Pupil premium strategy statement – The Axis 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	78
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	48%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers **(3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year)**	2025/26 – 2027/28
Date this statement was published	Dec 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	Dec 2026, Dec 2027, Dec 2028
Statement authorised by	Dan Blundred, Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Claire Gill
Governor / Trustee lead	Julia Murray

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£56,490 Pupil Premium 38 pupils (Primary 6, Secondary 32) PLAC 15 pupils (Primary 2, Secondary 13) FSM 29 pupils (Primary 5, Secondary 24)
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years *(enter £0 if not applicable)*	£0

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*	£56,490

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

The Axis Academy is now exceeding capacity in terms of pupil numbers and has started the academic year 2025–26 with 79 pupils, 38 of whom are eligible for Pupil Premium. This represents a year-on-year increase and reflects the growing demand for our specialist provision.

We support pupils with a wide range of Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, as well as Cognition and Learning and Communication and Interaction needs. As such, a broad and responsive range of additional support is essential to ensure that all pupils make progress socially, emotionally, and academically from their individual starting points.

Our aim is to use Pupil Premium funding to achieve and sustain positive, long-term outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. While socio-economic disadvantage is not always the primary challenge our pupils face, we do see variances in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils compared to their peers, even when they join us at similar starting points.

At the heart of our approach is the principle that secure foundations lead to success: social and emotional needs must be met before pupils can thrive in learning. Guided by the ethos of "*First we Maslow, then we Bloom*", we prioritise emotional security, wellbeing, and resilience as the basis for academic achievement.

Our strategy focuses on:

- **Equity of opportunity**: Ensuring disadvantaged pupils have access to the same high-quality teaching, resources, and experiences as their peers, tailored to individual needs.
- **Emotional security and health**: Creating a safe, nurturing environment where pupils feel valued, supported and able to take risks in their learning.
- **Meaningful relationships**: Building strong, positive connections with peers and staff to foster trust, empathy, and social development. This will support them in leading a healthy future.
- **Self-awareness and metacognition**: Helping pupils understand themselves as individuals and as learners, equipping them with strategies to reflect, plan, and take ownership of their learning.

- **Independent life and social skills**: Preparing pupils for adulthood through practical skills, high-quality work experience, careers guidance, and pathways to further and higher education.

Although our strategy is focused on disadvantaged pupils, many initiatives—such as whole-school approaches to high-quality teaching—will benefit all pupils. Implicit in our intended outcomes is the expectation that progress for non-disadvantaged pupils will also improve alongside their disadvantaged peers.

Our approach is driven by the needs and strengths of each young person, based on formal and informal assessments rather than assumptions or labels. This ensures that every pupil receives the relevant skills, experiences, and opportunities they need to succeed in life and contribute positively and meaningfully to society.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	**Attendance and Engagement** Unauthorised absence among pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium (3.7% compared to 1.3% non PP), primarily due to Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) and extended holidays, limits access to learning and continuity of progress.
2	**Limited Cultural Capital** Many disadvantaged pupils have restricted opportunities to develop cultural capital outside of school, often linked to anxiety and mental health needs. This impacts their ability to broaden horizons and engage confidently with new experiences.
3	**Emotional Regulation and Resilience** Pupils frequently demonstrate lack of ability to self-regulate, limited understanding of their own emotions, and low levels of resilience. They often lack healthy strategies to manage stress and emotional challenges, which affects learning and relationships.
4	**Outcomes** Outcomes in **reading** for disadvantaged pupils are lower than

	their peers, as evidenced by reading ages and standardised scores. This impacts upon access to the wider curriculum and limits progress in other subject areas. Overall academic progress tends to be lower in most subjects compared to non-disadvantaged pupils.
5	**Mathematical Gaps** There are significant gaps in basic maths skills, including rapid recall of multiplication tables across KS3 and KS4. These gaps slow progress and are difficult to address within normal classroom teaching, as opportunities for re-teaching are limited.
6	**Assessment Accessibility** Disadvantaged pupils often struggle to access assessments due to low resilience and stamina when asked to complete assessment tasks. This raises concerns about the accuracy of data (and availability of reliable data) used to track progress and plan interventions. Alternative assessment tools are needed to better capture ability and inform support.

