

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	The Castle School
Number of pupils in school	1209
Percentage of students that are disadvantaged	16%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2024/2025 to 2027/2028
Date this statement was published	September 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	October 2025
Statement authorised by	James Lamb Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Dominic Beer Assistant Headteacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Helen McConnell Lead Disadvantaged Governor

Funding Overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£195,245
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	£195,245

Part A: Pupil Premium Strategy Plan

Statement of Intent

Our mission is Every Child Achieves, Belongs, and Participates enabling a life of choice and opportunity.

We feel education should empower our students, giving them the knowledge to make sense of the world and grow into citizens who make a difference.

The Houses are essential in fostering the strong family ethos at The Castle School. We very much believe in the partnership between parents and the school. The House system enables us to work with our families; siblings always go into the same House so we get to know families over time.

As a result, every child can expect to acquire powerful knowledge, develop strong relationships and adults modelling the way and no one is left behind.

The curriculum is designed to be well-balanced and gives rich opportunities for all students. It promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our students and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Our aim is to provide a curriculum that is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all our students' needs.

Our students will be widely educated, with experiences that include consideration of the best that humanity has produced, words, art, ideas, science. We aim to ensure that students leave the schools within The Castle Partnership Trust very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment, and educated so that they enjoy life and live well.

We plan strategically to ensure our most disadvantaged students are successful. To ensure this is effective, we will:

- Ensure disadvantaged students have the same equity of access to enrichment and participation as others.
- Adopt a whole school approach in which all staff take responsibility for disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and raise expectations of what they can achieve by prioritising disadvantaged students in the disadvantaged drive within subjects.
- All colleagues are skilled and able to intervene early when there is a lack of knowledge within a sequence of lessons.
- Underachievement is identified through RAPs at House and SLT level.
- In all areas those students that have multiple vulnerabilities will be prioritised for interventions and support.

Our Priorities 2025-2026 - Our teaching and learning guiding principles and core habits are fundamental to realising our priorities underpinning by supporting our most disadvantaged students (specifically Free Schools Meal students and SEND). **Always through the lens of disadvantaged and SEND**

1. **Every child a reader** – Robust and early identification of reading levels and effective intervention to support students at the early stages of reading. Reading opportunities and disciplinary literacy are built into the curriculum and implemented consistently by colleagues.
2. **Attendance and Lost learning** – Students attend well and can fully engage in their learning. Track and address lost learning due to all forms of absence.

3. **Adaptive teaching for SEND** - teaching plans for students who may benefit from additional practice, tailored support, component knowledge broken down and acting on information from ongoing formative and summative assessment.

Challenges

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

Challenge / Issue number	Detail of challenge
1.	Progress & attainment gaps of disadvantaged students in comparison to non-disadvantaged students exist in KS4 outcomes, particularly those with multiple vulnerabilities including those with SEMH.
2.	Attendance data shows that disadvantaged students in comparison with non-disadvantaged students don't attend as regularly as non-disadvantaged students particularly those that have multiple vulnerabilities and are SEN ASC and SEMH .
3.	Behaviour data shows that the number of disadvantaged pupils receive disproportionate number of suspensions in comparison to non – disadvantaged pupils.
4.	Participation data shows that disadvantaged pupils those eligible for FSM do not engage in as much extracurricular as those that are non-disadvantaged.

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
1. Achieve strong progress 8 for disadvantaged students:	Positive Progress 8 overall, with the ambition to move towards the whole school target of +1. Basics of 5+E&M and 4+E&M in line with non-disadvantaged peers. Disadvantaged students perform equally as well in all school performance 'buckets' (English, Maths, EBACC, Open) Disadvantaged students leave with as many qualifications as non-disadvantaged peers, with any bespoke curriculum considered with rigour.
2. Reduce the attendance gap between disadvantaged students and others.	Disadvantaged students reach the school attendance target. Persistent absence percentage for disadvantaged students decreases. Attendance in line with pre-pandemic figures.
3. Reduce the number of suspensions for disadvantaged students.	Disadvantaged students receive fewer suspensions than others.

