# 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 | 145 |
| Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils | 44.1% |
| 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)** | 2026 - 2027 |
| Date this statement was published | November 2026 |
| Date on which it will be reviewed | November 2027 |
| Statement authorised by | Rebecca Davies |
| Pupil premium lead | Lara Latham |
| Governor / Trustee lead | |

## Funding overview

| Detail | Amount |
|---|---|
| Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year | £66,490 |
| Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years *(enter £0 if not applicable)* | £0 |
| **Total budget for this academic year**<br>*If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year* | £66,490 |

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

Mary Elliot Academy aims to use pupil premium funding to achieve and sustain positive outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, in line with our academy vision, “Preparing for Life”. We recognise that socio-economic disadvantage is not always the primary challenge our pupils face; however, it can compound existing barriers and contribute to differences in academic attainment, opportunities for further education and employment (where appropriate), and access to social experiences. Our strategy seeks to reduce these barriers and enable pupils to make meaningful progress from their individual starting points.

Mary Elliot Academy supports pupils with sever learning difficulties (SLD), autistic spectrum conditions (ASC) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Pupils may experience challenges with receptive and expressive communication, emotional and sensory regulation, behaviour, independence and self-help skills, and everyday living where specialist equipment, therapeutic programmes or additional guidance are required. We recognise that these needs vary significantly between individuals and that disadvantage must be considered alongside, rather than assumed from, a pupil’s SEND profile.

We are committed to ensuring that teaching and learning opportunities meet the needs of every pupil, irrespective of ability, gender or socio-economic background. Appropriate provision for vulnerable groups is informed by assessment, observations, discussions with families and individual needs. High-quality, appropriately adapted teaching is central to our approach; pupil premium funding supplements, rather than replaces, the specialist and statutory provision to which pupils are entitled.

Through our strategy, we aim to provide a rich and engaging curriculum; develop pupils’ communication and ability to express their needs; strengthen emotional regulation, behaviour for learning and independence; and widen access to enriching experiences that build self-esteem, confidence and social interaction. We will support high-quality teaching through targeted staff CPD, including reading and specialist communication approaches, and work with families to improve engagement and address barriers to attendance. Across Aspire, Endeavour, Venture and Post-16, support will be shaped by formal and informal assessment, pupil strengths and individual aspirations, not assumptions or labels, to prepare pupils as fully as possible for adult life.

## Challenges

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

| Challenge number | Detail of challenge |
|---|---|
| 1 | Communication - Some disadvantaged pupils experience additional barriers to using and accessing communication systems, limiting participation and expression of needs. |
| 2 | Enrichment and cultural capital - Financial and practical barriers may limit access to activities, relationships and experiences outside school. |
| 3 | Independence and preparation for adulthood - Some pupils require additional practice and support to generalise independence, self-care and functional skills. |
| 4 | Community access and travel - Transport, access and travel-training barriers can restrict community participation and real-world learning. |
| 5 | Complex needs and access - Pupils may have complex sensory, physical, medical or communication needs. |
| 6 | Attendance and engagement - Absence reduces access to teaching and wider opportunities; previous strategy report 87.79% year-to-date attendance against a 90% target. |

