

Pupil premium strategy statement

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 effect that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	The Duston School
Number of pupils in school	Total 2078 Secondary 1390 Primary 415 Sixth Form 273
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	17.3%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers.	3 year plan – 2024-25 2025-26 2026 -27
Date this statement was published	October 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	June 2026
Statement authorised by	SST
Pupil premium lead	TWI & MJO & KLO
Governor / Trustee lead	Claudia Wade

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£ 376,870
Total budget for this academic year If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year	£ 376,870

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intention is that all pupils, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, make good progress and achieve high attainment across the curriculum, allowing them to be successful in their chosen next steps. The focus of our pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve that goal and to remove as many barriers to their learning as is possible to support their learning.

High-quality teaching is at the heart of our approach, with a focus on areas in which disadvantaged pupils require the most support. This is proven to have the greatest impact on closing the disadvantage attainment gap and at the same time will benefit the non-disadvantaged pupils in our school. Implicit in the intended outcomes detailed below is the intention that non-disadvantaged pupils' attainment will be sustained and improved alongside progress for their disadvantaged peers.

Key Principles:

- Quality first teaching and effective assessment meets the needs of all pupils.
- Where appropriate, provision is made for pupils that belong to vulnerable groups, including disadvantaged pupils.
- All children have access to the same opportunities to allow them to be successful in their next steps.

The Duston School's Core aims:

- Our core aim is to help pupils climb the tree of knowledge, so they can access university, higher education, employment or an apprenticeship.
- Our curriculum is embedded in a knowledge rich approach and we firmly believe that knowledge begets knowledge.
- Powerful knowledge gives pupils the cultural literacy they need to become active citizens in society and further their personal aspirations and ambitions.

The Duston School has 17.3% of children identified as disadvantaged. This is below the national figure of 27.3%.

Challenges

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

Secondary

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Literacy and numeracy skills of pupils entering Year 7 are lower for disadvantaged pupils than for non-disadvantaged pupils, which prevents them from making good progress in KS3. Current data indicates that disadvantaged pupils entering Year 7 have a reading age of 14 months lower in comparison to their non-disadvantaged peers. Around 25% of any given cohort are not secondary ready in reading when they start at The Duston School, with more than 40% of disadvantaged pupils not being classed as secondary ready within reading.
2	The attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils is lower than that of their non-disadvantaged peers. Over the last three academic years this has been evident across all attainment 8 areas but this is most significant within the EBacc element.
3	Disadvantaged pupils can experience higher levels of disengagement which have previously resulted in an increased proportion of exclusions and behaviour incidents for disadvantaged pupils. Through pupil voice, analysis and observations, this disengagement can be significantly influenced by reduced aspirations and lower parental engagement.
4	Attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils is below that of their non-disadvantaged peers (85% vs 94%). Although this may be above national average for this subgroup, this disparity in attendance to school has a significant impact upon outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
5	Disadvantaged pupils may not have the same opportunity or experiences outside of education and therefore may lack cultural capital.
6	Challenges in relation to wellbeing and mental health remain significantly higher than before the pandemic. In particular, we have seen an exponential rise in cases of self-harm, anxiety and school refusal. The impact on disadvantaged pupils has been particularly acute. Many of our pupils have made use of our Positive Impact Centre, this includes access to alternative provision, interventions, phased return support, peer mentoring, MHST, Service Six Opal project and counselling. Of the pupils who had access to these facilities, 26% of these pupils were classified as disadvantaged.

Primary

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Primary Phase assessment data shows that pupils eligible for PP in Year 2 and Year 3 underperform in Reading, Writing and Maths when compared to the rest of the school.
2	Year 5 data shows a significant gap between PP and non-PP pupils for children reaching the expected standard in English (Reading – PP 50%, non-PP 83%, Writing – PP 50%, Non-PP 78%).
3	Although the gap in attendance between pupils eligible for PP and other pupils has narrowed this year, (2023 PP was 93.04% and non-PP 95.60% = gap 2.56 . 2024 PP is 94.80% and non-PP is 95.97% = gap 1.17) we aim to close this further.
4	Disadvantaged students may not have the same opportunity or experiences outside of education and therefore may lack cultural capital.

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.

