

Pupil premium strategy statement – 2025-26. Rockwood Academy

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium for the 2024 to 2025 academic year 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.

Detail	Data
School name	Rockwood Academy
Number of pupils in school	1091
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	70%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	3 year (end of year 1)
Date this statement was published	December 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	November 2027
Statement authorised by	Richard Reeve
Pupil premium lead	Victoria Creedon
Governor / Trustee lead	Zairab Yasin

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£698,750
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£62,549
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	£761,299

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intention is that all students, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, make good **progress** with rates of **attainment** in line or above national average figures across the curriculum, particularly in English, Maths and Science.

The focus of our pupil premium strategy is to provide exceptional support for our disadvantaged students to achieve that goal, including good progress for those who are already high prior attainers. We consider and plan our strategy based upon the challenges faced by our students especially in relation to their demographic category and their Mental Health and Wellbeing. One of our aims is to ensure that students receive the right help at the right time and are able to access a wealth of support both internally and externally. The activities we have outlined in this statement are also intended to support students' personal and social needs, regardless of whether they are disadvantaged or not.

High-quality teaching is at the heart of our approach, with a focus on areas proven to have the greatest impact on addressing the challenges of educational disadvantage. Research and experience suggest this is in the classroom, where through our teaching we have the most control over our students' development. The "Excellence at Rockwood" teaching strategy underpinned by the principles associated with the science of learning will remain the cornerstone and foundation for high quality teaching in 2025-26. We will also engage in initiatives that focus on developing reading skills and provide layers of support so that all students can aim to be at a level associated with their chronological reading age.

Ensuring high quality teaching is therefore a key part of our strategy. This explains our commitment to teacher professional development to ensure our students are receiving the best possible education. One of our main focuses is improving teachers' understanding of how to support students with their reading comprehension. The Tutor Reading Programme, for instance, ensures all students read for an extended period with their comprehension supported by activities facilitated by the tutor. Emphasis is also placed on the mechanisms that support and encourage expert teaching, such as explicit vocabulary teaching and our commitment to powerful whole school routines that bring about consistency and ensure student focus is always on learning. The development of robust formative and summative assessment makes it possible for us to identify issues early and act swiftly to close gaps that emerge

Integral to strategy and wider school plans for education recovery is the introduction of a inclusion hub to our school, where our most vulnerable students will be able to access specific and targeted support through the use of tutoring, targeted intervention, counselling, mentoring and external services. A key principle for us is that all our teaching, pastoral and support staff understand the challenges of educational disadvantage. It means we take collective responsibility for overcoming the barriers to achievement that are brought about by circumstance.

Challenges – 2025-26

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Data from standardised assessments and internal tests shows a significant proportion of disadvantage students are behind age-related expectations across the core subjects. This is pronounced in year 11 where students who have been adversely affected by school closure are struggling to access GCSE topics. Observational data suggests these gaps in learning are compounded by low motivation and high anxiety, which leads to lesson avoidance. There is a need for targeted academic intervention for some pupils.
2	Overall attainment is lower for disadvantaged students than for non-disadvantaged students in most subjects. This gap is particularly evidenced in GCSE maths and Ebacc subjects, where the gap has been consistently high. Diagnostic assessment in science suggests students struggle with longer problem solving and application tasks, whilst in years 8-11 maths diagnostic assessments show a number of disadvantaged students lack fundamental mathematical knowledge. A revised curriculum and the use of interventions are utilised so that GAPS and misconceptions in learning can be eradicated.
3	Standardised reading assessments and observational data from classroom visits show that disadvantaged students' reading comprehension is significantly weaker than their non-disadvantaged peers, particularly at the lower end of the distribution in years 7-10. It seems that, on average, the vocabulary, background knowledge and ability of students to draw inferences from texts is a significant issue for a large proportion of our disadvantaged cohort.
4	Observations from lesson and tutor group visits highlights an issue with some disadvantaged students not fully participating in their learning , such as taking longer to settle to activities, leaving some work incomplete and giving up a little too easily when asked questions or set tasks. The number corrections and suspensions for accumulated low level behaviour issues and confrontational behaviour point to attentional issues in class for some of our disadvantage cohort. This observational and quantitative evidence suggests that keeping all our students focused on their learning and following expectations is a top priority for our professional development.
5	Our attendance indicates that attendance among disadvantaged students has been lower than that of our non-disadvantaged students and remains a priority in 2025-26. Our school postcode is in the most 5% deprived nationally. Our pupils exclusively come from Deciles 1 and 2 of the IDACI index
6	Monitoring (from our inclusion lead, Year Group Co-Ordinator's and Form Tutors) observations and discussions with students and families have identified a rise in social and emotional issues for a significant minority of students, such as anxiety, depression, low mood, and low self-esteem . These challenges particularly affect disadvantages students and are having an impact on their levels of academic attainment which results in lesson avoidance and further disruptions to their learning.

