



Pupil Premium Policy

2025 - 2026

We Care ● We Challenge ● We Commit

Document Control Table

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Summary of Policy Revisions

Area	Previous Policy	New Policy (2025–26)
Framing	Generic aims and funding allocations	Curriculum-first approach, rooted in retrieval, feedback, vocabulary, and cultural capital
Definition of Disadvantage	FSM/Ever6 eligibility only	Explicit recognition of invisible poverty (20/30 pupils in context)
Strategy Model	List of interventions	Graduated Response (Assess → Plan → Do → Review) applied across PP
Attendance	Mentioned as a barrier	Elevated as the decisive unlock ; APS parity at ≥93% attendance
Accountability	General reporting to governors	Challenge Framework appendix with “Do we...?” checks for leaders, staff, governors
Curriculum Access	Broad reference to enrichment	Invisible Poverty Checklist ensures removal of hidden costs, equitable homework/trip access
KPIs	Limited focus on attainment gap	Specific targets: PP 90.7% attendance, APS ≥4.0 with secure attendance, punctuality tracked termly

Evidence Base	DfE compliance noted	Explicit alignment with EEF toolkit and local IMD/IDACI/AHC data
Monitoring	Annual review only	Termly RAG-rating and dashboards (attendance, attainment, curriculum equity)
Roles & Responsibilities	Broad responsibilities	Sharpened: SLT (attendance), DoLs (curriculum audits), TAs (independence), Pastoral (barriers)

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Policy Statement

At Fulwood Academy, and across Dunstone Education Trust, we are committed to ensuring that all pupils, regardless of background, have access to an excellent education and the opportunity to thrive. We recognise that disadvantage is broader than Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility or Ever6 status. Many of our pupils experience **invisible poverty**: hardship without a formal label, but with real impact on participation, attendance, and achievement. In our context, analysis shows that as many as **20 in every 30 pupils** may be living in poverty after housing costs — a figure significantly above the national picture.

Our use of the Pupil Premium is guided by our Trust values:

- **We Care** – We remove hidden barriers to learning with dignity and respect, ensuring no child is excluded by cost, circumstance, or lack of access.
- **We Challenge** – We set and maintain high expectations for disadvantaged pupils. We deliberately prioritise them in lessons, use precise checks for understanding, and ensure they receive the same stretch and challenge as their peers.
- **We Commit** – We commit to a **curriculum-first approach**, embedding retrieval, feedback, vocabulary instruction, and cultural capital as equity levers for every child.

We apply a **graduated response** (Assess → Plan → Do → Review) to every Pupil Premium initiative, ensuring provision is precise, time-bound, and evidence-based. We recognise that **attendance is the decisive unlock**: when pupils are present, they achieve in line with or above national disadvantaged averages. Improving attendance and tackling barriers to participation are therefore central to our strategy.

Context

Fulwood Academy serves a community with significant and persistent disadvantage. **45% of pupils are eligible for the Pupil Premium**, far above the national average. Nationally, around **9–10 in every 30 pupils** live in poverty; locally, analysis of Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and IDACI data shows that for our intake the figure is closer to **20 in every 30**. This means a large proportion of pupils face disadvantage not captured by Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility or Pupil Premium funding. Many experience **invisible poverty** — financial insecurity, overcrowded



housing, digital exclusion, or hidden costs such as uniform, transport, and equipment. These barriers often go unrecorded but have a real effect on learning, wellbeing, and participation.

Despite these challenges, outcomes evidence is increasingly positive. **When present**, disadvantaged pupils achieve well: those with attendance at or above **93%** reached an **APS of 4.02**, in line with their non-disadvantaged peers (APS 4.15). Low-attending PP pupils also improved significantly year-on-year, with a **+7 A8 uplift** in 2024–25. This proves that curriculum and teaching are effective; the key challenge is securing **consistent attendance and engagement**.

Attendance overall in 2024–25 stood at **93.1%**, above the national figure of 91.4%. Persistent absence (19%) was lower than national (23.2%). However, internal gaps remain: FSM and SEND groups attend less regularly than peers, and this directly limits outcomes.

Our Pupil Premium strategy therefore targets:

- **Closing the attendance gap** for disadvantaged learners, especially FSM and SEND subgroups.
- **Removing invisible barriers** that prevent full participation in curriculum and enrichment.
- **Embedding curriculum equity** through retrieval, feedback, vocabulary, and cultural capital, ensuring PP pupils make sustained progress.

3. Strategy: A Graduated Response

Why a Graduated Response?

