.
Improved maths attainment for disadvantaged pupils at the end of KS2.	<p>MTC data shows that more disadvantaged pupils meet the expected standard and are closing the gap with all pupils nationally.</p> <p>KS2 maths outcomes in 2026/27 and beyond, for EXS and GDS, show that more disadvantaged pupils meet the expected standard and are closing the gap with all pupils nationally.</p>
To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	<p>Sustained high attendance by 2026/27 demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers continues to reduce so remaining smaller than the national gap • the percentage of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent reduces and is smaller than the national gap
To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils in our school, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	<p>Sustained high levels of wellbeing by 2026/27 demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • qualitative data from pupil voice, pupil and parent surveys and school leader observations • reduced numbers of disadvantaged pupils who are EBSA or who are at risk of being EBSA • all disadvantaged pupils are able to access formal testing and are able to perform to their true ability • high numbers of disadvantaged pupils continue to access the positive enrichment activities offered by OD-BST schools

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.

Leadership / Teaching and Learning

Budgeted cost: £37,324.45

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Senior leaders responsible for supporting quality first teaching across the school.</p> <p>Trust wide leadership group for promoting effective school strategies around disadvantaged learners</p>	<p>DfE, 2015: Having a senior leader responsible for disadvantaged pupils is essential for addressing barriers such poor attendance, low aspirations, and limited life experiences. This leadership ensures targeted interventions and aligns performance management with strategies to improve disadvantaged outcomes. Cordingley et al., 2014; DfE, 2015: focused leadership on disadvantaged pupils drives significant improvements by aligning professional development with their needs</p> <p>UCL Institute of Education: leaders who engage with professional learning focussed on equity are more effective in implementing strategies that support disadvantaged learners.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4</p>
<p>Trust wide speech and language programme to develop teacher skills and to support strategies for non-verbal pupils</p> <p>EYFS leader groups and focus on SEP work in schools around developing oracy amongst disadvantaged pupils</p>	<p>EEF Mastery Learning, Metacognition</p> <p>SEND Code of Practice: Individual Instruction from effective assessment and identification of individual need.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</p>
<p>Bespoke English network group to focus on improving outcomes for underachieving disadvantaged pupils in writing</p> <p>Continued Trust wide writing programme to skill leaders, teachers and support staff</p>	<p>EEF Mastery Learning, Metacognition, Collaborative learning and the effectiveness of strong Feedback for pupils</p> <p>DfE writing framework</p> <p>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686e7890fe1a249e937cbeeb/The_writing_framework.pdf</p> <p>DfE reading framework</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-reading-framework-teaching-the-foundations-of-literacy</p>	<p>2, 4, 5</p>

Access to bespoke ODBST Maths Hub group with resources and CPD (including Teaching for Mastery training)	The DfE non-statutory guidance has been produced in conjunction with the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics, drawing on evidence-based approaches:	3, 4, 5
PPM focus – discussed/targeted	EEF: Research shows monitoring and evaluation are essential to effective Pupil Premium implementation, highlighting the importance of regular meetings to ensure fidelity and ongoing improvement.	2, 3

Targeted academic support

Budgeted cost: £ 35,575.37

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Enhanced support from the ODBST School Effectiveness Partner with identified strategies and training for staff Disadvantaged review by the Director of Education	EEF: improving teaching is the single most important lever for closing the attainment gap. UCL Institute of Education: leaders who engage with professional learning focussed on equity are more effective in implementing strategies that support disadvantaged learners.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
White Rose	White Rose emphasises a mastery-based curriculum with small, sequential steps aligned with strong pedagogical research. This method provides a solid framework for closing attainment gaps, offering structured learning and progression for all pupils. Its mastery-based approach is particularly valuable for disadvantaged pupils, as it builds confidence and strengthens core skills.	1, 3, 5
Little Wandle (including books and assessments)	Little Wandle Phonics supports disadvantaged pupils by providing a structured and systematic approach to phonics teaching. Through clear progression and consistent assessment, Little Wandle ensures that all pupils receive targeted support tailored to their needs, boosting their confidence and engagement in literacy and helping to close the attainment gap.	1, 2, 5
Dyslexia Gold (including assessments)	Dyslexia Gold is an educational program designed to support pupils with dyslexia. Dyslexia Gold can benefit disadvantaged pupils by addressing the specific challenges they may face in literacy	1, 2
Essential Writing	Essential Writing helps disadvantaged pupils by providing structured support to develop core writing skills.	2
Flash Academy EAL	Flash Academy EAL is a digital platform that helps pupils learning English as an Additional Language improve their skills through interactive lessons and activities. Flash	1, 2, 3, 5