Secondary

Intended outcome	Success criteria
<p>Improve the attainment outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.</p>	<p>Disadvantaged pupils improve their outcomes within English and Maths:</p> <p>Target Year 1: 32% of disadvantaged pupils achieve a grade 5 or above in English and Maths. Target Year 2: 34% of disadvantaged pupils achieve a grade 5 or above in English and Maths. Target Year 3: 36% of disadvantaged pupils achieve a grade 5 or above in English and Maths.</p> <p>Disadvantaged pupils improve their outcomes within the EBacc element:</p> <p>Target Year 1: Disadvantaged pupils achieve an EBacc attainment score of 11. Target Year 2: Disadvantaged pupils achieve an EBacc attainment score of 11.5 Target Year 3: Disadvantaged pupils achieve an EBacc attainment score of 12.</p>
<p>Reduce the reading age disparity between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.</p>	<p>Through a targeted and bespoke literacy programme the reading age disparity between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils is reduced from the time pupils finish KS2 to the time that pupils complete KS3 and begin their KS4 studies. Targets will be measured at the end of KS3.</p> <p>Target Year 1: Reduce the reading age gap to less than 12 months. Target Year 2: Reduce the reading age gap to less than 11 months. Target Year 3: Reduce the reading age gap to less than 10 months.</p>
<p>Disadvantaged pupils demonstrate an improved engagement within their lessons.</p>	<p>Improved engagement and a positive learning environment within lessons evidenced through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil voice • Teacher observations • Quality assurance process • Climate checks • Behavioural, ATL and rewards data.

<p>Improved attendance rates for all disadvantaged pupils.</p>	<p>The percentage attendance gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils continues to reduce and remains below the national average for disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>Target Year 1: Reduce the attendance gap to less than 6%. Target Year 2: Reduce the attendance gap to less than 5%. Target Year 3: Reduce the attendance gap to less than 4%.</p> <p>Disadvantaged pupils demonstrate a continued trend of improvement with a reduced number of disadvantaged pupils classified as persistent absentee.</p>
<p>Disadvantaged pupils have access to the same opportunities to extra-curricular opportunities as their non-disadvantaged peers.</p>	<p>All disadvantaged pupils have equal access to school trips throughout the academic year.</p> <p>Attendance rates at extra-curricular clubs continues to improve with disadvantaged pupils showing continual uptake at these clubs.</p>
<p>To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.</p>	<p>Sustained high levels of wellbeing by 2024/25 demonstrated by qualitative data from pupil voice, pupil and parent surveys and teacher observations.</p>

Primary

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Improved attainment in Writing	<p>2025 disadvantaged pupils achieved higher than national in writing (TDS 75% - National 72%). 2026 for disadvantaged pupil to achieve, at least, equal to their non-disadvantaged peers (77% in 2025).</p> <p>Target Year 1: Disadvantaged pupils achieve, at least, 75%. Target Year 2: Disadvantaged pupils achieve, at least, 76%. Target Year 3: Disadvantaged pupils achieve, at least, 77%.</p>
Improved attainment in Multiplication Timestables	<p>Achieve, at least, national attainment at the end of Year 4 (34% in 2024)</p> <p>Target Year 1: Disadvantaged pupils achieve, at least, 32%. Target Year 2: Disadvantaged pupils achieve, at least, 34%. Target Year 3: Disadvantaged pupils achieve, at least, 36%.</p>
Improved attendance.	<p>The percentage attendance gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils continues to reduce and remains below the national average for disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>Target Year 1: Reduce the attendance gap to less than 4%. Target Year 2: Reduce the attendance gap to less than 3%. Target Year 3: Reduce the attendance gap to less than 2%.</p>

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: £74,681

Secondary £70,026

Primary: £4655

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Continued development of quality first teaching through the CPD programme.</p> <p>The CPD programme for the 23-25 has been inspired by 'The Extended Mind' book created by Annie Murphy Paul and subsequently reviewed as part of the 'In Action Series' by Emma Turner, David Goodwin and Oliver Caviglioli.</p> <p>The focus of the whole school improvement plan for the 2025/26 academic year will be 'Consolidating Brilliance'. The overarching aims of the improvement plan are to fully embed our approaches to wellbeing to support pupils and staff alike; to drive the enacted curriculum and school culture and to harness our approaches to SEND to maximise outcomes for all. The aim is to further drive standards in the quality and delivery of teaching, which will in turn raise aspirations, enhance character and drive up outcomes.</p> <p>In the 2025/26 academic year the focus will continue on the KS2 to KS3 end points and transition. This is in place to ensure all pupils</p>	<p>A study published by the Education Policy Institute (Fletcher-Wood & Zuccollo, 2020) concluded that the impact of high-quality CPD on pupil outcomes is comparable to the impact of having a teacher with 10 years' experience in front of a class instead of a graduate teacher.</p> <p>High-quality CPD improves teacher retention, particularly for early-career teachers and can also lead to increased student self-efficacy and confidence.</p>	<p>1,2,3</p>