Traditionally, Pupil Premium strategies have focused on funding allocations and interventions. While this has value, it risks becoming a list of actions rather than a cycle of improvement. To strengthen our practice, Fulwood Academy has adopted the **graduated response model** (Assess → Plan → Do → Review), already familiar from SEND provision, as the spine of our Pupil Premium strategy.

This approach ensures:

- **Consistency:** Staff understand and apply the same cycle used for SEND across Pupil Premium, reducing variation.

- **Precision:** Each pupil's barriers are identified clearly and responded to directly, rather than through generic offers.
- **Accountability:** Every intervention is time-bound, has success criteria, and is evaluated for impact.
- **Evidence-alignment:** The model mirrors the EEF guidance on “diagnose → implement → monitor”, providing a clear evidence base for policy.
- **Equity:** It tackles both *visible* disadvantage (FSM, Ever6, LAC) and *invisible poverty* (in-work poor, housing insecurity, hidden costs).

Policy Decision

From 2025–26, Fulwood Academy's use of the Pupil Premium will follow this graduated response cycle. All leaders, teachers, and support staff will apply it when planning, delivering, or evaluating strategies for disadvantaged pupils. Governors will hold the school to account by interrogating each stage of the cycle through a published **Challenge Framework** (appendix).

The Cycle

Assess

- Diagnose **precise barriers** for each PP pupil: literacy, gaps in prior knowledge, attendance, punctuality, wellbeing, or hidden costs.
- Identify **dual disadvantage** (PP + SEND/EAL) for tailored support.
- Review **setting/grouping** to check if PP pupils are over-represented in lower sets and whether this impacts outcomes.
- Gather **pupil and parent voice** to understand barriers at home and how pupils feel about school and learning.

Plan

- Design **time-bound interventions** (6–20 sessions) linked directly to diagnosed barriers and curriculum needs.
- Train TAs to **build independence**, not dependence; focus on helping pupils overcome barriers rather than complete tasks.
- Develop **parental engagement**: workshops on effective study habits, long-term memory strategies, and supporting learning at home.

- Audit and remove **hidden costs** (uniform, trips, equipment, digital access) that restrict participation.

Do

- Prioritise **high-quality teaching first**: retrieval, spacing, feedback, vocabulary, and modelling as universal levers.
- Teachers deliberately **check for understanding** with PP pupils and cold call to ensure their voices are central in class.
- Monitor **attendance and punctuality** closely for PP pupils, with targeted interventions for FSM and SEND subgroups.

Review

- Evaluate impact using attainment (APS/A8), attendance, punctuality, engagement, and work scrutiny.
- Interventions are **stopped, sustained, or scaled** based on impact.
- Governors use the **Challenge Framework** to hold leaders accountable for evidence of progress and equity.

Appendix: Pupil Premium Challenge Framework

(Governors, leaders, teachers, and support staff use these questions to test the strength of our graduated response and ensure impact for disadvantaged pupils.)

Assess

- Do we know precisely which barriers each PP pupil faces — academic, attendance, wellbeing, or hidden costs?
- Do we identify pupils who are both PP and SEND/EAL, and track their additional needs clearly?
- Do we analyse whether PP pupils are over-represented in lower sets, and measure the impact of setting on their outcomes?
- Do we actively seek pupil and parent voice to understand barriers at home and how pupils feel about school and learning?

Plan

- Do we design interventions that are specific, time-bound (6–20 sessions), and directly linked to assessed barriers?
- Do we train and deploy TAs so that they help pupils overcome barriers rather than complete tasks for them?
- Do we engage parents with events that show them how to support learning, study habits, and long-term memory?
- Do we audit departments for hidden costs and remove them, ensuring equitable access to resources, trips, and homework?

Do

- Do we ensure high-quality teaching first: retrieval, spacing, feedback, vocabulary, and modelling embedded in every classroom?
- Do we deliberately check for understanding with PP pupils and ensure they are routinely cold called and included in modelling?
- Do we monitor lateness and absence of PP pupils at lesson level and act swiftly to secure punctuality and attendance?
- Do we maintain consistently high expectations, avoiding any lowering of challenge for PP pupils?

Review

- Do we evaluate the impact of interventions on attainment, attendance, punctuality, and engagement every term?
- Do we collect and review evidence of impact — including pupil work, outcomes, and voice — for every intervention?
- Do we stop, sustain, or scale interventions based on their impact, avoiding resource drift or dependency?
- Do we challenge ourselves as leaders and governors: are outcomes for PP pupils improving, and are gaps closing?