	Academy EAL can help disadvantaged pupils by providing personalised language support, enabling them to improve their English skills, access the curriculum more effectively, and boost their confidence in school.	
PiXL Membership	PiXL membership helps close the attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils by offering targeted resources and assessment tools that address their specific learning needs.	3, 5
Catch Up (Phonics)	Catch-up phonics involves targeted interventions for pupils who have fallen behind in phonics and early reading skills. This programme focuses on reinforcing essential sounds and decoding strategies through intensive, small-group or one-on-one sessions.	1, 2

Wider strategies

Budgeted cost: £18,841.64

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Whole staff training on behaviour management and anti-bullying approaches with the aim of developing school ethos and improving behaviour across school.</p> <p>ODBST Step On tutors in schools as part of the ODBST Behaviour Strategy.</p> <p>Ongoing training to support staff understanding of online safety, including AI generative materials.</p> <p>Development of school curricula for continued learning around online safety, including generative AI materials.</p> <p>Monitoring of behaviour, including online behaviours, by ODBST leaders</p>	<p>Both targeted interventions and universal approaches can have positive overall effects:</p> <p>Behaviour interventions Teaching and Learning Toolkit EEF</p>	4, 5
<p>Embedding principles of good practice set out in the DfE's guidance on working together to improve school attendance.</p> <p>Implementation of ODBST attendance policy and strategy</p> <p>This will involve training and release time for staff to develop and implement new procedures.</p>	<p>The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced levels of absence and persistent absence.</p>	4

<p>Appointing attendance/support officers to improve attendance.</p> <p>Training for DSLs and Family Liaison Officers</p> <p>Monitoring of attendance by ODBST leaders</p>		
<p>Funding available for Pupil Premium Funded pupils to enable them to participate in extra-curricular enrichment activities (including music tuition, school trips, residential, after school clubs etc)</p>	<p>Recent research shows that extracurricular activities greatly enhance disadvantaged pupils' engagement with school and help develop key life skills like teamwork and responsibility. These activities reinforce classroom learning and promote a well-rounded education. However, the Sutton Trust Report (2015) highlights persistent social inequalities, with many disadvantaged pupils lacking equal access to these opportunities, making it essential to address this gap.</p>	4, 5
<p>Family Support Worker</p>	<p>Family support workers can significantly assist disadvantaged pupils by building strong home-school links, helping communication between families and schools, and ensuring parental involvement, which research shows correlates with improved academic outcomes. Additionally, they help to address socio-emotional needs, as support in this area is crucial for the well-being and success of disadvantaged pupils.</p>	4, 5
<p>Play Therapy</p>	<p>Research shows that play therapy not only positively impacts disadvantaged pupils by reducing behavioural issues, it also supports academic success and improves SEMH.</p>	2, 3, 4, 5

