

Pupil Premium Strategy Statement - The Downley School 2025-2028

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	331
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	56 (16.91%)
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)	2026-2027 2027-2028
Date this statement was published	September 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2027
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	£80,600.00
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£ 0
Total budget for this academic year	£80,600.00

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.

Our approach is responsive to the challenges identified within our school community, rooted in robust assessment, evaluation and dialogue with staff, pupils and families, rather than assumptions about the impact of disadvantage. Not all disadvantaged pupils face the same barriers, therefore our approach focuses on identifying and addressing the specific needs of our pupils through targeted and evidence-informed support.

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	Maintaining the successes to date with an ever changing, more complex cohort on entry to EYFS.
2	Assessments, observations and discussions with school staff and leaders suggest disadvantaged pupils generally have greater difficulties with early writing and later extended writing, including transcription, than their peers. Although significant progress has been made, writing remains a core reason why some disadvantaged pupils do not achieve GLD at the end of EYFS. By the end of key stage 2, writing still remains an obstacle to achieving EXS, and GDS, RWM combined for some disadvantaged pupils in particular.
3	Internal and external assessments indicate that Maths attainment among disadvantaged pupils is sometimes below that of non-disadvantaged pupils and especially at GDS standard. Lower confidence in Maths skills due to basic Maths skills not yet truly embedded; further work to explore around the use of manipulatives and representations. Lack of self-belief in ability in Maths, lower resilience leading to anxiety in Maths. Despite positive GLD outcomes, fewer disadvantaged pupils reach the MTC standards at the end of Year 4 than non-disadvantaged pupils. By the end of key stage 2, Maths can be an obstacle to achieving EXS RWM combined.
4	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. Persistent absenteeism remains a challenge for some of our disadvantaged pupils and we want to continue to close this gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.
5	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.

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.	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. 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. <i>NB: There are 2 PPF pupils in EYFS in 2026-2027 so therefore data cannot be quantitative.</i>
Improved writing attainment among disadvantaged pupils.	By 2026/27 and beyond, disadvantaged pupils in KS2 will achieve improved writing outcomes at both EXS and GDS, with a higher proportion attaining in line with or above national disadvantaged outcomes than would have been predicted from their Year 2 starting points.
Improved maths attainment for disadvantaged pupils at the end of KS2.	MTC data shows that more disadvantaged pupils meet the expected standard and are closing the gap with all pupils nationally. Sustained improvement in KS2 mathematics outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, demonstrated by: • An increase in the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard (EXS) from 50% in 2025/26 to at least 55% in 2026/27. • An increased proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the greater depth standard (GDS). • More disadvantaged pupils attaining the expected standard and greater depth compared with previous cohorts. • The attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils nationally continuing to narrow over time.
To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	Sustained high attendance by 2026/27 demonstrated by: • The attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers continuing to narrow and remaining smaller than the national gap. • The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent reducing to 12% or below. • The school's disadvantaged persistent absence rate remaining below the national disadvantaged persistent absence rate.

To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils in our school, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	Sustained high levels of wellbeing by 2026/27 demonstrated by: • 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
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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.

Leadership / Teaching and Learning

Budgeted cost: £26,758.88

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Trust wide leadership group for promoting effective school strategies around disadvantaged learners Training for LGBs	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
Trust wide speech and language programme to develop teacher skills and to support strategies for non-verbal pupils EYFS leader groups and focus on SEP work in schools around developing oracy amongst disadvantaged pupils	EEF Mastery Learning, Metacognition SEND Code of Practice: Individual Instruction from effective assessment and identification of individual need.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Bespoke English network group to focus on improving outcomes for underachieving disadvantaged pupils in writing Continued Trust wide writing programme to skill leaders, teachers and support staff	EEF Mastery Learning, Metacognition, Collaborative learning and the effectiveness of strong Feedback for pupils DfE writing framework https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686e7890fe1a249e937cbeeb/The_writing_framework.pdf DfE reading framework	2, 4, 5

School Effectiveness Partner work in schools around early literacy amongst disadvantaged pupils	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-e-reading-framework-teaching-the-foundations-of-literacy	
Access to bespoke ODBST Maths Hub group with resources and CPD (including Teaching for Mastery training) New Trust wide Maths programme to skill leaders, teachers and support staff around the use of manipulatives and the more effective use of representations, as used in WRM. School Effectiveness Partners work in school around early Maths amongst disadvantaged pupils	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: Mathematics guidance: key stages 1 and 2 The EEF guidance is based on a range of the best available evidence: Improving Mathematics in Key Stages 2 and 3	3, 4, 5

