

Pupil premium strategy statement -Thomas Ashton School

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium funding to help improve the attainment of our disadvantaged pupils.

It outlines our pupil premium strategy, how we intend to spend the funding in this academic year and the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils last academic year.

School overview

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school	100
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	59 (Autumn 24) 75 (Autumn 25) 75%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year)	2025-2028
Date this statement was published	Dec 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	Dec 2028
Statement authorised by	David Butterworth Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Emma Stewart Deputy Head
Governor / Trustee lead	Elaine Healey

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£99,484.
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
Total budget for this academic year <i>If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year</i>	£99,484.

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our aim is to use pupil premium funding to help us achieve and sustain positive outcomes for our disadvantaged pupils. Whilst socio-economic disadvantage is not always the primary challenge our pupils face, we do see a variance in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils across the school when compared to their peers (and those who join us at similar starting points), particularly in terms of:

- Academic attainment
- Progression to further and higher education
- Employability
- Social opportunities

At the heart of our approach is high-quality teaching focussed on areas that disadvantaged pupils require it most, targeted support based on robust diagnostic assessment of need, and helping pupils to access a broad and balanced curriculum.

Although our strategy is focused on the needs of disadvantaged pupils, it will benefit all pupils in our school where funding is spent on whole-school approaches, such as high-quality teaching. Implicit in the intended outcomes detailed below, is the intention that outcomes for non-disadvantaged pupils will be improved alongside progress for their disadvantaged peers.

We will also provide disadvantaged pupils with support to develop independent life and social skills and continue to ensure that high-quality work experience, careers guidance and further and higher education guidance is available to all.

Our strategy is integral to wider school plans for education recovery, notably through engagement with the National Tutoring Programme for pupils that have been worst affected, including non-disadvantaged pupils.

Our strategy will be driven by the needs and strengths of each young person, based on formal and informal assessments, not assumptions or labels. This will help us to ensure that we offer them the relevant skills and experience they require to be prepared for adulthood.

In consideration of our strategy, we refer to our MAT vision 'Creating meaningful futures.' In order to achieve this vision, our Mission as a school, is for all children to have access to meaningful, bespoke and purposeful learning opportunities delivered in a safe and stimulating environment to enable them to build on skills in all areas, in preparation for life beyond school.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	There is a demand for places at TAS with the school growing in size by an additional 20 places with continued growth projected by Tameside Local Authority for the years ahead. Additional pupils have resulted in less opportunities for one to one interventions and means that outside agencies (EP/SALT) have more pupils to see in the same amount of time. When pupil numbers rise without an increase in provision, disadvantaged pupils are often most affected. Many of our pupils eligible for Pupil Premium are more likely to require timely, targeted interventions. Reduced access to 1:1 sessions, EP involvement, or SALT input can widen existing gaps in language development, emotional regulation, and academic progress. These pupils may also have less access to private assessment or support outside school, meaning that school-based provision is their primary route to intervention. Any reduction or delay therefore has a greater long-term impact on their outcomes.
2	An increased number of pupils with specific difficulties in the areas of Language and Communication and with sensory processing disorders needing a higher staff to pupil ratio. Higher percentage of pupils have a diagnosis of ASC which means they have specific needs in the areas of social communication and emotional regulation and require a specialised curriculum in order to develop key skills . Disadvantaged pupils are statistically more likely to have unmet or unidentified communication and interaction needs, and they often join school with poorer baseline language and vocabulary skills. A cohort with higher complexity increases demand on staff time, resources, and specialist support. For disadvantaged pupils who already face barriers in communication at home (e.g., fewer opportunities for structured language interaction), the absence of tailored support risks widening the gap in social communication, emotional understanding, and self-regulation.

	Without consistent staff ratios and specialist approaches, these pupils may struggle to access learning and curriculum pathways effectively. The Three different Pathways support the different cohort of pupils.
3	Due to school expansion, the recruitment of new teachers and TA's has resulted in a high demand and need for CPD to ensure consistency of approaches and strategies to support teaching and learning. Disadvantaged pupils rely heavily on the quality and consistency of teaching, as they typically have fewer external resources or enrichment opportunities to compensate for inconsistencies. When new staff require substantial CPD to understand complex SEND profiles, specialist pathways, or personalised strategies, any delay in embedding effective practice impacts Pupil Premium pupils most. These pupils benefit significantly from predictable routines, skilled communication modelling, and trauma-informed approaches which depend on well-trained staff. Gaps in staff expertise can lead to reduced emotional safety, less effective differentiation, and slower progress for disadvantaged learners. The school provides bespoke curriculums which support the needs of pupils across a range of Pathways. Staff require individualised training which is updated on a regular basis in order to implement these strategies effectively.
4	Due to school expansion, the school has recruited additional staff such as a new EHCP manager and assistant to take on the work of the SENDCO and a full time pastoral manager to support the management and wellbeing of the increased number of staff. High teacher workload can lead to delays in EHCP processes, reviews, and referrals. For disadvantaged pupils who may have more complex home circumstances or limited advocacy outside school timely EHCP management is crucial. Delays can prevent access to specialist provision, external therapy, equipment, or funding streams that support their development. Where families may struggle to chase agencies or navigate SEND systems independently, the school's capacity becomes essential. Reduced capacity disproportionately affects Pupil Premium pupils who depend most on school-led coordination. The increased number of pupils (100% in receipt of an EHCP) has impacted significantly on teacher workload in regard to the statutory reviews process of EHCP's and the agency referral aspect of SEN
5	A new KS2 site has opened at Easter 2025. There are significant challenges in ensuring our children receive access to a range of