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
1. Improve attendance for disadvantaged pupils by reducing EBSA-related absence and unauthorised holidays	- Attendance for Pupil Premium pupils improves year-on-year. - Reduction in unauthorised absences recorded. - EBSA pupils supported through reintegration plans and progress monitored
2. Increase access to enriching experiences that build cultural capital and confidence, both within and beyond school	- All Pupil Premium pupils participate in at least one enrichment activity per term. - Pupil voice indicates improved confidence and engagement. - Evidence of cultural capital development in personal development records. - Reduction in numbers of PP pupils who are NEET

	- Increased opportunities for work experience, vocational training and community engagement.
3. Develop pupils' ability to self-regulate emotions, build resilience, and use healthy coping strategies	- 'Healthy' strategies used to manage emotions - Pupils have increased awareness of their emotions and how to respond to these - Pupils demonstrate improved emotional literacy - Increased engagement in learning following SEMH support.
4. Improve reading ages, word reading, fluency and comprehension for disadvantaged pupils	- Reading ages for Pupil Premium pupils accessing interventions show accelerated progress compared to baseline. - Standardised reading scores improve year-on-year. - Increased engagement with reading across the curriculum. - Progress in other curriculum subjects is in line with non-Pupil Premium pupils at all key stages.
5. Close gaps in fundamental maths skills, including rapid recall of multiplication tables	- Pupil Premium pupils demonstrate improved fluency in multiplication tables. - Diagnostic assessments show reduced gaps in basic skills. - Improved progress in maths evidenced by internal and external assessments including statutory assessments.
6. Ensure assessment tools accurately reflect pupils' ability by introducing alternative methods and building resilience for formal assessments	- Implementation of alternative assessment strategies for - Increased completion rates for GL assessments and statutory assessments - Data reflects a more accurate picture of ability and informs targeted interventions. - PP pupils make at least expected progress in core subjects from their starting points.

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: £ 6642

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Implement the Zones of Regulation framework	Sage Journal **A Research Review of the Zones of Regulation Program** ASAT A review of study titled A Review of the Zones of Regulation Program	3, 1, 2
Deliver high quality CPD and INSET training focused on adaptive teaching strategies (including the use of Ed-Tech)	EEF blog: Moving from 'differentiation' to 'adaptive teaching' | EEF The shift to adaptive teaching: A research-informed guide : My College Full article: Longitudinal study on impact of iPad use on teaching and learning	4, 5, 6
Evaluate the effectiveness of assessment tools; identify most appropriate assessment tool to use; complete assessments with pupils for both baselines and termly summative assessment	INTEGRATING SUMMATIVE AND FORMATIVE FUNCTIONS OF ASSESSMENT	6, 5, 4
Therapeutic teaching course – 6 online modules, 2 in-person workshops	Therapeutic Interventions in Schools | LGFL Integrating Therapeutic Interventions into School Practices Paving the way to a therapeutic, emotional curriculum | BPS Behaviour interventions | EEF	3, 2, 1

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

Budgeted cost: £ 50803

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Fresh Start intervention delivered 3 x week following FS assessments	Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh Start - trial | EEF Read Write Inc. Fresh Start - The School Psychology Service	3, 4, 6
Intervention for KS2 and KS3 on addressing gaps in basic maths skills (incl multiplication tables) delivered by a qualified teacher	Improving Mathematics in Key Stages 2 and 3 | EEF	5
Train a Pastoral Support Officer to be an ELSA. Deliver ELSA sessions with pupils. PSO to participate in supervision	Eloise Dalby - thesis - ELSA Implementation.pdf An exploration of the impact of the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) programme on wellbeing from the perspective of pupils.	3, 1
Regular access to Times Table Rock Stars to support the embedding of multiplication tables		5
On site mental health support to be provided by the Mental Health Counsellor (talking therapy, play therapy, CBT)	Social and emotional learning | EEF	3, 1

