

Pupil premium strategy statement

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery) 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.

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	Solway Community School
Number of pupils in school	147
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	38.7% (as at September 2024)
Academic years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2021-22 to 2024-25
Date this statement was published	October 2024
Date on which it will be reviewed	January 2025
Statement authorised by	Tom Hailwood
Pupil premium lead	Jennifer Rowlands
Governor / Trustee lead	David Davidson

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£52840
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£0
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£52840

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intention is that all of our students achieve well, regardless of their advantage or disadvantage, regardless of background and home circumstances, regardless of starting point, ability or aptitude.

From our historical data and current analysis of our students, we have identified literacy as one of our key challenges, and therefore our key building blocks to enable students to access better outcomes for themselves. Together with a focus on addressing barriers to learning, we feel this primary focus will enable us to streamline our approaches to make a real, lasting difference to our students' lives. In line with EEF research, high quality, quality first teaching, and an explicit focus on literacy and vocabulary, will provide the building blocks to support high attainment.

Our approaches will not only focus on the disadvantaged, but because of the relative proportion of disadvantaged students will provide whole-school initiatives to improve outcomes for everyone, raising the bar and expecting more from all our students. In this way, a tide of improvement will bring all students with it, enabling them to challenge and support each other to achieve more. Non-disadvantaged attainment will be sustained and improved alongside that of their disadvantaged peers.

We will ensure that we take a holistic view, addressing issues and gaps as well as tailoring to the individual child. Our small size enables us to know our students well and provide tailored support to them, to ensure they are in the best possible position to learn and learn well. We will work equally hard for high attainers, ensuring they continue to achieve and thrive, as we do for those who struggle the most.

Our strategy will also link to our school improvement plan, with particular focus on those most disadvantaged in our school population, whether they are in receipt of Pupil Premium or not.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Reading ages of our students are generally below their real age. Assessments show that in all year groups a significant proportion of our students have a reading age which is below their actual age. From recent evidence, this gap widens during their time at our school.
2	Scrutiny of assessments indicate that students are not able to access complex language and texts, and struggle with academic and subject specific vocabulary. This is evident in analysis of external examination outcomes, and in internal assessment of literacy and vocabulary use.

3	In previous years pastoral support has sometimes focused on resolving issues rather than going the step further to resolve issues and support effective learning. Attendance has not been good and disadvantaged students have had higher absence rates than non-disadvantaged.
	In 2023-24 we have re-focused our energies to the three main issues we see within school: literacy and reading, supporting students pastorally and encouraging good attendance.

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 by disadvantaged group of students across the curriculum at the end of KS4	By the end of our current plan in 2024-25, disadvantaged students will have consistently achieved as well as non-disadvantaged students in our school. In 2024-25 academic year, outcomes demonstrate that disadvantaged students achieve an attainment 8 score of 0 or greater.
Improved literacy scores across all year groups	Literacy scores demonstrate improved reading ages compared to actual age for disadvantaged students. Literacy interventions are clearly linked to carefully identified gaps in learning, are being addressed comprehensively and consistently, and are making a difference. Teachers have noticed improvement in comprehension of tasks and activities, as well as improved outcomes in assessments, observed in lessons and demonstrated in work scrutinies as well as improved attainment scores at internal data points.
Improved attendance and engagement with learning	Students are in school, and are learning actively. Pastoral focus is on enabling learning and successful engagement in classes. Teachers report improved engagement with learning, evidenced by improved behaviour, improved attitude to learning and homework scores.

