Pupil premium strategy statement – Soar Valley College

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery premium) funding for the 2024 to 2025 academic year to help improve the attainment of our disadvantaged students.

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
Number of students in school	1569
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible students	30.5%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2024/25, 2025/26, 2026/27
Date this statement was published	December 2024
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2025
Statement authorised by	Julie Robinson (Principal)
Pupil premium lead	Neetin Pabari (Associate Principal)
Governor lead	Vibha Gohil (Chair of Governors)

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£ 484,460
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£ 0
Total budget for this academic year	£ 484,460

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intention is that all students, regardless of their background or the challenges they face, make at least good progress and preferably more, and are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need for the next stage of their education, and indeed, life.

We recognise that in our school there are many more 'disadvantaged' (DA) students than those identified as such, for example, with a number of children in families with very low income, children who are young carers, and those with little or no exposure to English language outside school. Our strategies will endeavour to meet the needs of this wide range of students and needs.

At the heart of our strategy is high-quality teaching, with a focus on the core subjects and the areas in which disadvantaged students require the most support or benefit more, such as effective feedback, metacognition and literacy. This will benefit those not classed as disadvantaged too, and implicit in the intended outcomes detailed below, is the intention that non-disadvantaged (NDA) students' attainment will be sustained and improved alongside progress for their disadvantaged peers.

Our intention is to link our pupil premium strategy to wider school recovery for all relevant students following the Covid pandemic, notably in the use of targeted support through the National Tutoring Programme, School Led Tutoring and increased use of resources. Our approach is individualised, evidence-based and uses diagnostic assessment that allows us to respond to the particular challenge and context of our students. We make decisions on a learning-led, not label-led approach.

We also recognise the wider needs of our students and a key part of our strategy is also to ensure the highest levels of pastoral care for students. The physical and mental wellbeing of children is fundamental to their success in school and, given the success of the strategy in previous years, we will build on already high quality provision in this area of our work.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge

1	Despite being in line with national figures for progress for NDA students, our DA students achieve less well than others in the school overall and certainly in the core subjects, which are so vital to progression and later success.

	English			Mathematics			Overall		
	All	DA	NDA	All	DA	NDA	All	DA	NDA
2019	0.33	-0.12	0.66	0.48	-0.01	0.72	0.45	0.05	0.56
2020*	0.34	0.18	0.46	0.44	0.09	0.71	0.47	0.26	0.63
2021*	0.39	0.02	0.57	0.58	0.01	0.86	0.59	0.11	0.83
2022	0.63	0.19	0.87	0.53	-0.03	0.83	0.74	0.17	1.01
2023	0.44	0.03	0.63	0.56	0.26	0.70	0.67	0.28	0.82
2024*	0.57	0.16	0.71	0.61	-0.02	0.82	0.77	0.24	0.94

* Estimates from SISRA collaborative data

The gap in performance between DA and NDA students has increased from 2023 although this is broadly due to an increase in outcomes for NDA students rather than an issue with the performance of DA students.

The disproportionate impact of Covid on DA students was a national issue and at SVC this broadened the gap to 0.84 in 2022. In 2023 this was reduced to 0.54, similar to 2019 when the gap was 0.51, but with significant improvements in performance from both NDA and DA cohorts. In 2024 this gap has increased to 0.70 although the performance of DA students has remained relatively consistent.

In maths and English, across the same timescale, the gap in performance has narrowed in English from 0.78 to 0.55, whereas in maths it has increased slightly to 0.80.

We are pleased that the P8 figure for DA students at SVC is 0.24, and is higher than that for NDA students nationally [0.17 in 2023]. However, we continue to work on strategies to narrow the gap as we are not complacent about the issue and the push to improve achievement for DA students is a whole school priority.

2	Assessments and observations indicate lower levels of reading and comprehension for disadvantaged students compared to others, which impacts on achievement across the curriculum.
3	Our work with children and families indicates increasing levels of social and emotional issues, such as anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. Incidents of self-harm for example.
4	Some of our disadvantaged students exhibit poorer attitudes to learning, do not always see the value of education, and this manifests itself in behaviours both in and out of school.
5	Attendance rates for disadvantaged students, and in particular certain ethnic groups within this category, are lower than their peers.
6	A number of students have recently joined us with little or no English. This seems to be continuing. These students need rapid programmes of language acquisition if they are to be able to make the progress of which they are capable.