## 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 |
|---|---|---|
| **Communication and Interaction:**<br>Disadvantaged learners develop their receptive and expressive communication skills, using a range of appropriate communication methods to express their needs, make choices and engage meaningfully with others. | Developing effective communication is essential for learners to access the curriculum, build relationships and develop independence.<br><br>Personalised communication approaches, supported by specialist interventions and staff training, enable learners to communicate more confidently and participate fully in school life. | Learners demonstrate measurable progress in communication skills and achievement of EHCP targets, showing increased confidence and independence in using appropriate communication methods to express themselves and engage with others. |
| **Independence and Preparation for Adulthood:**<br>Disadvantaged learners develop greater independence, confidence and essential life skills, enabling them to participate more actively within school, the wider community and everyday life. | Developing independence and functional life skills prepares learners for adulthood and supports their ability to engage meaningfully in their communities.<br><br>Providing practical learning experiences and targeted support helps learners overcome barriers and develop confidence in everyday situations. | Learners make measurable progress in independence, functional skills and Preparing for Adulthood targets, demonstrating increased confidence and ability to apply skills within school and the wider community. |
| **Reading and Literacy Development:**<br>Disadvantaged learners make sustained progress in reading and early literacy skills from their individual starting points, ensuring they have equitable access to high-quality reading provision and targeted support. | Reading is fundamental to developing communication and increasing independence.<br><br>A consistent approach to phonics, early reading and comprehension, supported by appropriate resources and staff CPD, ensure learners receive teaching matched to their individual needs and stages of development. | Reading assessment data demonstrates sustained progress from individual starting points, with disadvantaged learners making progress comparable to peers where appropriate. Increased confidence, engagement and participation in reading activities are evident. |
| **Enrichment and Wider Opportunities:**<br>Disadvantaged learners access a broad range of enriching experiences that promote personal development, physical | Access to enriching experiences supports learners' social, emotional and physical development while providing opportunities they may not otherwise experience. | Learners access a range of enriching experiences, demonstrating increased confidence, social interaction and participation. Progress is evidenced through observations, engagement |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| wellbeing, confidence and inclusion within school and the wider community. | Activities such as sports coaching, swimming, music and community-based learning help develop confidence, relationships and essential life skills. | records and achievement of relevant personal development targets. |
| **Emotional Regulation, Behaviour and Wellbeing:** Disadvantaged learners develop greater emotional awareness and regulation skills, enabling them to manage their emotions, engage positively in learning and develop meaningful relationships. | Developing emotional regulation and positive behaviour supports learners' wellbeing, readiness to learn and ability to engage with others.<br><br>Consistent approaches, specialist support and staff training enable learners to develop appropriate strategies for managing their emotions and accessing learning successfully. | Learners demonstrate improved emotional regulation and engagement in learning, with reductions in the frequency and severity of behaviour incidents where appropriate.<br><br>Progress is evidenced through behaviour monitoring, observations and individual targets. |
| **High-Quality Teaching and Specialist Provision:** Disadvantaged learners access a high-quality, ambitious and personalised curriculum delivered by skilled staff, supported by ongoing professional development and specialist interventions. | High-quality teaching has a significant impact on learner outcomes. Ongoing CPD and specialist training ensure staff have the knowledge and skills to meet the complex needs of learners across all pathways.<br><br>This supports consistent practice, effective interventions and meaningful progress from individual starting points. | Learning walks, observations and moderation demonstrate consistently high-quality teaching and effective specialist provision.<br><br>Staff CPD positively impacts practice, with disadvantaged learners making measurable progress against curriculum and EHCP targets. |
| **Attendance and Engagement:** Attendance and engagement improve for disadvantaged learners through personalised support that addresses individual barriers to accessing education. | Regular attendance provides learners with consistent access to education, specialist interventions and wider developmental opportunities.<br><br>Recognising the complex medical, SEND and contextual barriers faced by learners enables the academy to provide appropriate support to families and promote sustained engagement in education. | Attendance for disadvantaged learners improves against previous baselines, with reductions in persistent absence where appropriate. Individualised support and effective family engagement help address barriers and promote consistent access to learning. |

## 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: £5,495

| Activity | Evidence that supports this approach | Challenge number(s) addressed |
|---|---|---|
| **Reading Framework resources and CPD**<br><br>Provide targeted staff training and appropriate phonics, early reading and comprehension resources to ensure consistent, high-quality reading provision across pathways. | The DfE Reading Framework (2023) emphasises the importance of systematic, evidence-informed reading instruction.<br><br>Targeted training and appropriate resources support consistent delivery and improved reading outcomes. | 1, 3, 5 |
| **Intervener training**<br><br>Provide specialist training for staff supporting learners with complex communication and sensory needs, including those with multisensory impairment. | Specialist intervener approaches support communication, interaction, engagement and access to learning.<br><br>Training enables staff to provide consistent, individualised support that promotes independence and participation. | 1, 3, 5 |
| **Team Teach training**<br><br>Equip staff with consistent, positive behaviour support strategies to promote emotional regulation, safety and engagement in learning. | The EEF's *Improving Behaviour in Schools* guidance highlights the importance of consistent approaches, staff training and understanding individual needs to support positive behaviour and learning. | 5, 6 |

