

Pupil premium strategy statement

This statement details our school's use of pupil 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	Leigh UTC Dartford
Number of pupils in school	696
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	27.4% (191)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2023/2026
Date this statement was published	November 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	August 2026
Statement authorised by	Kevin Watson, Principal
Pupil premium lead	Gabriel Alamu, VP
Governor / Trustee lead	Clive Barker

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£200,976.46
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 If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year	£200,976.46

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intention is that all pupils, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, make good or better progress at Leigh UTC Dartford. All members of staff and the governing body accept responsibility for challenging 'social disadvantage' and are committed to meeting the academic, pastoral, and social needs of our pupil premium pupils.

Gov.uk education statistics reports that the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers continues to remain at a considerable gap relative to all other pupils (in state funded schools). At Leigh UTC Dartford we are committed to narrowing this gap through the work we do. We work hard to challenge the existing gap by tackling the existing barriers to learning. Our goal is to ensure the rapid development of our disadvantaged pupils by ensuring 'success for all'. This goal is at the heart of our improvement strategy and is one of our T&L drivers.

The national picture for attainment amongst disadvantaged pupils remains bleak with the education policy institute citing nationally disadvantaged pupils are 15.4 points (attainment) behind pupils who are non-disadvantaged. In summary the evidence has shown that the attainment 8 Gap has widened (from 2018/19) due to disadvantaged pupils having a larger decrease than pupils who are non-disadvantaged.

At Leigh UTC Dartford we continue to address the UK's demand for more STEM professionals in higher education and careers, addressing the skills shortage gap identified by the government in July 2020 and October 2025. Statistics show a clear under representation of disadvantaged pupils in A-level STEM subjects. Teach first analysis suggests despite disadvantaged pupils making up around 25% of the number of Y11 national cohort (in 2025) only 8% are represented in A-level entries in STEM. This is confirmed by the FFT report which cites disadvantaged STEM participation as 'persistently low'. The Education Policy Institute confirms that the odds of disadvantaged pupils progressing on to Level 3 STEM courses are 44% lower than for non disadvantaged pupils. Our aim is to ensure our disadvantaged pupils go on to further address this under representation of STEM focused professionals in further education and in STEM specialist industries.

As a UTC we continue to contribute to the pool of STEM graduates in the UK which equates to 43% of all graduates. We address the underrepresentation of STEM pupils in post-secondary education, highlighted in the government's White Paper, 'Skills for Jobs 2020'.

For the 191 pupil premium pupils we serve, we continue to remove the tolerance of low expectations in all educational aspects of their lives, raise lifelong aspirations, and remove barriers to learning. We enable our pupils to achieve holistically and move beyond 'expected' outcomes and become successful STEM professionals in line with their personal ambitions.

Our core value of professionalism at Leigh UTC Dartford is also critical in developing the maturity and professional habits of our pupils. We invest heavily in the nurturing of professional standards, professional attitudes and professional behaviours explicitly.

Our culture of professional habits addresses the often perceived helplessness, apathy and 'deprivation through values' which can so often be linked to pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Our work aims to address the academic, cultural, and personal barriers our pupils face and through careful planning, rigorous tracking and targeted support we provide all our children with the access and opportunities to enjoy a thriving holistic journey of self improvement and actualisation at Leigh UTC Dartford.

The key aims of the strategy will be to:

- Ensure the achievement of our disadvantaged pupils, ensuring their attainment and progress is comparable with national figures for non-disadvantaged pupils.
- Minimise the gaps in achievement, attendance and behaviour between disadvantaged and non disadvantaged pupils within the academy.
- Raise the aspirations of our disadvantaged pupils by exposing them to wider opportunities.
- Improve the numeracy, literacy and reading skills of our disadvantaged pupils.
- Develop and build the cultural capital of our disadvantaged pupils giving them experiences and opportunities they might not have otherwise had

