

Pupil Premium Strategy Statement – Airedale Academy

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium funding for the 2025 to 2026 academic year 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	Airedale Academy
Number of pupils in school	1021
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	529 / 52%
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)	2025/26 – 2027/28
Date this statement was published	November 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	November 2026
Statement authorised by	Mr A Percival, Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Miss K Marshall, AHT
Governor / Trustee lead	Mr Ali Crompton

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£555,050
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>	£555,050

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At Airedale Academy, we are committed to ensuring that every pupil, regardless of background, can achieve excellence and thrive both academically and personally. Our Pupil Premium strategy is designed to remove barriers, raise aspirations, and ensure that disadvantage is never a limit on potential.

Our Ultimate Objectives

- For all disadvantaged pupils to achieve progress and attainment that at least matches or exceeds national averages for non-disadvantaged pupils.
- For all disadvantaged pupils to access an ambitious, knowledge-rich curriculum that develops strong literacy, personal and social skills, confidence, and cultural capital, enabling them to become well-rounded individuals with a strong sense of purpose and belonging.

How Our Plan Works Towards Achieving These Objectives

Our approach is guided by the Ofsted report *“The pupil premium: what Ofsted looks at,”* which highlights that successful schools do not treat pupils eligible for the pupil premium as a single, homogenous group. We recognise that each disadvantaged pupil faces unique academic and pastoral challenges, and our strategy focuses on understanding and addressing these barriers to learning so that every pupil can succeed.

Our plan:

- **Targets the deep-rooted causes** of underachievement among disadvantaged pupils by strengthening the quality of education through an ambitious, knowledge rich curriculum and consistently high-quality teaching.
- **Responds to individual and shared challenges**, including limited access to support at home, weaker language and communication skills, reduced confidence, more frequent behaviour difficulties, attendance and punctuality issues, and the need for additional safeguarding or external agency support.
- **Promotes a culture of inclusion and high expectations**, ensuring that every member of staff takes responsibility for disadvantaged pupils’ outcomes and contributes to sustained improvement across the school.

Our strategy is structured around the **Education Endowment Foundation’s (EEF) three-tiered model**:

1. **High-quality teaching**: Investing in professional development, coaching, and curriculum design to ensure consistently effective teaching for all pupils.
2. **Targeted academic support**: Using diagnostic assessment to identify and address specific learning gaps through timely interventions.
3. **Wider strategies**: Tackling non-academic barriers to learning, such as attendance, behaviour, and aspirations to ensure pupils are ready and able to engage fully in learning.

This tiered approach ensures that improvements in teaching benefit every pupil, while targeted and wider strategies provide the additional support needed to remove individual barriers and sustain progress over time.

Our Key Principles

Our work is underpinned by key principles that guide our decisions and reflect our commitment to excellence for all:

- **Evidence-informed practice**: Every action is guided by research evidence, particularly from the EEF and DfE, ensuring our strategy is effective and sustainable.
- **Data-driven decision-making**: We use pupil-level and cohort-level data to monitor impact, track progress, and compare outcomes against national benchmarks.
- **High expectations for all**: We believe every pupil can succeed, maintaining ambitious standards and equitable access to opportunities, enrichment, and support.
- **Early identification**: We act quickly to identify emerging barriers to learning and intervene before gaps widen.