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

Budgeted cost: £40,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Implementation of Literacy Improvement strategies	EEF research clearly shows that a focus on literacy is key in secondary schools. The EEF Guidance Report ‘Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools’ outlines the interventions that are recommended. Our approach incorporates implementing many of the elements of the guidance report.	1, 2

Targeted academic support

Budgeted cost: £15,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Focused support on improving literacy by specific interventions and in-lesson teaching.	EEF research clearly shows that a focus on literacy is key in secondary schools. The EEF Guidance Report ‘Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools’ outlines the interventions that are recommended. Our approach incorporates implementing many of the elements of the guidance report.	1, 2

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

Budgeted cost: £15,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Pastoral support focusing on attendance , behaviour for learning and engagement with learning as a priority	Children need to be in school to engage with learning. We therefore focus a lot of effort on supporting students to get into, and stay in, school. In addition to this, we also focus on improving learning behaviours in school. EEF research supports focusing on improving learning behaviours as well as managing misbehaviour . A focus on pastoral support that enables good learning to happen successfully is key to supporting good attainment.	3

Total budgeted cost: £ 70,000

Recovery Premium

Funding received: £14076

This grant, which is designed to be used to support recovery of disadvantaged students following the pandemic. The conditions of grant include a requirement to use the recovery premium in line with evidence informed research. Given this evidence is also used to create our pupil premium strategy, we have added the Recovery Premium to our pupil premium funding and have used it to support the activities outlined above.

The outcomes of our investment are detailed below.

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Pupil premium strategy outcomes, including Recovery Premium

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the **2023-24** academic year. In 2022-23 we focused on a slightly larger set of strategies than have been chosen for focus in 2023-24. The analysis below includes the legacy strategies as well as those we are continuing to deliver.

In academic years 2019-20 and 2020-21, student outcomes were significantly impacted by the global pandemic. Many students were absent for much of the time and online learning was more effective for some students than others. This has resulted in some gaps in knowledge in various curriculum areas which are being addressed as part of our wider recovery curriculum work.

In 2022, our disadvantaged students achieved marginally better than our other students, although neither cohort was as successful as we would have liked.

	PP 2023	Non-PP 2023
A8 average	34.8	32.7
English and Maths 4+	37%	38%
Progress 8	-0.65	-1.49

In **2023**, our disadvantaged students achieved significantly better than non-disadvantaged, although neither group achieved as well as we would have liked. Disadvantaged students achieved on average almost 0.85 of a grade better than their non-disadvantaged peers. In particular, our disadvantaged students achieved very well in English, Maths and BTEC PE.

	PP 2024	Non-PP 2024
A8 average	28.6	27.9
English and Maths 4+	22%	30%
Progress 8	TBC	TBC

In **2024**, while official validated results and progress 8 is not yet available, our disadvantaged students achieved a higher attainment 8 score than our non-disadvantaged students. Again, neither groups achieved well, but it is pleasing that our disadvantaged students achieve better than their peers. In particular, our disadvantaged students achieved very well in English, Maths, Science, Spanish, History, PE and Food compared to our non-disadvantaged students.

In terms of our specific pupil premium strategies (also supported by the Recovery Premium), we outline below the key outcomes for each strand:

Implementation of Literacy Improvement strategies and Targeted tutoring through NTP, school-led tutoring. Small group and 1:1 work with Teaching Assistants and other staff to support improvements in literacy and reading and other gaps identified.

Our long-term strategy focuses on literacy improvement strategies in line with the EEF 'Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools' document. This is a three-year strategy, so not everything is going to be implemented at the same time. In line with EEF guidance, we have focused on a small number of effective initiatives rather than spreading ourselves too thinly and outline below those strategies and interventions that have been implemented as well as those in preparation.

In **2021-22** academic year we implemented several strategies to support the development of literacy skills that have both been a historical issue for our students, but also which have been exacerbated by the global pandemic.

In **2022-23** our focus turned to strategies for including disciplinary literacy and explicit literacy teaching in lessons. We shared these in our Inset sessions in January and April 2022 and further developed our approaches in 2023 by a renewed approach to focused literacy learning in the classroom during inset sessions in September 2022, January 2023 and September 2023. There is evidence that strategies are being used in lessons, and evidence of good practice being embedded particularly in language and humanities subjects.

As part of our recovery curriculum work, we also implemented disciplinary literacy through the implementation of roadmaps and topic overviews including tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary. These were launched in September 2022 and are now well embedded in lessons and in our curriculum. This has included explicit teaching of vocabulary at the start of topics and the opportunity for pre-teaching of vocabulary to specific students to support them being able to access learning.

