

# Pupil premium strategy statement – Countesthorpe Academy

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	Yr7-11: 997 KS5: 159 Total: 1156	PP Yr7-11: 225 PP KS5: 6 PP Total: 231
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	19.98%	
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers ( <b>3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year</b> )	2025-2028	
Date this statement was published	December 2025	
Date on which it will be reviewed	October 2026	
Statement authorised by	Mr Damian Thurston, DHT.	
Pupil premium lead	Mrs Annabel Roberts, AHT	
Governor / Trustee lead	Alison Bluff	

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£223,650
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b> <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>	£0

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

At Countesthorpe Academy, our Pupil Premium strategy is designed to ensure equity and excellence for all learners. We believe that high-quality teaching is the most powerful lever for improving outcomes and closing gaps. Our approach is evidence-informed, rooted in diagnostic assessment, and delivered through a whole-school commitment to meeting the needs of every learner. We aim to remove barriers, build cultural capital, and develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence our students need to thrive now and in the future.

Quality First Teaching is at the heart of our approach. We understand that consistently high-quality teaching has the greatest impact on closing attainment gaps. This helps all learners while accelerating progress for disadvantaged students. The Education Endowment Foundation is clear that the largest impact on closing the gap for disadvantaged learners is ensuring that every lesson is delivered by an effective teacher and that recruiting and developing effective teaching must be a priority for pupil premium spending. Consequently, our focus stays on teaching and learning as the foundation for achievement. We understand that disadvantage is a barrier, not a reflection of capability. We therefore set ambitious goals for all disadvantaged students and strive for excellence for every learner.

Alongside this, we provide tailored support for individual needs. Through diagnostic assessment and analysis, we find areas for support and respond with high-quality practice, targeted professional development, and carefully considered interventions. Our strategy is informed by a deep understanding of our students, academic research, and stakeholder feedback.

Students in receipt of Pupil Premium funding, including High Prior Attainers and those with SEND, are supported to engage fully in school life and aspire to achieve highly. Our offer to all includes enhanced transition, proactive collaboration with parents and carers, priority careers advice, counselling, tutoring, mentoring, and other appropriate interventions. We also prioritise the development of student agency and strong relationships through our graduated response, the REAL Life curriculum, and dedicated CREW time. These elements are integral to fostering independence, resilience, and a sense of belonging. By embedding opportunities for reflection, collaboration, and personal growth within the curriculum, we ensure that students are equipped not only with academic knowledge but also with the confidence and skills needed to navigate challenges and succeed beyond the classroom.

We recognise that no single intervention will close the gap. Our approach is multi-layered, combining high-quality teaching with targeted support. Ongoing monitoring,

evaluation, and communication with stakeholders ensure provision stays responsive to the needs of each cohort and student.

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Many disadvantaged students join Countesthorpe Academy with lower attainment at Key Stage 2, and the gap in progress and outcomes at Key Stage 4 is not closing quickly enough. This means too many of our students leave without achieving their full potential. A key barrier to the curriculum which limits progress across subjects is difficulty with extended written responses and below average literacy skills. A high proportion of our pp students who arrive in Year 7 with KS2 scores that are below the national average.
2	Improving attendance for disadvantaged students remains a significant challenge at Countesthorpe Academy. While overall attendance is improving, the gap between disadvantaged students and their peers persists and widens as students move through school. Current data shows that disadvantaged students are less likely to access the full benefit of high-quality teaching, which impacts progress and attainment. For some, patterns of low attendance are established before Key Stage 4, making intervention more complex.
3	Disadvantaged students often join school with lower starting points in literacy and numeracy, which limits their ability to access the curriculum. Weak reading comprehension and logical reasoning skills reduce success in problem-solving and extended written responses across subjects, impacting overall progress and attainment.
4	Disadvantaged students at Countesthorpe Academy are more likely to experience poor attendance, higher suspension rates, and challenges with anxiety and wellbeing. These factors significantly impact engagement and progress. Social and emotional issues, including low self-esteem and concerns about exams and future prospects, can lead to reduced participation in learning and enrichment opportunities. Addressing this requires a whole-school approach that prioritises relationships, belonging, and resilience, alongside academic support.