<p>have the same level of accessibility to the curriculum.</p> <p>All subjects will be following a subject specific CPD programme for the year.</p>		
<p>To continue to embed deliberate practice and institutional routines as part of whole school teaching routines.</p> <p>Part of the whole school improvement plan is to streamline the ways in which teachers go about their daily routine.</p> <p>We will embed deliberate practice throughout the year through briefings and continual whole staff training sessions. We will also work with departments and staff weekly on an individual level.</p>	<p>Research shows that the embedding of CPD has varying effectiveness across a staff body due to the variations levels of experience of those staff members. (Lemov, Wollway and Yezzi, 2012).</p> <p>Deliberate practice is defined as ‘a highly structured activity, the explicit goal of which is to improve performance. Specific tasks are invented to overcome weaknesses, and performance is carefully monitored to provide cues for ways to improve it further’ (Ericsson et al., 1993, p. 368). Embedding of Deliberate practice strategies will ensure effective transitions within lesson times to maximise learning time.</p>	1,2,3
<p>Recruitment & retention – In the 2025/26 academic year we will continue to develop and embed our ‘Wellbeing and Workload group’ among staff. This consists of a team of staff members across a range of faculties. As a school we achieved the ‘Investors in People Well-being school’, having already gained IIP gold status and IQM flagship status, we are now recognised as a ‘National Champion School’. We will continue to refine approaches to workload and well-being. This in turn will aim to reduce teacher absence and allow teachers to focus on their core role of teaching and learning.</p> <p>We will continue to ensure our workload charter is robust, cutting edge and fit for purpose. This is also being supported by the school governors who have completed a well-being</p>	<p>The Sutton Trust found the following:</p> <p><i>‘The most rigorous academic papers find consistent and significant results: having a very effective , rather than an average teacher raises each pupil’s attainment by a third of a GCSE grade (0.1-0.25 Standard Deviations). The GCSE gap between poor and non-poor students is 6.08 GCSE points. Assuming this was generated over 8 GCSE subjects, if the poor student had very effective teachers (75th percentile teachers) and the non poor student had underperforming teachers (25th percentile teachers), this would reduce the gap by half, or 3.4 points’.</i> (Improving the impact of teachers on pupil achievement in the UK – interim findings - September 2011).</p> <p>Retaining our most effective teachers is crucial in supporting our disadvantaged students in improving outcomes.</p>	1,2,3

<p>investigation to evaluate our strategies and approaches.</p> <p>If there is a long term absence within the school, SLT will endeavour to cover this through teaching over-allocation to limit the impact on pupils.</p>		
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Primary

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Continued development of high quality first teaching through CPD.</p> <p>Continue to embed the knowledge rich curriculum by partnering with Primary Knowledge Trust and accessing high quality training for all staff and continue to be a showcase PKC school.</p> <p>£2,897</p>	<p>The 2019 Ofsted inspection framework emphasises that pupils should be provided with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.</p> <p>The Education Endowment Foundation says that “a successful knowledge-rich curriculum should be designed to help pupils remember what they have been taught”, through effective sequencing</p> <p>The DfE says that, taught well, a knowledge-rich curriculum: Focuses on the essential building blocks of knowledge required on the path from novice to expert (rather than how to ‘think like an expert’)</p>	1, 2
<p>Improve teaching of early writing.</p> <p>To implement the Talk for Writing approach to writing in EYFS and Year 1.</p> <p>£712.80</p> <p>Writing structure CPD for Years 2-6.</p> <p>Programme of CPD to build confidence in the structured approach to writing: planning, drafting, revising, editing and sharing.</p> <p>£1045.68</p>	<p>In the early stages of learning to write, sentence-level composition should be carried out orally. Visual prompts (such as images from a story book or photographs), along with sentence stems, can support pupils to organise their spoken language into structures that are suitable for written language. (The writing framework July 2025)</p> <p>Writing can be thought of as a process made up of five components: planning; drafting; revising; editing; and publishing. (EEF Improving Literacy in Key Stage Develop fluent reading and writing skills for seven – 11 year olds)</p>	1

