



University

Collegiate School

Pupil Premium Strategy Statement

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

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

School overview

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school	688
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	47.3%
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	26 th November 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2026
Statement authorised by	Ian Barry Head of School
Pupil premium lead	Sian Lewis Assistant Headteacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Kate Flood

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£303,150.00
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years <i>(enter £0 if not applicable)</i>	£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>	£303,150.00

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At UCS we are driven by the belief that there is no ceiling to success. Every student deserves a high-quality education that opens doors to academic achievement, personal growth and future careers in an evolving, world of work.

Our Pupil Premium Strategy ensures that disadvantaged students benefit from the full strength of our STEM-focused, employer-led curriculum, gaining equitable access to knowledge, experiences and wider enrichment that underpin real-world success.

Our approach is informed by evidence from the Education Endowment Foundation, exam centre subject-specific reports and our own internal data, ensuring that the strategies we adopt have the greatest impact on outcomes for our disadvantaged learners.

As a University Technical College, we offer a unique learning experience that blends rigorous academic study with Health Science, Engineering and Digital pathways, employer-led projects and authentic workplace encounters. Our intent is that every disadvantaged learner (from Year 7 to Year 13) can see a clear and motivating line of sight between their education and their future. This is achieved through high expectations, meaningful industry engagement and a culture that fosters curiosity, resilience and adaptability.

We recognise that disadvantage is not a single experience but a combination of circumstances that may affect attendance, wellbeing, confidence, access to learning, or engagement with enrichment. Our strategy is designed to respond to these diverse needs with sensitivity, high ambition and personalised support. Additionally, we recognise that disadvantaged students may face additional challenges, including lower reading ages, reduced access to enrichment, gaps in prior learning and lower confidence in engaging with employers or external agencies. Our strategy is deliberately designed to address these barriers while raising aspiration and achievement.

Central to our approach is ensuring that all students, including those defined as Pupil Premium, access equitable Quality First Teaching, an interleaved and conceptually connected curriculum, and timely, targeted support. Teachers skilfully build retrieval, address misconceptions and scaffold thinking to close gaps, with disadvantaged students strategically prioritised for feedback and support. Our developing UTC-aligned curriculum from Key Stage 3 onwards ensures that choices at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 are purposeful, informed and focused on real destinations.

We understand that students thrive when they feel known, valued and supported. We prioritise strong relationships, consistent routines and a sense of belonging that enables disadvantaged pupils to feel safe, confident and ready to learn.

We place a strong emphasis on attendance, ensuring that disadvantaged learners are supported to attend regularly, feel included in all aspects of school life and are not disproportionately affected by absence.

We maintain high expectations for every learner while recognising that disadvantaged students may require additional time, support or tailored intervention to reach their potential.

Our ambition remains unwavering, and our support remains compassionate. Improving literacy remains a key priority. Through our whole-school reading commitment (including form-time 'faster reading', regular reading in all subjects, vocabulary testing and targeted interventions) we ensure disadvantaged students develop the language, fluency and confidence needed to access the full curriculum. Students with lower reading ages benefit from bespoke support and monitored intervention to accelerate progress.

We are committed to ensuring disadvantaged students access aspirational destinations, including apprenticeships, university pathways and STEM careers, and that they are supported to understand, navigate and achieve these opportunities.

Our values of professional, responsible and loyal underpin every aspect of our approach. They ensure that disadvantaged students are respected, supported and challenged to meet high expectations, develop strong workplace behaviours and contribute positively to our community. They help our students grow into young people who are committed, reflective and ready for the world beyond UCS.

