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# The Willows School Academy Trust

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## Pupil premium strategy statement

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery 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	83
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	59%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2024/2025 to 2025/2026
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	Malcolm Shaw
Pupil premium lead	Danai Vourdanou
Governor / Trustee lead	Balevir Grant

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£74,235
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£0
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b>	<b>£74,235</b>

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

Our aim is to use Pupil Premium funding to achieve and sustain positive outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. We recognise that disadvantage can present in many ways, and that barriers to learning and participation differ for each child.

Our approach is driven by a deep understanding of every pupil's unique circumstance and needs, enabling us to adapt support accordingly. At the heart of this strategy is high-quality teaching in the areas where it is most needed, alongside targeted support informed by robust assessment, and ensuring access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

Research shows that high-quality teaching is the most powerful driver of progress for disadvantaged pupils, and our strategy prioritises this. While our focus is on disadvantaged pupils, we expect that all pupils will benefit where funding is used to strengthen whole-school approaches.

We are committed to providing opportunities that extend learning beyond the classroom, including enrichment activities, cultural experiences, and personal development opportunities. These experiences aim to broaden horizons, build confidence, and foster a love of learning that lasts beyond school.

Our strategy is responsive, evidence-informed, and centred on helping pupils acquire the knowledge, skills, and experiences they need to thrive in school and beyond, preparing them for success in adulthood.

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Educational barriers - Disadvantaged pupils often enter our school with educational gaps, including lower levels of literacy and numeracy, which can hinder their ability to fully participate in and benefit from the curriculum.
2	Communication barriers - some pupils have complex social, communication and emotional needs which can result in emotional dysregulation. This lack of regulation can impact on their ability to learn effectively

3	Environmental barriers – some pupils’ sensory needs are negatively affected by their physical environment; this can reduce their ability to learn effectively.
4	Parental engagement – some parents require a high level of guidance to engage fully in all aspects of school life and understand how to support their child/ren.
5	Access to enrichment opportunities – Limited financial resources may restrict disadvantaged pupils' participation in extracurricular activities or educational experiences outside the classroom, impacting their holistic development and academic attainment.

## 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 of all pupils in all subject areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustained progress in literacy and numeracy for all pupils, measured through a combination of teacher assessments, individual progress tracking, and personalised targets.</li> <li>• Reduction of any attainment gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in key academic areas.</li> <li>• Increased participation, engagement, and confidence of all pupils in classroom activities, discussions, and collaborative learning.</li> <li>• Pupils demonstrate growth in communication, social-emotional skills, and independence, reflecting holistic development alongside academic progress.</li> <li>• Pupils experience enriched learning opportunities that enhance motivation, wellbeing, and readiness for the next stage of their education or adulthood.</li> </ul>
Promote social communication and interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils demonstrate improved emotional regulation and self-management skills, shown through reduced instances of challenging behaviour, increased</li> </ul>

	<p>calm engagement, and greater ability to self-regulate in daily activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils make progress in social communication skills, evidenced by more confident interactions with peers and adults, participation in group activities, and understanding and responding to social cues.</li> <li>• Pupils show increased confidence and positive engagement in both structured and unstructured social situations, reflecting growth in personal and social development.</li> </ul>
<p>Foster accessible and inclusive environments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils benefit from an environment that is adapted to meet diverse sensory, learning, and communication needs, as evidenced by observations and feedback from pupils, staff, and parents.</li> <li>• Reduction in barriers to learning related to sensory or accessibility challenges, reflected in improved focus, engagement, participation, and enjoyment in classroom activities.</li> <li>• Learning spaces and resources are regularly reviewed and adapted to ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum and fully participate in school life.</li> </ul>
<p>Devise strategies to improve parental engagement to support pupils' learning, pupils' families and wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased parental involvement in school activities, events, and learning opportunities, evidenced through attendance records, participation rates, and engagement in workshops or school-led initiatives.</li> <li>• Enhanced understanding of pupils' needs and improved capacity to support learning and wellbeing at home, demonstrated through feedback from parents, regular communication with staff, and collaborative goal-setting.</li> <li>• Strengthened home-school partnership, ensuring families feel</li> </ul>

	supported, informed, and empowered to contribute positively to their child's education and personal development.
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**Activity in this academic year**

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

**Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)**

Budgeted cost: £27,500

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Provide high-quality professional development for all teaching staff to deepen their understanding of effective instructional practices, inclusive teaching, and differentiation strategies. This training will focus on meeting the complex and diverse needs of disadvantaged pupils, ensuring that every child can access the curriculum and make meaningful progress.	Research demonstrates that targeted professional development is one of the most effective ways to improve pupil outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged students. By equipping teachers with advanced knowledge of instructional strategies, curriculum adaptation, and personalised support, schools can enhance classroom practice, reduce barriers to learning, and accelerate pupil progress (Desimone et al., 2002; Guskey, 2002). High-quality professional learning not only improves teacher expertise but also drives system-wide improvement, ensuring that effective practices are consistently applied across the school.	1 2 3

