

Student premium strategy statement – Aston Academy

This statement details our school’s use of student premium funding to help improve the attainment of our disadvantaged students.

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

School overview

Detail	Data
Number of students in school	1360 (+161 Post 16)
Proportion (%) of student premium eligible students	22.1% (304)
Academic year/years that our current student 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	1 st Jan 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	1 st Jan 2026
Statement authorised by	James Graham
Student premium lead	Phil Wilson
Governor / Trustee lead	

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Student premium funding allocation this academic year	£ 334,480
Student 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>	£334,480

Part A: Student premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At Aston Academy, every student deserves the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their starting point or background.

Our mission is to empower all students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to achieve academic success while building social confidence, self-worth, and resilience. Success extends beyond exam results; it involves equipping students with the mindset, skills, and opportunities to overcome challenges, develop aspirations, and succeed in life.

By prioritising forensic and strategic interventions and continually evaluating outcomes, we aim to create sustainable improvements in the lives of our students.

Objectives for Disadvantaged Students

Disadvantaged students often encounter obstacles such as limited social capital, language gaps, lower aspirations, and attendance challenges. We adopt a targeted approach to identify and address these barriers, ensuring our strategy is tailored to meet specific needs. By fostering high expectations and a supportive environment, we enable students to achieve their goals and reach their potential. Our strategy is rooted in the belief that all students can excel with the right support. We focus on academic, social, and emotional growth, recognising that disadvantaged students can face complex challenges that may hinder their motivation and progress. Our approach is designed to remove these obstacles and offer comprehensive support beyond the classroom.

Conclusion

At Aston Academy, our Pupil Premium Strategy is guided by core principles designed to address the unique needs of disadvantaged students while ensuring resources are used effectively for maximum impact. Central to this approach is high-quality, inclusive and adaptive teaching supported by ongoing professional development to ensure evidence-based strategies improve student outcomes. Sustainability is achieved by embedding these practices into school culture, providing a supportive environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

At Aston we want to unlock the potential of every Pupil Premium student, empowering them with the support, opportunities, and confidence they need to rise above challenges, achieve their dreams, create a brighter future and thrive.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge																															
1	<p>Attainment/Outcomes</p> <p>In the most recent GCSE data, disadvantaged students achieved an average progress score of -1.25 with a variance of -0.3 to their non-disadvantaged counterparts. This disparity highlights the ongoing need to address the literacy barriers faced by disadvantaged students, which significantly impact their ability to achieve on par with their peers.</p> <p>Data from NGRT (New Group Reading Test) and standardised reading assessments, alongside observations from classroom visits, reveal that disadvantaged students can lag behind their non-disadvantaged peers in reading comprehension. This gap is particularly evident among students in Years 7–10, with those at the lower end of the distribution struggling the most. Disadvantaged students often face significant challenges with vocabulary, background knowledge, and the ability to draw inferences from texts—key skills essential for accessing the curriculum effectively.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="384 1037 1390 1576"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="384 1037 823 1093">KS4 Data (Disadvantaged)</th> <th data-bbox="828 1037 1038 1216" rowspan="2">National Data 2022/2023</th> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="1043 1037 1390 1093">Aston</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="384 1093 823 1216">Performance Measures KS4</th> <th data-bbox="1043 1093 1214 1216">Results 2023</th> <th data-bbox="1219 1093 1390 1216">Results 2024</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="384 1216 823 1279">P8 Measures</td> <td data-bbox="828 1216 1038 1279"></td> <td data-bbox="1043 1216 1214 1279">-0.98</td> <td data-bbox="1219 1216 1390 1279">-1.25</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="384 1279 823 1341">Attainment 8</td> <td data-bbox="828 1279 1038 1341">34.99</td> <td data-bbox="1043 1279 1214 1341">32.65</td> <td data-bbox="1219 1279 1390 1341">31</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="384 1341 823 1404">4+ English & Maths (%)</td> <td data-bbox="828 1341 1038 1404">43</td> <td data-bbox="1043 1341 1214 1404">43</td> <td data-bbox="1219 1341 1390 1404">37</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="384 1404 823 1467">5+ English & Maths (%)</td> <td data-bbox="828 1404 1038 1467">25</td> <td data-bbox="1043 1404 1214 1467">22</td> <td data-bbox="1219 1404 1390 1467">22</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="384 1467 823 1529">Ebacc APS</td> <td data-bbox="828 1467 1038 1529">2.97</td> <td data-bbox="1043 1467 1214 1529">2.77</td> <td data-bbox="1219 1467 1390 1529">2.72</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="384 1529 823 1576">EBacc (5+)</td> <td data-bbox="828 1529 1038 1576">7</td> <td data-bbox="1043 1529 1214 1576">6</td> <td data-bbox="1219 1529 1390 1576">3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	KS4 Data (Disadvantaged)	National Data 2022/2023	Aston		Performance Measures KS4	Results 2023	Results 2024	P8 Measures		-0.98	-1.25	Attainment 8	34.99	32.65	31	4+ English & Maths (%)	43	43	37	5+ English & Maths (%)	25	22	22	Ebacc APS	2.97	2.77	2.72	EBacc (5+)	7	6	3
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2	<p>Attendance</p> <p>Both internal and external data highlight that attendance at Aston Academy amongst disadvantaged students, with notable disparities observed across all year groups and key cohorts. Analysis of attendance data consistently shows that disadvantaged students attend less frequently than their non-disadvantaged peers, with the gap widening in certain year groups. For instance, attendance rates among disadvantaged students in Years 9 and 10 are among the lowest, coinciding with critical stages of their academic journey where consistent attendance is essential for securing positive outcomes. Both PA/SA and SEND attendance is a challenge and Fridays specifically remains a historically poorly attended day (a spread of nearly 4%).</p>																															