Targeted academic support

Budgeted cost: £ 32,762.27

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 Maths	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 Pupil Premium (PPF) pupils, as it builds confidence and strengthens core skills.	1, 3, 5
Little Wandle (including books and assessments)	Little Wandle Phonics supports Pupil Premium (PPF) 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	2

	Pupil Premium (PPF) by addressing the specific challenges they may face in literacy	
Essential Writing	Essential Writing helps Pupil Premium (PPF) 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 Academy EAL can help Pupil Premium (PPF) by providing personalised language support, enabling them to improve their English skills, access the curriculum more effectively, and boost their confidence in school.	1, 2, 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
Clicker	Clicker is used to support disadvantaged pupils who face barriers in literacy. The software provides scaffolds including speech feedback, vocabulary support and writing frameworks, enabling pupils to write more independently and confidently. Evaluations have shown improvements in writing outcomes, engagement and independence, while EEF guidance highlights the positive impact of technology when used to support effective teaching and targeted pupil needs.	1, 2, 5

Wider strategies

Budgeted cost: £21,078.85

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Whole staff training on behaviour management and anti-bullying approaches with the aim of developing school ethos and improving behaviour across school. Introduction of Boxall Profile across the ODBST to better standardise and support responses to SEMH difficulties Step On tutors in schools as part of the ODBST Behaviour Strategy. Ongoing training to support staff understanding of online safety, including AI generative materials. Development of school curricula for continued learning around online	Both targeted interventions and universal approaches can have positive overall effects: Behaviour interventions Teaching and Learning Toolkit EEF	4, 5

safety, including generative AI materials. Monitoring of behaviour, including online behaviours, by ODBST leaders		
Embedding principles of good practice set out in the DfE's guidance on working together to improve school attendance July 2026 Implementation of ODBST attendance policy and strategy This will involve training and release time for staff to develop and implement new procedures. Appointing attendance/support officers to improve attendance. Training for DSLs and Family Liaison Officers Monitoring of attendance by ODBST leaders	The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced levels of absence and persistent absence.	4
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, cookery clubs and GOAL in a day by Premier etc)	Recent research shows that extracurricular activities greatly enhance Pupil Premium (PPF) 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 PPF pupils lacking equal access to these opportunities, making it essential to address this gap.	4, 5
Family Support Worker	Family support workers can significantly assist Pupil Premium (PPF) 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.	4, 5
Play Therapy	Research shows that play therapy not only positively impacts PPF pupils by reducing behavioural issues, it also supports academic success and improves SEMH.	2, 3, 4, 5

Total budgeted cost: £80,600.00

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

During 2025-26, disadvantaged pupils at The Downley School continued to benefit from targeted academic, pastoral and attendance support. Whilst cohort sizes remain small and outcomes should therefore be interpreted cautiously, analysis of the data indicates that disadvantaged pupils generally achieved outcomes that were broadly in line with national disadvantaged averages, with notable strengths in reading, mathematics, attendance and progress measures.

Achievement in KS2

The 2026 Key Stage 2 disadvantaged cohort consisted of 12 pupils. 50% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined, compared with 49% nationally for disadvantaged pupils. This places disadvantaged pupils broadly in line with national disadvantaged outcomes and above similar schools.

In reading, 67% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard, compared with 63% nationally for disadvantaged pupils. Although a 14 percentage point gap remained when compared with national non-disadvantaged pupils (81%), disadvantaged pupils performed in line with national disadvantaged outcomes and above similar schools.

The targeted provision delivered by the Deputy Headteacher, who taught a small focused group comprising predominantly Pupil Premium pupils, contributed significantly to these improved outcomes by enabling highly responsive teaching, precise feedback and tailored support.

In mathematics, 50% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard compared with 62% nationally for disadvantaged pupils. Whilst attainment was below national disadvantaged outcomes in 2026, the cohort made good progress from their Key Stage 1 outcomes and demonstrated improved confidence and fluency in mathematics over the course of their time in Key Stage 2. Analysis of pupil outcomes suggests that targeted intervention and small-group support helped pupils make accelerated progress, although this was not sufficient for all pupils to reach the expected standard by the end of Key Stage 2. Mathematics therefore remains a priority area for development. Additional interventions, enhanced use of assessment and earlier identification of gaps have now been implemented to ensure disadvantaged pupils are able to keep up with age-related expectations and achieve stronger outcomes in future cohorts.