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 progress and attainment for disadvantaged students, with a closing of the gap between disadvantaged and all students.	Whilst disadvantaged students at Soar Valley achieved well compared to all students nationally, both in 2019 and in the CAGS and TAGs of 2020 and 2021, there is still an in-school gap.
	Our intention is to reduce the progress gap to 0.3 during the life of this plan, and to also reduce the gap between disadvantaged students and their peers in the key headline measures, 5+ English and mathematics, 4+ English and mathematics, and the proportion achieving a good pass in the EBacc suite of subjects.
	Observations will show continued focus on our 'disadvantaged first' strategy.
Improved reading levels for disadvantaged students at key stage 3 whose reading ages fall below their chronological age	Revised curriculum at key stage 3 in English, including for the fortnightly library lessons.
	Improvements seen in the NGRT Sparx assessment, to be taken at the start and end of Year 7 and Year 8, usefulness to be assessed before confirming whether to continue with this strategy longer term.
	Improvements seen in NGRT reading and comprehension test outcomes also.
	Improvements seen for those students engaged in school-led interventions.
Improved wellbeing for all students, including those who are disadvantaged.	Effective programmes in place to support students with varying levels of emotional and social support. This will include in-house strategies (counsellor, training of Associate Heads of Year) as well as the addition of MHST colleagues.
Re-established routines and strategies leading to improved standards of behaviour. Students 'buying in' to their school experience, through increased opportunities, which will also address the cultural capital deficit for some.	Reduce the gap between disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged for suspensions, S4s and whole-school detentions.
	Participation Passport data to show targeting of disadvantaged students for extra-curricular, leadership and responsibility opportunities.
	Analysis of tuition opportunities shows disadvantaged targeted, including at homework clubs, study support, accelerated learning sessions.
	Establish an offer of a range of subsidised experiences and opportunities across Y7-11 that will increase buy in and add to students' wider knowledge.
Improved attendance for disadvantaged students.	Our aim is for the absence figure for disadvantaged students to be no more than 3% less than the overall figure, which would represent an improvement.
Rapid improvement for those students arriving with little or no English, leading to their	Clear assessment procedures in place to identify need, with planned support at different levels to ensure all are able to make excellent progress.

successful integration and progress.	

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: **£200,000**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Further refine the use of data from diagnostic assessment of reading in order to identify students for intervention and to inform planning of high quality teaching.	For intervention and teaching to be most effective it is vitally important to know the precise area of need. 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, 2
Continue to provide additional staffing in mathematics, English, science and RE leading to smaller class sizes and more frequent and better targeted feedback.	Smaller class sizes have been shown to have at least a +3 month impact (EEF). Feedback has been shown to have a +8 month impact (EEF) or an effect size of +0.73 (Hattie, 2009). Smaller class sizes obviously allows for students to have more frequent and detailed feedback.	1, 2
Further enhance the CPD model [focussed on subject, subject pedagogical and pedagogical knowledge] to ensure that it is both research informed and tailored to the needs and interests of the individual teacher.	Our in-school monitoring has shown a shift in teachers' approaches during and since the lockdown periods for school, to a more didactic and less collaborative learning model. CPD will focus on developing teaching techniques, as outlined in the EEF Guidance below, and within the framework of our Great Teaching @ Soar Valley statements. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/effective-professional-development	1

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Establish and embed further research informed strategies such as adaptive teaching.		
Refine assessment practice to ensure feedback given to students allows them to accelerate their own progress. Embed a range of effective formative assessment processes in every lesson to ensure routine checking for understanding.	EEF toolkit (2019) states that 'providing feedback is well-evidenced and has high impact on learning outcomes. Effective feedback tends to focus on the task, subject and self-regulation strategies: it provides specific information on how to improve.'	1, 2, 6
Further refine the use of subject specific resources (particularly online resources) to support improved outcomes through effective revision.	Continue to provide access to well resourced platforms such as GCSE Pod and Educake.	

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

Budgeted cost: **£134,460**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Continue effective reading interventions for struggling readers through small group withdrawal with a specialist, paired reading with older students, tutor time reading, and/or support provided during AIM sessions in KS4. Continue reading activities during registration,	Acquiring disciplinary literacy is key for students as they learn new, more complex concepts in each subject: Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools Reading comprehension, vocabulary and other literacy skills are heavily linked with attainment in maths and English: word-gap.pdf (oup.com.cn)	1, 2, 6

