

Pupil Premium Strategy Statement - Riverside Bridge School

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	292
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	36.3% (106 pupils)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2025-2028
Date this statement was published	September 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2026
Statement authorised by	Leila Amri
Pupil Premium lead	Leila Amri
Governor / Trustee lead	Hermann Farrington

This Pupil Premium strategy is set within a three-year strategic framework, recognising that improvements in communication, independence and Preparation for Adulthood for pupils with complex SEND require sustained and consistent practice over time. While the strategic intent spans three years, funding allocations, activity planning and impact evaluation are reviewed annually to ensure responsiveness to pupils' needs and that funding remains appropriate, proportionate and impactful for disadvantaged pupils with complex SEND.

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£152,845
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>	£152,845

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

School Context

Riverside Bridge School is a special school for pupils aged 4 to 18 with complex, layered needs including autism, severe and moderate learning difficulties, communication disorders, sensory and physical needs, and social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The majority of pupils have autism as their primary area of need, often alongside additional diagnoses.

The school serves a highly diverse community. A significant proportion of pupils experience socio economic disadvantage alongside complex SEND. For many pupils, disadvantage is cumulative: poverty, communication barriers, limited community access, reduced independence opportunities, and family capacity all intersect to impact outcomes.

Pupil Premium funding is therefore used not to 'close a gap' in attainment in the traditional sense, but to reduce the compounded impact of disadvantage on pupils with complex SEND, accelerating progress in:

- communication
- independence
- functional skills
- personal development
- preparation for adulthood (PfA)

Statement of intent

At Riverside Bridge School, socio-economic disadvantage rarely exists in isolation. Pupils eligible for Pupil Premium are more likely to:

- require higher levels of adult support;
- have fewer opportunities to generalise skills at home and in the community;
- experience reduced access to enrichment and cultural capital;
- face increased risk of poor post-16 outcomes without targeted intervention.

Specifically, we aim for disadvantaged pupils to:

- make strong progress from their individual starting points in communication, independence and functional learning;
- develop increasing autonomy in daily routines, self-care, decision-making and self-regulation;
- access enrichment, cultural and community experiences on an equitable basis with their peers;
- achieve meaningful accreditation linked to Preparation for Adulthood outcomes;
- transition successfully into post-16 education, training or supported employment, reducing the risk of becoming NEET.

For our pupils with complex SEND, success is defined not by traditional attainment measures, but by sustained independence, generalisation of skills across settings, and readiness for adulthood.

Our ultimate objective for disadvantaged pupils at Riverside Bridge School is that they leave us as confident, communicative and as independent as possible, equipped with

the functional skills, personal resilience and experiences needed to participate meaningfully in adult life.

Our pupil premium strategy is designed to address the compounded impact of socio-economic disadvantage and complex SEND. Funding is deployed strategically to remove barriers that would otherwise limit pupils' independence, engagement and long-term outcomes.

The strategy works by:

- prioritising independence-first pedagogy and PfA outcomes across all pathways
- ensuring disadvantaged pupils can access the same breadth of enrichment, community learning and vocational experiences as their peers
- strengthening consistency between home and school through structured parental engagement and personalised home support
- investing early and progressively in independence, communication and employability, rather than responding late to gaps
- Pupil Premium spending is explicitly aligned to the School Development Plan, ensuring disadvantaged pupils benefit from whole-school improvement priorities while receiving targeted support where disadvantage creates additional barriers.

By aligning Pupil Premium spending directly with School Development Plan priorities, the strategy ensures that disadvantaged pupils benefit from whole-school improvement work, whilst also receiving targeted support where disadvantage creates additional barriers.

Our pupil premium strategy is underpinned by the following principles:

1. Independence before attainment

Increasing pupil autonomy and reducing reliance on adults is the strongest lever for improving long-term outcomes for pupils with complex SEND.

2. Preparation for Adulthood from the earliest stages

PfA outcomes are embedded from EYFS to KS5 so disadvantaged pupils develop life skills progressively and coherently.

3. Equity, not equality

Funding is used to provide additional support and opportunities where disadvantage creates barriers, enabling fair access for all pupils.

4. Whole-school impact with targeted accountability

Strategies often benefit all pupils, but impact for disadvantaged pupils is explicitly tracked, reviewed and reported.

5. Evidence-led and responsive decision-making

Funding decisions are informed by Development Profiles, PfA tracking, attendance, behaviour and destination data, and are adapted based on impact.

