

Pupil Premium strategy statement – Thorns Collegiate Academy

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	870
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	37.01%
Academic years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2024/25 – 2026/27
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	Ms Nikki Jones
Pupil premium lead	Mrs Anna Mulholland
Governor / Trustee lead	Mr Martin O'Hanlon

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£328,950
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£328,950

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At Thorns Collegiate Academy the intention is to provide all of our students, regardless of their background, the support and opportunities to help them be successful and aspirational.

At the core, this is achieved through quality -first teaching with us providing professional development opportunities for all staff throughout the year. Our school improvement plan reflects the importance that support for disadvantaged students is the responsibility and priority for all staff.

Our Pupil Premium funding is used to address individual needs, raise aspirations and equality of opportunity where there are difficult circumstances. In addition to providing strong academic support there is a focus on supporting with mental health and well-being.

Regular reviews of the impact of interventions cross referenced with internal termly data will inform any necessary adjustments of spending in each academic year, and across the three-year period of this strategy. Student involvement in extracurricular activities and cultural capital opportunities is tracked to ensure all students experience equality. Maximising the opportunities to develop the cultural capital of disadvantaged students is one of the key components of our Pupil Premium strategy. All reporting and quality assurance processes maintain a focus on the progress and engagement of disadvantaged students to ensure we track and monitor this priority.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Attainment Closing the attainment gap between Pupil Premium and non-Pupil Premium students remains a focus. Although this gap is narrowing, the academy aims to raise attainment for all students to that of national
2	Attendance Although improving, attendance remains an area of challenge to continue these improvements as attendance of Pupil Premium students is lower than that of non-Pupil Premium students
3	Safeguarding and Well Being

	<p>Significant numbers of safeguarding issues which disproportionately effect our Pupil Premium students.</p> <p>In additional these often complex safeguarding issues impact students' around mental health and wellbeing creating additional barriers to learning.</p>
4	<p>Students' participation in extracurricular and enrichment activities</p> <p>Poverty is reducing or removing Pupil Premium student ability to access opportunities and so limiting the development of cultural capital and aspiration</p>
5	<p>Family engagement</p> <p>Challenges in communicating with families can result in disadvantaged students not receiving the necessary support outside of the academy. This can be compounded by resulting experiences then being lost to a student as permissions have not been received from home.</p>

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
Reduce the attainment gap between Pupil Premium and non-Pupil Premium students.	Data shows a reduced gap between Pupil Premium and non-Pupil Premium students. All students achieve in line with national expectations
Improving the attendance and punctuality of Pupil Premium students	Rates of attendance for Pupil Premium students are close to the academy target of 96%. Further reduction in Persistent Absence rates for disadvantaged students continues each term
Increasing student's cultural awareness and inquisitiveness in order to support the raising of aspiration	<p>Tutor and PSHE delivery includes a foci on aspiration and the development of cultural capital</p> <p>Extracurricular opportunities, trips and residential, Duke of Edinburgh experiences</p> <p>Students from disadvantaged backgrounds having the same access to experiences as other students in the academy, and being able to use these experiences to enhance and inspire their learning</p> <p>Extra-curricular and cultural capital development opportunities are tracked in order to target specific students for opportunities</p>
To continue to develop family engagement and relationships to support disadvantaged students	<p>Parental feedback, including Family Forum notes</p> <p>Attendance of parents at academy events</p> <p>Increased communication with families</p>

Students to develop a sense of belonging and responsibility across the Academy and beyond for their behaviour and conduct.	Student voice indicate that students feel an increasing part of the academy community Behaviour data shows decreasing number of in class behaviour events.
To improve wellbeing support for Pupil Premium students	Student voice Feedback from students with regard to wellbeing interventions and events, including Focus Days.

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: £159,559

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Investment in Teaching and Learning developments. Foci for 25/26 continues to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of metacognition strategies Marking and Feedback 	The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) evidence base indicates that quality first teaching makes more difference to disadvantaged students than any other strategy. EEF has found metacognition strategies can impact +7 month additional progress EEF has found feedback strategies can impact +6 month additional progress	1
Literacy Coordinator to further develop reading across the academy	Improved reading ages, spoken and written use of language will support improved outcomes for disadvantaged students. EEF has found reading comprehension strategies can impact +6 month additional progress	1, 5
Continue development of Numeracy to raise the profile and importance of maths across all subject areas	Given the importance of numeracy as a life skill, as well as a valued qualification by employers and post 16 education providers we should support students to maximise their mathematical knowledge.	1, 5
Behaviour based interventions delivered by staff to support students	Employment of Care and Guidance mentor and Reflection and Refocus manager, alongside Inclusion staff to work intensively with students to support	1, 3