<p>3</p>	<p>Behaviour</p> <p>Internal data at Aston Academy indicate that a disproportionately high percentage of behavioural incidents involve disadvantaged students. Disadvantaged students are significantly more likely to receive school sanctions, ranging from warnings to more severe measures such as suspensions. This overrepresentation reflects the additional challenges including difficulties with emotional regulation, engagement, and social dynamics within the school environment. This is further compounded by a lack of routine and gaps in learning linked to attendance.</p> <p>Repeated sanctions can lead to lower attendance rates as students may become disengaged or feel excluded from the school community. This, in turn, hinders their ability to fully access the curriculum and achieve academically.</p> <p>Furthermore, time away from positive school experiences, such as enrichment activities and extracurricular opportunities, limits the development of cultural capital, reducing their ability to thrive in social and academic settings.</p> <p>Addressing this challenge requires a comprehensive approach, focusing on early intervention, restorative practices, and tailored support to help disadvantaged students manage behaviour, build resilience, and remain actively engaged in school life.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Cultural Capital and opportunity to thrive</p> <p>Due to socio-economic barriers, many students in this cohort face fewer opportunities to engage in enriching experiences outside of school, such as extracurricular activities, cultural trips, and wider community engagement. These limitations often hinder the development of key personal qualities such as resilience, self-worth, and social confidence.</p> <p>This lack of exposure can have a profound impact on students, restricting their ability to broaden their horizons, develop aspirations, and build the skills needed to navigate future challenges. Without opportunities to thrive, disadvantaged students may struggle with low self-esteem, reduced motivation, and limited capacity to persevere when faced with academic or personal setbacks.</p> <p>The consequences of these limitations extend into the classroom, where students may exhibit lower engagement, struggle to form strong peer relationships, or lack the confidence to participate fully. In the long term, these challenges can affect their readiness for life beyond school, limiting access to further education, training, and career opportunities.</p> <p>Addressing this challenge requires a focused commitment to providing disadvantaged students with enriching experiences, both within and beyond the school environment, to help them build cultural capital, develop resilience, and gain the confidence to thrive.</p>