Our Teaching Assistants work with students who are particularly struggling in their reading and writing skills. Our end of year analysis shows that SEN students who are also PP are doing well.

In line with our whole school approach to supporting disadvantage, the data below shows a clear shift in key stage 3 to higher levels of attainment – this should also be read in the context of our data strategy; students have targets that are either Developing, Securing or Extending. Because of the way our underpinning grade descriptors work, to stay at the same attainment level (D, S or E) shows progress has been made – to move to a higher grade shows exceptional progress.

Using English attainment as a proxy for development of literacy skills, the data below shows the number of students achieving during the term in Key Stage 3 and the shift upwards, particularly from Securing to Extending.

Term	Developing	Securing	Extending
Autumn	16	57	7
Spring	16	53	12
Summer	15	56	11

Disadvantaged vs non-disadvantaged:

	D1		D2		S1		S2		S3		E1		E2	
Autumn	1	5	7	3	1	19	6	20	5	6	1	3	0	3
Spring	5	2	6	3	6	13	8	19	2	5	5	3	0	4
Summer	1	1	10	3	4	10	9	20	3	10	3	5	0	3

Both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students have made progress, not only by maintaining their assessed level but also by moving up within and between grades.

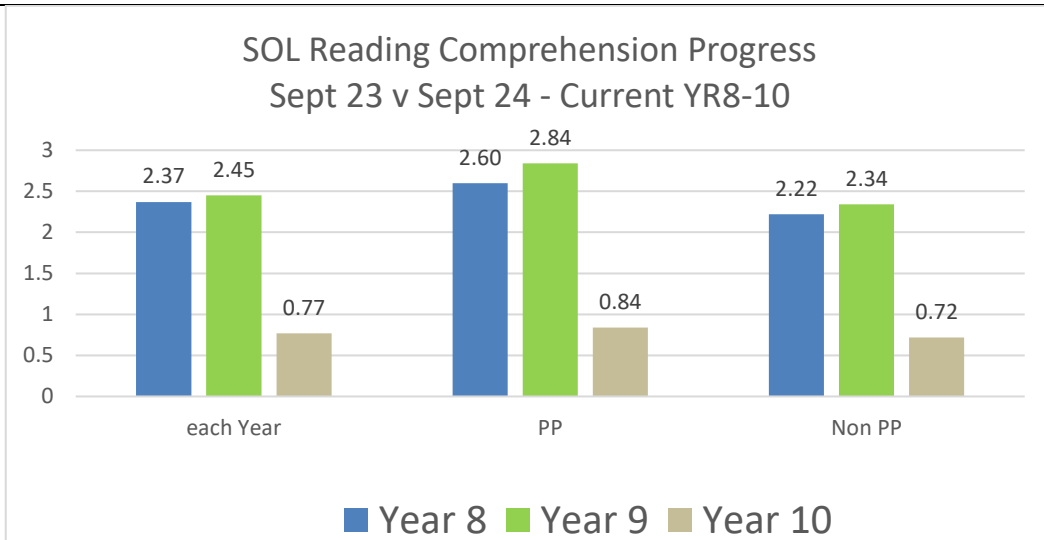
As well as targeted interventions, we have also implemented school-wide strategies include closing the vocabulary gap initiative Word of the Week and Vocabulary Books. We have also re-energised our library and literacy testing. Evidence to date has shown that students are engaged in Word of the Week, and anecdotal evidence suggests that students who have struggled in the past with decoding words are using the word roots taught by Word of the Week with success.

We regularly test reading and spelling ages across the school, and use this information to drill into the specific needs of students who are significantly below their expected reading age at a level which is impacting their access to learning. These deeper tests inform specific interventions that support improvement of phonics knowledge, reading comprehension and fluency.

