

Pupil premium strategy statement – Grace College

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	1164
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	40.2%
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)	2024/5 - 2026-7
Date this statement was published	Sept 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	Sept 2026
Statement authorised by	Rachael Hooker, Head of School
Pupil premium lead	Rebecca Argent (Vice Principal) Kelsey McLuckie (Assistant Vice Principal)
Governor / Trustee lead	Shayne Elsworth

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£491,275
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£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>	£491,275

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Grace College is a place where every student is welcomed, supported, and challenged to succeed. We are a school with high expectations, rooted in the belief that all young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, deserve the very best education.

A key driver of our improvement journey is ensuring that our disadvantaged students attend school regularly, develop ambitious aspirations, strengthen their reading and literacy skills, and achieve academic excellence. We know that strong attendance is the foundation for success, and we work relentlessly with students and families to remove barriers so that every child is present, on time and ready to learn.

Reading is at the heart of our strategy. We believe that the ability to read confidently and fluently is the gateway to future success. Therefore, all students are supported and challenged to read widely and well, both in and beyond the classroom.

Our strategy aligns with the EEF's guidance on the Pupil Premium: the most effective way to support disadvantaged students is by ensuring the highest quality of teaching, coupled with targeted support where needed. By focusing on classroom excellence, purposeful intervention, and the removal of limiting labels, we aim to close attainment gaps and empower every student to achieve more than they thought possible.

Beyond the classroom, we remain committed to providing disadvantaged students with access to enrichment opportunities that nurture ambition and broaden horizons.

The intention of all leaders at Grace College is clear: every student should flourish. By securing excellent attendance, nurturing ambition, strengthening reading, and raising attainment, we are determined to ensure that every student, regardless of background, leaves us with strong outcomes, a wealth of experiences, and the skills and aspirations to thrive in the future.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Reading A considerable amount of pupil premium students enters Year 7 with a lower-than-expected reading age. This is both historic and present.
2	Attainment There remains a significant gap in outcomes between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged attainment. On average, disadvantaged students join Grace College with lower prior attainment than their peers.
3	Ambition Disadvantaged students often have fewer cultural experiences, which can limit background knowledge, understanding of context, and engagement across the curriculum. Fewer cultural experiences can also limit students' aspirations, as exposure to different ideas, careers, and opportunities which often inspires ambition.
4	Attendance Schools across the country continue to face challenges with attendance, and this has had a greater impact on disadvantaged students than on their peers. Attendance is the biggest lever to success for disadvantaged students.

Intended outcomes

This explains the outcomes we are aiming for **by the end of the first academic year of our current 3 year strategy plan**, and how we will measure whether they have been achieved.

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Reading	Reduction in the difference between reading age and chronological age.
Attainment	Increased attainment of disadvantaged students particularly in Maths and English. Decreased gap in the attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students.
Ambition	Improved attendance of disadvantaged students in extra-curricular activities, house events in line with non-disadvantaged students. Reduction in the % of disadvantaged students who receive a fixed term exclusion in comparison to their non-disadvantaged peers. Increase the % of Gatsby benchmarks being fully achieved.
Attendance	Reduction in the number of persistently absent students, particularly disadvantaged. Increase in the overall attendance of PP students

Activity in this academic year

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

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £ 182,133

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Attainment High quality teaching in every classroom	High-quality teaching in every classroom is the foundation for success for Pupil Premium (PP) students. This requires continuous professional development, strong leadership and curriculum management, collaborative planning, and clear accountability in classrooms. Well-designed policies and procedures that define and promote what constitutes effective teaching ensure that best practice is consistently embedded. By securing these high standards, schools can effectively support disadvantaged students and maximise their attainment.” Evidence: • ‘Good teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils’ - Education Endowment Foundation, Guide to the Pupil Premium (London: 2019) • ‘The effects of high-quality teaching are especially significant for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds: over one school year, these pupils gain 1.5 years’ worth of learning with very effective teachers, compared with 0.5 years with average performing teachers’ - Sutton Trust, Interim Report (London: 2011)	1,2,3,4