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><i>A 3 year cycle of improved attainment and outcomes for Pupil premium students.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained improvement moving towards national average for progress and attainment for the disadvantaged cohort • The gap between PP and non PP is reduced annually, initially comparing to 2024 results. • National average for attainment for all students. • NEETs figures in line with Non disadvantaged • Decreased disparity between the attainment of disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged students on standardised reading assessments. • Attainment for disadvantaged students in GCSE English Language closer with or above the national average for non-disadvantaged students. • Students in reading stanines 1 and 2 receive appropriate intervention and make progress. • Evidence of students reading ages based of NGRT is closing the gap between non disadvantaged cohort.
<p><i>A 3 year cycle of improved behaviour for Pupil premium students.</i></p>	<p>Every student is actively engaged in their learning, contributing meaningfully and participating enthusiastically in all classroom activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in C2/C3 reviewed termly but comparisons made annually. • Suspensions and repeat suspension decline over the 3 year strategy • Improved internal behaviour data (achievement points, milestone certificates). • Half termly book reviews • Lesson visits and quantitative data. • Student voice and measured impact of behaviour curriculum. • Evidence of disadvantaged cohort reflecting an appropriate proportion of exclusions.

<p>A 3 year cycles of improved attendance for Pupil premium students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance gap between disadvantage students and non-disadvantaged above national benchmarks • Persistent absence among disadvantaged students no more than 20%. • Evidence of national strategy of “<i>working together to improve attendance</i>” embedded and tracked using SPT. • KPI of key attendance data tracked and comparisons made. Evidence of implemented strategies to reflect emerging needs (PA groups, Fri challenged). • Incentivisation of attendance reflects emerging needs of school attendance challenges.
<p>Cultural Capital and opportunity to thrive</p>	<p>Students feel supported, valued, and confident, enabling them to thrive both academically and personally. In addition, students have access to enriching experiences that broaden their horizons and foster a strong sense of self-belief and resilience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student voice plays a critical role in understanding their well-being, • Learning walk data during pastoral sessions. • Destination data shows disadvantaged students have clear progression pathways. • Use of MIND and WMIM with case studies/review of measurable impact. • Opportunities are tracked to ensure inclusivity for extra-curricular activities, trips and other cultural capital experiences.

Activity in this academic year

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

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £123,443

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p><u>CPDL</u> Ensure that all leaders, teaching and pastoral staff possess a comprehensive understanding of the complexities associated with educational disadvantage and their specific responsibilities in mitigating its impact. Targeted training, funded and delivered through dedicated professional development sessions, will be implemented both within the school and through external expertise to ensure a deep and practical alignment with Aston Academy's strategic approach to addressing these challenges. This initiative is designed to cultivate an informed and cohesive response across all levels of staff. In addition targeted CPDL linked to T&L is forensic in nature to target need.</p>	Evidence from the EEF Implementation Guidance Report	1-4
<p><u>Literacy and Oracy</u> Enhance the subject-specific instruction and support of reading, writing, and oracy across all lessons to ensure students develop essential literacy competencies. Our initial emphasis will centre on the explicit teaching of reading and vocabulary acquisition, recognising these as foundational elements for accessing the wider curriculum.</p> <p>To achieve this, we will implement targeted strategies such as the ERIC (Everybody Reads in Class) programme, alongside structured tutor-led reading interventions, designed to improve fluency, comprehension, and disciplinary literacy. Half termly reading weeks, KS3 Reading lesson x1 hour per week, Literacy projects Professional development sessions will prioritise equipping teachers with advanced pedagogical approaches and strategies for integrating literacy instruction seamlessly into their subject areas, fostering consistent and impactful literacy support for all students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EEF Guidance Report on Improving Secondary Literacy. • National Literacy Trust (2021) • Hirsch (2006): The Knowledge Deficit • Shanahan & Shanahan (2008): Disciplinary literacy Voice 21 (2021) 	1

