

Pupil Premium Strategy Statement

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (for the 2025 to 2026 academic year) funding to help improve the attainment of our disadvantaged students.

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	The Ladder School
Number of students in school	112 <i>This fluctuates as we are an Alternative Provision school</i>
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible students	73 Total- 65% <i>This fluctuates as we are an Alternative Provision school</i>
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2025 – 2026
Date this statement was published	November 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2026
Statement authorised by	Hannah Shepherd, Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Adrian Lee, Assistant Headteacher
Governor / trustee lead	Nick Dean

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£27,950
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£27,950

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 students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Pupil Premium funding that The Ladder School receives is not reflective of the funding that the students are entitled to as funding goes to the students' mainstream school. Each school uses its Pupil Premium funding to contribute towards the funding of the placement. In addition, the Pupil Premium income received is not reflective of the numbers of disadvantaged students in school.

Most students joining The Ladder School come from a background of social and economic deprivation. Whilst we acknowledge that this is not always the primary challenge our students face, it is evident that their outcomes for academic attainment, social mobility, progression to FE and HE and employability are less positive than their peers both within TLS (and those who join us at similar starting points) and their placing schools. We focus our high-quality teaching on areas that disadvantaged students require most, targeted support based on robust diagnostic assessment of need, and helping students to access a broad and balanced curriculum. This includes our transition process and assessment on and after entry.

Although our strategy is focused on the needs of disadvantaged students, it will benefit all students in our school where funding is spent on whole-school approaches, such as high-quality support within the classroom. While we strive to offer all students the same opportunities, we make targeted efforts to support pupil premium students where appropriate. This includes interventions focused on improving attendance and providing additional resources. In such cases, we proactively contact parents to inform them about the available resources for their child. Our intention is that the outcomes for non-disadvantaged students will also be improved as a result of this strategy.

Our strategy is personalised to the needs and strengths of each young person, based on formal and informal assessments and a detailed knowledge of their background and the challenges that they face both in and out of school. This will help us to ensure that we offer them the relevant skills, qualifications and experience they require to be prepared for adulthood.

We will also provide disadvantaged students with support to develop independent life and social skills and continue to ensure that high-quality work experience, careers guidance and further and higher education guidance is available to all.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Most students arrive at the school with large gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Few are working at the standards expected for their age. Students are screened and tested on entry to identify starting points and any additional needs to ensure effective support is put in place at the earliest opportunity. Poor attendance at their previous schools is a key factor.
2	Our assessments, observations and discussions with students show that disadvantaged students generally have greater challenges around communicating and expressing their needs than their peers, including non-verbal, limited language and social interaction difficulties.
3	Our assessments, observations and conversations with students indicate that disadvantaged students often require additional support to develop personal skills, e.g. personal hygiene, healthy eating, substance abuse awareness, and sexual health.
4	Through observations and conversations with students and their families, we find that disadvantaged students generally have fewer opportunities to develop cultural capital outside of school.

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
Improved attainment for disadvantaged students in Maths, English and Science relative to their starting points as identified through baseline assessments.	Improved performance of disadvantaged students and a reduction in the attainment gap between these students and their peers, as demonstrated by our end of year assessments and GCSE results.
Disadvantaged students have access to quality careers advice and opportunities.	Data shows that all disadvantaged students have access to regular careers advice. Leavers have planned further careers destinations, either in education or work.
Personal development – all disadvantaged students have access to quality education around personal skills (i.e. drugs awareness, sexual health, etc)	Reduced instances of individual students being recorded on MyConcern as being involved in activities that constitute personal risk and harm. Pupil voice surveys show positive reviews of personal development education at TLS.
Disadvantaged students are given opportunities to take part in activities offered by The Ladder School that are clearly designed to develop and enhance their own experiences and increase their cultural capital (in line with other schools within the Mercian Trust).	All disadvantaged students are able to experience a range of extra-curricular opportunities. End of year review of Evolve shows an increase of disadvantaged students at TLS being involved in a wide range of activities which support their learning compared to last year.

Activity in this academic year

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

Quality First Teaching

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Subjects to include a range of activities to support disadvantaged students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for individual students' needs to address gaps in knowledge and misconceptions. Ensuring the necessary components of foundational knowledge are in place so that students access more complex knowledge/concepts as they progress. • Continue to use metacognition and oracy to enable students to increase attainment. Various such techniques were introduced last year which will be further embedded this year. • Teachers provide careful explanations and modelling by interacting with students through effective questioning • Students are provided with meaningful activities to support them in knowing, understanding and remembering more in the long-term. • Teachers check understanding regularly in lessons and adapt teaching where necessary. <p>Subjects bid for resources such as workbooks and guides. Although all students receive them as per our strategy, we proactively contact parents to inform them about such resources for their child. £1000</p>	<p>To ensure Quality First Teaching across the school</p> <p>Pupil-Premium-resource-evidence-brief.pdf (d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net)</p> <p>Avery, C (1990) Teacher Action Research: Building Knowledge Democracies, Sage Publications</p> <p>Teaching and Learning Toolkit EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p> <p>The potential impact of metacognition is high (7+ months) EEF https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/educationevidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/metacognition-andself-regulation</p> <p>'There is evidence to suggest that feedback involving metacognitive and self-regulatory approaches may have a greater impact on disadvantaged pupils and lower prior attainers than other pupils.' EEF</p> <p>Updated EEF report: 'Metacognition and Self-Regulated Learning' (published Nov 2025) Metacognition and Self-Regulated Learning EEF</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>T&L CPD opportunities: Appropriately planned CPD for staff to develop their expertise in planning, teaching, learning and assessment. This is not only from TLS and Trust wide opportunities but also individual CPD based on specific individual needs.</p>	<p>By delivering an effective CPD strategy affords all staff the opportunity to improve their pedagogy. This will lead to an improvement in student outcomes.</p>	<p>1</p>