4. Disadvantaged students have the same access to opportunities as other students. Disadvantaged students fully immersed in the PD programme. Targeted support and intervention put in for those students that have multiple vulnerabilities	High levels of participation for disadvantaged students in extracurricular clubs. High uptake of disadvantaged students on trips including 'big' trips abroad. Attendance of students remains high on curriculum enrichment days. FSM - free music tuition - Secondary if they want it.
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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: £ 145,777

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Curriculum refinement and develop of pedagogy around the guiding principles. Develop professional growth model of performance management further. Create time for colleagues to develop subject specific pedagogy Supporting ECTs through the Early Careers Framework and mentoring. Implement team teaching for new colleagues / ECTs	Standardised tests can provide reliable insights into the specific strengths and weaknesses of each pupil to help ensure they receive the correct additional support through interventions or teacher instruction: Standardised tests Assessing and Monitoring Pupil Progress Education Endowment Foundation EEF	1

Coaching for colleagues as an extra layer of support to enhance practice.		1
Utilise the latest research to inform our practice.		

Improving literacy for disadvantaged students. Effective use of literacy strategy including - 1. Development of disciplinary literacy alongside the teaching and learning principles. To include explicit teaching of vocabulary, development of oracy and competence in the classroom, engagement with wider academic discourse. 2. Tutor time reading to be twice a week with strategies embedded to support no opt out. 3. Comprehensive literacy intervention programme Year 7-10. This will include phonics programme to include use read, write inc, reading Fluency during tutor time alongside comprehension programmes within breakfast intervention and speech and language therapist and accuracy as well as comprehension programmes. Strategic aim for 24/25 for phonics to permeate throughout the classroom and teachers to continue to develop this strand of work. Fluency training and prioritising for 24/25, alongside adults having a deep understanding of their students, where they sit on the early stages of reading, and most impactful strategies to support them. Employment of Primary school teacher to support students who are at initial stages of numeracy and literacy through small group work.	Disciplinary literacy focusing key vocabulary, academic reading and subject specific language. Explicitly teaching vocabulary. Following academic text and developing reading in tutor time. Engage in most up to date research that supports literacy of disadvantaged students. Accessed, reviewed and monitored through Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Metacognition and self-regulation Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF Reading comprehension strategies can have a positive impact on pupils' ability to understand a text, and this is particularly the case when interventions are delivered over a shorter timespan: Reading comprehension strategies Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF Oral language interventions (also known as oracy or speaking and listening interventions)	1
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	refer to approaches that emphasise the importance of spoken language and verbal interaction in the classroom. They include dialogic activities. Oral language interventions are based on the idea that comprehension and reading skills benefit from explicit discussion of either content or processes of learning, or both, oral language interventions aim to support learners' use of vocabulary, articulation of ideas and spoken expression. Oral language approaches might include: targeted reading aloud and book discussion with young children; explicitly extending pupils' spoken vocabulary; the use of structured questioning to develop reading comprehension; and the use of purposeful, curriculum-focused, dialogue and interaction. Oral language interventions have some similarity to approaches based on Metacognition (which make talk about learning explicit in classrooms), and to Collaborative learning approaches which promote pupils' interaction in groups. Oral language interventions EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	
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Screening all disadvantaged students' single word reading and those that are identified as needing additional support are screened for read, write ink programme Conducted in Year 7 for all students and then targeted in Years 8, 9 and 10. Screening data is used to inform intervention as outlined above.	Phonics is an approach to teaching some aspects of literacy, by developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the relationship between written symbols and sounds. This involves the skills of hearing, identifying and using the patterns of sounds or phonemes to read written language. The aim is to systematically teach pupils the relationship between these sounds and the written spelling patterns, or graphemes, which represent them. Phonics emphasises the skills of decoding new words by sounding them out and combining or 'blending' the sound-spelling patterns. Phonics EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	1
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Targeted Academic Support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £ 35,474