Our strategy is not a series of discrete interventions but a coherent, school-wide approach to excellence and equity, ensuring that disadvantage is never a barrier to success.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Literacy Many disadvantaged pupils enter Year 7 with reading ages below the average standard age score, often due to weaker vocabulary acquisition and limited exposure to language-rich environments at home. This affects their ability to access the full curriculum, reduces confidence in reading and writing tasks, and impacts performance across a range of subjects. <i>On entry to year 7 in 2025, 42% of our disadvantaged pupils arrive below the standard age score for reading compared with 14% of their peers. 25% of these disadvantaged pupils score low enough to be eligible for Fresh Start interventions compared with 6% of their peers.</i>
2	Attainment and Progress Many disadvantaged pupils enter Year 7 with attainment below expected national standards in reading, writing, and mathematics. As a result, they start secondary school with less secure knowledge and understanding and require accelerated progress to close gaps with their peers. Without consistently high-quality teaching and targeted support, these pupils often make slower progress, which can limit GCSE outcomes and future academic opportunities. <i>On entry to Year 7 in 2025, 27% of our disadvantaged pupils achieved the KS2 Expected Standard in reading, writing, and mathematics, compared to 39% of their peers and 62% nationally.</i>
3	Attendance Our disadvantaged pupils are more likely to have higher rates of absence and persistent absence than their peers. This results in missed learning time, widening knowledge gaps, and reduced engagement with school routines. Ensuring consistent attendance is therefore essential to support progress, wellbeing, and attainment. <i>In 2024/25, our disadvantaged pupils had an average attendance of 79.77%, compared to 86.37% for their peers, and 93.1% nationally. Additionally, 58.28% of our disadvantaged pupils were classed as persistently absent, compared to 38.05% of their peers and 17.63% nationally.</i>
4	Aspirations and Post 16 Progression Some of our disadvantaged pupils have lower self-belief and limited awareness of academic and career pathways beyond school. This can affect motivation and engagement, particularly where family experience of higher education or professional employment is limited. Targeted careers guidance, mentoring, and exposure to role models are essential to raising ambition and supporting post-16 progression. <i>On leaving Year 11 in 2023, 78% of our disadvantaged pupils were not in education, employment, or training (NEET), compared to 86% of their peers.</i>
5	Enrichment opportunities and cultural capital experiences Our disadvantaged pupils often experience fewer wider experiences that builds their cultural capital than their peers. Financial constraints and lower family engagement in enrichment opportunities mean some pupils miss out on trips, are less likely to engage with clubs, and leadership experiences that develop confidence, social skills, and wider knowledge.

6	Behaviour, self-regulation, and readiness to learn A small but significant proportion of our disadvantaged pupils struggle with self-regulation, organisation, and focus in lessons. This affects engagement, learning progress, and attainment. Challenges may be influenced by factors outside school, including home environment, social or emotional needs, or limited access to structured routines. <i>In 2024/25, 45.57% of our disadvantaged pupils were removed from lessons at least once, compared to 32.57% of their peers, and 29.54% received one or more suspensions, compared to 16.9% of their peers.</i>
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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
Literacy Disadvantaged pupils will demonstrate age-appropriate reading skills, enabling full access to the curriculum and improved progress across all subjects.	By 2027/28: • All elements of the academy's literacy strategy are implemented. • The proportion of disadvantaged pupils with reading ages below their standard age score reduces significantly • The proportion of disadvantaged pupils within the lowest 20% of reading ages across the academy decreases. • Targeted reading interventions show measurable impact, with disadvantaged pupils making rapid gains from their starting points.
Attainment and Progress Disadvantaged pupils achieve strong academic outcomes, performing at least in line with non-disadvantaged peers nationally.	By 2027/28: • The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving grades 9–5 and 9–4 in English and Mathematics is at least in line with, or rapidly closing towards, national others. • Progress 8 outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are in line with national others, or the gap has significantly reduced.
Attendance Disadvantaged pupils attend school regularly, with attendance and persistent absence rates in line with non-disadvantaged peers nationally.	By 2027/28: • The overall attendance rate for disadvantaged pupils is in line with national others, or the gap has significantly reduced. • Persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils is in line with national others, or the gap has significantly reduced. • Early intervention and pastoral support systems are embedded and demonstrate sustained impact on attendance.
Aspirations and Post 16 Progression Disadvantaged pupils have high aspirations, clear post-16 goals, and are supported	By 2027/28: • No disadvantaged pupils are NEET. • The school exceeds national averages on all Gatsby Benchmarks.