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

Budgeted cost: £73,935

Secondary: £68,423

Primary: £5512

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Continue to develop and embed Direct Instruction lessons for all identified pupils.</p> <p>Identified pupils in year 7, 8 and 9 will receive 2 hours of Direct Instruction for Maths and/or English from trained specialists. This programme runs in addition to the full timetabled Maths and English lessons to compliment teaching of the full curriculum.</p> <p>Pupils may graduate from the programme, but often they will continue to receive the support depending on their progress and needs.</p> <p>Pupils' progress will be monitored against their peers to highlight the impact of this programme on closing the gap.</p> <p>£49,911</p>	<p>Research shows “The average effect size across all of the comparisons with Direct Instruction was .59.” (https://www.nifdi.org/research/recent-research/whitepapers/1352-a-brief-summary-of-research-on-direct-instruction-january-2015/file)</p> <p>EEF summary states “There is a great deal of evidence showing that the Direct Instruction approach can increase mathematics attainment for school-age pupils, and particularly those struggling with mathematics concepts.”</p>	1,2,3
<p>Over-staff the English, maths and science teaching departments to allow for smaller group sizes in KS4.</p> <p>Increased teaching capacity to allow for smaller group sizes and creation of responsive intervention groups.</p> <p>£766</p>	<p>EEF summary states that reducing class size results in 3 months additional progress on average (effect size of plus 3).</p>	2
<p>Offer an additional period 6 session to all Year 11 pupils in the final three terms prior to the GCSE</p>	<p>EEF findings state ‘Small group tuition has an average of four months’</p>	1,2

<p>exams. Disadvantaged pupils are encouraged to attend all these available sessions through the support of mentors, tutors and subject teachers.</p> <p>£9,121</p>	<p>additional progress over the course of a year’.</p> <p>The EEF toolkit states ‘The average impact of approaches involving extending school time is about an additional three months’ progress over the course of a year.’</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted interventions based on data collected through reading tests throughout the academic year. These include 1:1 or small group reading fluency and comprehension sessions with the literacy coordinator or school librarian. • In term 6, year 9 PP students with a reading age below 11 years take part in a small group intervention with KSH to prepare them for the literacy demands of KS4. • Organise several events and opportunities, such as visiting authors, competitions and book fairs, for students to foster a love for reading and writing. • Whole school curriculum focus on tier two vocabulary through the ‘word of the week’. Staff briefings for Literacy focus on strategies to support reading and writing across the school; especially strategies to support SEND pupils. • All students in KS3 visit the library for one lesson per fortnight in their English lessons to complete reading challenges and to choose or exchange their own, personal reading book. • Offer two book clubs after school. One for KS3 and one for KS4/5 pupils. • Use Accelerated Reader to track the reading progress of pupils. Teachers use this reading age data to inform their teaching practice and 	<p>The EEF toolkit states that literacy interventions results in up to 6 months additional progress on average (effect size of plus 6).</p>	

<p>scaffold reading material where needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We offer Direct Instruction for English for pupils who have been identified as being significantly below expected reading ability and are not secondary ready. <p>£2875</p>		
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Primary

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Small group/1:1 multiplication intervention identified pupils in Year 3 and 4 who are at risk of not achieving, at least, 22/25 in the MTC to develop automaticity.</p> <p>£1574.82</p>	<p>Assessments used effectively to identify children and target with 'keep up not catch up' approach has been shown to have impact in other subjects at TDS.</p> <p>Once conceptual understanding is in place, we need to teach our pupils to be parrots so that they can effortlessly and accurately recall the facts they need. (National College – Gill Knight – Tips and tricks for teaching times tables in KS2)</p>	2
<p>Targeted RWI interventions for the lowest achieving 20% in lower key stage 2 with a focus on phonics, reading fluency and writing.</p> <p>£1574.82</p> <p>Targeted reading interventions in upper key stage 2 using the Read, Write, Inc Fresh Start Programme.</p> <p>£2362.23</p>	<p>There is a strong and consistent body of evidence demonstrating the benefit of structured interventions for pupils who are struggling with their literacy. The first step should be to accurately diagnose capabilities and difficulties in order to match pupils to appropriate, evidence informed interventions that target specific areas of difficulty (EEF Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2)</p> <p>Nevertheless, it is likely that a small number of pupils will require additional support in the form of high quality, structured, targeted interventions to make progress</p>	1, 2