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Employee tutors through existing Castle school colleagues. (Mandarin Sept 2024)	Peer tutoring includes a range of approaches in which learners work in pairs or small groups to provide each other with explicit teaching support, such as: fixed role, cross-ability tutoring in which one learner, who is often older, takes the tutoring role and is paired with a tutee or tutees, who are often younger; reciprocal role tutoring, in which learners alternate between the role of tutor and tutee. The common characteristic is that learners take on responsibility for aspects of teaching and for evaluating their success. Peer tutoring EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	1
Teaching assistant intervention	Research which focuses on teaching assistants who provide one to one or small group targeted interventions shows a stronger positive benefit of between four	

	and six additional months on average. Often interventions are based on a clearly specified approach which teaching assistants have been trained to deliver. Read, write ink Comprehension – Vipers, Touch typing, Numeracy intervention ELSA Social Skills Play Therapy Speech and Language Therapist – Trust wide. Implementing and training TA's to produce bespoke individual plans for students. Teaching Assistant Interventions EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	
CatchUp Maths to be implemented by January 2025, with specific interventions in place for students needing additional numeracy support to access the wider curriculum.	Catch Up Numeracy - first trial EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	

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

Budgeted cost: £ 7,361

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Employee Early help coordinator	The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced persistent absence levels. Attendance interventions rapid evidence assessment EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	2

Trust offers to feeder primary schools to support the early identification and intervention for students with SEND needs. Includes SEMH specialist, play therapist, specialist teacher for SEND.	EIF's report on adolescent mental health found good evidence that CBT interventions support young people's social and emotional skills and can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression: Adolescent mental health: A systematic review on the effectiveness of school-based interventions Early Intervention Foundation (eif.org.uk) There is evidence to suggest that CBT can have a high impact on risk behaviours and behavioural difficulties: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy - Youth Endowment Fund Behaviour interventions EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	2
Invest in robust tracking system that will monitor participation levels of disadvantaged pupils particularly those that are eligible for FSM.	Physical activity refers to approaches that engage pupils in sports, dance, or any kind of physical exercise. This might be through organised after school activities or a programme organised by a local sporting club or association. Sometimes sporting activity is used as a means to encourage young people to engage in additional learning activities, such as football training at a local football club combined with study skills, ICT, literacy, or mathematics lessons. Physical activity EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) After-school programmes - Youth Endowment Fund	4

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 2024 to 2025 academic year.

1. 2025 Leavers Outcomes

22/23	23/24	24/25
P8 All +0.22	+0.6	+0.56
4+EM 74%	84%	79%
5+EM 54%	59%	57%
PP P8 -0.17	0	-0.32
PP 4+EM 56%	52%	56%
PP 5+EM 28%	29%	39%
SEND EK P8 -1.06	-0.84	-1.33
SEND 4+EM 26%	24%	30%
SEND 5+ EM 22%	12%	17%

KS4 2025 Leavers outcomes - Overall trends:

- P8 unable to calculate, no KS2 SATs. BEP toolkit using KS1 shows +0.56, very similar to 2024 leavers and second year of significantly above average progress. 1st out of BEP schools.
- P8 PP -0.32, 1st in BEP schools, but gap of -1.04 between PP and non, 4th in BEP.
- Ave no. of quals 8.1, was 8.3 2024 leavers – small number missing slots, gatekept relatively well, but SEND girls lower entries.
- Gender: M +0.67, F +0.45 – similar gap to 2024 leavers but gender switched.
- 1st or 2nd in Somerset for Eng Lang, Eng Lit and Maths attainment at 4+ and 5+%. 79% 4+ E/M – 5% decrease from 2024, but up 5% from 2023. 57% 5+ E/M – 1% decrease from 2024, 3% increase from 2023. Maths increase at 5+. Matching the limiting factor this year. 13th out of 118 SWIFT schools for 5+E&M (same as 2024), but big improvement for PP 5+E&M at 10th (was 30th 2024). 1st in BEP for all attainment and progress headlines, except 4+E&M (0.5% lower).
- PAGs: HPAs lowest +0.11 (69), then MPAs +0.59 (97), then LPAs +1.14 (49)
- SEND P8: E -0.82 (9 Ss), K -1.62 (14 Ss), HN +0.23 (68 Ss)

Attendance:

22/23	23/24	24/25
Overall / PA - 93.1/15.2	All /PA 93.5%/14.3	All/PA 92.8%/15.9%
Dis / PA -88.6 / 30.5	Dis/PA 87.5%/38.0%	Dis/PA 87.7% / 34.5%
FSM / PA - 86.5 / 25.9	FSM 87.0% / 40.9%	FSM 85.8% /39.4%
SEND / PA 82 / 36.1	SEND/PA 85.0%/31.1%	SEND/PA 82.8% / 39.3%

National secondary attendance data: 91.7%. Persistent absence 22.9%. Southwest Secondaries 92.9%, PA 18.4%. Disadvantaged, FSM and SEND students have the lowest attendance data and biggest persistent absence gap. These groups must remain a priority for attendance.

