

Pupil premium strategy statement – Mary Elliot Academy

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

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

School overview

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school	148
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	43.2%
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 - 2026
Date this statement was published	November 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	November 2026
Statement authorised by	Rebecca Davies
Pupil premium lead	Rachael Bowen
Governor / Trustee lead	

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£72,565
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years <i>(enter £0 if not applicable)</i>	£0
Total budget for this academic year <i>If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year</i>	£72,565

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our aim is to use pupil premium funding to help us achieve and sustain positive outcomes for our disadvantaged pupils. Whilst socio-economic disadvantage is not always the primary challenge our students face, we do see a variance in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils across the school when compared to their peers (and those who join us at similar starting points), particularly in terms of:

- Academic attainment
- Progression to further and higher education
- Employability (where appropriate)
- Social opportunities

Mary Elliot Academy is a school for students with special educational needs, including Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD). We understand that students attending our school will face additional challenges in reaching their full potential with their main barriers being:

- Communication difficulties (both expressive and receptive)
- Emotional and sensory regulation difficulties
- Difficulties in regulating emotions and managing their behaviour
- Difficulties in independence and self-help skills
- Difficulties in their everyday living without access to specialist equipment, therapy programmes or additional guidance / support.

At Mary Elliot Academy we ensure that the teaching and learning opportunities we provide meet the needs of all of our students irrespective of their ability, gender or socio-economic background. We ensure that appropriate provision is made for students who belong to vulnerable groups, this includes ensuring that the needs of socially disadvantaged students are adequately assessed and addressed.

We will provide disadvantaged students with support to develop communication, independence, social skills and high quality learning. Through the use of pupil premium we aim to...

- Provide enriching opportunities to engage in activities and facilities which promote self-esteem and confidence
- Provide a curriculum which is rich and engaging
- Have access to a wide range of support to enable them to communicate needs
- Support students to develop skills which will help support their behaviour and

self-regulation

- Provide high quality teaching and learning through CPD for staff
- Additional support to families to help engage with school and for this to have a direct and positive impact on attendance

Our strategy will be driven by the needs and strengths of each young person, based on formal and informal assessments, not assumptions or labels. This will help us to ensure that we offer them the relevant skills and experience they require to be prepared for adulthood, reflecting our academy vision 'Preparing for Life'.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Assessments, observations, and discussions with students indicate that disadvantaged students often face greater difficulties in communicating and expressing their needs compared to their peers. This includes challenges such as being non-verbal, having limited language, and experiencing difficulties with social interaction
2	Observations and conversations with students and their families suggest that disadvantaged students tend to have fewer opportunities to build cultural capital beyond the school environment.
3	Our assessments, observations and conversations with students indicate that disadvantaged students frequently need additional support to develop personal independence and self-help skills.
4	Assessments and conversations with students and their families reveal that many face barriers in accessing community resources, particularly due to limited transport options and a lack of travel training opportunities.
5	All students in the pupil premium cohort have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and require additional support and resources. Some also have significant medical needs, including conditions that are life-limiting.

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	Rationale	Success criteria
Learners effectively use a variety of communication methods to enhance understanding and develop their ability to express themselves.	Using a range of communication systems supports learners' understanding and helps them express ideas clearly, promoting confidence, independence, and meaningful interaction.	Improved progress through communication aspects of curriculum Achievement termly targets linked to EHCPs
Disadvantaged learners develop increased confidence and independence, enabling them to engage actively in the wider community and prepare for adult life.	Building confidence and independence empowers disadvantaged learners to engage more actively in their communities and develop the skills needed for successful preparation for adulthood.	Learners engage in more positive and meaningful interactions within the community. Learners show improved progress in independence and community-based areas of the curriculum. Learners make measurable progress toward Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) targets and EHCP outcomes.
Vulnerable learners will receive targeted support to ensure that progress in reading is comparable to their peers.	Targeted support for vulnerable learners helps close reading gaps, ensuring their progress aligns with peers and promoting equal and inclusive access to learning opportunities.	Reading data demonstrates measurable improvement in learner progress. Learners show increased confidence and engagement in reading activities.
Students have access to a variety of activities and facilities that foster personal development and promote inclusion.	Providing access to diverse activities and facilities fosters personal development, enhances confidence, and promotes inclusion for all students.	Students participate in a variety of enriching activities alongside a wider peer group. Increased self-esteem, confidence, and tolerance of others are evident Impact is measured through observations, IEP targets, and impact statements.
Disadvantaged learners develop greater emotional awareness and the ability to regulate their feelings both independently and with	Developing emotional awareness and regulation enables disadvantaged learners to manage their feelings effectively, improving	Reduction in behaviour incidents recorded Progress through the