Our mission is clear: to ensure that disadvantaged students keep up, not catch up; access opportunities, not miss them; and achieve ambitious, life-shaping outcomes that reflect their true potential. By combining technical excellence, a rich academic foundation and meaningful employer engagement, we empower every pupil premium student to thrive academically, professionally and personally in a competitive and ever-changing world of work.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p><i>Attendance</i></p> <p>Lower attendance among pupil premium students typically reflects a combination of social, economic and personal factors beyond their control. Research suggests family responsibilities, health issues, transport challenges or reduced engagement with school as the key issues. Evidence demonstrates that consistent attendance is strongly correlated with attainment and long-term outcomes, making it a critical focus of our Pupil Premium strategy.</p>
2	<p><i>Secondary-ready skills and knowledge</i></p> <p>Many of our pupil premium students begin their high school experience with lower-than-average attainment in literacy, numeracy and foundational knowledge compared to their peers. These weak starting points often reflect a combination of limited prior educational opportunities, fewer experiences with reading and academic language and reduced access to enrichment activities during their primary education.</p>
3	<p><i>Literacy levels</i></p> <p>Pupil Premium students join us with lower-than-average reading ages, weaker decoding fluency and limited exposure to tier-two and tier-three vocabulary. There are considerable differences between reading ages and chronological ages. Research suggests that these literacy gaps restrict access to curriculum content, reduce the accuracy and depth of written responses and hinder their ability to engage with disciplinary reading in subjects such as science, history and mathematics.</p>
4	<p><i>Parental engagement</i></p> <p>The engagement of parents of pupil premium students is lower than those of non-pupil premium. Those hardest to reach families where education is in some cases less likely to be valued, and aspirations are often low, continue to prove a challenge.</p>
5	<p><i>Outcomes at Key Stage 4, in particular with English, Maths and Science</i></p> <p>Pupil premium students achieve lower outcomes at GCSE, especially in English, Maths and Science compared to their peers. These weaker outcomes often reflect prior attainment gaps, limited access to academic resources and reduced exposure to subject-specific vocabulary and knowledge.</p>

	These disparities can restrict post-16 progression and reduce opportunities for higher education, apprenticeships or careers in STEM and other professional pathways which is an essential part of our commitment and offering as a University Technical College.
--	---

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
<p>Attendance</p> <p>Achieve and sustain improved attendance and a reduction in PA for all students, in particular pupil premium students.</p>	<p>A reduction in the rate of persistent absence of pupil premium students compared to last year.</p> <p>Overall attendance of pupil premium students is in line with local and national averages.</p> <p>Overall attendance of pupil premium students is in line with non-pupil premium students in school.</p> <p>System in place to reduce the learning gaps in students with interrupted attendance in school.</p>
<p>Secondary ready skills and knowledge</p> <p>Provide pupil premium students with a robust intervention programme with a particular focus on English, Maths and Science.</p>	<p>A detailed analysis of KS2 end points (SATS) and KS3 starting points (CATS) for all pupil premium students on entry with an intervention plan to support skill and knowledge acquisition.</p> <p>A robust staff CPD programme with a clear focus on adaptive teaching strategies to support skill and knowledge acquisition.</p> <p>Annual baseline assessments in English, Maths and Science are used to identify skills and knowledge gaps across all year groups.</p> <p>Department specific pupil premium plans are in place to identify pupil premium students who need additional support with clear actions and desired outcomes to support their success. Department</p>

	<p>meetings include this as a standard agenda item.</p> <p>A form time programme is operational that supports progress with basic literacy and numeracy skills for pupil premium students.</p>
<p>Reading levels</p> <p>Narrow the gap between reading age and chronological reading age for our pupil premium students.</p>	<p>Data evidences improved reading comprehension from starting points, year-on-year for pupil premium students</p> <p>Increases in the percentage of pupil premium students being defined as growing independent readers and independent readers following NGRT testing, year-on-year.</p> <p>A robust staff CPD programme with a clear focus on all staff understanding that all teachers are teachers of reading.</p>
<p>Parental engagement</p> <p>Improve the wellbeing and contextual experiences of our pupil premium students and achieve and sustain improved engagement for all students and their families, particularly those who are disadvantaged.</p>	<p>Improved attendance at parents' evenings and other events, for example: Preparation for Success evening, celebration evening.</p> <p>High response rate from parents/carers, in particular those of pupil premium students to our parental surveys that show satisfaction and trust with our school.</p> <p>Proactive and regular positive contact with parents/carers, in particular those with pupil premium students to celebrate their child's progress and instances when our values have been lived.</p>
<p>Outcomes at Key Stage 4</p> <p>Improve the outcomes for pupil premium students for both standard and strong passes (4+, 5+) across all subjects but especially in English, Maths and Science.</p>	<p>Timetabled intervention sessions at KS4 to ensure pupil premium students are exam ready.</p> <p>Technology is available and fully utilised to support the revision process for pupil premium students during the GCSE programme, for example: GCSEPod.</p>

	<p>All subject data shows an upward trend of progress for pupil premium students.</p> <p>Overall performance of pupil premium students is in line with national averages.</p>
--	---