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Trust Board and Local Governing Body

- Approve the Pupil Premium policy and strategy.
- Hold leaders to account for the impact of funding using the **Challenge Framework**.
- Scrutinise outcomes, attendance, and engagement for PP pupils alongside national benchmarks.

Principal and Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- Ensure the graduated response (Assess → Plan → Do → Review) is applied consistently across the school.
- Secure systems that prioritise **attendance and punctuality** as the decisive factor for PP success.
- Oversee publication of the three-year Pupil Premium strategy and annual impact statement.
- Provide CPD so that staff understand the impact of **invisible poverty** and avoid deficit language.

Directors of Learning and Heads of Department

- Embed **curriculum equity**: retrieval, feedback, explicit vocabulary, and prior-knowledge checks in every scheme of learning.
- Audit and remove **hidden costs** in subjects (equipment, trips, digital access).
- Track PP pupils' progress termly and use data to adjust curriculum and intervention.

Teachers

- Maintain **high expectations** of all PP pupils.
- Routinely **check for understanding** and deliberately prioritise PP pupils in questioning and modelling.
- Design tasks that build independence and long-term memory, not dependence on adult help.

Teaching Assistants

- Support PP pupils in overcoming barriers, not simply completing tasks.
- Use strategies agreed in departmental and pupil plans to build independence and resilience.
- Record evidence of impact during interventions and feed back to class teachers.

Attendance and Pastoral Teams

- Monitor PP pupils' **attendance and punctuality** at whole-school, year-group, and lesson level.
- Implement early intervention strategies for persistent absence or lateness, working directly with families.
- Support inclusion by tackling barriers linked to **invisible poverty** (uniform, equipment, transport).

Monitoring, KPIs and Reporting

Our Pupil Premium strategy will be monitored termly through a combination of **data, work scrutiny, and pupil voice**. Evaluation is rooted in the graduated response (Assess → Plan → Do → Review) to ensure that interventions are precise, time-bound, and evidence-based.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

We will measure success against the following:

- **Attendance**
 - Whole-school PP attendance maintained at **90.7%** (above national FSM benchmarks).
 - FSM and SEND disadvantaged gaps narrowed year-on-year.
 - **Punctuality**: late arrivals for PP pupils reduced term-on-term, monitored at lesson level.
- **Attainment and Progress**
 - PP pupils with ≥93% attendance sustain **APS ≥4.0** and match national non-PP benchmarks.
 - The **Attainment 8 gap** continues to close against national averages, with sustained improvement for low-attending PP pupils.
 - Curriculum evidence (Do Now retrieval, extended writing, vocabulary tasks) shows PP pupils' knowledge and skills align with peers.
- **Curriculum Equity**
 - All departments complete annual **hidden cost audits**; all essential resources provided free of charge.
 - Retrieval, spacing, and feedback observed in 100% of subject areas through lesson visits and book scrutiny.
 - All departments embed prior-knowledge checks and explicit Tier 2/3 vocabulary teaching.
- **Engagement and Inclusion**



- Increased participation of PP pupils in trips, clubs, and leadership roles, monitored by subgroup.
- Pupil voice evidences belonging, agency, and confidence in learning.

Reporting

- Governors receive a **termly dashboard** covering attendance, attainment, punctuality, intervention impact, and curriculum equity audits.
- An **annual impact statement** will be published on the school website, including the outcomes of the Challenge Framework.
- Case studies will be shared with governors and stakeholders to evidence how barriers (including invisible poverty) have been identified and addressed.
- Data will be triangulated: whole-school tracking, national benchmarks, and pupil feedback will all be used to evaluate impact.

Challenge Framework

(Governors, leaders, teachers, and support staff use these questions to test the strength of our graduated response.)

Assess

- Do we know precisely which barriers each PP pupil faces (attendance, literacy, hidden costs, wellbeing)?
- Do we identify and track pupils with **dual disadvantage** (PP + SEND/EAL)?
- Do we analyse whether PP pupils are over-represented in lower sets, and monitor the impact of grouping?
- Do we actively capture pupil and parent voice to understand barriers at home and in school?

Plan

- Do we design **time-bound interventions** (6–20 sessions) linked directly to barriers?
- Do we deploy TAs to build **independence**, not dependence?
- Do we engage parents with events on study skills, long-term memory, and supporting learning at home?
- Do we audit and remove **hidden costs** to ensure equitable access?

- Do we ensure **high-quality teaching first**: retrieval, feedback, vocabulary, and modelling embedded in every classroom?
- Do we deliberately **check for understanding** with PP pupils and include them in questioning and modelling?
- Do we monitor **lateness and absence** of PP pupils at lesson level and act swiftly to secure improvements?
- Do we maintain consistently **high expectations**, avoiding lowered challenge?