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

Budgeted cost: £252,625

Secondary: £243,228

Primary: £9397

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Continue to make full use of the Positive Impact Centre.</p> <p>Support pupils' mental health with dedicated on site services in the Positive Impact Centre (PIC) including small groups, one to ones, counselling and an alternate provision.</p> <p>Due to the increasing need and demand within our PIC centre, we have added additional staffing. This includes an Assistant Principal to Line Manage the PIC centre, a PIC manager, a deputy PIC manager, two counsellors, HLTA, a behaviour co-ordinator, mental health support worker and an EAL co-ordinator. PIC dovetails with our SEND team which incorporates a Senior Vice Principal line managing the non-teaching SENDCO. There will be three deputy SENDCOs who will have varying roles including teaching and non teaching.</p> <p>An external SEND audit has taken place to ensure all procedures are robust and effective.</p> <p>We have also incorporated the use of curriculum specialists to support with the lesson delivery within PIC.</p> <p>£131,837</p>	<p>EEF states that 'targeted interventions for those diagnosed or at risk of emotional or behavioural disorders produce the greatest effects'.</p> <p>EEF states that wider strategies relate to the most significant non-academic barriers to success in school, including attendance, behaviour and social and emotional support.</p> <p>EEF states that 'Both targeted interventions and universal approaches have positive overall effects (+4 months). Schools should consider the appropriate combination of behaviour approaches to reduce overall disruption and provide tailored support where required.'</p>	<p>3,4</p>
<p>Develop the school culture through the wider pastoral teams.</p> <p>A pastoral team of one teacher (Director of Year) and one non-</p>	<p>EEF toolkit states that 'Evidence suggests that, on average, behaviour interventions can produce moderate improvements in</p>	<p>3,4</p>

<p>teacher (Assistant Director of Year) allocated to each year group in each key stage to oversee pastoral care. These teams will coordinate tutor teams and a range of activities, such as assemblies, literacy, numeracy and PSHE to drive the school culture as laid out in the school mission statement.</p> <p>For the 2025/26 academic year we have continued with the additional staffing to the pastoral model to support with pastoral care. This includes an Assistant Principal per year group, two newly appointed Lead Practitioners (PSHE/RSE & pastoral support and RE & Character) and two educational support administrators.</p> <p>We have continued with the additional KS3 behavioural associate to support with some of the behavioural challenges of our disadvantaged KS3 pupils who are most in need of this support.</p> <p>£70,474</p>	<p>academic performance along with a decrease in problematic behaviours.'</p> <p>'Impacts are larger for targeted interventions matched to specific pupils with particular needs or behavioural issues than for universal interventions or whole school strategies. School-level behaviour approaches are often related to improvements in attainment, but there is a lack of evidence to show that the improvements are actually caused by the behaviour interventions, rather than other school interventions happening the same time.</p> <p>Parental and community involvement programmes are often associated with reported improvements in school ethos or discipline and so are worth considering as alternatives to direct behaviour interventions.'</p>	
<p>Reduce the number of persistent absentees through an established whole school attendance procedures and measures which has been quality assured by an external auditor.</p> <p>All students to be involved in the Attendance Stages procedure which has 5 stages of intervention and support. Specific focus on disadvantaged students. Greater number of home visits for these students.</p> <p>Two external consultants from WPA (private attendance company) continue to be employed with this moving to one WPA representative from November 2025. They will be supporting our two internal EWOs and working</p>	<p>EEF 'wider strategies' states that good attendance means that stakeholders understand and follow all school systems to make early identification and thus interventions, ending in improvement in attendance.</p> <p>/assets.publishing.service.gov.uk-How schools are spending the funding.</p>	4

<p>with our persistent absentees. Re-structure of EWO roles which allows greater coverage across both primary and secondary phases of the school.</p> <p>All Directors of Year (DOYs) will have an assigned period upon their timetable dedicated to driving up attendance.</p> <p>£26,735</p>		
<p>Continue with the PP package offer to all identified pupils.</p> <p>All disadvantaged pupils to have a ring fenced amount of money which parents can use to provide financial assistance in various identified areas. These include school uniform; Support towards trips and visits; peripatetic music lessons and a number of other options outlined in regular parental communication. This will equate to £100 at KS4 and £80 at KS3 (KS3 disadvantaged pupils have some of this assigned money set aside for KS3 trips).</p> <p>£20,000</p>	<p>EEF wider strategies page 9</p> <p>/assets.publishing.service.gov.uk-How schools are spending the funding.</p>	1,2,3,4
<p>During the year, there are a wide variety of educational visits available to the pupils. These range from local visits within lesson time to nearby places of interest, to residential activities further afield. Disadvantaged pupils at KS3 have whole school educational trips fully funded.</p> <p>£3025</p>	<p>A student survey showed that 53.78% of students strongly agree that field trips have helped to increase their knowledge base (Rahman & Spafford, 2009).</p> <p>A 2015 study found that science-oriented field trips can improve the scores of middle school students in science tests and increase their overall proficiency in the subject matter. This biggest impact was seen on students from poor backgrounds (Whitesell, 2015).</p>	5
<p>During each academic year there will be a different termly extra-curricular offer to all pupils, including a variety of sports suitable for the season, music</p>	<p>EEF states that Arts participation can have +3 months impact, whilst having a</p>	1,2,5