6. Strong partnership with families

Improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils requires consistency between home and school; families are supported as active partners.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1. Reduced independence and over-reliance on adult support	Disadvantaged pupils are more likely to demonstrate lower independence baselines, with fewer opportunities to practise self-care, decision-making and functional skills beyond school. This limits progress towards PfA outcomes.
2. Limited access to cultural, community and enrichment opportunities	Financial and practical barriers restrict access to trips, transport, clubs and community experiences, reducing opportunities to generalise learning and build confidence outside school.
3. Communication and consistency between home and school	Transport arrangements mean most families do not have daily contact with class staff. Families require structured support to mirror in-school communication systems, routines and behaviour strategies.
4. Increased risk of poor post-16 outcomes	Without early and sustained exposure to independence, enterprise and vocational learning, disadvantaged pupils are at greater risk of becoming NEET or requiring more restrictive adult provision

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 independence for disadvantaged pupils	Pupils demonstrate reduced adult prompting across daily routines. Development Profiles and PfA tracking show increased independence over time.
Equitable access to enrichment and community learning	Disadvantaged pupils participate in enrichment, trips and clubs at the same rate as peers. Improved confidence and behaviour in community settings.
Stronger home–school consistency	Increased parental confidence. Improved consistency in communication systems and routines between home and school.
Improved Preparation for Adulthood outcomes	Pupils achieve meaningful accreditation, vocational experience and successful post-16 transitions. Reduction in NEET risk.

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: £34,046 (including £31,445 - pro-rata SALT cost for disadvantaged pupils)

This allocation funds specific, identifiable inputs that directly improve communication and independence for disadvantaged pupils. This includes a proportionate contribution to Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) provision equivalent to the percentage of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium, alongside additional staffing capacity, specialist independence and Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) training, and curriculum development time. This ensures Pupil Premium funding contributes appropriately to the cost of provision received by disadvantaged pupils, without attributing the full cost of universal SEND provision to Pupil Premium.

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s)
Whole-school CPD and instructional coaching focused on independence-first pedagogy and PfA outcomes	Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) <i>Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools</i> guidance; EEF <i>Improving Behaviour in Schools</i> (focus on consistent routines and reduced adult dependency) Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) emphasis on curriculum intent and independence	1 and 4
Specialist training to embed communication, independence and functional skills across daily routines	EEF High Quality Teaching guidance (adaptive teaching and scaffolding) Autism Education Trust (AET) Framework; SEND Code of Practice (communication as a prime area of need) Pro-rata Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) input supporting staff practice, communication strategies noting the proportional use of PP funding.	1
Curriculum development and staffing capacity to embed PfA and functional skills across all pathways (EYFS–KS5)	Department for Education <i>Preparing for Adulthood</i> guidance Ofsted EIF focus on coherence and progression EEF <i>Putting Evidence to Work</i> (implementation and curriculum design)	1 and 4

Note: Speech and Language Therapy is universal EHCP provision. To ensure transparent and appropriate use of Pupil Premium, we allocate only the proportion of SALT cost

equivalent to the percentage of disadvantaged pupils on roll. This reflects the cost of provision received by disadvantaged pupils, not the full cost of universal provision.

This ensures Pupil Premium contributes directly to improving communication and independence i.e. the foundations for learning and Preparation for Adulthood, whilst maintaining clear separation from core SEND funding. SALT in our school is about building staff capacity to embed communication and independence across the day. Pupil Premium contributes proportionately to that work for disadvantaged pupils, which is why it sits within specialist training rather than as a separate intervention.

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

Budgeted cost: £16,889

This allocation funds tangible, pupil-facing provision that develops functional skills, independence and employability. Provision is structured to support early vocational preparation from KS3 & KS4, with consolidation at KS5, ensuring disadvantaged pupils benefit before transition points.

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s)
Skills for Life and PfA curriculum resources targeted at disadvantaged pupils	DfE Preparing for Adulthood outcomes framework EEF evidence on explicit teaching and overlearning for pupils with SEND Internal PfA tracking and Development Profiles	1 and 4
Internal work-related learning and enterprise opportunities Employability & Employer Engagement Programme (KS3–KS5)	DfE Careers Guidance and Access for Education statutory guidance DfE Supported Internships principles Ofsted EIF focus on preparation for adulthood and employability	4
Accreditation pathways aligned to pupil need, including OCR Life and Living and AQA Unit Award Scheme (UAS)	Ofqual-recognised qualifications DfE SEND Review emphasis on meaningful outcomes Destination data and transition success measures	4

Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, well-being)

Budgeted cost: £101,910 (including £24,163 pro-rata OT cost for disadvantaged pupils)

This allocation funds direct costs such as transport, enrichment subsidies and family support resources, removing financial and practical barriers that disproportionately affect disadvantaged pupils' attendance, participation and transition readiness.