Key actions of the school will be to

- Ensure that teachers and staff are responsible for leading academic achievement. Plan for accelerated academic and holistic progress through quality first teaching, and offer high quality pastoral care.
- Spotlight the importance of quality first teaching, ensuring that the day-to-day teaching meets the needs of disadvantaged learners, instead of relying on interventions to compensate for learning that is less than effective.
- Systematically focus on giving pupils clear, effective feedback about their work and personal development, enabling them to become reflective pupils that adopt a growth mindset and develop higher ambitions.
- Develop professional positive habits that are beneficial to ensuring strong professional relationships in school and beyond.
- Improve parental engagement and participation, ensuring that raising aspirations is encouraged and celebrated at home as well as in the academy.
- Build the cultural capital of our disadvantaged pupils through rich extra-curricular activities and experiences.

In planning our pupil premium strategy, we have drawn on a range of evidence-based research and best practice from the Education Endowment Foundation's Teaching and Learning Toolkit which found that the most important factor in narrowing the disadvantage gap is effective teaching day after day.

We also utilise a range of out of lesson interventions to address gaps in achievement and behaviour. The consequences of being 'disadvantaged' affect all pupils differently and as such our work aims to address this difference to bring about educational equity.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p>Recruiting the best teachers</p> <p>The challenges of recruiting and retaining expert STEM skilled teachers in a national shortage crisis is a challenge . To compound this, ensuring that we are able to retain the best performing existing teachers is also a challenge.</p>
2	<p>Lower starting points</p> <p>Since we have no validated KS2, our internal data reveals a cohort make up similar to previous years. In 2023-24 year around 28% of our year 11 outgoing cohort were lower attaining (LA) pupils and only around 12% were higher attaining (HA) pupils.</p>
3	<p>Behaviours and habits</p> <p>Our data revealed a disproportionate number of disadvantaged pupils represented in negative points and exclusions data. Disadvantaged pupils represented around 43% of our FTE data last year. Our suspensions for disadvantaged pupils were 3.6% above the national average. Disadvantaged pupils on average were over represented in negative points data and under represented in positive points data (50% negative representation vs 26% positive representation) in comparison to Non disadvantaged pupils across the academic year.</p>
4	<p>Cultural capital</p> <p>Reduced cultural capital opportunities and experiences outside of the local areas. We observe a lack of cultural understanding and a lack of desire about the wider world beyond familial experiences and places. We have identified less engagement in wider or cultural experiences within the academy. Only 28% of all attendees to extra curricular clubs were disadvantaged.</p>
5	<p>Attendance</p> <p>We continue to experience low attendance and high levels of persistent absence with our disadvantaged pupils, although our attendance is still better than the national picture our disadvantaged PA continues to fall behind. Our attendance for disadvantaged pupils last year sat at 88.2% in comparison to our non disadvantaged which sat at 94.8%. In addition the persistent absence percentage for our disadvantaged was 40.8% in comparison to that of our non disadvantaged persistent absence which sat at 14%.</p>
6	<p>Family engagement</p> <p>We experience low family engagement/support with a high number of our disadvantaged families. The variance in aspirations and values culture often impedes the engagement from families with our</p>

	disadvantaged pupils. Last academic year 40% of our disadvantaged families failed to engage onsite and in person with information evenings. This was slightly better at KS3 but not in line with the academy's expectations.
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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
Improve academic expectations, progress and attainment across the curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduce the overall attainment gap between pupil premium and non pupil premium. The current attainment gap stands at -15.1. ● Increase % of disadvantaged pupils achieving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4+ in Maths (Currently 52%) 5+ in Maths (Currently 28%) 4+ in English (Currently 60%) 5+ in English (Currently 36%) ● Y11 A8 to reach 4.0 for disadvantaged pupils. ● MYP average grade of 4.5 by the end of Y9 ● All disadvantaged pupils in year 9 have 1:1 with Middle and Senior Leaders in year 9 before choosing their options. This is to ensure all disadvantaged pupils are on the right courses to achieve the expected grade and secure academic/vocational success. ● The curriculum is adapted successfully where low levels of literacy or numeracy are present. With effective in class and out of class intervention utilised to address barriers to their learning ● Recruitment and retention of high performing teachers to continue the developments of teaching and curriculum design ● Teachers receive high quality CPD and coaching enabling them to become better skilled and confident in accelerating progress for all disadvantaged pupils
Cultivate opportunities for enhancing 'cultural capital' through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All disadvantaged pupil to experience 3 academic or cultural experiences a year through the LBC programme