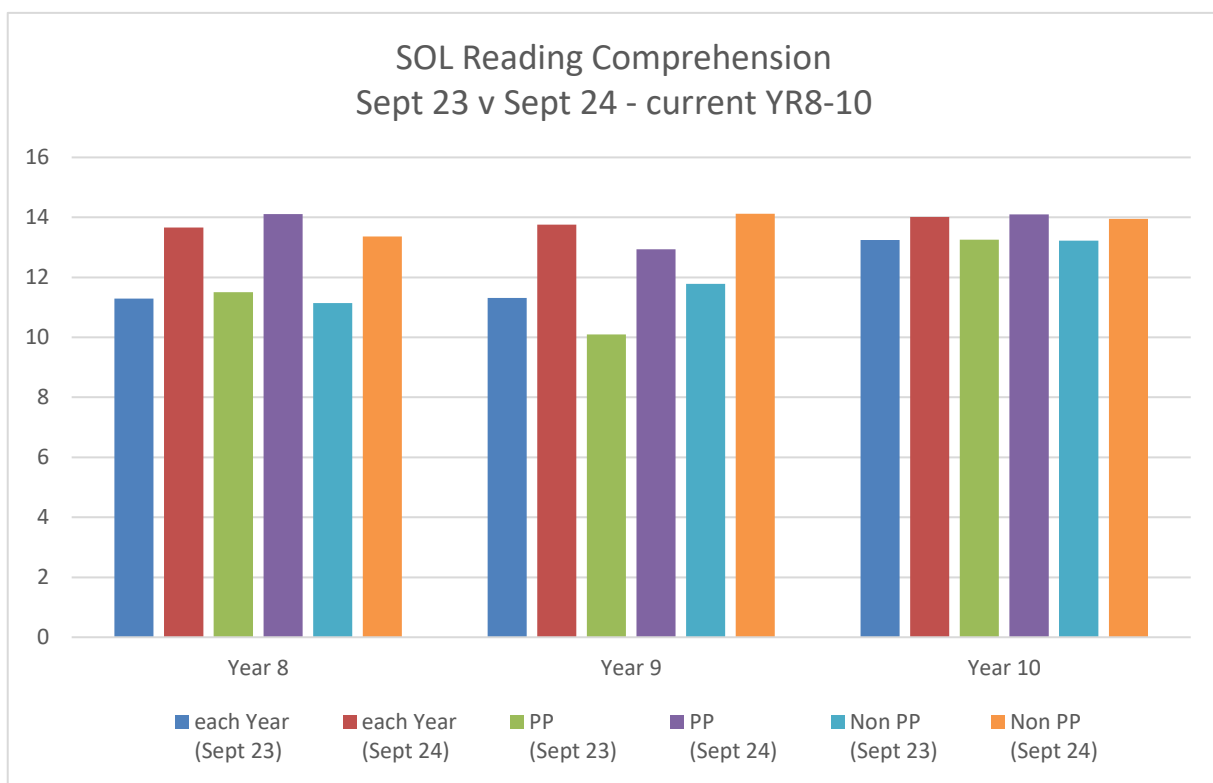
Our regular testing, and monitoring of those students who are on interventions, shows improving reading ages for children who are on specific interventions, and an overall increase in average reading age in years 7, 8 and 9 during the academic year 2022-23.

In **2023-24** we focused on implementing a more robust process for literacy testing and interventions based around Literacy Assessments Online (in the early part of the year) and GL Assessments (towards the end of the academic year). We implemented various interventions including Fresh Start for those struggling with phonics, IDL (now finished) and HfL to improve reading fluency in those who struggle. There is significant evidence that the interventions were successful:

The following graph shows that PP students have made more progress in reading comprehension tests between September 2023 and September 2024 than non-PP for our year 8, 9 and 10 cohorts:



Each year group cohorts have shown an increase in average reading comprehension scores over time from September 23 to September 24, with disadvantaged students showing, in year current 8 and 10 at least, the same score or higher than non-PP. Year 9 disadvantaged have made proportionally more progress than non-disadvantaged:



Further develop opportunities for blended learning and use of technology to support additional learning.