It also includes a proportionate contribution to Occupational Therapy (OT) provision equivalent to the percentage of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium. OT is provided universally to support regulation, sensory processing and physical access, and Pupil Premium funding contributes only to the cost of provision received by disadvantaged pupils.

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s)
Subsidised enrichment activities, educational visits and community access to ensure equitable participation	EEF <i>Arts Participation and Outdoor Adventure Learning</i> evidence summaries Ofsted EIF personal development judgement; school participation and behaviour data	2
Personalised Home Support Programme (communication packs, independence resources, parent workshops)	EEF <i>Working with Parents to Support Children's Learning</i> SEND Code of Practice (co-production with families) School engagement and attendance data	3
Occupational Therapy (OT) and Educational Psychologist provision supporting regulation, sensory processing and access to learning	SEND Code of Practice (physical, sensory and self-care needs) EEF guidance on improving behaviour and engagement; internal behaviour and engagement data	2 and 3
Targeted behaviour, attendance and well-being support for disadvantaged pupils and families	DfE <i>School Attendance</i> guidance; EEF <i>Improving Behaviour in Schools</i> School attendance, behaviour and well-being analysis	2 and 3

In a specialist SEND setting, Pupil Premium funding cannot be used to isolate teaching quality or professional development for a small subgroup of pupils. Instead, funding is used to create the conditions for learning that disadvantaged pupils rely on most. Many disadvantaged pupils at Riverside Bridge School have fewer opportunities to practise independence, communication and functional skills outside school. As a result, improvements to classroom routines, staff practice, environments and pedagogy have a disproportionate and sustained impact on their outcomes.

This funding is therefore about changing the conditions for learning, not delivering a discrete intervention. Pupil Premium is used to fund additional staffing capacity, specialist independence and Preparation for Adulthood training, and curriculum development time that enables staff to redesign daily routines, environments and learning tasks so pupils practise independence repeatedly and consistently across the school day.

While this investment benefits all pupils, disadvantaged pupils benefit most because they depend more heavily on school-based provision to access enrichment, independence

practice and generalisation of skills. Impact is evidenced through changes in practice, reduced adult prompting, increased pupil initiation, curriculum documentation, learning walk evidence, and longer-term outcomes such as successful transitions and reduced NEET risk.

Our strategy is informed by EEF guidance on high-quality teaching and SEND, DfE statutory guidance on Preparation for Adulthood and careers, and Ofsted's framework for personal development and independence.

Total budgeted cost: £152,845

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

The 2024-2025 academic year marked the final year of the school's previous three-year Pupil Premium strategy. That strategy focused primarily on parental engagement, cultural capital, social opportunities and progression to further education and employability.

Evaluation of the strategy indicates partial success, with stronger impact in some areas than others.

Where the strategy was most successful, disadvantaged pupils benefited from increased access to enrichment, community experiences and vocational opportunities. Participation in work-related learning and enterprise activities increased, and destination data showed that the majority of leavers transitioned successfully into further education or training, with a reduction in NEET outcomes compared to earlier cohorts.

Parental engagement also strengthened over the course of the strategy period. Whole-school initiatives, including the introduction of Class Dojo to support consistent communication and the further development of the Parent -Teacher Association (PTA), led to improved communication, engagement and partnership with families. While these initiatives were implemented across the whole school, they didn't advantage disadvantaged pupils over others; however, they removed barriers that disproportionately affected them, particularly around communication and confidence in engaging with school.

→ The introduction of Class Dojo significantly improved communication between home and school. Prior to its implementation, disadvantaged families were more likely to miss information, experience irregular contact with staff, face communication gaps due to transport arrangements, or rely on second-hand or delayed messages. Following implementation, communication became more immediate, visual, accessible outside working hours and, where needed, supported through translation. While all families benefited from improved communication, disadvantaged families experienced a greater reduction in barriers to engagement and gained increased access to timely information and support that had previously been less accessible to them.

→ The continued development of the Parent -Teacher Association (PTA) also strengthened parental engagement. Historically, disadvantaged families are less likely to attend formal school events, engage with traditional governance structures or feel confident approaching school leaders. By developing a more informal, peer-led and welcoming PTA model, engagement became more community-based and accessible. Although the PTA supports all families, those who were previously least engaged

benefited most from the increased opportunities to connect with the school and other parents, strengthening partnership and confidence over time.