enrichment and experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase number percentage of disadvantaged pupils to engage with extra curricular clubs or enrichment learning activities ● An enriched experiential curriculum with rich cultural and global narratives, examples are explicitly taught and experienced through the IB curriculum, experiences, clubs, trips, assemblies, visits and more
Raise literacy and numeracy levels/engagement so that pupils can successfully access the curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to Increase the percentage of KS 3&4 disadvantaged pupils reading at or above their chronological reading age. ● NGRT, baseline and interventions to show improved baseline stanine scores among disadvantaged pupils(94) vs non-disadvantages pupils (102) in Y7, Y8 (94.7v102.4) and Y9(103.7v106.7).
Improve the wellbeing and learning habits of disadvantaged pupils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pupil voice and PASS score indicate, improved wellbeing amongst disadvantaged pupils ● 121 pastoral welfare check-ins termly for all disadvantaged pupils ● Reduce the number of disadvantaged pupils receiving fixed term exclusion. Baseline data 2024/25: No. of disadvantaged pupils suspended = 40
Improve attendance and punctuality, while decreasing persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduce the attendance gap that exists between disadvantaged (88.2%) and non-disadvantaged (94.8%) pupils in the academy, Gap of -6.6%. ● Reduce persistent absence gap that exists between disadvantaged pupils (40.8%) and non-disadvantaged (14%) pupils, Gap -26.8% ● Increased parental engagement of disadvantaged pupils through improving attendance to face to face parents evenings. Baseline data showed 60% attendance to parents evenings in 2024/25.

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 (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £ 130,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Professional learning focuses on improving the quality of teaching, using the UTC 'Teaching drivers' and 'Enablers'	<p>'Good teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve outcomes for Disadvantaged pupils' EEF 2019</p> <p>Studies suggest that the quality of teaching will have a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged pupils</p>	1,2
<p>Professional development and coaching/training on checking knowledge and providing effective feedback to support disadvantaged pupils in lessons</p> <p>Modelling and effective feedback training/coaching</p>	<p>EEF Report: A schools Guide to Implementation – key strand: support staff and monitor progress.</p> <p>Sutton Trust research states that the difference between the effect of poor teaching and that of highly effective teaching is just under half a year's extra progress for most pupils.</p> <p>Appropriate and timely CPD for all staff will raise the profile of disadvantaged pupils and ensure that effective teaching strategies are used in lessons to support them.</p> <p>The development of effective feedback is an EEF suggested strategy for maximum impact (very high impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence: impact +6). 5+ additional months progress over the course of the academic year in secondary schools.</p>	1,2
Maintain post holder to drive improvement of standards and outcome regarding disadvantaged pupils	EEF Report: A schools Guide to Implementation – key strand: support staff and monitor progress + key strand: identify and cultivate leaders of implementation.	1,2,3,4,5,6

Provide support and plan timely interventions Track interventions and review effectiveness of strategy	Regular quality assurance (through lesson walks, book scrutiny and learning conversations) ensures that the delivery of Quality First Teaching that meets the needs of disadvantaged pupils EEF Report: A schools Guide to Implementation – key strand: support staff and monitor progress.	
Homework club is used to support pupils failing or struggling to complete homework at home	EEF report- Teaching and learning toolkit	1,2
Recruitment of expert and specialist teachers with strong domain specific knowledge and pedagogical skill	EEF & NAO- using the premium to tackle the recruitment and retention challenge – and evaluating new approaches as we innovate – must make sense at a time when it is schools’ biggest worry.	1,2