<p>clubs including a music technology club, gaming and arts clubs. All pupils are invited to attend and disadvantaged pupils are strongly encouraged to do so. Letters are sent to parents and there are key reminders through line-ups and through form tutors.</p> <p>A literacy club is held within school at lunchtime and after school once a week. These sessions are open to all years and aim to boost overall literacy levels.</p> <p>£7,279</p>	<p>positive impact on academic outcomes.</p> <p>EEF findings state ‘Small group tuition has an average of four months’ additional progress over the course of a year’.</p>	
<p>We have a full time lead practitioner as our careers lead for two days a week to drive aspirations and careers across the entire school. She is supported in her role by an Assistant Principal and a careers advisor employed for two days a week.</p> <p>This will aim to drive up aspirations of our disadvantaged pupils, whilst making pupils aware of the various opportunities they may pursue in the future and in turns raise outcomes.</p> <p>£6,903</p>	<p>The EEF toolkit warns that ‘Aspiration interventions without an academic component are unlikely to narrow the disadvantaged attainment gap. Teacher expectations play a role in shaping pupil outcomes and teachers should aim to communicate a belief in the academic potential of all pupils.’</p> <p>Raising the expectations of not only pupils but teachers as well is key.</p>	1,2,5

Primary

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Further embed attendance approach, to include no authorised holidays, increased communication of procedures with parents and that all staff identify at risk pupils so that support is targeted and disadvantaged children are prioritised.</p> <p>£2434.77</p>	<p>Principles of an effective whole school attendance strategy - Ofsted</p>	3
<p>Sports Coach to provide a planned schedule of structured games to engage pupils and increase the range of sports and sporting opportunities.</p>	<p>EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit indicates that physical activity improves progress by one month.</p>	4

<p>£2362.23</p> <p>All PP pupils to have a ring fenced £100, which parents can use to provide financial assistance in various identified areas. These include school uniform; Support towards trips and visits; peripatetic music lessons and a number of other options outlined in regular parental communication.</p>	<p>Social Mobility Commissions' report 'An Unequal Playing Field: Extra-Curricular Activities, Soft Skills and Social Mobility' - The evidence presented here suggests that extra-curricular activities are a positive and enriching experience for young people, promoting not only positive educational outcomes but also offering the possibility for developing a wider set of skills beyond the qualifications obtained from school.</p> <p>A key finding from this research is that opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities is profoundly structured by socioeconomic status, with participation gaps between rich and poor households evident through the national-level analysis as well as the case study research in the four localities.</p>	
<p>Continue PP package offer to all identified students.</p> <p>All PP pupils to have a ring fenced £100, which parents can use to provide financial assistance in various identified areas. These include school uniform; Support towards trips and visits; peripatetic music lessons and a number of other options outlined in regular parental communication.</p> <p>£4600</p>	<p><u>EEF wider strategies page 9</u></p> <p>Claire O'Keefe from 'Achievement For All' worked with The Duston School as a school improvement partner for a year consulting on support for PP.</p> <p><u>/assets.publishing.service.gov.uk-How schools are spending the funding.</u></p>	<p>3</p>

Total budgeted cost: £401,241

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Secondary

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

For 2025, the Attainment 8 score (which is a measure of GCSE attainment across 8 subjects) was 40.8 (exceeding the attainment score achieved for disadvantaged pupils in 2024 at 37.9). See [DfE guidance](#) for more information about KS4 performance measures.

To help us gauge the performance of our disadvantaged pupils we compared their results to those for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils at national and local level (though these comparisons are to be considered with caution given ongoing pandemic impacts) and to results achieved by our non-disadvantaged pupils.

The national Attainment 8 score for disadvantaged pupils in 2023-24 was 34.6 and for non-disadvantaged pupils it was 50.0. In 2024-25 disadvantaged pupils at The Duston School exceeded the national average attainment for disadvantaged pupil (40.8 attainment 8 at TDS in comparison to 34.6 nationally). This can also be seen at a regional and local level as shown below:

Disadvantaged pupils	The Duston School 2025	West Northants 2024	East Midlands 2024	National 2024
Attainment 8 Average	40.8	31.9	32.7	34.56

The gap between the Attainment 8 scores of our disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils has narrowed since last year (12.86 in 2024 vs 10.86 in 2025). The Attainment 8 score of our non-disadvantaged pupils was 51.66.