	learning opportunities which are fundamental to the holistic development, wellbeing and regulation of our complex learners. Disadvantaged pupils often have fewer opportunities for structured physical play, sensory integration activities, and emotional regulation tools outside of school. For pupils with ASC, sensory processing needs, trauma histories, or emotional/social vulnerability, access to regulation spaces is vital for engagement in learning. Without appropriate indoor and outdoor regulation environments, disadvantaged pupils may experience heightened dysregulation, increased crisis incidents, and reduced readiness to learn. This can widen attainment gaps as these pupils often require consistent co-regulation and sensory input to maintain emotional stability and participate successfully in lessons. Pupils currently have no spaces designed and resources appropriately for regulation . Large outdoor play equipment is needed to support pupil's physical and sensory needs. Indoor regulation spaces need to be developed to support children who are in crisis and provide sensory regulation opportunities.
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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 attainment for disadvantaged pupils in all subjects, notably reading, relative to their starting points as identified through baseline assessments.	- By July 2026, ≥80% of disadvantaged pupils will show at least expected progress from their baseline in reading, writing, and maths, as evidenced through termly TAS assessment data. - Assessment trackers will demonstrate closing of gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in at least two core subject areas. - Work scrutiny and moderation outcomes will show disadvantaged pupils increasingly meeting their personalised curriculum targets.

Improved phonics for pupils who are in the lowest 20% reading ability using the reading and phonics termly assessments	• Termly phonics assessments will show a year-on-year reduction in the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in decoding, blending and segmenting scores. • By the end of 2025/26, ≥70% of disadvantaged pupils identified in the lowest 20% will meet or exceed their personalised phonics target steps. • Interventions (e.g., RWI Fresh Start) will show measurable progress through entry exit assessment comparisons.
Pupils can use a range of communication systems to aid their understanding and to develop expressive communication skills.	• Termly EHCP reviews and tracking of outcomes on Evidence for Learning will show that ≥90% of disadvantaged pupils have met their communication-related outcomes. • Observations will evidence consistent use of communication systems (WIDGET, communication boards, Attention Autism) across lessons and transitions. • SALT (Speech and Language Therapy) progress reports will demonstrate increased independence in communication attempts and reduced prompts required.
Disadvantaged pupils have greater confidence and independence to help them engage more with the wider community and prepare for adulthood.	• Structured observations will show disadvantaged pupils initiating interactions, making choices, and participating independently in ≥75% of community-based learning activities. • Families report increased confidence and independence during termly parent meetings and annual reviews. • Skills for Life tracking demonstrates improvement in independent living skills, community awareness, and self-advocacy.
Through targeted CPD, improved staff knowledge of identified approaches and strategies to support teaching and learning	• Lesson observations and learning walks will show consistent implementation of targeted strategies across ≥90% of classes.

	• Staff will successfully complete all required CPD modules, demonstrated by CPD logs, post-training evaluations and application of strategies in classroom practice(monitored through learning walks) • Pupil progress data will show improvement specifically linked to the strategies introduced (e.g., regulation support, visual communication systems).
Through targeted CPD, improved knowledge of individual pupil's sensory profiles and strategies to support pupil's sensory needs (Particularly at KS 2)	• Staff will produce and maintain accurate sensory profiles for every disadvantaged pupil, updated termly. • Observations will demonstrate staff using personalised sensory strategies (movement breaks, sensory diet tools, weighted equipment, calming plans) with high consistency. • Pupil behaviour and engagement records will show reductions in dysregulation incidents and increased time-on-task for disadvantaged pupils at KS2.
Pupils will have access to outdoor learning opportunities to support their holistic development.	• By July 2026, disadvantaged pupils will participate in scheduled outdoor learning sessions at least twice weekly, recorded through class timetables and outdoor learning logs. • Ongoing assessments will show improvements in physical regulation, engagement, communication, and social interaction linked to outdoor learning opportunities. • Staff reports and pupil observations will demonstrate increased independence, resilience, and emotional regulation in outdoor settings.