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

Budgeted cost: **£50,000**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Numeracy and literacy intervention to close gaps identified through bespoke morning intervention	EFF Toolkit: The average impact of the adoption of phonics approaches is about an additional five months’ progress over the course of a year. Studies in England have shown that pupils eligible for free school meals typically receive similar or slightly greater benefit from phonics interventions and approaches.	2
Use of LAT curriculum advisers and specialist teachers to support study and learning interventions for examination groups: Small group subject intervention Exam preparation and revision	<u>Small group tuition Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF</u>	1,2

Study habits preparation and support		
Acquiring Learning/specialist TA & Mentors with subject and academic expertise to support low attaining pupils and pupils making limited progress	<p>Tuition targeted at specific needs and knowledge gaps can be an effective method to support low attaining pupils or those falling behind, both one-to-one:</p> <p><u>One to one tuition EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</u></p> <p><u>Small group tuition Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF</u></p>	1,2

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

Budgeted cost: **£20.976.46**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Attendance intervention provided by the pastoral team.</p> <p>Regular contact with parents to support attendance.</p> <p>Rewards and recognition to encourage improved attendance.</p>	<p>Attendance directly relates to academic attainment. Supporting the attainment of Disadvantaged pupils (Nov 2015) clearly states that children must be in school before they can access their learning.</p> <p>DfE research published in 2016 (Absence and Attainment at Key Stages 2 and 4) found that:</p> <p>The higher the overall absence rate across the lower the likely level of attainment at the end of KS4.</p> <p>Pupils cannot access the range of other support available if they do not attend school regularly.</p> <p>EEF Report: A schools Guide to Implementation – key strand: support staff and monitor progress + key strand: identify and cultivate leaders of implementation.</p> <p>EEF Toolkit; parental and community involvement programmes are associated</p>	5,6

	<p>with improvements in school ethos or discipline.</p> <p>https://schoolleaders.thekeyssupport.com/pupils-and-parents/absence-and-attendance/strategies-for-managing-attendance/research-into-how-attendance-can-impact-attainment/</p>	
<p>Support the SEMH of vulnerable disadvantaged pupils through counselling, mentoring and additional interventions</p> <p>Counselling Wellbeing support Behaviour support</p>	<p>EEF Toolkit: Alongside academic outcomes, SEL interventions have an identifiable and valuable impact on attitudes to learning and social relationships in school. Interventions which focus on improving social interaction tend to be more successful (6+ months).</p>	3,6
<p>Key staff to deliver/facilitate behavioural and emotional support for disadvantaged pupils</p> <p>Including but not limited to-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -121 mentoring -external visiting counsellor -use of educational psychologist -speech and language therapist -ELSA programme 	<p>According to figures from the Department for Education, pupils who receive Free School Meals are more likely to receive a permanent or fixed period exclusion compared to those who do not.</p> <p>The most common reason for exclusion is persistent disruptive behaviour.</p> <p>Behaviour interventions EEF</p>	3,5
<p>Track and monitor engagement from home. Family engagement and participation through parent information evenings.</p>	<p>Research by the EEF shows that parental engagement has a moderate impact on pupil progress.</p> <p>Ensuring an understanding of how to support children with independent learning at home.</p>	3,5,6
<p>Provide in school support or resources (books stationery, uniform etc.) including revision guides for core subjects.</p>	<p>Ensure disadvantaged pupils have access to the necessary resources for equitable access to the curriculum</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/school-uniform</p>	1,3,5

Enrichment activities in school and out of school (guest speakers, mentoring etc).	Pupils from academically weaker schools reported stronger programme related gains. Implications for enhancing and evaluating the effect of science-enrichment programs on pupils' science attitudes. 2005 Wiley	1,2,4,5
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Total budgeted cost: £ 200,976.46

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the 2024 to 2025 academic year.

In spite of compounding challenges facing disadvantaged pupils at Leigh UTC Dartford, we continue to show overall, sustained improvement in the impact of our pupil premium strategy. Our data shows an improved performance for disadvantaged pupils in E+M for 4+ & 5+ measures.