<p><u>Literacy</u></p> <p>All students in Years 7 to 10 engage in structured, high-quality reading sessions during tutor time, specifically designed to enhance their vocabulary acquisition and develop advanced reading skills. This approach fosters improved comprehension, fluency, and linguistic proficiency, providing a critical foundation for academic success across disciplines. In addition Post 16 Reading Coaches will support our students who face these challenges and reviewed half termly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EEF Guidance Report on Improving Secondary Literacy. • National Literacy Trust (2021) • Hirsch (2006): The Knowledge Deficit • Shanahan & Shanahan (2008): Disciplinary literacy Voice 21 (2021) 	<p>1,3,4</p>
<p><u>Numeracy</u></p> <p>Enhance numeracy skills among Pupil Premium students by implementing targeted interventions. These will include expanding the cohort of students studying statistical and launching a core booster curriculum for Year 10 Maths. This tailored approach is designed to address gaps in numeracy proficiency, improve overall mathematical confidence, and support students in achieving better academic outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing the Attainment Gap" (EEF, 2017) • Improving Mathematics in Key Stages 2 and 3, Anne Watson and Keith Jones (2011) • Closing the Gap in Maths Achievement for Disadvantaged Pupils" (NFER, 2019) 	<p>1,3,4</p>

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

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed

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

Budgeted cost: £ 211,037

<p><u>Intervention</u></p> <p>Enhance the utilisation of assessment data to enable the early identification of barriers to student progress, ensuring timely and effective intervention. All students will be categorised into the Horsforth Quadrant, facilitating a nuanced understanding of their performance relative to effort and attainment. Comprehensive training will be provided to staff on the interpretation and application of assessment data, fostering a deeper analytical capability. Additionally, assessment systems will be refined to support the systematic and frequent review of student progress, enabling responsive adaptations to teaching strategies and interventions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black & William (1998): <i>Inside the Black Box</i> • EEF (2023): Diagnostic Assessment • Shute (2008): Focus on Formative Feedback 	1,3,4
<p><u>Behaviour Curriculum</u></p> <p>Implement a structured behaviour curriculum for students, explicitly teaching values, expectations, and strategies for self-regulation and positive interactions. This curriculum will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear Expectations: Defining and consistently reinforcing behavioural standards. • Resilience and Self-Regulation: Equipping students with skills to manage emotions and respond constructively to challenges. • Restorative Practices: Encouraging reflection and relationship-building through restorative approaches. • Inclusivity and Cultural Capital: Promoting respect, diversity, and community contribution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simonsen et al. (2008): <i>Evidence-Based Practices for Classroom Management</i> • Zins & Elias (2007): <i>Social and Emotional Learning: Promoting the Development of All Students</i> • Duckworth et al. (2007): <i>Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals</i> 	1-4
<p><u>Cultural Capital</u></p> <p>Strategically enhance access to extracurricular activities for disadvantaged students, ensuring that all students have opportunities to develop their cultural capital, resilience, and personal growth. This initiative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goodall (2013): <i>The Role of Extracurricular Activities in Improving</i> 	1-4

<p>will focus on providing a broad range of enrichment activities—ranging from sports and arts to leadership development and community engagement—that promote both academic and personal development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Extracurricular Provision: Ensuring that disadvantaged students have equal access to extracurricular opportunities, regardless of socio-economic barriers. This will include funding for trips, clubs, and activities that broaden students' experiences and expose them to a variety of cultural, intellectual, and social contexts. • Personal Development and Resilience: Embedding resilience-building opportunities within these activities, such as leadership roles, team-building exercises, and challenges that require perseverance and self-regulation. These experiences will be integral in fostering character development and preparing students for the challenges of adulthood. • Integration with Curriculum: Linking extracurricular activities with academic content and personal development goals, encouraging students to see the value of these opportunities in enhancing both their cognitive skills and personal growth. • Mentorship and Role Models: Creating partnerships with professionals and community leaders who can mentor disadvantaged students, providing positive role models and guidance that foster aspirations, self-worth, and future success. 	<p><i>Educational Outcomes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duckworth et al. (2007): <i>Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals</i> • Lee & McLnerney (2017): <i>Building Resilience in Schools:</i> • Ofsted (2019): <i>Improving Behaviour in Schools</i> 	
<p><u>Attendance</u></p> <p>Adopt a comprehensive, data-informed strategy to address the attendance challenges faced by disadvantaged students, recognising the complex relationship between attendance, academic achievement, and socio-emotional well-being. This approach will involve early identification of attendance patterns, tailored interventions, and a multi-faceted support system designed to remove barriers to consistent school attendance, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Key components of the strategy include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Early Identification and Targeted Support: 2. Personalised Support Plans 3. Building Positive Relationships and Engagement 4. Incentivising Consistent Attendance: 5. Parental and Community Involvement: 6. Tracking and Accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telford, A., & Callear, D. (2018): <i>Improving School Attendance and Reducing Absenteeism</i> • Ofsted (2014): <i>School Attendance: A Review of National and Local Practices</i> Bowers, • A. J., & Sprott, R. (2012): <i>The Impact of Attendance on Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analysis</i> 	<p>1-4</p>