	<p>the development of behaviour strategies to enable students to better access learning.</p> <p>EEF has found behaviour intervention strategies can impact +4 month additional progress</p>	
L4L	<p>Literacy for Life, which is embedded in key stage 3, has a nurturing nature and a focused monitoring of students' progress by a dedicated team of L4L teachers.</p> <p>It provides Pupil Premium students with an excellent foundation to their learning. In addition, it provides Premium students the emotional support to succeed. The richness of the curriculum offered by L4L includes external visitors (holocaust survivor, local religious leaders), external visits (The Space Centre). The maintaining of two extra PPA sessions for each L4L teacher within the L4L team is funded proportionally by Pupil Premium and the L4L teachers identify where intervention is needed and adapt learning to support Premium students.</p> <p>This includes weekly support with reading and phonics in the form of LEXIA and Accelerated Reader. This is in addition to a Peer Reading programme.</p>	1, 3, 4

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

Budgeted cost: £101, 517

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Teaching Assistants	<p>A team of highly motivated and committed TAs deployed to work with and support students learning and provide appropriate interventions.</p> <p>Appointment of SEMH and SLCN intervention managers to work provide 1:1 or small group support and bespoke interventions for SEND students that are identified as SLCN or ASD and SEMH on the register.</p>	1, 2, 3, 5

	All SEND students have a key worker who has regular contact with students and families. EEF has found teaching assistant interventions can impact +4 month additional progress	
Targeted support at the earliest stage for students identified with low levels of literacy	Improved reading ages, spoken and written use of language will support improved outcomes for disadvantaged students. EEF has found reading comprehension strategies can impact +6 month additional progress	1, 5
Targeted resources	Students have access to devices to support learning KS4 Revision resources are provided to ensure Pupil Premium students have equity of access	1, 3, 5
Pupil Premium Passports	Individual profiles of Pupil Premium students are created to include barriers to learning, aspirations, key information and interventions to support quality first teaching as well as effective intervention work	1, 2, 3, 5
Careers Intervention	Students are provided with one-to-one careers appointments from a career's advisor. Focus Days are used to provide students with a wide range of opportunities with numbers of external providers speaking to students including local colleges and post 16 providers. Academy is developing its network of Alumni in order to inspire current students to raise their aspirations	1, 2, 4, 5
Homework Clubs for KS3 & KS4	Students are invited to attend after-school homework clubs which provide access to both devices and staff support.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

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

Budgeted cost: £67,874

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Development of a TCA attendance vision & collective priority for staff and student.	A five year 'Inclusive Attendance' programme commenced September 2025, including the appointment of an attendance ambassador and staff training.	2, 3, 5

<p>Academy Attendance Officers ensure improving attendance.</p>	<p>Weekly monitoring of Pupil Premium attendance by our attendance officer.</p> <p>Weekly attendance strategy meetings to identify actions required, including about Pupil Premium family phone calls and meetings with families to discuss current attainment, behaviour and attendance.</p> <p>Half termly attendance celebrations where Pupil Premium students are rewarded for improved attendance.</p>	
<p>Participation in extended opportunities.</p>	<p>The intention of the Academy is always to develop strategies to increase the participation of Pupil Premium students in extracurricular activities. We ensure that all of our Pupil Premium students have experience of performing arts professionals including dance, drama and music performances.</p>	<p>2, 3, 4, 5</p>
<p>Daily breakfast club</p>	<p>Breakfast club to provide breakfast to students to reduce hunger and barriers to learning</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 5</p>
<p>Summer School for Y6, new into Y7</p>	<p>A summer school to support students in the transition to secondary school: a themed programme based on “Going Wild”, to allow opportunities for students and staff to get to know each other prior to the September start.</p> <p>There is also an additional induction day for vulnerable students before the new academic year begins, led by SEND dept</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 5</p>
<p>Supporting with wellbeing</p>	<p>Commitment that all students will have experienced some form of additional support/intervention by the end of 25/26 (with PP students being prioritised)</p> <p>Regular mentor visits and counselling sessions to support the emotional well-being of our students.</p> <p>The support for all learners is overseen by the Pastoral Director and Senior Assistant Principal to ensure co-ordinated bespoke interventions with a focus on maximising support for Pupil Premium students.</p> <p>Academy introduction of an additional well-being dog bringing the total to 3.</p> <p>Continued development of Student Support hub that allows a place for students to attend, and informally access support at break and lunch times</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 5</p>

Hardship Fund to support students and families	Support for students and families including food vouchers, uniform, Access activities,	1, 2, 3, 5
--	--	------------

Total budgeted cost: £328,950

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

We have analysed the performance of our disadvantaged pupils during the previous academic year and have evaluated this plan against the progress towards its intended outcomes:

Closing the attainment gap between Pupil Premium and non- Pupil Premium students

To put into context, Thorns Collegiate Academy continues an improvement journey, having gone into Special Measures in 2016, and then taken out of this category in March 2024 when inspected and judged as overall Requires Improvement with Leadership and Management and Personal Development having been judged as Good.