	24-25 (%)	23-24 (%)	Difference (%)
E+M 4+	42.3	37.2	+5.1
E+M 5+	26.9	16.3	+10.6
E+M 7+	3.8	4.7	-0.9
Attainment 8	33.03	32.55	+0.48

When comparing the school's disadvantaged Attainment 8 score with the national figure for non-disadvantaged pupils, the gap has narrowed from 17.6 in 2024 to 16 in 2025.

Across Years 7 and 8, the disadvantaged attainment gap reduced by 0.14 compared with the previous year. The average Standard Age Score increased from 99.86 in September 2024 to 100.3 in June 2025.

The academic performance of disadvantaged pupils at the UTC has shown consistent improvement since the introduction of our current strategy. We continue to refine our approach, regularly reviewing the impact of our actions to ensure sustained progress. Our teaching drivers are contributing positively to pupils' classroom experiences. Their precise definition, along with clearly articulated enablers, allows staff to receive targeted feedback and professional development. This focus on specific pedagogical priorities over each term has strengthened the quality of first teaching and ensured teachers make effective adaptations for individual pupils. As a result, learning and teaching have improved and pupil outcomes continue to rise.

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who were persistently absent in 2024/25 fell by 0.8%. The in-school gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils who were persistently absent reduced from 29.9% in 2023/24 to 26.8% in 2024/25. Attendance for disadvantaged pupils at Leigh UTC Dartford reached 88.6% in 2024/25, which was 0.4% above the national average for this group. While these improvements are encouraging, we remain committed to raising attendance for all pupils, closing internal gaps, and further reducing persistent absence. Ongoing evaluation and adaptation will continue across all key stages.

There was also a notable reduction in suspensions. In 2024/25, thirteen fewer disadvantaged pupils were suspended, representing a 15% decrease from the previous year. Every year group saw improvements, with reduced suspensions in Years 7 (-12), 8 (-1), 9 (-7), 10 (-11) and 11

(-10). The total number of suspensions for disadvantaged pupils fell by 41.3%, and the total number of suspension days decreased by 51%. We remain focused on maintaining this positive trend and ensuring that fixed-term exclusions continue to reduce across all year groups. Attitudes and engagement among disadvantaged pupils are also improving. Positive behaviour points increased by 3,500 compared with the previous year, while negative points decreased by 4,100. Low-tariff detentions declined, and the proportion of disadvantaged pupils accessing the internal exclusion room fell by two percentage points. Although progress has been made, further work is required to improve engagement with low-tariff sanctions so that disproportionate escalation to higher tariff detentions is avoided.

Regular, scheduled one-to-one conversations between pastoral staff and disadvantaged pupils continue to play a vital role in identifying emerging needs before they escalate. These termly discussions have resulted in timely referrals to the Emotional Wellbeing Support Team, which has contributed significantly to improved behaviour and engagement.

Engagement with enrichment opportunities, including extracurricular clubs, trips and academic interventions, shows positive participation from disadvantaged pupils in comparison with their peers. However, an 11% gap remains, and addressing this disparity is a priority. While motivation and engagement are improving, further work is needed to increase attendance at extracurricular activities, and this will remain a focus during the year ahead.

Our Learning Beyond the Curriculum (LBC) days ensure that all disadvantaged pupils experience at least three academic or cultural opportunities each year. These activities continue to have a substantial impact, broadening horizons and helping to address cultural capital gaps. Alongside the implementation of our “professional habits” behaviour driver, we continue to see improvements in conduct across the disadvantaged cohort.

Reducing the number of disadvantaged pupils who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) after Year 11 remains a priority. In 2023/24, 100% of pupils secured destinations aligned with their chosen field of study. Our commitment to retaining high-quality teachers also remains strong, reflected in a retention rate above 95% in 2024/25.

We remain resolute in challenging underachievement by continually adapting our curriculum to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils. As an International Baccalaureate school, we are committed to ensuring that our most disadvantaged pupils achieve success.