to make successful transitions into further education, employment, or training.	• 100% of Year 10 disadvantaged pupils complete a meaningful work experience placement. • Disadvantaged pupils are proportionally or more represented in all career-related and aspiration-raising activities.
Enrichment and Cultural Capital Disadvantaged pupils are fully involved in high-quality enrichment opportunities that build confidence, character, and cultural capital.	By 2027/28: Disadvantaged pupils are proportionally or more involved in the wider life of the academy, including: • Student leadership roles • Educational visits and external enrichment experiences • Extra-curricular clubs and activities • Rewards events and recognition programmes • School-led tutoring and mentoring initiatives
Behaviour, self-regulation and readiness to learn Disadvantaged pupils demonstrate positive behaviour, self-regulation, and engagement in lessons, supporting effective learning and outcomes.	By 2027/28: • Enhanced pastoral provision is embedded through targeted support and additional staffing. • Overall fixed-term exclusion rates for disadvantaged pupils are in line with national others, or the gap has significantly reduced. • Lesson removals for disadvantaged pupils are in line with non-disadvantaged peers, or the gap has closed significantly.

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: £268,613

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Embedding High-Quality Teaching through High Quality CPD Deliver a sustained programme of professional development focused on embedding the Trust's '6 Fundamentals of Great Teaching'. Includes keynote speakers, virtual CPD suite, Progress Teaching platform for low-stakes feedback, PIXL, subject pedagogy time, and national college training.	• The EEF states improving the quality of teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve pupil outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. • Sustained, evidence-informed CPD positively impacts pupil attainment (EEF, <i>Effective Professional Development</i>, 2021). EEF Effective Professional Development	1, 2, 3, 6

Developing Literacy Across the Curriculum Implement a whole-school literacy strategy focusing on disciplinary literacy, reading fluency, vocabulary instruction, and reading routines embedded across subjects. Includes Reading Plus, Fresh Start (Ruth Miskin phonics), fund lead practitioner for literacy, new library/ books and increased form-time reading.	• Literacy interventions, including vocabulary and comprehension, show improvements to reading age and SAS (EEF, Reading Comprehension Strategies, Oral Language Interventions) • Teachers supported to deliver subject-specific literacy improve pupil outcomes (EEF, <i>Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools</i>, 2021). • Embedding literacy across the curriculum ensures disadvantaged pupils access the full curriculum and build cultural capital. EEF Literacy Guidance EEF Toolkit Reading Comprehension	1, 2, 5
Recruitment, Retention, and Development of High-Quality Staff Recruit and retain high-quality teachers and leaders with subject expertise. Fund lead practitioners, deputy subject leaders, year leaders, Trust Directors of Core and additional pastoral staff to ensure smaller class sizes and enhanced support.	• Teacher quality is the most significant in-school factor affecting pupil outcomes (EEF, <i>Guide to the Pupil Premium</i>, 2021). • Consistency of staffing reduces disruption and ensures sustained progress for disadvantaged pupils.	1, 2, 3, 6
Strengthening Curriculum Sequencing and Pedagogical Consistency Ensure coherent sequencing of knowledge and skills, embedding cognitive science principles such as retrieval practice, dual coding, and scaffolding through CPD and departmental planning.	• Retrieval practice and spaced learning significantly improve long-term memory and pupil outcomes (EEF, <i>Cognitive Science Approaches in the Classroom</i>, 2021). • Curriculum alignment and sequencing support disadvantaged pupils to retain and apply knowledge effectively. EEF Cognitive Science Review	1, 2, 5, 6
Use of Assessment to Inform Responsive Teaching Strengthen formative assessment and feedback strategies to identify gaps and misconceptions early through embedding pedagogical techniques outlined in 6 fundamentals of great teaching.	• Effective feedback can accelerate progress by +6 months (EEF, <i>Feedback</i>, 2021). • Formative assessment supports adaptive teaching, addressing gaps for disadvantaged pupils. EEF Feedback Guidance	1, 2, 6
Instructional Coaching Implement a coaching model by working with Destino Coaching to train a group of coaching champions. This will support improvements in classroom practice through deliberate practice and one-to-one coaching sessions.	• Instructional coaching is highly effective, especially when focused on deliberate practice and feedback (EEF, 2021). EEF Effective Professional Development	1, 2, 6
Middle Leadership Development Empower middle leaders through trust-wide professional development and the sharing of proven systems, enabling them to take full ownership of their departments through robust quality assurance, effective curriculum leadership, and data-informed decision making. This will build	• Developing middle leadership supports sustainable CPD impact and teaching quality (EEF, <i>Effective Professional Development</i>, 2021).	1, 2, 6