Year 11 KS4 exam results highlight that those students with below 90% attendance achieved negative progress 8 and attained significantly lower than students with above 90% attendance. This trend is consistent across attainment and progress in other year groups.

Students with ASC and SEMH have the lowest attendance and highest PA.

Students experiencing Emotionally Based School Avoidance and/or anxiety typically have identified SEMH needs.

Year 11 Leavers were lowest attendance year group, highlighting the need for early intervention with PA students for Year 11 Leavers 2026.

Behaviour

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
No of pupils with 2+ suspensions:	35	42	49
No who are Dis and/or SEND:	Dis:17 SEND: 12	Dis: 19 SEN:25	Dis 30 SEND 34

Upward trajectory of repeat suspensions as well as overall trends

361 suspensions YTD. 264 Males (56 students) 97 Females. (32 students)

Compared to 23/24 = 228. Higher suspensions compared to last year by 133.

Higher rate of suspensions in Autumn and Spring. Summer rate falls by 59 suspensions.

Year 7 = 49 (7 repeat students/16 students overall)

Year 8 = 157 (15 repeat students/ 21 students overall)

Year 9 = 91 (13 repeat students/27 students overall)

Year 10 = 45 (9 repeat students/ 13 students overall)

Year 11 = 19 (5 repeat students/ 11 students overall)

Higher suspensions in year 8 (24-25) – Higher % are multiple repeat suspensions.

Males greatest proportion of suspensions (73%). Females (27%).

Disad. proportionally higher than other group – Number of PDB who are Disad. - 18

Repeats: SEN-E 5, SEN-K 29, No SEND 49.

29 students with suspensions with an SEMH need

Suspension Category Trends: (highest to lowest recorded)

1. Verbal abuse against an adult 99. 32 single/67 repeats. (21 student repeats.)
2. Physical assault against a pupil 41. 29 single/12 repeats (8 student repeats)
3. Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 107. 28 single/79 repeats (20 student repeats)
4. Racism 22. 16 single/ 6 repeats (4 student repeats)
5. Drug and alcohol 21. 18 single/ 3 repeats (3 student repeats)

Year Group totals and Highest categories

Year 7 = 49 (physical assault, verbal abuse)

Year 8 = 157 (verbal; abuse, PDB, Physical assault)

Year 9 = 91. 2 PEX's at the end of Spring 2. (Verbal abuse, PDB)

Year 10 = 45 (Verbal abuse, PDB)

Year 11 = 19 (Verbal abuse, Racism, PDB, Drug and alcohol)

Participation

3 Year trends

22/23	23/24	24/25
All – 99%	All – 99%	All – 97%
Dis – 97%	Dis – 95% (FSM 94%)	Dis – 94% (FSM 93%)
SEND – 94%	SEND – 91%	SEND 87%

Based on 30 hours over the academic year

57% of students have taken part in extracurricular session every week, SEN K 30%, SEN E 44%, PP 40%, Service 50%, FSM 37%

Year 7: 58%, Year 8: 49%, Year 9: 43%, Year 10: 42%, Year 11: 91%.

23/24 figures.

59% of students had taken part in extracurricular session every week, SEN K 47%, SEN E 57%, PP 48%, Service 50% and FSM 46%

Year 7: 59%, Year 8 50%, Year 9 45%, Year 10 51%, Year 11 90%

Clubs offered this academic year down on previous year

Participation in sport – out of school (influenced by sustained participation tracking and follow up) survey termly rather than annually, focus on targeted participation opportunities for students lowest. Vulnerable students taking part in sport enrichment.

Year 7 Enrichment fayre scheduled for 05.09.25 - Target -100% attendance

Friday challenge to launch on 12.09.25

PE bubble night on 04.09.25 - Year 7 focus to introduce extra-curricular offer at TCS

Full enrichment programme to commence week beginning 08.09.25