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: £85,675.00

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
High quality research driven training to be delivered to all teaching staff on adaptive teaching strategies to support reading and writing.	<p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/feedback</p> <p>Research suggest that providing students with meaningful feedback supports pupil progress as well as building learning and addressing those can and can't do moments.</p> <p>Ensuring an effective teacher is in front of every class, and that every teacher is supported to keep improving, is the key ingredient of a successful school and should rightly be a top priority for pupil premium spending.</p> <p>https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/2teachers-impact-report-final-1.pdf</p> <p>'having a very effective, rather than an average teacher raises each pupil's attainment by a third of a GCSE grade'</p>	2, 3, 5
Embed and sustain a whole school reading strategy, ensuring reading is	<p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/literacy-ks3-ks4</p>	2, 3, 5

<p>prioritised to allow pupils to access the full curriculum offer</p>	<p>The aim is to develop a rigorous approach to the teaching and learning of reading that develops learners' confidence and enjoyment in reading.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies</p> <p>However, we know that on average, disadvantaged children are less likely to own a book of their own and read at home with family members, and for these reasons may not acquire the necessary skills for reading and understanding challenging texts.</p>	
<p>Effective use of departmental CPD to QA the curriculum implementation. Identifying specific lines of enquiry and their subsequent impact on learning</p>	<p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/how-to-build-quality-assurance-into-programme-scale-up</p> <p>The guidance encourages schools to do fewer things better by carefully selecting and embedding evidence-informed approaches that drive meaningful and sustainable change. Doing so can move us a step closer to ensuring that all pupils, regardless of their background or circumstances, have access to high-quality, evidence-informed education. Effective implementation is vital to breaking the link between family income and education outcomes. This is because effective implementation turns research into tangible changes in schools and student outcomes.</p>	<p>2, 3, 5</p>
<p>Literacy coordinator to support the testing and to coordinate interventions to address the reading needs identified with our pupil premium students</p>	<p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/literacy-ks3-ks4</p> <p>Literacy coordinators play a vital role in embedding a whole-school approach to literacy, ensuring that the recommendations from the EEF's 'Improving</p>	<p>3, 5</p>

	<p>Literacy in Secondary Schools (KS3–KS4) guidance are translated into concrete, consistent practice across all subjects. According to EEF, literacy in secondary school is not solely the preserve of English lessons, every subject depends on students’ ability to read, write, speak and listen effectively. By coordinating professional development and supporting all teachers to adopt a “disciplinary literacy” approach, the literacy coordinator helps staff embed subject-specific vocabulary instruction, academic reading and structured writing across the curriculum, responding directly to the EEF’s call for subject teachers to teach the reading and writing skills relevant to their disciplines.</p>	
<p>Working with middle leaders to develop assessment that stretch and challenge that supports the identification of misconceptions and to develop therapy sessions that provides effective feedback, opportunities for misconceptions to be addressed and allocates time for students to address feedback and practice further to improve</p>	<p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/feedback</p> <p>Development of effective formative assessment strategies as well as improved summative assessments lead to better feedback. Effective feedback is a high impact strategy.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/eef-blog-five-ways-to-use-diagnostic-assessment-in-the-mathematics-classroom</p> <p>Diagnostic assessments 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>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/parental-engagement</p> <p>New progress reports (both internal and external) are being designed to</p>	<p>2, 3, 4, 5</p>

	better track the performance of pupils and groups of pupils. The reports are also designed to increase parental engagement.	
--	---	--

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

Budgeted cost: £109,769.09

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Maintain the licence for GCSEPod	Our students who regularly utilised GCSEPod for revision purposes in 2024/25 outperformed those who didn't. https://www.gcsepod.com Research suggests that regular use of GCSEPod helps students achieve 1.5 grades higher.	5
Maintain the licence for GL Assessment's NGRT	https://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/case-studies/creating-confidence-and-consistency-with-ngrt-and-lexonik/ Case studies show that the use of NGRT with Lexonik as an intervention programme aids the reading .	2, 3, 4, 5
Maintain the licence for Lexonik	https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/evaluation-of-lexonik-advance/ Research suggests the programme significantly benefits students with decoding skills below the national average and for older students. The programme is recommended by the National Literacy Trust. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/phonics Phonics has a positive impact overall (+5 months) with very extensive evidence and is an important component in the development of early reading skills, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.	2, 3, 4, 5
Maintain the licence for Sparx Maths	https://sparxmaths.com/impact/ Sparx uses over 200+ million data points to personalise homework for every single student in maths. This ensures	2, 5