internal capacity and sustain high-quality teaching across the academy.		
Phonics Training and Resources Ensure explicit, systematic phonics instruction delivered by trained teachers and HLTAs (e.g., Ruth Miskin Read Write Inc.).	• The implementation of Systematic Synthetics Phonics (SSP: Fresh Start) has high impact at very low cost, on improved reading proficiency (EEF Teaching & Learning Toolkit). • Teacher-led phonics is more effective than digital-only approaches. EEF Phonics Evidence	1, 2

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

Budgeted cost: £105,083

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Extended School Day – Year 11 Booster Sessions (ASPIRE) After-school and half-term workshops providing structured, subject-specific support for disadvantaged pupils to consolidate learning and prepare for exams.	• The EEF <i>One to One Tuition</i> and <i>Small Group Tuition</i> guidance indicate that targeted, structured interventions can improve attainment by 5+ months on average. • Booster sessions allow pupils to address gaps in learning and consolidate key concepts before high-stakes assessments.	1,2
Phonics Training and Resources Ensure explicit, systematic phonics instruction delivered by trained teachers (e.g., Ruth Miskin Read Write Inc/ Fresh Start.).	• The implementation of Systematic Synthetics Phonics (SSP: Fresh Start) has high impact at very low cost, on improved reading proficiency (EEF Teaching & Learning Toolkit) Teacher-led phonics is more effective than digital-only approaches. EEF Phonics Evidence	1,2
Teaching Assistant Deployment for Targeted Support TA support in-class for disadvantaged pupils, including SEND and SEMH support; after school and lunchtime access to the library for homework and independent learning.	• Teaching Assistants, when trained and deployed effectively, can improve progress by +4 months (EEF, <i>Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants</i>, 2018). • Small-group or one-to-one TA support linked to teacher planning maximises impact. EEF: Making Best Use of TAs EEF: Maximising the Impact of TAs	1, 2, 3, 6
Support for Pupils with SEMH/ EBSA Needs Our 'Step Up' learning support space will be used to give additional support and mentoring to vulnerable disadvantaged pupils with social, emotional, and behavioural needs.	• Behaviour interventions can add +4 months progress (EEF, <i>Behaviour Interventions</i>, 2019). • Mentoring adds +2 months progress on average (EEF, <i>Mentoring</i>). • Social and Emotional Learning programmes can improve outcomes by +4 months (EEF, <i>SEL</i>). • These approaches help pupils engage with	3, 6

	learning and reduce barriers caused by SEMH challenges.	
Targeted Interventions for Pupils with SEND Structured interventions and additional resources to meet the needs of pupils with SEND, including tailored interventions such as literacy, language support, resilience building delivered by trained staff.	• Evidence shows that targeted support for SEND pupils improves engagement, progress, and access to the curriculum (EEF, <i>Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools</i>). • Structured, evidence-based interventions for literacy and numeracy support long-term attainment.	1, 2, 6