Targeted academic support

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Literacy intervention for low attaining disadvantaged pupils Ruth Miskin Fresh Start effective use of Reading Policy which is fully embedded in pedagogy. This is to help our students acquire and understand both tier 2 and 3 vocabularies. To be delivered by HLTA.</p> <p>English lead and SENCO to explore and develop strategies to check on the reading age progression of targeted students across the year. £4000</p>	<p>To improve reading age of pupils (focussing on pupils with a reading age of less than 10), comprehension skills and oracy</p> <p>Reading comprehension strategies EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p> <p>Not only is reading a vital life skill but evidence suggests that students who have reading ages equivalent to their chronological age are more likely to perform better at GCSE exams.</p>	1
<p>Key working sessions to aid with resilience and attainment/behaviour in all subjects.</p>	<p>Targeted academic support can support pupil progress and can be employed to help boost language development, literacy, or numeracy as well as other subject areas. Interventions should be carefully linked to classroom teaching and matched to individual pupils' specific needs, while not inhibiting their access to the wider curriculum.</p>	1, 3

Wider strategies

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Buy-in outside agencies to offer bespoke support to help students with their personal development, targeting areas of concern that affect students at TLS (i.e. substance abuse awareness, sexual health, etc). Utilise Walsall School Nurse offer; MoreTalk MoreAction presentation for targeted PP students; Smash Life for vulnerable/LAC/high trauma students; WISH; The Beacon. £1600	3. Wider strategies EEF	3
Continue with 'family dining' strategy to ensure that PP students are provided with a regular healthy meal daily to improve cognitive and mental health; to use lunch time offer for role modelling high quality conversations/eating habits. 10% of yearly catering costs subsidised by PP funding: £5000.	More than a meal: An independent evaluation of universal primary free school meals for children in London * primary focussed but clear ideas and evaluations shared.	1, 3
New uniform strategy for Sept 2026. Purchase PE tops for all students - same uniform to improve behaviour on PE days. £2300.	Teaching and Learning Toolkit	3
Offering PP students with daily mentoring from MW Impact within TLS with physical, mental, social and emotional support. 5% of yearly costs subsidised by PP funding: £4500.	One to one support in and out of the classroom Blatchford, Russell, Bassett, Brown and Martin (2004)	1, 3, 4
Enrichment: Take students to Farchynys in March 2026 to enrich PP students' cultural capital; Staff to bid for money to experiences that support our curriculum offers. £1000.	https://www.hereforschools.co.uk/Page/14432 "Cultural Capital, Experiences and Enrichment"	4
Monetary rewards to aid in motivation for students to stay in lessons, participate well, etc. £7000	https://improvingteaching.co.uk/2019/05/19/rewarding-students-should-we-if-so-how/	1
Purchase self-regulation products for the Green Room to assist in calming dysregulated students. £1200.		1, 3
Prioritised 1:1 careers advice to Year 10 and 11 PP students through Connexions and other careers agencies.	Paving-the-Way-1.pdf	1, 3

Total budgeted cost: £ 27,950

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 students in the 2024 to 2025 academic year.

Attainment

English Language average target grade: 3.3

English Language result: 2.3

English Literature average target: 3.3

English Literature result: 2.1

Maths average target grade: 3.3

Maths average result: 2.0

Science average target: 3-3

Science average result: 2-2

25% of PP students achieved their target grade in both English Language and Maths.

- Students joining The Ladder School will have inevitably have many gaps in their knowledge and understanding; unfortunately, not all gaps were filled during the time they spent at TLS. As a result, some students were unable to achieve their target grade.

Attendance

2024 – 2025 overall: 51.17% (non-PP = 51.80%, PP = 49.98%). The gap between PP and non-PP students was small by the end of the academic year.

Across the year, PP students' attendance in Spring 2: non-PP (72.81%) vs. PP (66.22%) showed a quite significant gap of around 6%.

By Summer 1, although the overall percentage attendance fell, there was a reversal in improved attendance data (non-PP: 53.03% vs. PP: 61.03%) **TLS internal data

Whilst there was a small gap between PP and non-PP cohorts in Y10 and Y11, the biggest gap was in Y9, where the disparity between non-PP and PP was as high as 17%. This accounts for the overall gap. It has to be acknowledged that students entering The Ladder School in Y9 find it more challenging to settle to their new surroundings, and therefore will exhibit more erratic attendance patterns, whereas the older students will be more confident in their experiences and be more likely to attend regularly.

Student Engagement

Student engagement remains a core strength that is now embedded in our teaching pedagogy. This has been evidenced through The Mercian Trust quality assurance visits

and internal learning walks in January 2025. Feedback from students also indicated strong engagement, with the vast majority finding the lessons captivating. These findings demonstrate an increase in student participation during class activities, which contributes to their overall academic progress. When students exhibit high levels of behavioural and emotional engagement, they are not only more likely to succeed academically but also experience an enhanced sense of social-emotional well-being.

Wider strategies

Some of last year's funding was used to give students the opportunity to experience Frankenstein LIVE in school delivered by the Birmingham Theatre Company. Students also experiences immersive demonstrations from the 'Animal Man' that students not only enjoyed but helped enhance their BTEC Animal Care coursework, through working with exotic animals and gaining knowledge on how to hold these animals safely and correctly.