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

Budgeted cost: £ 27922

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed

Beanstalk reading Volunteer programme delivered weekly	Evaluation of Coram Beanstalk's reading support programmes (2022) - Coram The reading framework - GOV.UK	1, 3, 4
Attendance Officer to monitor attendance, support EBSA, home visits, links to pastoral support/early help.	CCB Indep. EBSA final Aug 2024 Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA): Students' Views of What Works in a Specialist Setting | Continuity in Education Emotionally Based School Avoidance in the Aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Neurodiversity, Agency and Belonging in School	1
Providing free nutritious breakfast for all disadvantaged pupils ensuring no pupil attends school hungry	Magic Breakfast - trial | EEF	1, 3, 4, 5
Providing wider opportunities beyond the classroom including educational day visits	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/outdoor-adventure-learning	1, 2
Provide uniform where needed to ensure pupils have a sense of belonging.	School uniform | EEF	1, 3

Total budgeted cost: £ 85365

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Evaluation of the previous plan shows the following impact:

Improved attainment in core – the vast majority of disadvantaged pupils across the school made progress based on their starting points as evidenced through in house assessments. Statutory assessments show that all disadvantaged Y11(40%) achieved a GCSE grade in English, Maths and Science. In Year 6 SATs, 50% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard (33% of all pupils achieved EXS). Disadvantaged pupils performed better than all pupils at the higher standard (50% compared to 16% all pupils). In GPS and Maths there was no difference in outcomes between disadvantaged and all pupils, with all pupils working below the expected standard. Teacher assessment in writing and science shows all pupils working below the expected standard with disadvantaged pupils in line with all pupils working towards the expected standard.

Fresh Start intervention is having an impact with 100% of disadvantaged pupils making progress ensuring that their reading age increases, reading fluency increases and ability to use strategies to read tricky words is secure; access to an age-related curriculum is improved especially for pupils in KS4.

Improved communication – In house speech and language is provided for all pupils who need it with staff training taking high priority so S&L can be built into all teaching and learning opportunities. The evidence of this is measured in their EHCP reviews.

Readiness for the next stage of education, training and adulthood – all pupils have regular access to high quality careers education weekly, careers planning meetings with the Careers Advisor in Year 9 – Y11 (Careers Mark achieved Spring 2024), have opportunities to interact with a range of employers, vocations and community-based experiences. In 2023 67% of leavers remained in education or training, whilst in 2024 this figure is higher.

Relationships with pupils & attendance – All pupils have strong relationships with at least one, but often multiple, key staff who champion their needs and act as a mentor. These strong relationships mean that pupils attend school regularly (while the IDSR data shows a fluctuating picture for attendance, comparisons of attendance for these pupils in their previous settings shows significant improvements). During 2024 – 2025, disadvantaged pupils attendance was

slightly higher than non-disadvantaged pupils with 4% less authorised absence. However, unauthorised absence (3.6% compared to non-disadvantaged pupils 1.3%) remains a focus. Numbers of persistently absent disadvantaged pupils are the same as non-disadvantaged.

Mental Health and Well-Being – There are currently 38% of disadvantaged pupils accessing mental health and pastoral support that is in addition to the core SEMH offer of the school. Pupils are using this support to enable them to better cope with their personal barriers to enable them to be as successful as possible in school. This has included 39% of disadvantaged pupils being resilient enough to access a respite holiday (Go Beyond). This break has significantly positively impacted upon their self-esteem, independence and ability to be resilient.

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**
Fresh Start	Ruth Miskin Read Write Inc

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information: **How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year**
NA
The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils

NA

Further information (optional)

Use this space to provide any further information about your pupil premium strategy. For example, about your strategy planning, implementation and evaluation, or other activity that you are delivering to support disadvantaged pupils that is not dependent on pupil premium funding.