Total budgeted cost: £ 91,741.46

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

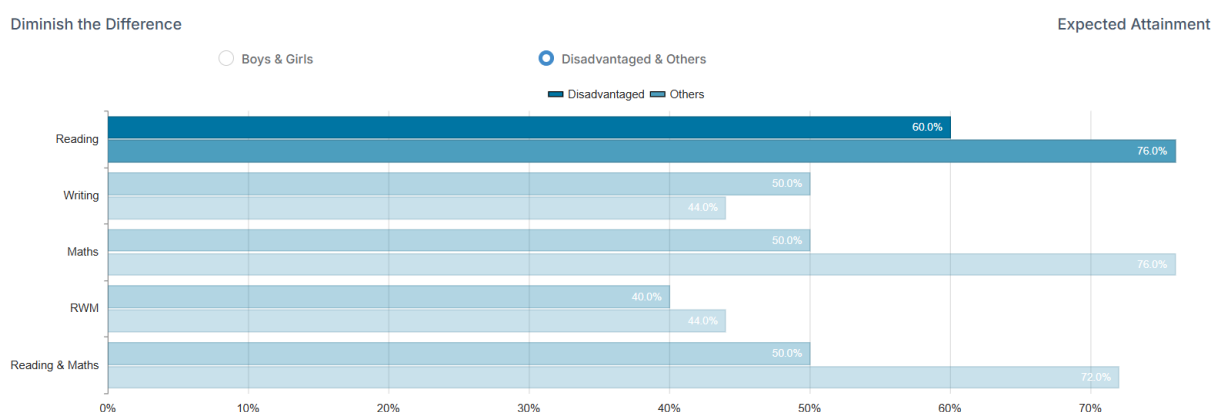
Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Teaching and Learning

Progress of disadvantaged pupils:

Disadvantaged pupils have made progress this academic year, as evidenced in both internal data and work in their books. The schemes we use in school provide a sequential curriculum that have clear steps of learning that promote progress and build on prior knowledge. Teachers have been provided CPD to use their knowledge of their children to adapt teaching to meet the needs of the children or provide interventions for them.

- The improvement in EYFS outcomes suggests that early interventions are benefiting pupils, however disadvantaged pupils achieving GLD remain at 33% for the past 3 years, highlighting a persistent gap in early achievement. To address this, the Assistant Headteacher (AHT, PP lead) will be line managing a new reception teacher that has joined the team from September 2025. This close working will ensure that targeted support and inclusive strategies are in place from the beginning, with a particular focus on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils in KS2 underperform compared to their peers, with gaps ranging from 4% to 26% which is reflected in the table below. The gap is smallest in writing as this was a target area for the school and shows that Essential Writing and the CPD provided by Julie Sargent has provided consistency and improved teacher confidence. Writing data has historically been weaker across the school but a smaller gap between disadvantaged and their peers is encouraging, showing quality first teaching has improved across the school for writing. Maths shows the widest attainment gap indicating a significant area for targeted intervention in the next academic year. Moving from Power Maths to White Rose will result in the teachers having more ownership over their lessons, where they are easily able to adapt their teaching and it will ensure teachers are working together to provide consistency across the school. Interventions will be essential to fill gaps, the Mastering Number has been a key feature in our KS1 lessons to support fluency and basic knowledge that we will be rolling out to our KS2 children to build strong mathematical foundations. This will help to close the attainment gap moving forward.



High-Quality CPD:

Teachers have benefited from the CPD offer during the last academic year focusing on including targeted training sessions led by an external provider through the ODBST. These sessions focused on improving the teaching of writing and have contributed to more consistent and effective classroom practice across the school. Some Subject Leaders have benefited from working with other leaders from ODBST on developing their subject area. The feedback from these Subject Leaders was positive and the

changes seen in the curriculum have been seen during learning walks and during book looks. Children also rated these areas highly in the pupil voice (see below).

Pupil Voice – Writing:

A pupil survey from July 2025 indicates that more disadvantaged children now enjoy writing. This reflects the impact of using the new Essential Writing scheme. All staff have had CPD over the year to use the scheme consistently across the school.

Targeted Interventions:

A number of interventions have taken place to support disadvantaged children, including small group work and 1:1 sessions. These have been tailored to individual needs of the children, as identified from assessments, and have contributed to improved outcomes. This year we are measuring how effective each intervention is.