Review

- Do we evaluate the impact of interventions on attainment, attendance, punctuality, and engagement?
- Do we record and report evidence of success for every intervention?
- Do we stop, sustain, or scale interventions based on measured impact?
- Do governors and leaders challenge themselves: *are outcomes for PP pupils improving and gaps closing?*

Invisible Poverty Checklist

(To be used by leaders and departments during curriculum and provision reviews.)

Hidden Costs

- Have we audited homework tasks for digital dependence or printing requirements?
- Are paper packs/no-tech alternatives available for pupils without devices?
- Are all essential resources (exercise books, equipment, uniform items) provided free of charge?
- Are practical subjects (Art, Food, Tech) equitably resourced for PP pupils?

Access and Participation

- Do all trips, clubs, and enrichment activities include no-cost or low-cost routes for disadvantaged pupils?
- Do we monitor participation rates in enrichment by PP/SEND/EAL?
- Are sign-up processes inclusive (avoiding “first-come-first-served” exclusion)?

- Do units clearly identify and assess prior knowledge?
- Is Tier 2/3 vocabulary pre-taught and revisited through retrieval?
- Do we avoid cultural assumptions (e.g. “you’ll have seen this on holiday”)?
- Do we explicitly teach background knowledge needed for understanding texts and tasks?

Wellbeing and Belonging

- Do staff avoid deficit language (e.g. “low effort”) and reframe barriers with dignity?
- Do pastoral systems identify “quiet compliance” as possible masking of invisible poverty?
- Do pupils feel known, safe, and represented in the curriculum and school culture?

Attendance & Attainment Tracker – Core Fields

(A monitoring template for SLT, attendance officers, and governors)

Weekly/Termly Tracking

- Whole-school attendance % vs national benchmark.
- PP attendance % vs non-PP attendance % (gap measure).
- FSM subgroup attendance vs national FSM.
- SEND/PP dual-disadvantage attendance vs non-SEND.
- Persistent absence rates (10%+, 20%+) by subgroup.
- Lesson-level punctuality logs (late arrivals tracked weekly).

Attainment Links

- APS and A8 for:
 - PP pupils $\geq 93\%$ attendance
 - PP pupils $< 93\%$ attendance
 - Non-PP pupils ($\geq 93\%$) for comparison
- Progress of dual-disadvantage PP (PP + SEND/EAL).
- Impact of attendance interventions (tracked half-termly).

Governor Dashboard Summary

- Are attendance and attainment trends for PP pupils improving term-on-term?
 - Is the attendance gap narrowing faster than the national picture?
 - Are high-attending PP pupils sustaining parity with peers?
 - Are low-attending PP pupils making measurable recovery?

Compliance and Evidence Base

Fulwood Academy's Pupil Premium strategy is fully compliant with **statutory requirements** and grounded in robust evidence.

Compliance with DfE expectations

- A **three-year strategy** is published on the school website, reviewed annually, and aligned to the DfE template.
- The **annual impact statement** is published, including progress against key performance indicators.
- The Pupil Premium budget is **ring-fenced and visible** within financial planning, ensuring transparency.
- The Principal is accountable for Pupil Premium spend and outcomes, reporting regularly to governors and the Trust Board.

Alignment with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)

- Our graduated response (Assess → Plan → Do → Review) reflects the EEF's recommendation to **diagnose, implement, and monitor**.
- All strategies funded through Pupil Premium are **evidence-informed**, drawing on the EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit and guidance reports.
- Interventions are prioritised according to the EEF's three-tiered approach:
 - **High-quality teaching first** (e.g. retrieval, feedback, vocabulary).
 - **Targeted academic support** (time-bound interventions linked to assessed barriers).
 - **Wider strategies** (attendance, wellbeing, family engagement, enrichment).

Governance and Accountability

- Governors interrogate the impact of Pupil Premium through the **Challenge Framework** (Appendix A).



- Progress is benchmarked against **national disadvantaged data** and reported in termly dashboards.
- Leaders ensure that the **impact of invisible poverty** is considered alongside FSM/Ever6 data, reflecting our local context.

Evidence Base for Policy Decisions

- National Attainment 8 and APS benchmarks are used to contextualise performance.
- Local analysis of IMD, IDACI, and After Housing Costs data demonstrates that **poverty in our school community is far higher than funding proxies suggest.**
- Attendance and attainment tracking shows that **curriculum and teaching are effective when accessed consistently**; closing the attendance gap is therefore central to this policy.