5	Many disadvantaged students have limited access to enrichment experiences, reducing opportunities to develop metacognition, independence, and aspiration. This lack of exposure hampers their ability to make connections beyond the classroom and impacts confidence in applying knowledge. Barriers are compounded by factors such as birth season disadvantage and SEND needs, which can affect readiness for independent learning and resilience. In addition, high-attaining disadvantaged learners face barriers such as limited access to stretch opportunities, reduced confidence in competitive settings, and lower participation in enrichment that supports aspiration.
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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
1. Improved attainment for disadvantaged students at KS4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By the end of the current plan (2028), the attainment gap for disadvantaged students will have closed and be equal or better than the national average.</li> <li>• As part of our three-year plan, by 2027, Pupil Premium outcomes will be in line with national averages for disadvantaged students.</li> <li>• Subject monitoring, evaluation, and reviews will show clear improvements in the quality of work, progress, and homework completion rates for disadvantaged students.</li> <li>• Evidence from book scrutiny and assessment data will demonstrate that disadvantaged students are attempting and achieving marks on extended responses in line with their targets.</li> </ul>
2. Achieve and Maintain Sustained Improvements in Attendance for DA students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By the end of the current plan (2028), disadvantaged students will have attendance rates in line with national averages, and the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students will be reduced. Attendance of disadvantaged students to reach 93% (within 1% of peers).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persistent absence among disadvantaged students is no higher than national averages for all students.</li> </ul>
3. Disadvantaged students make accelerated progress in literacy and numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved reading ages - By Year 9 over 90% of PP students will have a reading age commensurate with their chronological age</li> <li>• Stronger logical reasoning and problem-solving skills.</li> <li>• Ability to produce extended written responses across the curriculum.</li> <li>• Increased confidence and attainment in all subjects, particularly maths and science.</li> </ul>
4. Disadvantaged students experience improved wellbeing, and engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced suspension rates and improved behaviour.</li> <li>• Increased sense of belonging and resilience.</li> <li>• Higher participation in lessons and enrichment activities.</li> <li>• Improved academic progress through better engagement and reduced anxiety around exams and future prospects.</li> <li>• Suspension rates for disadvantaged students are proportionate to the PP cohort size.</li> <li>• Student voice surveys show improved sense of belonging and confidence.</li> <li>• Increased participation in enrichment activities and revision sessions.</li> <li>• Academic progress measures show improved engagement and outcomes.</li> </ul>
5. Disadvantaged students gain greater access to enrichment opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved metacognitive skills and ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate learning.</li> <li>• Increased independence and resilience in tackling academic challenges.</li> <li>• Higher aspiration and confidence in applying knowledge beyond the classroom.</li> <li>• Stronger engagement with curriculum-linked enrichment and cultural capital experiences.</li> <li>• Participation rates of disadvantaged students in enrichment activities increase proportionately to match cohort size.</li> <li>• Student voice surveys show improved confidence, aspiration, and readiness for independent learning.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence from lesson observations and work scrutiny shows improved metacognitive strategies (e.g., planning, self-checking).</li> <li>• Positive impact on progress measures in subjects requiring extended application of knowledge.</li> <li>• Ensure high-attaining disadvantaged learners access stretch opportunities (e.g., advanced enrichment, academic competitions) to maintain progress and aspiration.</li> </ul>
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## Activity in this academic year

This details how we intend to spend our pupil premium funding **this academic year** to address the challenges listed above.

## Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £127,820

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Deliver high-quality CPL focused on adaptive teaching, metacognition, and feedback strategies through EFA, XMAT liaison, and RISE to strengthen QFT and improve student progress	<a href="#">EEF – High Quality Teaching</a> ; <a href="#">Great Teaching Toolkit</a> ; <a href="#">Evidence Based Education</a> ; Sutton Trust – <a href="#">Closing the Attainment Gap</a> ; ASCL – <a href="#">The Purposes of Education</a>	1,2,3,4,5
Implement enhanced KS2–KS3 transition programme with structured academic and pastoral support to reduce attainment dips and build early engagement for PP students	<a href="#">Institute of Health Equity – Improving School Transitions</a> ; <a href="#">EEF – Transition Guidance</a> ; <a href="#">Unity research school – Catch up Conundrum</a>	1,2
Provide strategic leadership for PP through AHT role to embed evidence-based practice, monitor impact, and ensure accountability across all faculties and stakeholders	<a href="#">Marc Rowland – Addressing Educational Disadvantage</a> ; <a href="#">EEF – Leadership Guidance</a> ; Unity Research School – <a href="#">Resources for Disadvantage Strategy</a>	1,2,3,4,5
Deploy Lead Practitioners and T and L leads to model high-challenge, scaffolded teaching and support faculty CPL to	<a href="#">EEF – Subject Specific CPD</a> ; <a href="#">EEF – Metacognition and Self-Regulation</a> ; Sutton Trust – <a href="#">High Attaining Disadvantaged Pupils</a>	1

improve outcomes in English, Maths, and Science		
Use annual data assessment cycles and diagnostic tools to identify gaps early, inform targeted interventions, and track progress of PP students	<a href="#">EEF – Diagnostic Assessment</a> ; <a href="#">EEF – Feedback</a>	1,3
Prioritise PP focus during faculty planning and curriculum reviews to ensure consistent strategies, adaptive teaching, and equitable access across subjects	<a href="#">EEF – Behaviour Interventions</a> ; <a href="#">EEF – Collaborative Learning</a>	1,2,3,4,5
Develop and implement a whole-school PP data system via Arbor, providing staff with individual PP profiles including academic, pastoral, and enrichment information to inform adaptive teaching and intervention planning	<a href="#">EEF – Diagnostic Assessment</a> ; <a href="#">Marc Rowland – Addressing Educational Disadvantage</a> ;	1,2,3,4,5

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

Budgeted cost: £ 73,510

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Deliver structured literacy intervention led by specialists to accelerate reading age and comprehension for PP students below ARE, using reciprocal reading and phonics-based strategies	<a href="#">EEF – Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools</a> ; <a href="#">EEF – Phonics</a> , <a href="#">The Summer Born Effect – Every Child Journal</a> ; <a href="#">The academic disadvantage of being born in the summer</a>	1,3
Provide targeted homework and study support through CREW and Sparks sessions to build independent learning habits and metacognitive skills	<a href="#">EEF – Homework</a> ; <a href="#">EEF – Metacognition and Self-Regulation</a>	1,3
Ensure equitable access to learning through provision of devices and digital resources for remote and blended learning, supporting engagement and continuity	<a href="#">EEF – Digital Technology</a> ; <a href="#">DfE – Remote Education Guidance</a>	1,3

Run exam intervention and revision sessions focused on metacognitive strategies, retrieval practice, and spaced learning for PP students	<a href="#">EEF – Small Group Tuition</a> ; <a href="#">EEF – Homework</a> ; <a href="#">EEF – Metacognition and Self-Regulation</a>	1
Hold RAP meetings and Raising Standards Groups to provide timely feedback, personalised action plans, and parental engagement for PP learners	<a href="#">EEF – Feedback</a> ; <a href="#">EEF – Parental Engagement</a>	1
Offer wellbeing support through ELSA, emotion coaching, and SEND provision to reduce barriers to learning and improve emotional regulation	<a href="#">Public Health England – Promoting Wellbeing</a> ; <a href="#">EEF – Social and Emotional Learning</a>	4
Provide work experience and careers guidance to raise aspirations, inform future pathways, and develop cultural capital for PP students	<a href="#">EEF – Aspiration Interventions</a> ; <a href="#">Gatsby Benchmarks</a>	5

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

Budgeted cost: £ 22,320

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Offer Saturday School for all with a focus on invitation to PP students. Use this time to focus on core subjects, exam preparation, and confidence-building to close gaps and boost attainment	<a href="#">EEF – Extended School Time</a> ; <a href="#">EEF – Small Group Tuition</a>	1,2
Implement Graduated Response approach to behaviour and SEMH needs to improve engagement, reduce exclusions, and support positive relationships	<a href="#">EEF – Behaviour Interventions</a> ; <a href="#">DfE – Behaviour in Schools Guidance</a>	4
Provide targeted mentoring and counselling to build resilience, improve attendance, and support emotional wellbeing for PP students	<a href="#">EEF – Mentoring</a> ; <a href="#">EEF – Social and Emotional Learning</a>	1,4