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: £ 17,500

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Subscription to learning interventions- Oxford Owl, RWI phonics, Accelerated reader and Star reading assessments, Skillsbuilder Pro Squiggle, Widget £4,066	Subscriptions to structured reading interventions are supported by the <i>Simple View of Reading</i> model, which states that reading comprehension develops through the interaction of word recognition and language comprehension. The programmes chosen (RWI, Oxford Owl, AR, Star Reader) explicitly target these components, aligning with research from the <i>National Center on Improving Literacy</i>, which confirms that successful reading instruction requires systematic and explicit instruction in both strands. This evidence can be checked through the cited research brief 'Learning to Read: The Simple View of Reading' Programme usage reports (RWI, Oxford Owl, AR, Star) Reading assessment data showing progress from baseline Evidence from: <i>Learning to Read: The Simple View of Reading</i> (National Center on Improving Literacy)	1,2,3
CPD for new and existing staff to develop and maintain strategies to support quality teaching and learning. £2820(Supervision) £510	Investment in CPD is supported by the National College, which reports that high-quality professional development increases teacher motivation, confidence, and commitment, leading to more effective teaching. This provides a checkable evidence base demonstrating that well-trained staff are more likely to implement effective strategies consistently,	3

£2679 Talk for Writing	benefitting disadvantaged learners. Planning and monitoring of CPD recorded and data gathered through learning walks is used to plan future training. Assessment systems show reduced incidents of behaviour and increased progress on Evidence for Learning. This evidence can be verified through the National College's published research on CPD impact.	
Additional resources to support the implementation of the teaching and learning strategies £7425	Providing additional teaching and learning resources aligns with research-based learning principles, which state that pupils make stronger progress when they can draw on a range of high-quality resources that help them make connections between new and prior knowledge. The evidence provided confirms that learning is an active process strengthened by meaningful links to pupils' experiences and identities. This evidence can be checked against the research summary- Research-based learning principles. CPD logs and attendance registers Lesson observations evidencing strategy implementation Staff evaluations and impact reflections	4,5
Additional resources to support the implementation of the extended curriculum due to school expansion	Providing additional teaching and learning resources aligns with research-based learning principles, which state that pupils make stronger progress when they can draw on a range of high-quality resources that help them make connections between new and prior knowledge. The evidence provided confirms that learning is an active process strengthened by meaningful links to pupils' experiences and identities. This evidence can be checked against the research summary in the document <i>Research-based learning principles</i>.	1,2

	Resource inventory and deployment records Work scrutiny showing effective use of resources Learning walk notes	
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support, structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £ 41,468

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Additional time allocation for the Educational Psychologist to support the EHCP and review process and to develop staff's understanding of the range and complexity of needs of the pupils. Engagement with Intraquest services £27,000 SALT, Art & Drama Therapy £14,468 intervention worker	According to a report by the DfE: Educational Psychology services (EP services) play a key role in supporting the development, learning and wellbeing of children and young people aged 0 to 25. They work with education settings including special schools and alternative provision schools, and other services, such as health and social care, to support the most vulnerable children and young people, and those with the most complex needs. The use of further resources to support curriculum expansion is grounded in the same research-based principles, which identify that effective resources promote connections between existing knowledge, identity, and new learning. As the extended curriculum introduces new content and contexts, resourcing ensures that pupils can make the necessary cognitive and experiential links. Curriculum maps showing extended provision Timetables and planning demonstrating resource usage Pupil voice and engagement logs	2,3

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

Budgeted cost: £40,516

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Establishment and resourcing of on site regulation spaces and emotional learning areas to support the holistic development, wellbeing and regulation of our complex learners £25000 £15 516 Forest school lead	Nasen reported on research into the potential benefits of outdoor learning for children with SEN which states: Outdoor development programmes are used by mainstream and special educational schools as they contribute to a 'broad and balanced' curriculum emphasising an action approach towards learning. This research looked at the philosophy behind outdoor development and its potential to facilitate social and integration skills for children with special educational needs. Three 8 9 common outcomes of outdoor development programmes (group cohesion, tension/anxiety levels and physical self-perception) were examined with qualitative and quantitative methodology.	4,5

Total budgeted cost: £ 99,484

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Improved attainment for disadvantaged pupils in all subjects, notably maths, relative to their starting points as identified through baseline assessments.

The school developed a baseline maths test for all students – the first year showed progress in the BNST tests . Baseline testing for all groups set up in Nov 2025.

Improved phonics for pupils who are in the lowest 20% reading ability

Use of RWI phonics and Fresh Start across school – development day for Phonics .
School has transitioned to use EFL for assessment monitoring

Pupils can use a range of communication systems to aid their understanding and to develop expressive communication skills.

Our assessment of the reasons for these outcomes points primarily to the delivery of a robust and consistent maths program and reading program. Capacity within the school to deliver good quality curriculum planning has also had an impact. This disrupted the teaching of maths and had a negative impact on most pupils' development to varying degrees, particularly in limiting opportunities to progress social and communication skills and independence.

We mitigated the impact on academic outcomes by our resolution to maintain a high quality intervention/ Trauma Informed approach even when pupils were not in school. However, it was challenging to provide differentiated support to our pupils online.

Our assessments and observations suggested that for many pupils, engagement and interest in their curriculum concern over their future and challenges around access to support were detrimental to behaviour, wellbeing and mental health to varying degrees. We used pupil premium funding to help provide wellbeing support and targeted interventions where required. Resources to support pupils when they felt dysregulated.

The impact of all of these challenges was greatest on our disadvantaged pupils .

The school has undergone significant changes – joining Newbridge MAT and the appointment of a new head teacher and the introduction of new assessment and monitoring systems along with a new curriculum model. All of these are being implemented this 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

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

<i>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</i>
The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils

Further information (optional)

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