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

Budgeted cost: £184,939

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Attendance Strategy and Family Engagement Implement new attendance strategy and policy across all stakeholders, fund additional Family Liaison Officers, Attendance Officer, and Education Welfare Officer to support disadvantaged pupils and families.	• Structured attendance support and family engagement improve attendance and attainment (EEF, <i>Improving School Attendance</i>). • Higher attendance ensures pupils access the full curriculum and reduces attainment gaps.	3
Alternative Provision Specialist off-site provision for pupils who struggle to access the main curriculum, including interventions to reduce suspensions and reintegrate pupils successfully. Plan to develop a dedicated AP with its own staff by the end of the three-year plan.	• Ofsted's three-year survey of off-site alternative provision highlights that well-managed AP can support vulnerable pupils to remain engaged, improve behaviour, and reduce exclusions. • CBT-based approaches have high impact on risk behaviours and behavioural difficulties (+4 months progress, EEF). Ofsted AP Survey CBT Evidence	3,6
Aspiration and Careers Development Fund Unifrog access, full-time Careers Advisor, guest speakers, Future Fridays programme, and mock interviews. Enable pupils to make informed post-16 choices.	• High-quality careers education and mentoring improves motivation, engagement, and post-16 outcomes. • Pupils with clear pathways are more likely to remain in education, training, or employment (EEF, <i>Careers Guidance</i>).	4
Cultural Capital and Personal Development Provide enrichment activities including Duke of Edinburgh Award, cultural visits, guest speakers, leadership opportunities, and rewards programmes.	• Participation in enrichment and personal development opportunities builds confidence, resilience, and engagement, supporting long-term outcomes (EEF, <i>Arts Participation</i>, 2019; Ofsted Pupil Premium Reports).	5,6
Mentoring and Counselling Targeted mentoring for disadvantaged	• Mentoring improves academic outcomes and social/emotional skills (+2 months progress, EEF,	3, 6

pupils to develop self-regulation, resilience, and readiness to learn.	<i>Mentoring</i> , 2020). • Counselling interventions, particularly CBT-based, reduce risk behaviours and enhance engagement.	
Parental Engagement and Information Evenings Information Evenings and communication channels to help parents engage with learning, reinforce strategies at home, and support revision and attendance.	• Parental engagement strategies can improve outcomes by +3 months on average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils (EEF, <i>Parental Engagement</i> , 2019).	1,2,3

Total budgeted cost: £558,634

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

In 2024/25, the performance of disadvantaged pupils remained below that of non-disadvantaged pupils both locally and nationally. National and internal assessments show attainment and progress gaps across key measures, for example:

Key Measure	Airedale Academy (PP)	Airedale Academy (Non-PP)	National PP	National Non-PP
A8	A8	27.5	33.9	34.9
P8	P8	N/A	N/A	N/A
4EM+	4EM+	33%%	43.6%	43.5
5EM+	5EM+	17%	24.1%	25.6
Attendance	Attendance	79.77%	85.6%	92.3
Persistent Absence	Persistent Absence	58.28% (53.9% in latest IDSR)	39.2%	34.5
NEET	NEET (may include unknown statuses and data gaps)	12%	14% - 2023	11.3%

While some elements of the previous Pupil Premium strategy were well-intentioned, overall outcomes for disadvantaged pupils fell short of ambition. This reflected both historic leadership and staffing challenges and the complex socio-economic context of the Airedale community, which experiences high levels of unemployment, crime, and entrenched disadvantage.

Since joining Castleford Trust in February 2025, Airedale Academy has entered a new phase of rapid improvement. The academy now benefits from strong, stable leadership, consistent systems, and a renewed focus on high expectations for teaching and behaviour. As a result, teachers can teach, pupils can learn, and the culture of the academy is markedly more purposeful and aspirational. These improvements in classroom climate, staff stability, and pupil engagement provide a firm foundation for the new three-year Pupil Premium strategy to embed and accelerate sustained improvement for disadvantaged pupils.

There are already clear indications that this new phase will lead to improved outcomes for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils alike. For example:

- **Behaviour and climate:** A significant reduction in low-level disruption, stronger learning routines, and calmer classrooms mean pupils are better able to focus and make progress.
- **Teaching and learning:** Highly effective CPD and the Trust's 6 Fundamentals of Great Teaching are embedding consistency in pedagogy, expectations, and accountability, ensuring all pupils receive high-quality instruction.
- **Pupil and staff voice:** Surveys, discussions, and the Thursday Forum (pupil voice) indicate improved morale, a stronger sense of community, and greater clarity around expectations.
- **Leadership capacity:** The appointment of a new headteacher with a proven track record, supported by Trust Directors for Core Subjects, Secondary School Improvement, and Education, has significantly strengthened the school's capacity for sustained change.