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
Overall Attainment by the end of Year 11 for disadvantaged students to remain in line or above national average in Maths, English and Science.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disadvantaged student attainment to be in line with the performance of non-disadvantaged students. - Overall Attainment 8 to be at least 40.
Overall Progress for Disadvantaged Students by the end of Year 11 to improve further towards national averages especially in English, Maths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall achievement of disadvantaged students to be in line with or above non-disadvantaged students. - Headline figures show at least 7% improvement in the Basics English and Maths headline figures. - Attainment of students in “open bucket” subjects to be in line with national average and show at least a 7% minimum improvement in terms of attainment
Progress by the end of KS3 will demonstrate that students are on track to meet secure progress through the intended curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A minimum of 60% of all disadvantaged students by the end of KS3 will demonstrate that they are ‘secure’ in curriculum progress.
SEND disadvantaged KS3 students will make progress in line with high expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A planned series of intervention will mean that at least 70% of KS3 disadvantaged students will achieve their ambitious targets in English and Maths’
Reading ages of targeted disadvantaged students to show improvement in relation to their chronological reading age in 2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading ages will significantly improve as a result of reading strategies utilised across the academy. A minimum of a 75% of students in each year group (who’s chronological reading age is below expectations) will demonstrate a diminishing gap between actual and chronological reading age by the end of the Academic Year.
Recorded behaviour incidents in the academy report no significant difference between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fixed Term (FTE) and Permanent Exclusions (PEX) of disadvantaged students should not show a significant difference to that of non-disadvantaged students. The figure for disadvantaged students will not be more than 25% higher than that of non-disadvantaged students. - .
Attendance of disadvantaged students will improve in 2025-26.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall attendance of disadvantaged students will be in line with non-disadvantaged students. Overall

	<p>Disadvantaged students will be within 3% of Non – Disadvantaged students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall school attendance will be above 92%. Disadvantaged students will be in line with their non-disadvantaged peers, in 2025-26 up to a maximum of 4% difference. - Persistent absence of disadvantaged students will be below 25% in 2025-26.
The Mental Health and Wellbeing of disadvantaged students at Rockwood Academy remains positive and enables students to access opportunities available at the Academy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Base post impact data indicate that 80% of disadvantaged students makes expected or better progress in attendance, behaviour and well-being.
Disadvantaged students will access a range of opportunities that develop cultural capital.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All disadvantaged students will have accessed opportunities to develop personal and social skills as well as cultural capital. Each disadvantaged student will go on and have access to at least one external trip during 2025-26.

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: £ 279,810

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Utilise Trust lead Practitioners across Ebacc subjects to support quality first teaching.	<p>Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged students (DFE, 2021) (EEF Toolkit) suggests high quality teaching, including mastery teaching is a key aspect of successful schools and raising attainment among students.</p> <p>Evidence: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit</p>	1,2,3
Teaching and Learning focus on evidence-based strategies to support Quality First Teaching.	<p>Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged students (DFE, 2021) (EEF Toolkit) suggests high quality teaching, including mastery teaching is a key aspect of successful schools and raising attainment among students.</p>	1,2,3