Increased parental confidence and communication contributed to improved consistency between home and school, particularly around routines, behaviour and independence.

However, evaluation of the previous strategy also identified limitations. While engagement and opportunity improved, the previous strategy lacked sufficient emphasis on independence, consistency of classroom practice and Preparation for Adulthood embedded systematically across daily routines. As a result, impact was variable and often dependent on individual initiatives rather than embedded practice.

Evidence from Development Profiles, Preparation for Adulthood tracking, attendance and behaviour records indicated that disadvantaged pupils continued to rely heavily on school-based provision to develop independence and functional skills, and that progress was strongest where independence and vocational learning were explicitly prioritised.

These findings directly informed the development of the new 2025–2026 Pupil Premium strategy, which places greater emphasis on independence-first pedagogy, systematic Preparation for Adulthood pathways and intentional changes to the conditions for learning, rather than discrete or isolated interventions.

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
OCR Life and Living and AQA Unit Award Scheme (UAS) are explicitly named as statutory-recognised accreditation pathways.	OCR & AQA
Read Write Inc. Phonics → provides a structured, systematic phonics programme with training and coaching that supports staff to deliver consistent, evidence-informed literacy teaching for pupils working below age-related expectations → improved consistency of phonics delivery; strengthened early reading and functional literacy outcomes for disadvantaged pupils	Ruth Miskin Training
Thrive Approach → supports pupils' emotional regulation, well-being and readiness to learn through a structured, developmentally informed framework. → improved regulation and engagement; reduction in behaviour incidents impacting learning	Thrive Approach Ltd

<p>Autism Education Trust (AET) training and materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → provides nationally recognised autism-specific training to strengthen staff understanding of communication, independence and sensory needs → increased staff confidence and consistency in autism practice; improved engagement for disadvantaged pupils with autism 	<p>Autism Education Trust</p>
<p>Speech and Language Therapy (commissioned training and resources)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → builds staff capacity to support communication, AAC use and language development across daily routines → improved use of communication systems; increased pupil initiation and independence 	<p>KaraJones Communication Therapy</p>
<p>Occupational Therapist & Educational Psychologist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → provides structured sensory, motor and regulation support through staff modelling, consultation and embedded classroom strategies. → improved pupil regulation, increased readiness to learn and greater independence in daily routines for disadvantaged pupils. 	<p>Words First Ltd</p>
<p>Tailored employability, and employer engagement programme designed specifically for students with special educational needs and disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → delivers a structured employability and workplace-readiness programme tailored for pupils with SEND, including employer engagement and supported work experience. → increased vocational confidence, independence and improved preparation for post-16 transition for disadvantaged pupils. 	<p>Emerald Mindset</p>

These programmes are reviewed annually to ensure they continue to represent value for money and demonstrate a positive impact on disadvantaged pupils' access, engagement and outcomes.

Further information (optional)

Evidence used to evaluate the impact of the new Pupil Premium strategy

The impact of the 2025–2026 Pupil Premium strategy will be evaluated using triangulated evidence base appropriate to a special school context. This approach will ensure that judgements about impact are grounded in reliable internal data and reflect progress from individual starting points, rather than reliance on national attainment measures, which are not always an appropriate or reliable indicator of progress for pupils with complex SEND.

Development Profile data will form the primary measure of progress. Termly Development Profile summaries for Pupil Premium pupils will be reviewed, with a specific focus on communication, independence and functional learning / skills for life strands. Impact will be evaluated through sustained movement from individual baselines across these strands, demonstrating incremental and cumulative progress over time.

Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) tracking will be used to evaluate pupils' readiness for adulthood. This will include evidence of increased independence, participation in work-related learning (including internal work experience), and readiness for transition. PfA tracking will be reviewed across EYFS-KS5 to ensure progression and coherence.

Attendance and behaviour data will be used as supporting indicators of engagement and regulation. Attendance for Pupil Premium pupils will be compared against the whole-school SEND cohort using internal benchmarks. Behaviour logs will be analysed to identify trends in reduced incidents, improved emotional regulation and increased engagement with learning.

Destination data will be used to evaluate longer-term impact. This will include analysis of leavers' destinations (further education, training or supported provision) and comparison with previous cohorts, rather than national data, to assess improvements in sustained post-16 outcomes and reductions in NEET risk.

Together, these evidence sources will inform termly review, strategic adjustment and governance reporting, ensuring that the Pupil Premium strategy remains responsive, evidence-informed and focused on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils with complex SEND.