In 2022-23 we concluded our focus on technology to support learning. As at end of 2023 academic year, all of our students now have access to devices to support their at-home learning in the event of school closure, but also to support their homework and out-of-school learning activities. In-school evidence has shown the benefit is a reducing number of homework detentions being seen over the school year and less disadvantaged students being proportionately given homework detentions.

	Number of detentions	Per head of population
PP	116	1.6
Non- PP	106	1.3

Although this data shows there is a disparity, 24 of the detentions for the PP students were held by 2 students.

Proactively improve parental engagement by quality of education team focused on appropriate engagement with parents

In 2022-23 we concluded our focus on improving parental engagement. We have embedded pastoral mobile phones, both at a pastoral worker & an SLT level.

These have been used to allow parents to effectively communicate in a format they feel comfortable with. As a result of this, we have seen a reduction in parents making no contact with school.

Where we have split parents, we have been able to add them to a common group chat, to ensure clarity and transparency of information. This hasn't worked for all parents and some separate Early Help meetings have had to be held for some families. Nevertheless, this approach has improved engagement with all parents and families and communication is generally very positive.

We have seen further increases in the number of people following our social media accounts and lots of positive interactions from parents and the wider community.

Over time we have seen a marked reduction in the proportion of parents who "would not recommend this school to another parent", and an improving proportion who state that they are aware of what their child will learn, and that any concerns are dealt with promptly.

Pastoral support focusing on attendance, behaviour for learning and engagement with learning as a priority

Progress has been made with whole school attendance, increasing it from 88.3% in 2021/22, to 89.9% in 2022/23 & to 90.1% in 2023/24

Persistent absence has also reduced from 37% in 21/22, to 25% in 22/23. With a slight increase to 25.7% in 23/24

Current data shows out Disadvantage students attend better than national disadvantage. Sol 86.6%, with national at 85.4%

Introduction of breakfast club to ensure all students are in receipt of nutritious meal before the day starts.

In school staff upskilled/trained in Drawing & Talking, decider skills, ELSA & Bereavement support, so that intervention can happen at the earliest stage.

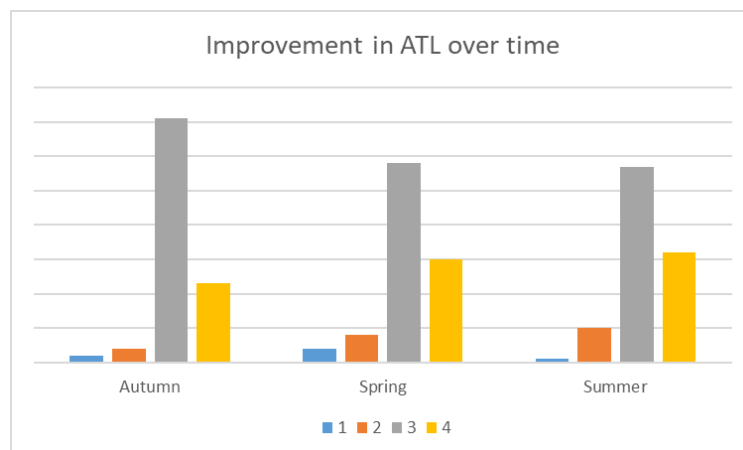
Always Another Way brought in to provide independent support students and costed into PP allocation

Weekly pastoral meetings to discuss all students, especially disadvantaged students with multiple ACE's.

Staff weekly context briefings to share an insight into the life and background of students with a disadvantaged background & high number of ACE's.

Governor support at Governor Attendance Panel meetings (GAP) happen frequently, as well as face to face discussions with senior leaders to support parents' understanding of the implications of absence from school.

Attitude to learning has also improved this year, despite a tightening up of expectations over the same period. For example, an analysis of student Attitude to Learning in History shows an improvement over time for our year 7, 8 and 9 students.



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

Further information (optional)

We are also in receipt of additional funding through a local initiative, WELL (Western Excellence in Learning and Leadership) which supports the literacy aspects of our strategy.