This decreasing attainment gap from 23/24 to 24/25 can be seen across all the elements of Attainment 8:

Attainment Gap between Disadvantaged and Non-Disadvantaged pupils.					
Year	English	Maths	EBacc	Open	A8 Pts
2024/25	2.03	1.74	3.77	3.24	10.86
2023/24	2.55	2.41	4.25	3.74	12.86

As a school we are highly aspirational for all our pupils and this is reflected in the significant number of students who enter the EBacc. EBacc entry for disadvantaged pupils was 43.6%, which is significantly higher than the national average (28.6%). This does remain below that for our non-disadvantaged pupils (63.1%) as our curriculum remains bespoke for all pupils.

We have also drawn on school data and observations to assess wider issues impacting disadvantaged pupils' performance, including attendance, behaviour and wellbeing.

When considering attendance rates we have utilised the DfE tool to compare The Duston School to similar schools. During 2024-25 we exceed the average percentage attendance rates for both FSM pupils (85.4% vs 83.7%) and non-FSM pupils (94.2% vs 93.2%) when compared to similar schools. The attendance rates of disadvantaged pupils in the 2024-25 academic year dipped slightly to 85% compared to 88% in the 2023-24 and is below that of all other pupils (94.2%). However, the persistent absentee of disadvantaged pupils although not at the desired level remains below that of the national average for disadvantaged students. In 2023/24 31% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the school standard of above 95% attendance, in 2024/25 this increased to 33%. This evidences that although disadvantaged attendance rates decreased, this was heavily impact by a few persistent absentees.

The impact of attendance is evident in the attainment gap for the 2024-25 outcomes. The attainment gap drops from over a grade to less than half a grade when pupils have 95% or greater attendance. This is evidenced in the table below. Disadvantaged pupils have an average Attainment 8 outcome of 5.2 when they have achieved above 95% attendance.

Attainment 8 outcome by attendance bands				
Overall	Below 50%	50% - 90% % Attendance	90%-95% Attendance	Above 95% Attendance
PP	2.0	3.6	3.8	5.2
Non -PP	1.2	4.2	4.9	5.7

Attendance will continue to be a focus in the new academic year, where we will be working closely with pupils and families through our Positive Impact Centre (PIC), through our two internal EWOs (Educational welfare officers) and our external EWO appointment from the WPA. The work of our EWOs in supporting our disadvantaged pupils in their attendance, through home visits, parental meetings and liaison between all involved parties remains integral in driving down disadvantaged pupils absence. We will continue and look to expand interventions to prove we have done everything reasonably possible to ensure pupils attend school. This includes:

- Following additional guidance from EEF with links to the Attendance Toolkit for schools
- Continue to use FFT and DFE data to target support
- Fully compliant with statutory requirements
- Making attendance the responsibility of everyone in the school through whole school briefings and information circulated to all staff on a weekly basis
- Financial investment in a private attendance organisation (WPA) for over three years which has also involved training from WPA
- A clear five staged process which was written in consultation with WPA and our own pastoral teams
- A restructure of all extra-curricular activities to engage pupils in exciting opportunities
- Increase in money spent on achievement incentives (through amazon vouchers) to make pupils want to attend school
- Additional attendance rewards including increase of house points, jump the lunch line passes and amazon vouchers

- Increase in letters both celebratory and to support our attendance escalation procedures. These letters included ongoing advice around being too ill to attend school
- Increase in home visits, including more PP home visits
- A new approach to lateness to school to push for a reduction in U codes
- Term time holidays not being tolerated
- Series of PP parental meetings with senior members of staff
- Closed the link between attendance and safeguarding which allows attendance concerns to be discussed.
- Protected time for pastoral teams written in timetables to allow meetings with the attendance teams
- To push for an increase in meetings with the local authority SASO to help support attendance concerns
- Creation of a new role to oversee EHAs to monitor progress
- Regular audits of our attendance processes
- SLT meetings allocated to meeting pupil premium parents with attendance concerns
- Training via the DFE courses that were offered online
- Strong and clear stance on term time holidays, all of which are reviewed by the Principal
- Enhancements in internal file systems pertaining to attendance making use of collaborative working software, such as a unified stage tracking document and holiday referral tracker.