<p>“Excellence at Rockwood”.</p>	<p>Evidence: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit</p>	
<p>Design and implement a CPD programme for 2025-26 for the development of the “Rockwood Excellence” teaching model and adaptive teaching.</p>	<p>Ensuring an effective teacher is front of every class’ (EEF 2021) highlights the importance for a comprehensive programme of support, guidance and CPD for our staff.</p> <p>Evidence gained by SLT/ML through drop ins, observations, book scrutiny, QD cycle demonstrates the effectiveness of staff following the teaching model in ensuring regular consistent practice. (EEF identify quality teaching includes approaches to developing metacognition and self-regulation.</p> <p>Metacognition and self-regulation Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF.</p>	<p>1,2,3</p>
<p>Improve the subject-specific teaching and support of reading, writing and oracy in all lessons. We will focus on the teaching of reading and vocabulary first.</p>	<p>Developing disciplinary literacy is a key recommendation in the EEF Guidance Report on Improving Secondary Literacy. There is significant evidence that improving students’ reading comprehension and vocabulary skills impacts attainment at GCSE.</p>	<p>1,2,3, 4</p>
<p>Improve academic intervention in KS3 to support closing gaps in reading, English and Maths to enable stronger progress and attainment in KS4</p>	<p>Individualised instruction involves providing different tasks for each learner and support at the individual level. It is based on the idea that all learners have different needs, and that therefore an approach that is personally tailored—particularly in terms of the activities that pupils undertake and the pace at which they progress through the curriculum—will be more effective.</p> <p>Individualised instruction EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p>	<p>1,2,3,4</p>
<p>Make better use of assessment so we can identify issues early. Training will be provided on how to interpret assessment data, and systems improved to ensure regular reviews of progress.</p>	<p>High quality 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.</p>	<p>1,2,3</p>

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

Budgeted cost: £ £144,033

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Provide opportunities to improve literacy levels and access to the curriculum for EAL students through CORE Hello.	Individualised instruction involves providing different tasks for each learner and support at the individual level. It is based on the idea that all learners have different needs, and that therefore an approach that is personally tailored—particularly in terms of the activities that pupils undertake and the pace at which they progress through the curriculum—will be more effective. Individualised instruction EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	1, 2, 3
Appoint a literacy lead to improve levels of literacy with a particular focus for on disadvantaged students.	Reading comprehension strategies are high impact on average + 6 months. Alongside phonics it is a crucial component of early reading instruction. Reading comprehension strategies EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	1,2,3
Provide academic guidance and support for disadvantaged students through the appointment of academic mentors	Teaching assistants / Academic mentors can provide a large positive impact on learner outcomes supporting teachers in classroom environments as well as providing targeted support. Teaching Assistant Interventions EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	1,2,3
To continue to provide appropriate reading CPD for all staff to enable targeted support. For example: Ruth Miskin resources and staff / student CPD.	Reading comprehension strategies can have a positive impact on students' 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	1,2,3
Provide opportunity to support students MHWB through the services of an appointed school councillor and an inclusion manager.	Social and emotional learning (SEL) interventions seek to improve pupils' decision-making skills, interaction with others and their self-management of emotions, rather than focusing directly on the academic or cognitive elements of learning. Social and emotional learning EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	4,5,6
Provide additional tutoring and intervention programmes during Saturday's and	This targeted approach will have an impact on outcomes for disadvantaged students. The EEF Toolkit highlight that periods of lost learning can be achieved with this approach: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition	1,2

Holiday periods.		
Use whole school QD to develop teachers' ability to use high impact teaching strategies to support all pupils, in particular pupils with cognition and learning needs. SEND	Guidance Report Five a Day strategies, including explicit instruction and scaffolding. EEF Effective PD Guidance Report.	1,2,3,
Offer tutoring programmes (graduate coaches) to disadvantaged students in Reading, and Maths	Small group tuition (National Tutoring programme) is defined as one teacher, trained teaching assistant or tutor working with two to five pupils together in a group. This arrangement enables the teaching to focus exclusively on a small number of learners, usually in a separate classroom or working area. The research of extending the school day and offering Saturday and summer schools suggest this can add up to 3+ months progress. Summer schools EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	1,2

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

Budgeted cost: £ 274,907

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
To appoint 5 Year Group Co-ordinators to oversee and lead all aspects of pastoral care and development within each year groups 7-11. YGC	The DFE identify that pastoral care is a priority particularly in respect to the effects of COVID 19 and periods of lockdown. The DFE state: "Schools are aware that some students will require additional emotional and pastoral support when they return to school, so making time for pastoral care is a priority". https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pastoral-care-in-the-curriculum	4, 5, 6,
Provide additional study support revision materials, and materials for disadvantaged students. (Particularly KS4).	In July 2021 Third Space Learning (Sam Southall) identifies that breaking down any barriers to success is crucial in the overall achievement of disadvantaged students. https://thirdspacelearning.com/blog/how-to-spend-pupil-premium-funding-primary/	1,2,3
Provide targeted support through a family support worker and a	EEF Teaching and Learning toolkit states that behaviour interventions and parental engagement	1,2,3,4,5, 6,7

<p>SEND admin officer to improve attendance, punctuality and links with families.</p>	<p>are both effective strategies that have positive impact. (EEF online) +3months progress</p> <p>Aspiration interventions EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance.</p>	
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Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year (2024-25)

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the 2024 to 2025 academic year.