	students always receive homework in Maths that is challenging and achievable. They experience success and are stretched by more challenging questions.	
TA delivery of some reading, language development and numeracy interventions	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/teaching-assistants Deploying teaching assistants effectively and with purpose. Some TAs have been trained on Lexonik. TAs are deployed to support some English and Maths lessons.	2, 3, 5
EAL Coordinator to support progress for our pupil premium EAL students through coordination of additional support, delivery of interventions and effective access arrangements	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/english-as-an-additional-language-eal There is substantial variation in academic outcomes among EAL pupils; while some catch up by age 16, others risk under-achievement if their English or academic language needs are overlooked. Without structured, school-wide support, EAL learners may not receive the coherent, consistent provision they need across different subjects, which can perpetuate inequities.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Revision guides and workbooks for key subjects to support revision and practice	https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/content/best-practice/study-skills-effective-use-of-revision-guides There is strong cognitive-psychology evidence that retrieval practice (actively recalling knowledge, self-testing) significantly improves long-term retention and transfer of learning – much more than passive rereading or highlighting. A recent study (2025) found that retrieval practice leads to better retention and better ability to apply complex concepts (i.e. not just memory recall, but transfer) after a delay of days.	5

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

Budgeted cost: £ 109,339.68

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
A Star Attendance Solutions	https://astarattendance.com School staff can “see at a glance” attendance patterns, monitor individual pupil attendance, and spot emerging issues early.	1, 4, 5

Attendance Officer and specific SLT lead for attendance	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/leadership-and-planning/supporting-attendance According to the EEF, improving attendance works best when a school builds a holistic understanding of pupils and their families – including identifying individual barriers to attendance – rather than relying solely on headline attendance data.	1, 4, 5
Pastoral lead to attend RAG meetings and support SLT lead for outcomes with understanding the context of pupil premium students and doing direct work with students to support wellbeing and improve outcomes	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/support-for-schools/school-planning-support/3-wider-strategies A pastoral lead can coordinate and lead structured support at key transition points: helping new students integrate socially and emotionally, liaising with prior schools (or feeder primaries) to share information, facilitating induction processes, and ensuring students quickly build peer-networks and familiarity with the school's expectations and systems. This reduces disruption and helps maintain continuity in learning and wellbeing. The EEF emphasises that social and emotional skills, like self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making, are foundational for learning, long-term development, and positive life outcomes.	1, 4, 5
Aspire Behaviour Management – renew annual contract	https://www.aspirebm.co.uk They offer comprehensive Outreach, Training, Specialist Supply and Educational Psychology services that empower schools and organisations to create positive, inclusive and nurturing learning environments.	1, 4, 5

Total budgeted cost: £304,783.77

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Measure	2024/25	2023/24	Difference
Average total attainment 8	30.94	29.93	+1.01
Average attainment 8 grade	3.09	2.99	+0.1
Students achieving 5 standard passes (Grade 4 and above)	29.5%	30%	-0.5%
Students achieving 5 strong passes (Grade 5 and above)	20.5%	10%	+10.5%
Students achieving grades 9-7 in English and Maths	0%	0%	-
Students achieving grades 9-5 in English and Maths	20.5%	30%	-9.5%
Students achieving grades 9-4 in English and Maths	31.8%	60%	-28.2%
Students achieving grades 9-7 in English	11.4%	0%	+11.4%
Students achieving grades 9-7 in Maths	0%	0%	-
Students achieving grades 9-5 in English	38.6%	40%	-1.4%
Students achieving grades 9-5 in Maths	22.7%	40%	-17.3%
Students achieving grades 9-4 in English	50%	60%	-10%
Students achieving grades 9-4 in Maths	31.8%	60%	-28.2%

Performance of pupil premium students improved marginally from 2024 overall when measured across all subjects with both attainment 8 and average attainment 8 increasing. There was a more significant increase in the proportion of PP students achieving 5 strong passes, however the proportion of PP students achieving both grade 4 or higher, and grade 5 or higher in English and Maths fell, with the proportion of students achieving grade 4+ in both subjects falling by a significant amount.

Extra provisions are being provided for PP students such as access to breakfast club before the start of the school day, where revision and additional learning can be undertaken; provision of revision guides for key subjects; revision skills workshops and access to study spaces for independent work after school.

--

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