Disadvantaged pupils also performed well in English Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (EGPS), with 75% achieving the expected standard compared with 61% nationally for disadvantaged pupils. The gap to national non-disadvantaged pupils narrowed considerably to just five percentage points.

A significant strength within the 2026 outcomes was the progress made by disadvantaged pupils.

Disadvantaged pupils achieved:

- Reading progress of +6.6 compared with -0.7 nationally for disadvantaged pupils.
- Writing progress of +7.3 compared with -0.5 nationally for disadvantaged pupils.

- Mathematics progress of +4.9 compared with -0.9 nationally for disadvantaged pupils.

In all three subjects, disadvantaged pupils made significantly above-average progress and outperformed both national disadvantaged and national non-disadvantaged pupils. These outcomes indicate that disadvantaged pupils benefitted strongly from targeted teaching, intervention and curriculum support throughout Key Stage 2.

Attendance and Wellbeing

Attendance remained a key strength of the school's disadvantaged provision.

In 2025/26:

- Attendance for disadvantaged pupils was 94.8%, compared with 92.3% nationally.
- Persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils was 13.2%, compared with 25.3% nationally.
- Attendance for disadvantaged pupils was judged above national averages.
- Persistent absence was significantly below national figures.

These outcomes suggest that the school's attendance strategy, family engagement and pastoral support have been effective in reducing barriers to learning and increasing access to the curriculum for disadvantaged pupils.

MTC

In 2025-26, 27% of disadvantaged pupils achieved a score of 21 or above in the Multiplication Tables Check (MTC), compared with 64% of pupils across the cohort. Analysis of the cohort indicates that some pupils entered Year 4 with gaps in their multiplication fluency, limiting their ability to achieve higher scores in the statutory assessment.

In response, the school has strengthened its focus on times tables teaching through regular retrieval practice, targeted interventions and increased opportunities for rehearsal and application across the mathematics curriculum. The current Year 4 cohort has stronger starting points in multiplication knowledge and fluency. In addition, both the Deputy Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher are teaching in Year 4 this year, with a significant focus on developing rapid recall of multiplication facts to ensure all pupils, particularly those eligible for Pupil Premium funding, are supported to achieve stronger outcomes in future MTC assessments.

The school is targeting 80% of disadvantaged pupils to achieve a score of 21 or above in the MTC in 2026-27. To support this ambition, disadvantaged pupils in the current Year 5 cohort continue to receive targeted intervention and additional practice to secure and embed multiplication knowledge. Furthermore, times tables fluency has been identified as a priority from Year 2 onwards, ensuring pupils develop strong foundations through consistent practice, retrieval and application. This earlier and more strategic approach is intended to reduce gaps in mathematical fluency over time and enable more disadvantaged pupils to achieve at or above national expectations in future cohorts.

Phonics Screening Check

Phonics outcomes for disadvantaged pupils were below national disadvantaged averages in 2026, with 60% of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard in Year 1 and 33.3% achieving the standard in the Year 2 recheck. Due to the small number of disadvantaged pupils within each cohort, percentages can fluctuate considerably from year to year and should be

interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, these outcomes have highlighted the need for continued investment in early reading, targeted phonics intervention and timely support for disadvantaged pupils who are at risk of falling behind.

GLD

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) outcomes improved significantly in 2025-26. This improvement reflects the impact of high-quality teaching, targeted intervention and a strong focus on communication and language development.

The disadvantaged cohort in 2025-26 in Reception was very small and outcomes should therefore be interpreted with caution. In 2024-25, both disadvantaged pupils achieved a GLD (100%), compared with one of two pupils (50%) in 2025-26. Due to the small cohort size, the attainment of individual pupils has a significant impact on overall percentages. Nevertheless, internal assessment and observational evidence indicate that disadvantaged children made good progress from their starting points and were well prepared for the transition into Key Stage 1 through the school's Strong Foundations approach.

Summary

Overall, our intended outcomes were partially successful and we intend to achieve the outcomes we set out to achieve by 2027/28, as stated in the Intended Outcomes section above.

The strongest impact was seen in:

- Exceptional progress for disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6.
- Strong attendance and significantly reduced persistent absence.
- Improved writing outcomes and a narrowing attainment gap.
- Reading attainment remaining in line with or above national disadvantaged outcomes.
- Improved EYFS outcomes, with strong foundations established for future learning through a focus on communication and language development.
- High levels of engagement and inclusion across school life.

The evaluation of the approaches delivered last academic year indicates that interventions have been positive ones and outcomes are improved from the previous academic year.

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
White Rose Maths	White Rose Education

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