The Positive Impact Centre is an SEMH Centre supporting pupils from Year 5-Post 16. The environment is underpinned by the core values of respect, resilience and aspiration. PIC offers a firm, consistent and safe learning environment in which pupils can work on and develop their full social, emotional and academic potential. Pupils will have the opportunity to address challenges and barriers relating to their current behaviour / attitude towards school and any social setting. They will have the opportunity to adopt practical strategies, coping mechanisms, and explore different approaches to grow and develop as a confident learner.

Challenges in relation to wellbeing and mental health remain significantly higher than before the pandemic. In particular, we have seen an exponential rise in cases of self-harm, anxiety and school refusal. The impact on disadvantaged pupils has been particularly acute. 457 pupils made use of the Positive Impact Centre in 2024-25, this includes access to alternative provision, interventions, phased return support, peer mentoring, MHST, Service Six Opal project and counselling. Of the 457 pupils who had access to these facilities, 118 (26%) of these pupils were classified as disadvantaged. We have made full use of our Positive Impact Centre and our large pastoral team to support all our pupils through the academic year. This will be an on-going focus in the 2024-25 academic year.

During the 2025-26 academic year 91% of all interactions logged by class teachers (House points and behaviour points) were positive house point interactions (compared to 96% for all other pupils). Disadvantaged pupils do represent a higher percentage of the total number of behaviour points and exclusions in relation to the percentage of pupils classified as disadvantaged. However as a national behaviour hub lead school in 24-25 we ensure all our pupils are held to the very highest standard. Behaviour incidents across the school have continued to improve with very few behaviour incidents in any given day, we also have a very clear no nonsense approach to poor/negative behaviours. Supporting the

behaviour of our disadvantaged pupils through our pastoral systems and our Positive Impact Centre will continue to be a significant focus moving forward.

Based on all the information above, the performance of our disadvantaged pupils met the yearly targets in some areas but not all and therefore are at present are on course to achieve some of the outcomes we set out to achieve by 2026-27 but not all. However, as a school we have aspirations to be in the top 5% of all school nationally and therefore our targets are set at an aspirational level. We will continue to strive towards these aspirational targets but we are acutely aware that the impact of the pandemic has continued to add an element of unpredictability to any given year in terms of the challenges we face.

Our evaluation of the approaches delivered last academic year indicates that work of the Positive Impact Centre has been crucial in supporting the well-being and mental health of our most in need disadvantaged pupils. This will continue to play a significant part of the 2025-26 strategy plan. Whilst progress has been made to support disadvantaged pupils with their attendance, this must continue to be a focus.

We have reviewed our strategy plan and made changes to how we intend to use some of our budget this academic year, as set out in the Activity in This Academic Year section above.

Primary

We have analysed the performance of our school's disadvantaged pupils during the 2024/25 academic year using key stage 2 performance data, phonics check results and our own internal assessments.

The school's strategy to target early reading has had a great impact with phonics screening results improving year on year since 2022. In 2022 65% of children achieved a pass, this rose to 78% in 2023, to 85% of children in 2024 and then to 88% in 2025. 88% of disadvantaged children passed the Phonics Screening Check compared to 92% of non-PP (gap 4%).

Targeting teaching and learning alongside a knowledge rich curriculum is now seeing improved outcomes for all groups of children. Year 6 data shows attainment in all subjects is above national.

Reading, at least, expected: 2022 = 68%, 2023 = 82%, 2024 = 82%, 2025 = 82%

Writing, at least, expected: 2022 = 65%, 2023 = 79%, 2024 = 79%, 2025 = 77%

SPAG, at least, expected: 2022 = 70%, 2023 = 85%, 2024 = 80%, 2025 = 85%

Maths, at least, expected: 2022 = 67%, 2023 = 79%, 2024 = 79%, 2025 = 82%

The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged has continued to narrow in all subjects. In reading and maths disadvantaged pupils are now outperforming their peers.

Reading gap: 2023 = 58% in favour of non-PP, 2024 = 10% in favour of non-PP, 2025 = 20% in favour of PP

Writing gap: 2023 = 22% in favour of non-PP, 2024 = 22% in favour of non-PP, 2025 = 2% in favour of non-PP

Maths gap: 2023 = 44% in favour of non-PP, 2024 = 6% in favour of non-PP, 2025 = 4% in favour of PP

These figures show that the push for high expectations for all pupils, quality CPD and teaching a challenging curriculum, along with targeted support, has impacted our disadvantaged pupils greatly.

The attendance data was showing a narrowing of the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers.

2023 = 2.56% in favour of non-PP, 2024 = 1.17% in favour of non-PP, 2025 = gap 4.1%.

This year there is a widening of the gap. The reasons have been identified and acted upon with further resources being spent on attendance support.