

Pupil premium strategy statement – Sir William Romney’s School

This statement details our school’s use of pupil premium funding to help improve the attainment of our disadvantaged pupils.

It outlines our pupil premium strategy, how we intend to spend the funding in this academic year and the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils last academic year.

School overview

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school	496
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	24.24%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2024-2027
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	November 2026
Statement authorised by	Mr W Ruscoe Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Dr P Dillon Assistant Headteacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Mrs A Herbert Chair of LGB

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£142,472.75
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
Total budget for this academic year <i>If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year</i>	£142,472.75

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Sir William Romney's School aims to provide a curriculum which actively seeks to improve the life chances of all our students, addressing any inequalities and barriers that are present and allowing all students to realise their true potential. We are a school that is proud to be truly comprehensive, and that is fully committed to closing the gap of progress and attainment levels between disadvantaged students and those of the national average of non-disadvantaged students. We aim to do this by the high-quality teaching of an ambitious, rich and broad curriculum that ensures students become highly literate, confident learners. We ensure curriculums explore life beyond school and we aim to provide a wide range of trips and visits for all year groups to instil aspiration and motivate every student to strive for excellence.

Our facilitation of the best outcomes for our disadvantaged students is guided by the following principles, as part of a holistic approach rooted in research. We work to:

- Promote a whole school strategy which encourages all staff to promote the achievements and successes of disadvantaged students.
- Ensure that students receive quality first education in calm and focussed classrooms and are challenged to be the best versions of themselves. This has been found to be the most effective method of improving outcomes.
- Acknowledge that all students are unique and the barriers to them reaching their potential are specific to them. We value positive relationships with our students and their families which support us to identify these barriers and provide the most effective learning environment possible.
- Address barriers to attendance to ensure our students feel safe, valued and happy as part of our school community, and so attend school regularly and on time.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	The progress of disadvantaged learners as a group is lower than that of the non-disadvantaged learners
2	The attendance of disadvantaged learners as a group is lower than that of the non-disadvantaged learners
3	Our disadvantaged learners can have low literacy skills and are more likely to live in homes with limited literacy resources.
4	Our disadvantaged students have a lower engagement with wider curricular opportunities and as a result their accumulation of cultural capital and aspirational goals can be limited.
5	Parents of some of our disadvantaged students are less engaged with their children's learning and some do not have a quiet place to work or access to relevant resources and equipment.
6	Our disadvantaged students engage less effectively with quality first teaching.

7	Some of our disadvantaged students experience low-self-esteem, poor mental health, and aspirations

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. Quality first teaching in all classrooms with a focus on ensuring adaptive teaching strategies are implemented and that high quality, impactful feedback is embedded.	<p>Our adaptive teaching strategy (S.T.R.I.V.E) will be evident in all lessons so that barriers to learning are effectively addressed.</p> <p>A whole school approach to assessment and feedback will be evident through student voice and book looks.</p> <p>The gap in attainment and progress between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students will narrow</p>
2. Attendance levels are increased across all years for disadvantaged learners.	<p>The attendance gap of disadvantaged students' overall attendance to narrow with that of their peers demonstrating a rising trend in the number of sessions attended by disadvantaged students.</p>
3. Literacy weaknesses are addressed through effective classroom practice and intervention where appropriate.	<p>Systematic tracking of reading ages will ensure students who need intervention are identified and intervention put in place. Following targeted intervention (That reading thing) reading ages will be brought in line with chronological ages to help students access and be successful in the wider curriculum.</p> <p>Our S.T.R.I.V.E strategy will ensure that literacy is addressed and developed in class also.</p> <p>A school wide promotion of vocabulary through our 'Power of Words' programme will place development of tier 2 and 3 vocabularies at the heart of our curriculums, and this will be evident through our QA processes.</p>
4. The number of NEETs in our Disadvantaged cohort will reduce. Disadvantaged students are provided with a wide range of cultural capital opportunities as well as a range of experiences to better prepare them for post 16 and beyond.	<p>Our '11 by 11' pledge will have been embedded across the school and successfully being delivered through our Futures and Enrichment days.</p> <p>Engagement in these will be tracked to ensure our disadvantaged cohort is benefiting from this wide range of experiences.</p> <p>A continued promotion of extra-curricular opportunities and a subsidising of costs will ensure attendance and engagement by our disadvantaged cohort continues to increase.</p>