We have analysed the performance of our school's disadvantaged pupils during the previous three academic years. The data demonstrates there has been no gap for in 2022 and 2024 with disadvantaged students being in line with national benchmarks of progress. Whilst it is important to be tentative when making direct comparisons with data from previous years, and to recognise the uneven impact of the pandemic on school performance data, there was a widening of the gap in 2024. This was due to a small number of students who needed to work with external agencies on top of the bespoke provision provided by the school. In 2025 we have seen a marked improvement in attainment 8 for our disadvantaged students with over 5 attainment 8 points improvement on 2024 and our students performing better than disadvantaged peers nationally (A8 37.8 v 34.6). Whilst there is still much work to do to raise overall attainment and progress to be in line with national attainment, there is a minimal gap in A8 of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students of 3 attainment 8 points. Improvement in Maths progress and attainment will continue to be a priority alongside progress and attainment for 2025 – 26 and disadvantaged student achieving grade 5 in English and maths.

We have placed emphasis on diminishing the disadvantaged gap in Key Stage 3 English and Maths and ensuring students achieve a secure level. In the 2025 end of year 9 data analysis, disadvantaged students outperformed non by 3.1% in English and there was a 11% gap in maths. In year 8 disadvantaged outperformed non by 3.7% and there was a 5.7 gap in maths. In year 7 English, the trend continues where disadvantaged students outperform non by 1.8% and there is a minimal gap of 0.4 in maths. This focus will continue in the remaining two years of this strategy and the development of school software to identify and rectify gaps in knowledge. This will be supplemented by small group interventions in year 7-9.

Upon analysing the impact of our reading interventions for disadvantaged and SEND students, these strategies have yielded positive gains in the NGRT B testing period for our students, with 88% of disadvantaged students making expected or better levels of progress (an increase of 7% on the previous year) and 90% (an improvement of 21%) for SEND students. A number of reading strategies have now been implemented. Strategies include 'Control the Game'; Ruth Miskin 'Fresh Start Training' and Lexia.

We have invested heavily into CPD at all levels ensuring our leaders and teaching staff understand the barriers our disadvantaged and SEND students face. This has been complemented by CPD based on evidence of what good teaching is, to ensure progress through the intended curriculum. This has been developed further in our school improvement plan 2025 -2026 to have a constant thread of adaptive teaching through our teaching and pastoral systems. Middle leaders and Senior Leaders also receive CPD to drive this. In addition to this, reading CPD for all staff has taken place to develop the expertise of staff and drive improvement to the quality of teaching with a particular focus on incorporating reading development within the classroom. This strategy will be continued and embedded further.

Our interventions for attendance this year for disadvantaged students has yielded gains with an improvement of 1.1% in comparison with 2024. The attendance data demonstrated that attendance of our disadvantaged students remains a challenge to meet national statistics. The attendance of our disadvantaged indicates a 0.4% gap compared to non-disadvantaged. Despite the best efforts of the school to support pupils' social, emotional and mental wellbeing, there is still an unacceptable level of absence, disproportionately represented by disadvantaged pupils. The appointment of a dedicated attendance officer and working with the family support

worker' is beginning to make a difference with some harder to reach families. The Inclusion hub, the school's newly introduced dedicated facility to supporting pupils' mental health, has already begun to experience high levels of referrals, the majority are disadvantaged.

The number of days suspension of disadvantaged students has been reduced by 124 in comparison to 2024. As a result of the introduction of our Inclusion Base and reset, 231 days have been utilised by disadvantaged students who receive bespoke small group coaching on behaviour and self-regulation. During 2024-2025 209 students accessed Inclusion BASE interventions, 77% of which were PP students. By the summer term, 67% of students made as expected progress in their attendance, behaviour and wellbeing.

Whilst we will continue to put every possible intervention in place to reduce the suspension figure, we will need more time to for our revised systems and additional resourcing to make further material impact.

Externally provided programmes

Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you purchased in the previous academic year. This will help the Department for Education identify which ones are popular in England

Programme	Provider
N/A	N/A

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information:

Measure	Details
How did you spend your service pupil premium allocation last academic year?	NA
What was the impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils?	NA

Further information (optional)

Use this space to provide any further information about your pupil premium strategy. For example, about your strategy planning, or other activity that you are implementing to support disadvantaged pupils, that is not dependent on pupil premium or recovery premium funding.