Embed CREW programme to develop social and emotional skills, goal setting, and aspiration for disadvantaged learners, linking to PSHE and SMSC curriculum	<a href="#">EEF – Social and Emotional Learning</a> ; <a href="#">DfE – Character Education Guidance</a>	4,5
Conduct proactive attendance reviews with SLT and families to address barriers, improve PP attendance, and strengthen parental engagement	<a href="#">DfE – Improving School Attendance</a> ; <a href="#">EEF – Parental Engagement</a>	2
Use RAP meetings Curriculum and Attendance) to monitor progress, provide personalised strategies, and ensure accountability for PP students	<a href="#">EEF – Feedback</a> ; <a href="#">EEF – Collaborative Learning</a>	1
Introduce a Pupil Premium Charter outlining entitlement to academic mentoring, enrichment experiences, careers guidance, and independent learning support, ensuring consistency and visibility across the school	<a href="#">EEF – Aspiration Interventions</a> ; <a href="#">DfE – Character Education Guidance</a>	4,5

**Total budgeted cost: £ 223,650**

## Part B: Review of the previous academic year

### Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Attain 8	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Attain 8 all	40.57	38.57	38.18
Attain 8 Non DA	43.1	41.84	41.07
Attain 8 DA	27.58	25.31	24.47
<b>P8</b>			
P8 all	-0.49	-0.78	
P8 Non DA	-0.37	-0.69	-0.38
P8 DA	-1.16	-1.18	-1.52
<b>9-5 Eng/Maths</b>			
All	51.8	40.4	39.6
Non DA	56.1	45.8	44.8
DA	30	18.2	17.1
<b>9-4 Eng/Maths</b>			
All	65.3	57.4	60.9
Non DA	69.3	64.8	68
DA	45	27.3	28.6
<b>Attendance</b>			
Non DA	91.9	95.6	90.5
DA	84.4	83.4	79.9

Attainment 8 for disadvantaged students was 24.47 compared to 41.07 for non-disadvantaged, reflecting a persistent gap of over 16 points. Progress 8 for disadvantaged students was -1.52, indicating that students made less than expected progress and performed well below the national benchmark. English and Maths pass rates were particularly concerning only 17.1% of disadvantaged students achieved grade 5 or above in both subjects, compared to 44.8% of non-disadvantaged students. While 9-4 pass rates improved slightly to 28.6%, this remains far below the 68% achieved by non-disadvantaged students. These outcomes highlight the need for sustained, targeted interventions in literacy and numeracy, alongside strategies to improve engagement, resilience, and attendance. It is important to note that students included in this performance data experienced disruption due to Covid-19 earlier in their schooling and this impacted outcomes last year. Increased provision in Evolve and Elevate is addressing this now.

Attendance for disadvantaged students continues to present a significant challenge. In 2024–2025, attendance for disadvantaged students fell to 80.5%, compared to 90.5% for non-disadvantaged peers. This represents a decline from 82.5% in 2023–2024 and is well below the national expectation. The lasting impact of the pandemic affected a small yet significant proportion of students; its impact persisted over time, influencing attainment and overall outcomes and significantly lowering some attendance.

Persistent absence among disadvantaged students limits access to high-quality teaching and targeted interventions, directly impacting attainment and progress. Contributing factors include anxiety, wellbeing concerns, and lower engagement with school life, which we have identified as key barriers.

Our intended success is to close the attendance gap by improving disadvantaged attendance to at least 90%, reducing persistent absence, and ensuring students feel a strong sense of belonging. Strategies will include early identification and intervention, proactive family engagement, and the use of CREW time and our REAL Life curriculum to strengthen relationships and promote student agency. By embedding attendance as a shared responsibility across the school, we aim to ensure that disadvantaged students attend regularly and benefit fully from the curriculum and enrichment opportunities.

## 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)

*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***

**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.*