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

Budgeted cost: £32,500

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Implement targeted literacy and numeracy interventions tailored to the specific needs of disadvantaged pupils. These may include small-group instruction, one-to-one support, scaffolded learning activities, and personalised resources to address gaps and accelerate progress in foundational skills.</p>	<p>Research indicates that structured, targeted interventions can significantly improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for disadvantaged pupils (Hattie, 2009; Torgerson et al., 2011). Differentiated teaching approaches, focused on individual learning needs, have been shown to reduce attainment gaps and enable pupils to achieve their potential, particularly when combined with high-quality teaching. By carefully monitoring progress and adapting interventions, schools can ensure that every pupil receives the support they need to succeed.</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>Establish a multidisciplinary team—play therapists, speech and language therapists, and special education professionals—to assess and support pupils with complex social, communication, and emotional needs. Develop personalised behaviour plans, social skills interventions, and emotional regulation strategies to help pupils engage successfully in both academic and social settings.</p>	<p>Research demonstrates that social-emotional learning (SEL) and emotional regulation interventions can significantly enhance pupils' communication skills, reduce behavioural challenges, and improve overall wellbeing (Durlak et al., 2011; Greenberg et al., 2017). Additionally, targeted speech and language interventions, alongside structured social skills programmes, have been shown to improve communication abilities and foster positive peer interactions, particularly for pupils with communication barriers (National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, 2019). By integrating these approaches, schools can create a supportive, inclusive environment where all pupils can thrive academically and socially.</p>	<p>1 2 3</p>

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

Budgeted cost: £14,235

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Develop a targeted outreach plan to actively involve parents and carers in their child's learning and wider school community. Establish consistent and meaningful communication channels, such as newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, digital platforms, and workshops, to keep families informed about school events, initiatives, and their child's progress.</p>	<p>Research shows that parental involvement in education is strongly linked to improved pupil achievement, with engaged families positively influencing learning outcomes and school success (Desimone, 1999; Fan &amp; Chen, 2001). Targeted outreach efforts and structured communication strategies can strengthen home-school partnerships, helping parents support learning at home and participate in school decision-making processes (OECD, 2019). By fostering meaningful parental engagement, schools can create a collaborative environment that benefits both pupils and families.</p>	<p>4 5</p>
<p>Use Pupil Premium funding to ensure disadvantaged pupils can participate in extracurricular activities, educational trips, and enrichment experiences beyond the classroom. Promote a culture of inclusivity and equity within all programs to ensure every pupil feels valued, supported, and able to pursue their interests and passions.</p>	<p>Research demonstrates that engagement in extracurricular and enrichment activities can enhance academic achievement, social skills, and overall wellbeing, particularly for disadvantaged pupils (Fredricks &amp; Eccles, 2006; Mahoney et al., 2005). Providing equitable access to these opportunities helps to broaden pupils' experiences, develop confidence, and foster motivation, contributing to both personal growth and educational success.</p>	<p>1 5</p>

**Total budgeted cost: £74,235**

## Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider
Yoga	Oscar Stevenson
Kung-Fu	Jack Kontou
Swimming	Heston Pools & Fitness

## Part B: Review of the previous academic year

### Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

We have analysed the performance of our school's disadvantaged pupils during the previous academic year (September 2024 – July 2025), drawing on national assessment data and our own internal summative and formative assessments.

#### 1. Executive Summary:

End-of-Key Stage 2 attainment improved notably between 2023 and 2024, with a smaller dip in 2025 outcomes. Whole-school progress data indicates that the majority of pupils are making expected or better progress in reading and mathematics, while writing remains a consistent area for development. Due to very small cohorts, high levels of SEN/EHCP need, and significant variation between year groups, direct comparisons across years should be interpreted with caution.

#### 2. Key Stage 2 Attainment (Year 6)

Subject	2023 (%/Pupils)	2024 (%/Pupils)	2025 (%/Pupils)	Change 2023–2025
Reading	19% (3/15)	55% (10/18)	35% (8/23)	+16%
Writing	31% (5/15)	44% (8/18)	39% (9/23)	+8%
Maths	13% (2/15)	44% (8/18)	39% (9/23)	+26%
R/W/M Combined	7% (1/15)	39% (7/18)	26% (6/23)	+19%

2024 saw significant gains across all subjects. The modest decline in 2025 reflects cohort variation rather than a whole-school trend.

#### 3. Whole-School Progress Overview (100 pupils)

Subject	Accelerated	Expected	Less Than Expected	Expected or Above
Reading	41%	18%	41%	59%
Writing	20%	30%	50%	50%
Mathematics	33%	32%	35%	65%

Mathematics shows the strongest overall progress. Writing remains the subject with the highest proportion of pupils below expected progress.

#### **4. Year Group Breakdown**

##### **Year 5 (26 pupils)**

- Reading: 70% expected or above
- Writing: 70% expected or above
- Maths: 55% expected or above
- Strong reading and writing outcomes; maths needs additional targeted support.

##### **Year 4 (19 pupils)**

- Reading: 47% expected or above
- Writing: 34% expected or above
- Maths: 80% expected or above
- Writing is significantly weaker than reading and maths and requires focused intervention.

##### **Year 3 (27 pupils)**

- Roughly one-third of pupils are in each progress band across reading, writing, and maths.
- A mixed picture with high internal variation and no clear subject trend.

##### **Year 2 (9 pupils)**

- Reading: 23% expected or above
- Writing: 12% expected or above
- Maths: 34% expected or above
- Clear need for early-stage literacy and numeracy intervention.

#### **KS1 Phonics Screening**

Nine children sat the phonics check; two met the expected standard. All pupils had previously failed the check in Year 1.

#### **5. Context and Commentary**

- Outcomes continue to be shaped by a high proportion of SEN/EHCP pupils, complex neuro-diversity, and trauma-informed needs across cohorts.
- Given very small cohort sizes, national benchmarking and year-on-year comparisons are not statistically reliable.
- Despite this, the school's internal progress data shows positive improvement trajectories in maths and reading.
- Writing remains the most consistent area of need, particularly in Years 2–4.
- Ensuring sustainability of progress requires continued consistency in curriculum delivery, assessment, and intervention pathways.