- **Staffing stability:** Renewed reputation and improved working conditions have enabled the academy to be fully staffed with subject specialists, reducing reliance on supply and ensuring consistent, high-quality provision for all pupils.
- Although the ambitious objective of 'all disadvantaged pupils to achieve progress and attainment that at least matches or exceeds national averages for non-disadvantaged pupils' is not met, the academy now has the leadership, systems, and culture required to deliver sustained progress. The new three-year Pupil Premium strategy provides a clear, evidence-based roadmap for improvement, ensuring that the impact already seen in behaviour, teaching and wider areas of the academy translates into stronger outcomes for all disadvantaged pupils.

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
Educake	Educake Ltd
Sparx Maths	Sparx Learning
Accelerated Reader	Renaissance Learning

Further information (optional)

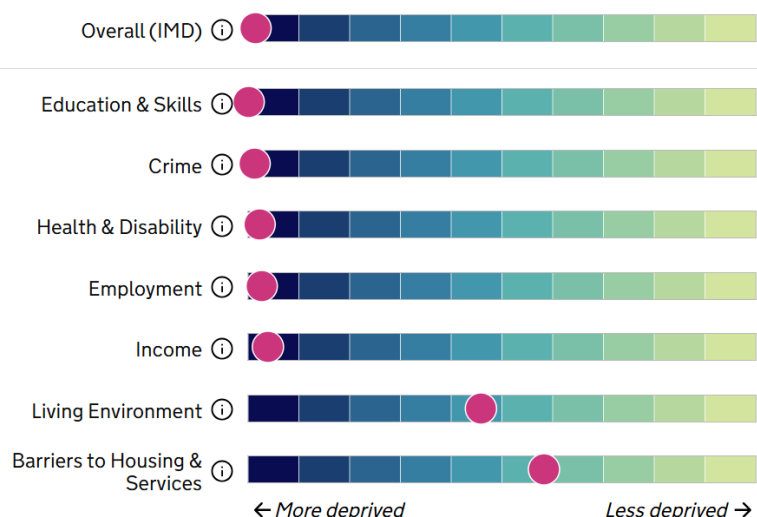
Airedale Academy is located in an area facing significant socio-economic challenges. Wakefield is ranked the 54th most deprived district in England (out of 317) considering income, employment, education, and health. Child poverty is relatively high: roughly 19-22% of children under 16 in Wakefield live in low-income families (below 60% of the median income) before housing costs.

In the ward of Airedale & Ferry Fryston, the proportion of children under 16 in low-income households is around 22.5%, which is above many other wards in Wakefield.

At Airedale Academy, nearly 50% of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), demonstrating a high level of economic disadvantage amongst the intake.

These figures indicate that many of our disadvantaged pupils come from settings where financial hardship, possibly low educational aspiration, and instability are common. Frequent exposure to such challenges can impact attendance, readiness to learn, behaviour, access to enrichment, and parental capacity to support learning at home.

On the 2025 Indices of Deprivation (IDACI), the Airedale postcode flags up as follows:



What This Means for Our Strategy and Implementation

These contextual factors help to explain why previous strategies had limited impact and reinforce the need for a renewed, evidence-led approach. The new three-year plan therefore focuses on:

- Embedding strong and consistent leadership, supported by stable staffing and proven trust systems now in place since joining Castleford Trust in February 2025.
- Accurately identifying and addressing key barriers for disadvantaged pupils, particularly in literacy, attendance, and wellbeing from the point of transition into Year 7.
- Placing high-quality teaching at the heart of improvement, with a clear focus on developing expert teachers through sustained, evidence-informed CPD.

Behaviour for learning has already improved significantly under the new leadership, creating calm, purposeful classrooms where teachers can teach and pupils can learn. This provides the stable foundation on which the new strategy will deliver sustained improvements in teaching, learning, and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

Monitoring and evaluation will be frequent. We will use key indicators such as attendance, persistent absence, participation in extracurricular, lesson removals, reading age scores to track progress, not just waiting for final outcomes.

This report therefore sits at a turning point: acknowledging the challenges of the past, but with the momentum, structure, and trust capacity to drive sustainable improvement for our disadvantaged pupils over the next three years.