Quality First Teaching

Leadership Support in Classrooms:

In 2024/25 the Assistant Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher have taken small groups for Maths and Writing in Years 5 and 6. This has allowed for smaller class sizes and more focused teaching on filling gaps, which has positively impacted pupil progress and confidence for all children including disadvantaged pupils.

Pupil Feedback:

Feedback from disadvantaged children via the pupil survey was positive. The majority reported feeling happy at school and enjoying subjects that have been a focus on developing this year, such as Art, PE and Forest School. However, subjects that are yet to be improved such as Geography, RE, and French were less enjoyed, highlighting areas for future development. A large number of our disadvantaged children prefer creative or practical subjects. Children scoring 3/5 or lower on the question regarding feeling happy at school were checked in with to gain more of an understanding of if there are any problems we needed to action. Fortunately, these were all minor issues that have been easily resolved.

Phonics and Early Reading:

The Little Wandle programme has been implemented consistently across KS1. As a result, 84% of Year 1 pupils passed the Phonics Screening Check (PSC) in June 2025. Our Year 1 disadvantaged children increased from 40% passing the PSC in 2024 to 66.6% in 2025. In Year 2, 75% of disadvantaged pupils passed the PSC in 2024 compared to 80% in 2025. This is an increase in both year groups.

Wider Strategies

Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) support:

The Family Support Worker (FSW) and other members of staff have delivered a range of interventions, including Lego Therapy Reading Dog, Drama club, Art club etc and regular check-ins with identified children. These have supported emotional regulation, social skills, and overall wellbeing. This has had a positive impact on our disadvantaged children ensuring they are engaged and ready for class.

- FSW has supported families throughout the year to ensure families are supported and address socio-economic needs.
- There have been improved links with home by providing parental workshops in phonics, maths, writing and PSHE. More parental workshops will be provided next year.
- Each class use the Zones of Regulation and is displayed for all children to see, this has supported SEMH needs and can be used more consistently in the next academic year.
- The introduction of OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) at lunchtimes has had a positive impact on pupils' SEMH. A recent pupil voice highlighted that children particularly enjoy playtimes and feel more

engaged. The structured play zones have encouraged active participation, collaboration, and enjoyment, all of which contribute to improved SEMH outcomes.

Attendance Monitoring:

The FSW has also played a key role in monitoring attendance. Through regular communication with families and targeted support, some children have shown improved attendance, contributing to better engagement and continuity in learning.

Support for Enrichment Opportunities:

Parents of disadvantaged pupils have been made aware of the funding available to support their child's education beyond the classroom. This has enabled many disadvantaged pupils to participate in school trips, extracurricular clubs, and residential. As a result, these children have had access to a broader, more enriching educational experience, supporting their personal development and sense of inclusion.

Attendance and Wellbeing:

School data and observations highlighted that wider factors, such as attendance and wellbeing, influenced the academic progress of disadvantaged pupils. Notably, attendance for some disadvantaged pupils was above that of their non-disadvantaged peers, reflecting positive engagement. While a few pupils required additional support to manage socio-emotional challenges, wellbeing initiatives have been effective in addressing these needs. Continued targeted interventions will build on this progress to further support sustained improvement.

Are We On Target to Achieve Our Strategic Outcomes?

Based on our assessments, the school is on track to achieve the outcomes outlined in our strategy. While progress has been made in closing gaps in learning and improving attendance, we acknowledge that ongoing efforts are required to fully close the attainment gap and further improve outcomes.

Assessment of the Previous Pupil Premium Strategy Plan:

Our assessment shows that the intended outcomes were partially met. While progress has been made in improving teaching quality and providing individualised support, academic outcomes remain inconsistent. External factors, as mentioned above, along with lower starting points for some pupils, have contributed to these challenges. We continue to refine our approach, with a greater focus on key areas to drive improvement.

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.

Programme	Provider
PiXL	Partners in Excellence
Flash Academy EAL	Flash Academy
Essential Writing	Essential Education
Dyslexia Gold	Dyslexia Action

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information: How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year

N/A

The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils

N/A