purchasing books as required to allow for all tutors to read aloud to their classes regularly.		
Embed the use of Sparx Maths and Sparx Reader across the school addressing homework and spaced retrieval practice for maths and reading/literacy for English. Use the Insights facility to target gaps in knowledge for specific students.	Completion of homework has been shown to have an effect size of +5 months (EEF) at secondary level. In addition, Hattie has shown that spaced practice has a +0.71 effect size on outcomes. Our DA students feature disproportionately in homework non-completion data.	1
Ensure all students have access to a device to support learning at home, or have access to space and time in school for independent study.	Completion of homework has been shown to have an effect size of +5 months (EEF) at secondary level. In addition, Hattie has shown that spaced practice has a +0.71 effect size on outcomes. Our DA students feature disproportionately in homework non-completion data.	1, 3, 4
Ensure a high degree of engagement with online tuition for targeted students, including PP, in KS4 with a focus on English and maths. Continue to refine the existing high-quality programme of school-led tutoring. Ensure a range of revision sessions during the Easter break, targeting PP students to attend before opening up to others Ensure that PP students are able to attend a targeted	Tuition targeted at specific needs and knowledge gaps can be an effective method to support low at-taining pupils or those falling behind, both one-to-one: One to one tuition	EEF (educationendowmentfoun-dation.org.uk) And in small groups: Small group tuition	Toolkit Strand	Education Endowment Foundation	EEF	1

homework club after school.		
Continue to fund a bespoke curriculum offer for targeted students at risk of exclusion.	In school evidence shows that we have almost no permanent exclusions as a result of a highly inclusive approach. Some students require a bespoke pathway, comprising vocational and academic elements, enabling them to gain qualifications and relevant experience. Evidence also shows that, historically, these students have gone on to successful post-16 options and not been NEET.	1, 3, 4, 5
Further develop provision for students with little or no English. Review the effectiveness of our provision in line with EEF report. Look at the deployment of staff for greatest impact. Employ an additional member of staff to lead this provision and to provide further capacity for EAL work.	Historic data shows students entering the school late on in key stage 4 with little or no English achieve poorly, and dedicated support is needed to boost attainment. EEF have commissioned a report on EAL in the mainstream classroom (due to identified gaps in achievement).	6

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

Budgeted cost: **£150,000**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Continued funding to employ a school counsellor. Establish a routine for mental health triage. Provide access to an improved range of provision within school (including ELSA. Love4Life, EMHPs) before allocation to	The number of students presenting with anxiety has significantly increased, particularly following the lockdown periods. Having sufficient time from a trained professional to address this is essential. EIF's report on adolescent mental health found good evidence that 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)	1, 3, 4, 5

counsellor's casework.		
Continued funding of an additional Pastoral Support Worker and Associate Heads of Year, to address behaviour and attitudes, as well as attendance. Establish the non-teaching role of *Safeguarding and Welfare Lead* to provide improved capacity in these crucial areas.	The EEF cites behaviour management interventions as having a +3 months impact, with Hattie (2009) suggesting that effective classroom management has an impact size of +0.52, with classroom cohesion having an impact of a further +0.52. According to Gottfried (2014) absenteeism has an observable effect on academic outcomes from a very early age. The Government has published clear research that shows a link between low attendance and low attainment: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/absence-and-attainment-at-key-stages-2-and-4-2013-to-2014	1, 3, 4, 5
Further refine programme for PSHE and the taught pastoral curriculum. Engage with *Progressive Masculinity* to deliver an intervention aimed at a specific identified group of boys.	EEF cites meta-cognition and self-regulation as having a +8 months impact on progress, with spaced practice (one of the strategies built into the taught pastoral programme) having an effect size of +0.71 (Hattie 2009). Metacognition and self-regulation	Toolkit Strand	Education Endowment Foundation	EEF	3, 4
Contingency fund for acute issues.	Based on our experiences and those of similar schools to ours, we have identified a need to set a small amount of funding aside to respond quickly to needs that have not yet been identified.	All
Employ an Attendance Improvement Officer. Work to focus on DA students with serious absence.	The DfE's Working together to improve school attendance guidance (February 2024) suggests that improving attendance includes 'building strong relationships and working jointly with family, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and removing them.'	1, 3, 5

Total budgeted cost: £ 484,460

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged students

	2024		2023		2019*
	All	**PP**	**All**	**PP**	**PP**
P8	+0.77	+0.24	+0.67	+0.28	+0.05
Attainment 8	51.6	42.6	51.3	45.1	41.5
9-4 English/Maths	72%	54%	72%	59%	54%
9-5 English/Maths	58%	44%	53%	38%	34%
Attendance	94%	91%	96%	92%	96%
EBacc standard pass	19%	11%	18%	16%	8.5%

* Included for reference as outcomes returned to standards set in 2019

Assessment outcomes:

An analysis of the performance of our school's disadvantaged students demonstrates that attainment has consistently improved for the whole cohort from 2019. The Progress 8 figure for DA students has improved from +0.05 in 2019 to consistently being broadly +0.25. This means that the performance of DA students at Soar Valley is better than the performance of NDA students nationally.