The data demonstrated that the overall A8 for 2024-25 was 39.68, with disadvantaged students achieving 31.41, indicating that our disadvantaged students are achieving less well than our non-disadvantaged. However, this has improved from 2024 where the A8 for disadvantaged pupils was 29.81, so developments introduced in 2023-24 are continuing into our three-year plan, 2024-27.

Improving the attendance of Pupil Premium students

Our aim is to achieve rates of attendance close to the Academy target of 96%, improve punctuality and to further reduce persistent absence rates.

Our attendance data across the previous three-year period of the plan showed an improving progression, with attendance increasing and persistent absence of disadvantaged students decreasing. Although there was a slight increase in persistent absence in 2024-2025, this was still much lower than in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023, so it remains an area of focus. Our overall attendance figure is slightly higher than national figures.

	Attendance %	PA %
2021-2022	85.70	43.14
2022-2023	85.72	42.85
2023-2024	87.10	31.72
2024-2025	88.43	33.44

Increasing student's cultural awareness and inquisitiveness in order to support the raising of aspirations.

In the March 2024 Ofsted visit 'Personal Development' was found to be "Good". Ofsted stated "Pupils benefit from a well-planned personal, health & social education curriculum. This includes an effective, careers education element. Pupils learn this through their lessons, assemblies, focus days & tutor times. These reflect the local issues that pose a risk to pupils and gives them the knowledge they need to make good decisions."

Hence, we have continued with our tutor & PSHE programme but have updated this in line with the new guidelines and to include a greater focus on aspiration and the development of cultural capital.

In addition to the high-quality careers advice highlighted by Ofsted, a wide range of educational trips and guest speaker sessions have been delivered throughout the year. These include visits to King Edward VI College, Stourbridge, theatre trips, a Virtual Reality Computer Science experience, Shrewsbury Prison, and participation in Maths Feast competitions and the UKMT Maths Challenge. Students have also engaged in the Duke of Edinburgh Award and activities with Challenge Academy.

Furthermore, we have welcomed a variety of guest speakers to broaden students' aspirations and subject knowledge. These have included representatives from Girton College, University of Cambridge; psychologists from Arden Aspire (Arden University); Speakers for Schools; and Professor Lloyd Speck

Visits to further education establishments are integrated within the academy's Focus Days (days where 'normal lessons' are collapsed in order to provide in depth immersive experiences). The academy continues to offer work experience opportunities to Year 10 which include targeted practical work experience on the academy site where an offsite experience is not possible. 41% of Premium Pupil students secured off site placements.

In 2024, a dedicated KS4 'Study Room' was established to provide students with a quiet and focused environment after school. This space enables them to complete homework and revision with access to devices, the internet, and specialist mathematics support. The initiative is designed to remove barriers to learning and promote academic progress.

Additionally, 30 Pupil Premium students benefited from music tuition, which included keyboard, drumming, and singing lessons. This provision supports the development of creativity, confidence, and cultural capital, enriching the wider educational experience for these students.

In June 2024, Thorns hosted its first 'Culture and Identity' Focus Day, celebrating diversity, heritage, and creativity within our school community. The event was planned

with significant input from students, ensuring their voice shaped activities around food, music, and fashion. The day featured immersive workshops such as henna art, cultural dance, African drumming, steel pan, and samba music, alongside a live performance by Britain's Got Talent finalist Donchez Dacres. Inspirational speakers and organisations, including Manny Kang (Pride of Britain winner), the Amy Winehouse Foundation, Arden University, and Old Halesonians Rugby Club, provided valuable insights and guidance. The event was widely praised as an opportunity to explore identity, celebrate culture, and strengthen community engagement.

In addition, 38% of Pupil Premium students actively engaged in extracurricular activities, attending at least one club from the wide range of opportunities offered across the school.

To develop family engagement & relationships to support disadvantaged students

Alongside the monthly Sway newsletter introduced in 2024-25 (with an average of 733 viewings each month), there has been the introduction of a school TikTok account to improve communication with families and increase the opportunities to celebrate student success.