<p>Implement a comprehensive well-being and mental health support strategy to address the socio-emotional challenges faced by disadvantaged students. Recognising the crucial link between mental health, emotional resilience, and academic success, this strategy will focus on creating a supportive, inclusive environment that fosters the emotional well-being of all students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Holistic Mental Health Support: 2. Collaborative Approach with External Agencies: (WMIM) and MIND 3. Early Identification and Intervention 4. Integration of Well-Being into the Curriculum.. 5. Regular Monitoring and Review of Mental Health and Well-Being: 6. Staff Training and Awareness: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stewart-Brown, S., & Layte, R. (2010): <i>Mental Health in Schools</i> • Mental Health Foundation (2016): <i>State of the Nation's Mental Health</i> • Greenberg, M. T., Domitrovich, C. E., & Bumbarger, B. K. (2001): <i>The Effects of Prevention Programs on Mental Health, School Engagement, and Academic Achievement</i> 	<p>4</p>
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Total budgeted cost: £334,480

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged students

Outcomes

Key Stage 2 Average Point Score (KS2 APS)

- Variance: -2.31
- PP: 103.03
- Non-PP: 105.34
- A small foundational difference in prior attainment between the groups.

Performance Gaps in English and Maths

- Standard Pass (Grade 4+)
 - Gap between PP and Non-PP: 34%
- Strong Pass (Grade 5+)
 - Gap between PP and Non-PP: 34.5%

Progress and Attainment

- Progress 8
 - Gap: -1.08
 - PP: -1.21
 - Non-PP: -0.15
- Attainment
 - Attainment Gap: -16.3
 - PP: 31.01
 - Non-PP: 47.31

Subject-Specific APS Gaps

- English APS Gap: -1.36
- Maths APS Gap: -1.77 Suggests that maths presents a particularly significant challenge for PP students.
- Science Value-Added Gap (VA): Gap: -0.85

Grades 5-9 and 4-9 in English AND Maths

- 5-9 Gap: 27.3%
- 4-9 Gap: 24.8%

Grade 4+

- English Gap: -25.5%
- Maths Gap: -36.5% Maths shows a particularly pronounced disparity at the standard pass level.

Grade 5+

- English Gap: -32.8%
- Maths Gap: -42.1%

Grade 7+

- English Gap: -12.5%
- Maths Gap: -22.3%

The lingering effects of the pandemic remain significant, disproportionately affecting PP students and amplifying gaps in both attainment and progress. While a gap remains between the PP and non-PP cohorts, the school's ongoing efforts and reflective practices provide a strong foundation for improvement. The new strategy's focus on rigor, challenge, and sustainability, combined with an acknowledgment of pandemic-related setbacks, showcases a clear pathway toward achieving greater equity and success for all students.

Attendance

The attendance gap between Pupil Premium (PP) and non-Pupil Premium students has consistently remained at just over 11%, highlighting an ongoing challenge in reducing disparities. Despite the implementation of various intervention strategies and the close tracking and monitoring of key cohorts, the impact on narrowing this gap has been limited. Disadvantaged students are nearly five times more likely to have unauthorised absences than their non-disadvantaged peers, with their overall unauthorised absence rates almost double those of other groups. While these figures underline the barriers faced by disadvantaged students, they also reinforce the need to continue refining and developing strategies that tackle the root causes of absence, ensuring all pupils can fully engage with their education.

2023/2024 Figures (Attendance)

Whole School Percentages

	Pupils in group	Attendances	Authorised Absences	Unauthorised Absences	Late Before	Late After
Pupil Premium	354	81.38	9.26	9.37	4.77	0.61
Not Pupil Premium	1286	92.62	5.33	2.05	3.62	0.16