5. Parents and carers are actively engaged in their child's education.	Attendance of parents and carers at whole school events such as information evenings and parents' evenings will be tracked. Disadvantaged par-ents/carers will be encouraged and supported to attend.
6. As part of our behaviour policy, all students are awarded and celebrated for engaging in the school and their learning.	Improved attitudes to learning for disadvantaged students. Reduced number of disadvantaged students referred to the reset room. Reduced number of suspensions for disadvantaged students.
7. Mental health and wellbeing of our disadvantaged students will improve	Increased capacity for mental health and wellbeing support for disadvantaged students Attitude to learning data will evidence a rising trend for disadvantaged students. Student voice will evidence improvements in mental health from disadvantaged students

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: £ 56,989.10 (40%)

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<i>Piloting a coaching model to drive the improvement of teaching and learning across the curriculum.</i>	Studies show that effective feedback can have up to 6+ months of additional progress. A whole school approach will benefit all students but "There is evidence to suggest that feedback involving meta-cognitive and self-regulatory approaches may have a greater impact on disadvantaged pupils and lower prior attainers than other pupils" Feedback EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) As such, our whole school policy that was introduced in 2024 is written around the EEFs recommendations of impactful feedback. Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) and CPD is planned around ensuring each of the recommendations is implemented effectively.	1,2,6

<p><i>Ongoing CPD on effective feedback practices</i></p>	<p>Studies show that effective feedback can have up to 6+ months of additional progress. A whole school approach will benefit all students but “There is evidence to suggest that feedback involving meta-cognitive and self-regulatory approaches may have a greater impact on disadvantaged pupils and lower prior attainers than other pupils” Feedback EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p> <p>As such, our whole school policy that was introduced in 2024 is written around the EEFs recommendations of impactful feedback. Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) and CPD is planned around ensuring each of the recommendations is implemented effectively.</p>	<p>1,2,6</p>
<p><i>A universal CPD that focuses on the following themes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Getting their attention</i> - <i>Checking for understanding</i> - <i>Think Hard</i> 	<p>Evidence from the Education Endowment fund, and a wide body of research (e.g. Rosenshine 2012) acknowledge that developing high quality teaching and learning is the most effective method of driving progress for disadvantaged students. Adaptive Teaching looks to address individual barriers for all students, whilst often considered in the field of SEN, it is equally important in addressing the barriers of PP students.</p> <p>EEF blog: Moving from ‘differentiation’ to ‘adaptive teaching’ EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p>	<p>1,2,3,6</p>
<p><i>Additional staffing of a specialist Maths teacher to allow for effective grouping to maximise support.</i></p>	<p>Svane et al. (2023) completed a systematic review of literature on maths intervention that drew positive correlations between numeracy intervention and attainment across other subjects. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376488734_A_systematic_literature_review_of_math_interventions_across_educational_settings_from_early_childhood_education_to_high_school</p>	<p>1,2,6</p>

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

Budgeted cost: £ 49, 865.46 (35%)

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<i>KS4 small group mentoring with a focus on accumulating effective revision techniques and high levels of attendance.</i>	EEF states that one to one mentoring has potential high impact for moderate costs. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/one-to-one-tuition especially when tied to the curriculum of the school. Our in house academic mentoring allows us to ensure that the support is targeted to gaps we have identified.	2,3,6,7
<i>Provision of an early intervention reading programme that improves students' confidence with literacy, comprehension and reading ages. Delivered in one-to-one sessions by two trained TAs.</i>	EEF's 'Developing Literacy in Secondary Schools' https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/literacy-ks3-ks4?utm_source=/education-evidence/guidance-reports/literacy-ks3-ks4&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=site_search&search_term=developing%20literacy Recommends 'high quality literacy interventions' and we have adopted 'That Reading thing' a programme designed for older readers that will engage our reluctant students more than the primary style lessons they are likely to have received previously. Impact of the programme can be found here Greg Brooks' Evaluation of TRT – That Reading Thing	3
Employment of a Pupil Premium Champion to ensure staff are familiar with PP students and the barriers they face and that key strategies are promoted. Works along-side SLT Lead on Pupil premium and meets regularly with identified students.	Using pupil premium EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) —teaching is the top priority, including CPD and ensuring all staff are aware of the key strategies being used. Successful schools “have clear, responsive leadership” Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) EEF Implementation Guide states that “school leaders play a central role in improving education practices through high quality implementation” by “defining both a vision	1,2,4,7