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

Budgeted cost: £37,065.75

| Activity | Evidence that supports this approach | Challenge number(s) addressed |
|---|---|---|
| **Speech and Language Therapy**<br><br>Maintain specialist speech and language therapy provision to assess communication needs, develop personalised interventions and support staff in implementing communication strategies. | The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists highlights the importance of specialist assessment and intervention in developing communication, interaction and participation in education. | 1, 5 |
| **Communication Lead TLR**<br><br>Maintain a designated lead to develop whole-school communication approaches, provide staff training and monitor the impact of targeted strategies. | Consistent, evidence-informed communication approaches support learners' understanding, expression and access to learning.<br><br>Specialist leadership helps embed effective strategies across the academy. | 1, 5, 6 |
| **Occupational Therapy (OT) support**<br><br>Provide specialist OT input, sensory assessments and personalised strategies to support regulation, independence and access to learning. | Occupational therapy supports sensory processing, functional skills and participation in daily activities.<br><br>Individualised approaches help reduce barriers to engagement and independence. | 3, 5, 6 |
| **Music Therapy**<br><br>Provide targeted therapeutic sessions to develop communication, emotional expression, social interaction and wellbeing for identified learners. | Research into music therapy for learners with complex needs indicates potential benefits for communication, social interaction and emotional wellbeing, supporting engagement and participation. | 1, 2, 5, 6 |

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

Budgeted cost: £23,929.25

| Activity | Evidence that supports this approach | Challenge number(s) addressed |
|---|---|---|
| **Sports Coach**<br><br>Provide specialist sports coaching to increase participation in physical activity, develop physical skills and promote confidence, teamwork and wellbeing. | The DfE's guidance on physical education and school sport recognises the contribution of regular physical activity to physical development, wellbeing and wider personal development. | 2, 3, 5, 6 |
| **Off-site Swimming**<br><br>Provide accessible swimming opportunities to develop water confidence, physical skills, independence and participation in activities beyond the school environment. | Structured swimming instruction supports water safety, physical development and independence.<br><br>Accessible provision helps overcome barriers that may prevent disadvantaged learners from participating in swimming activities. | 2, 3, 4, 5 |
| **Behaviour Lead TLR**<br><br>Maintain specialist behaviour leadership to embed consistent, positive behaviour approaches and coordinate universal, targeted and specialist support. | The EEF's behaviour guidance highlights the importance of whole-school consistency, personalised approaches and monitoring interventions to improve behaviour, wellbeing and engagement. | 5, 6 |

## Total budgeted cost: £66,490

# Part B: Review of the previous academic year

## Outcomes for disadvantaged students

Throughout 2025-2026, pupil premium funding has continued to support disadvantaged learners in developing communication, independence, emotional regulation and access to learning through targeted interventions, specialist provision and enrichment opportunities.

**Communication and Interaction:** Speech and Language Therapy, the Communication Lead and specialist staff training have supported the development of receptive and expressive communication skills. Personalised approaches have enabled learners to develop confidence in expressing their needs, making choices and interacting with others.

**Reading and Literacy:** Continued investment in reading resources and staff CPD has strengthened the delivery of phonics and early reading across pathways. Learners have accessed targeted approaches matched to their individual starting points, supporting progress in early literacy and comprehension.

**Sensory and Physical Development:** Occupational Therapy, swimming provision and Rebound Therapy have provided opportunities for learners to develop sensory regulation, physical skills and independence. Specialist support and staff training have helped learners with complex needs access learning and wider activities.

**Emotional Regulation and Behaviour:** The continued development of the academy's three-tiered behaviour approach, supported by the Behaviour Lead and Team Teach training, has strengthened consistent practice. Learners have benefited from personalised strategies to support emotional regulation, wellbeing and engagement in learning.

**Enrichment and Personal Development:** Music Therapy, Jessie's Fund and wider enrichment activities have provided opportunities to develop confidence, communication and social interaction. Community experiences and employer encounters have supported independence, functional skills and preparation for adulthood.

**Staff Development:** Investment in specialist CPD, including TASSEL training, communication strategies and manual handling, has strengthened staff knowledge and confidence in meeting learners' individual needs and delivering appropriate support.

**Overall Impact**

Pupil premium funding has supported the academy's *Preparing for Life* vision by improving access to specialist provision, developing staff expertise and providing meaningful learning opportunities. These activities have supported learners' communication, independence, wellbeing and engagement, helping to reduce barriers to learning and participation.