support.	well-being, relationships, and readiness to learn.	<p>number of learners accessing behaviour plans has reduced, demonstrating a reduction in level of behaviour and frequency.</p> <p>Increased engagement and participation in learning activities.</p>
An effective, well-designed curriculum is delivered through high-quality teaching supported by ongoing professional development.	Ongoing CPD ensures high-quality teaching and a well-designed curriculum that meets learners' needs and promotes effective learning outcomes.	<p>The curriculum is coherently planned to meet the specific learning needs of disadvantaged learners.</p> <p>Staff demonstrate improved practice and confidence as a result of a well-structured, ongoing CPD programme.</p>

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: £20,265

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Bespoke training for all teachers to improve pedagogy within all pathways.	<p>The National College state the following key advantages of continuous professional development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPD programmes not only help educators to keep pace with the current standards of others in the sector, but also ensures that staff can deliver high- quality teaching and impact positively on student outcomes. • CPD enables growth of our school; it underpins achievement of our vision and ensures that all staff are working towards a common purpose. • CPD increases teacher motivation, confidence, and commitment to teaching; learning new skills and applying them in the classroom can lead to a more effective teaching environment. • CPD ensures that all staff are compliant with DfE and Ofsted’s requirements, which is particularly pertinent as legislation continues to change and evolve. <p>The Importance of CPD in Schools Teacher CPD (nationalcollege.com)</p>	1,3
Reading Framework resources and CPD	As outlined in the Reading Framework, “Reading is fundamental to education. Proficiency in reading is vital for students' success. Students who find it difficult to learn to read are likely to struggle across the curriculum, since English is both a	3

	subject in its own right and the medium for teaching." <i>The Reading Framework, July 2023</i>	
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Offsite swimming provision to ensure appropriate opportunities to develop key skills and independence	The national institute for health states ' <i>Learning to swim via a structured program is an important skill to develop aquatic competencies and prevent drowning.</i> ' https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles	2,4
CPD – Tassels training to develop receptive communication for learners with most significant needs.	For SEN students, TASSEL CPD can specifically support staff in understanding and implementing sensory-based and communication interventions, such as Total Communication approaches, which are essential for learners with sensory and cognitive challenges. Programmes like these improve both student well-being and their ability to engage meaningfully with their education. NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION	1,3,4

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

Budgeted cost: £30,400

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Maintaining provision of Speech and Language therapist (30 days)	The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists state speech and language therapists (SLTs) provide life-improving treatment,	1, 2, 5

<p>Maintain the provision of the communication lead (TLR)</p> <p>Provision of communication resources to support academy strategies and improve learners access to the curriculum and wider world</p>	<p>support, and care for children rcslt-what-is-slt-factsheet.pdf</p> <p>The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence also provide evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of speech and language therapist support benefits of speech and language therapy Evidence search service closure information NICE</p>	
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<p>Maintaining and providing additional provision of in school Sensory Profile Training delivered through onsite trained staff and Occupational Therapist support</p>	<p>OTs help students understand and regulate their sensory responses to achieve a calm and focused state, which is optimal for learning. East London NHS Foundation Trust.</p>	<p>5,6</p>
<p>Music Therapy to enhance communication skills, improve social interactions, and support emotional well-being.</p>	<p>Music Therapy is an effective tool in promoting communication and social skills among children with developmental disabilities, including those with autism spectrum disorders</p>	<p>2,5</p>