We place a strong emphasis on building positive relationships with families to ensure every child receives the support they need. Each term, families of students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), many of whom are also eligible for Pupil Premium, are invited to meet with their key worker. These meetings run alongside our termly SEND coffee mornings, providing opportunities for open communication and collaboration. We have begun to log more formally attendance at parents evening and 42% of Yr 7 Pupil Premium students' parents attended this year.

At the start of the academic year, all staff are encouraged to introduce themselves to parents via email, offering a clear first point of contact for any questions or concerns. This proactive approach helps strengthen home-school partnerships from the outset.

In 2023/24, all staff completed training in Trauma-Informed Practice, equipping them with strategies to support students' emotional wellbeing and resilience. To further engage families, we arrange family forum meetings alongside other school events, making it easier for parents to attend and contribute.

The role of our Family Support Worker has also evolved significantly, now offering enhanced Early Help provision and additional mental health support. This development ensures that families and students have access to timely, targeted assistance when they need it most.

Students to develop a sense of belonging and responsibility across the Academy and beyond for their behaviour and conduct.

Student voice has told us that students are increasingly positive about the academy. Ofsted stated: “The school has done much to develop a culture that celebrates success, reinforces high standards and is truly inclusive. Pupils are increasingly signing up to this ethos.”

97% of students believe that “My school encourages me to respect people from other backgrounds and to treat everyone equally”.

In 2024 we introduced our Student Support Service to focus on the provision of guidance and support for students, linking pastoral, behaviour and inclusion together. Reflection & Refocus (R&R) intervention moved away from the isolation of students towards supporting those students who need help to improve their behaviour; the impact for our first R&R cohort, receiving weekly intervention, has been overwhelmingly positive: 26 students’ behaviour improved over the intervention – this represented 72% of the intervention cohort, with a further 3 students very close to securing an improvement. We refined this further in the summer term. Use of internal exclusions in 2024-25 is approximately a quarter of that in 2023-24 and thirteen times less than in 2022-23.

In September 2025 we introduced a range of further initiatives to enhance support and leadership opportunities for students. Nurture groups were launched across all year groups, providing smaller form settings led by members of the Student Support Services team to offer tailored guidance and care.

Our prefect system was successfully reinstated, with 36% of the team made up of disadvantaged students. Pupil Premium students were actively encouraged to apply and received support throughout the application process.

To improve well-being support for Pupil Premium students

93% of all students in the 2025 Student Voice questionnaire believe that “My school encourages me to look after my emotional and mental health”, an increase of 17%. 94% reported that they “feel safe at this school”, an increase of 18%, and 93% of students said, “There is an adult at this school I can talk to if something is worrying me”, an increase of 10%.

All students receive intervention, but Pupil Premium students are prioritised. The table below shows the average number of interventions and opportunities disadvantaged students took advantage of and some examples of these interventions:

Year	Average number of interventions for PP students	Some examples of the many interventions & opportunities Pupil Premium students have been involved in:
7	3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly 20% overnight camping • 30% Art Intervention

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 47% Lexia and/or Phonics
8	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSBC speaker – Maths Focus Day (all PP) • 21% Growth Mindset • 18% Talking Male Mental Health through Sport • 16% 'Tough Enough to Care' workshop
9	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17% 1- 1 Mindful Life Counselling • 11% Duke of Edinburgh • 21% Online safety intervention • 15% Female STEM mentoring (BedigitalInclusion) • 11% Cologne trip
10	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 61% Young Responders Emergency First Aid – St Johns Ambulance • 35% testicular cancer workshop • Nearly 30% Art Student Voice workshop Dudley • 14% Duke of Edinburgh • 20% Female STEM mentoring
11	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21% Exam Stress Workshop • 13% Music tuition • 13% University of Cambridge visit • 30% Young Responders Emergency First Aid – St Johns Ambulance • Nearly 30% - Shrewsbury Prison trip (English) • 18% Virtual Reality Computer Science trip

Our evaluation of the approaches delivered last academic year indicate that the strategies put in place have shown some affect and therefore, they will continue for the next two years of the plan.

Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider
GCSE Pod	GCSE Learning and Revision GCSEPod
Century	CENTURY Online Learning English, Maths and Science
JustMaths	JustMaths - Maths Tutorials, Resources and Support
MathsWatch	MathsWatch

LexiaUK	Lexia PowerUp Literacy Student Subscription
Renaissance Learning	Accelerated Reader
Flash Academy (Learning Labs)	Flash Academy
Linguascope	Linguascope