The gap in attainment is a result of many, multifaceted and interconnected, issues. However, it is important to note that the percentage of DA students in some of our harder to reach groups has an adverse effect on the overall performance of this cohort. There are many examples each year of excellent performance by DA students.

- In 2024 25% of our DA students achieved an average of one grade higher per subject than expected (from SISRA's SPI data).
- In 2024 60% of our disadvantaged students had a positive SPI figure.

Although the achievement of DA students was lower than that of their NDA peers in 2024, the vast majority of the headline indicators show an improvement from 2019 for DA students as a result of the various strategies that have been enacted across the last 5 years.

We have also drawn on school data and observations to assess wider issues impacting disadvantaged students' performance, including attendance, behaviour and wellbeing.

The data demonstrates that statistics against these key indicators for DA students point to additional challenges to be overcome to ensure good performance for DA students. This has led to additional strategies being put in place such as the addition of an Attendance Improvement

Officer, the creation of a Safeguarding and Welfare Lead and additional pastoral roles to en-sure that we provide a high degree of support for students whose additional challenges are likely to affect their achievement.

Based on all the information above, the performance of our disadvantaged pupils met expectations, and we are at present on course to achieve the outcomes we set out to achieve by 2026/27, as stated in the Intended Outcomes section above.

Our evaluation of the approaches delivered last academic year indicates that the strategy of focusing on high quality teaching and smaller groups in core subjects has had a positive impact on achievement for all students and, within this, for DA students. This is then supplemented by a DA first strategy that ensures that students are given access to high quality experiences and interventions that impact positively on their performance.

In addition to this, the targeted work of our pastoral and Inclusion teams ensures that we build positive and productive relationships with our most disadvantaged students. The impact of this work is seen in the high levels of engagement that we are able to maintain through to Year 11 exams.

The addition of a similar engagement strategy with low attenders is the next logical step in this strategy. We know that students whose attendance is high do well. DA students with attendance above 95% achieve a P8 of +0.86. Ensuring that all of our most disadvantaged students maintain a high level of attendance is crucial to continuing to close the gap.

Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider

Further information

In establishing our new pupil premium strategy for 2024-27, we combined a review of the previous strategy with our observations and data analysis, and available research evidence.

There are many strategies in place to support disadvantaged students which are not dependent on funding; some of these are listed below, under the headings of our core values.

Aspire

We will continue our focus with students on learning, with our mantra of 'Effort is Everything'. There will be a revision of our criteria to make high effort scores more demanding nd to further raise expectations. We will recap what great effort is and continue celebrations of those who understand what it means to be a Soar Valley student and demonstrate this consistently. We constantly encourage each child to be the best version of themselves, and to achieve the best they can, irrespective of the performance of others.

Careers interviews will be scheduled first for our disadvantaged students, to give them goals and aspirations, and to improve attitudes to learning, and repeated where necessary.

Our 'disadvantaged first' strategy will be employed across a number of areas, including for example, when organising appointments for Parents' Evenings.

We will hold develop our transition programmes by adding an extended transition programme for Year 7 students moving into Yr 8, to remind of and reinforce our expectations, and undertake further targeted sessions with some where deemed appropriate.

Enjoy

There will be a major focus on activities and events which encourage all students, but particularly the disadvantaged, to become more engaged in school life, to enjoy their time in school and to buy into their learning as a consequence.

Much of this is not covered by funding but is a result of time given willingly by our fantastic staff team. Just a glance at the student bulletin will give an insight into the wealth of opportunities for students to get involved, with a vast range of extra-curricular activities, a plethora of House competitions, Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, etc. too. The Participation Passport is a way of monitoring this engagement and targeting students appropriately.

The addition of two Mental Health Support Practitioners from the MHST team working with us, adds greater capacity to those endeavouring to support students' mental health and wellbeing.

Achieve

We will continue to focus on assessment and feedback, with the intention of making sure feedback and students responding to it is a bigger focus than 'marking'. This will directly support, and be supported by, our focus on adaptive teaching.

Our departments will each have an external review, and undertake subsequent improvements as indicated in the feedback. Our whole school CPD model will focus very much on research, with all staff engaging with educational literature and, as groups, determining what aspects can be brought into our individual and whole school practice, with a focus back on the pedagogy of the classroom.