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

Budgeted cost: £21,900

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Team Teach training to support positive behaviour management across the academy	<p>The Education Endowment Foundation provides research on the importance of behaviour strategies in schools:</p> <p>Improving_Behaviour_in_Schools_Evidence_Review.pdf (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p> <p>Teaching and Learning Toolkit EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p>	1,5
Maintain the provision of the behaviour lead (TLR)	<p>Positive behaviour leadership emphasises proactive strategies over reactive measures. It involves setting clear expectations, using consistent reinforcement strategies, and fostering an environment that promotes respect and inclusivity. These practices help reduce disruptive behaviors and create a predictable environment, which is particularly beneficial for learners with SEN. SEN MAGAZINE</p>	1,5
Jessie's Fund	<p>Jessie's Fund supports children with special educational needs (SEN) by using music as a tool to enhance emotional well-being, communication, and expression. Music therapy, which Jessie's Fund frequently facilitates, has been shown to help children with SEN improve their self-esteem and emotional resilience.</p>	1,2,4
Manual Handling Trainer CPD	<p>An on-site manual handling trainer enhances safety, compliance, staff confidence and quality of care, directly contributing to the well-being and inclusion of SEN learners while ensuring staff maintain high standards through accessible, ongoing CPD.</p>	5

<p>Whole school inclusion enrichment activities - linking to employer/employee encounters</p>	<p>Research from the Department of Education states too many young people from disadvantaged backgrounds never get the chance to take part in activities outside of school. As a result, they lose out on the benefits – increase confidence which helps social interaction, a real aspiration to go onto higher or further education, more soft skills and a sense of wellbeing and belonging.</p> <p>An unequal playing field: extra-curricular activities, soft skills and social mobility - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>	<p>2,4,5</p>
<p>Pool Safety Staff Training</p>	<p>Pool Safety trained staff ensures that learners can safely access and benefit from hydrotherapy sessions. Trained staff are equipped to manage risks, respond to emergencies, and provide appropriate support for students with complex physical or medical needs. This promotes a safe and inclusive environment, allowing learners to develop physical skills, improve wellbeing, and make progress toward EHCP outcomes through consistent, high-quality provision.</p>	<p>3,5</p>

Total budgeted cost: £72,565

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged students

Learners have continued to show progress in developing communication skills, as evidenced through lesson observations. One-to-one intensive interaction with staff offers personalised support that enhances both receptive and expressive communication abilities. Additionally, the academy's communication lead has designed and delivered targeted CPD to equip staff with the knowledge and strategies needed to effectively support learners' communication development.

As part of our ongoing enterprise activities students have had the opportunities to work with multiple employers from various occupations including food and beverage, and art design. As well as students accessing these opportunities, there are opportunities for parents and carers to meet with professionals and discuss aspirations for their children and the challenges they face.

Reading strategies remain embedded in daily practice, with students participating in structured phonics sessions. Phase One approaches are being extended to include more disadvantaged learners, giving them greater opportunities to build and strengthen essential pre-reading skills.

Following the appointment of the Positive Behaviour Lead, a three tiered behaviour approach has been developed and implemented across the academy. Learners receive universal, targeted and specialist support dependent on their level of need. The level of support provides students with the tools and required support to overcome barriers and succeed both inside and outside of the school community, preparing them for adulthood. Following the development of the tiered approach and continued CPD provided to staff to enhance their skills and strategies, there has a notable decline in learners who are accessing the targeted support offer due to their needs being met through the universal offer.

Following the collaborative work with Jessie's Fund, this activity has helped to support learners' character building through shared experiences with their peers. Learners demonstrated high levels of engagement, interactions and tolerance towards this new and exciting experience. Learners developed in confidence and cooperation through the experience, improving relationships with those around them. Success was displayed through learners' responses of increased vocals, body language and interactions.