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

Budgeted cost: £ 148,613

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
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Reading • Ready for school intervention for red readers • Primary teacher with a focus on reading • Additional tutor in Maths and English	Developing strong literacy skills is essential for students as they encounter increasingly complex concepts across all subjects at GCSE. Reading is foundational to success in both education and life, protecting students from future disadvantage. At Grace College, a higher proportion of disadvantaged students enter Year 7 with weaker reading skills. Unless addressed effectively, this will cause the attainment gap to widen further. Evidence: • ‘Last year, over 120,000 disadvantaged students made the transition from primary to secondary school below the expected standard for reading. The educational prospects for this group are grave’. – Education Endowment Foundation, Research into Literacy (London: 2009) • ‘There have been robust studies of phonics programmes in England and findings show that phonics programmes are highly effective in improving reading age and student confidence’ - Education Endowment Foundation, Teaching and Learning Toolkit (London: 2018)	1,2,3,4
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Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £ 160,529

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Ambition • Careers event and engagement	Careers events are well planned and support a range of opportunities. Disadvantaged students’ next steps are tracked alongside all students and trends identified. Co-curricular attendance is monitored, and disadvantaged students are a priority for attendance alongside SEND.	1,2,3,4

• Cocurricular attendance • Visits funding for all Year 7 PP students • Funded peri and LAMDA lessons	Evidence: ‘Extracurricular activities have the potential to develop both academic skills, and essential life skills which can help highly able students to succeed – such as confidence, motivation, resilience and communication skills. Interventions, which ensure that disadvantaged highly able students have access to extracurricular activities could potentially help to close the gaps between these students and their better – off peers.’ (Suttin Trust, 2018)	
Attendance • Attendance Vehicle • Community outreach	Regular attendance is crucial for all students, but especially for disadvantaged students. The more time they spend in school, the more knowledge they acquire, the richer their experiences, and the stronger their sense of belonging to a culture that is ambitious for their success. Driving improved attendance ensures these students can fully access the curriculum, engage with learning opportunities, and achieve their potential. Evidence: • ‘The higher the overall absence rate across Key Stage 4, the lower the likely level of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4. Pupils with persistent absence are also less likely to stay in education’ - Department for Education, Report on Attendance (London: 2016) • ‘The links between attendance and achievement are strong, pupils with persistent absence are less likely to attain at school and stay in education after the age of 16 years’ – National Strategy, Attendance (London: 2005)	1,2,3,4

Total budgeted cost: £ £491,275

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Attendance

There remains a significant gap between the attendance of DA and non-DA students in every year group. In many cases, despite a large increase in intervention and support measures attendance has decreased slightly. Overall gap in attendance of DA/non-DA students has reduced only slightly from 13.95% to 13.47%. In review of the academic outcome data, it is evident that the DA students who attended school well, achieved good outcomes. Those who did not, did not make the same rapid progress. Attendance must become the highest priority for our PP strategy in 2025-26. Y11 DA attendance is particularly concerning and though it has increased slightly from last year this must improve.

Attainment

There is still a significant gap internally between our DA and non-DA students in Y11 GCSE exams, although DA attainment has improved this year meaning that the gap between national attainment has narrowed. DA A8 2024 was 27.94, in 2025 was 31.82. DA students achieving 5 grade 4s or more was 24.5% in 2024 and 28.9% in 2025 and DA students achieving EBacc 4+ was 13.8% in 2024 increasing to 22.9% in 2025. That said, we can see that whilst DA attainment has improved across all of the headline measures, non-DA attainment has improved at a much faster rate. When we take into consideration the attendance of our DA cohort and analyse this alongside attainment data, it becomes clear that DA students who attended also achieved well therefore this continues to be a priority for us this coming academic year.

Externally provided programmes

Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you used your pupil premium to fund in the previous academic year.

Programme	Provider