	for, and standards of desirable implementation” This role ensures this happens effectively.	
<i>Weekly Academic mentoring for identified KS4 students to address gaps in knowledge across a range of subjects. (Prioritising English and Maths)</i>	EEF states that one to one mentoring has potential high impact for moderate costs. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/one-to-one-tuition especially when tied to the curriculum of the school. Our in house academic mentoring allows us to ensure that the support is targeted to gaps we have identified.	2,3,6,7
<i>One to one Careers Guidance to ensure all students have plans in place for their next steps</i>	As an 11-16 school we are committed to ensuring all our students are fully prepared and supported for their next steps. Research shows that effective careers guidance can impact not only academic outcomes but social outcomes too. In particular self confidence and maturity. Careers education EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	4,6,7
<i>Enhanced transition for identified Year 7 students (1 additional day) and additional parental meeting</i>	Dotterer and Wehrspann (2016) highlight the positive correlation between increased parental engagement and increased attitude to learning and academic achievement. Working with Parents to Support Children's Learning EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) Evidence from the EEF's Teaching and Learning Toolkit suggests that effective parental engagement can lead to learning gains of +3 months over the course of a year.	2,5,7

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

Budgeted cost: £ 35,618.19

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Heads of Year, SWO and ISWs to prioritise PP students when co-ordinating and delivering support and intervention with regards to Attendance, homework and behaviour, and liaising with parents and carers.	EEF toolkit – Parental engagement New guidance report published: Working with Parents to Support... EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) Evidence from the EEF's Teaching and Learning Toolkit suggests that effective parental engagement can lead to learning gains of +3 months over the course of a year.	2, 5, 6,7
<i>Small group mentoring for students who are finding it more challenging to engage positively in the classroom, with the aim of reducing the number of sanctions they receive.</i>	Mentoring EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) Evidence suggests that some pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds show low engagement with or have low expectations of schooling. Mentoring interventions may be more beneficial for these pupils, as the development of trusting relationships with an adult or older peer can provide a different source of support.	2,6,7
<i>Implementation of our 11 by 11 programme to ensure all students receive 11 key experiences linked to Careers and Enrichment- Futures days and Enrichment days</i>	Ofsted research (2019) places emphasis on improving cultural capital, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Student surveys reflect greater enjoyment and engagement in school as enrichment activities offer children a context for learning and a stimulus to trigger their interest.	4,6,7
<i>1:1 barrier mentoring with identified students by the PP Champion and members of SLT. This will focus on attendance and behaviour.</i>	Mentoring EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) Evidence suggests that some pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds show low engagement with or have low expectations of schooling. Mentoring interventions may be more beneficial for these pupils, as the development of trusting relationships with an adult or older peer can provide a different source of support.	
<i>Provision of homework club</i>	EEF Teaching and Learning toolkit highlights that:	5,7

	<p>1) Homework has a positive impact on average (+5 months), particularly with pupils in secondary schools.</p> <p>2) Some pupils may not have a quiet space for home learning – it is important for schools to consider how home learning can be supported (e.g. through providing homework clubs for pupils)</p> <p>Fan et al. (2017) produced a meta-analysis that showed a positive relationship between engagement with homework and academic achievement.</p>	
<i>A proactive approach to ensuring parents of PP students are aware of our trips and visits subsidisation to maximise attendance on trips by disadvantaged students</i>	<p>Ofsted research (2019) places emphasis on improving cultural capital, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Student surveys reflect greater enjoyment and engagement in school as enrichment activities offer children a context for learning and a stimulus to trigger their interest.</p> <p>EEF – sports participation increases educational engagement and attainment. EEF – outdoor adventure learning shows positive benefits on academic learning and self-confidence.</p>	4,5
<i>Support with uniform costs and materials needed to access the curriculum. (E.g Art equipment/ Ingredients for DT Food lessons etc)</i>	<p>Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs - Simply Psychology "When a deficit need has been 'more or less' satisfied it will go away, and our activities become habitually directed towards meeting the next set of needs that we have yet to satisfy. These then become our salient needs." It is crucial that physiological needs are met if we hope for students to focus on growth and development academically.</p>	4,6,7
<i>Subsidised Music lessons for disadvantaged students who show aptitude/ desire.</i>	<p>Ofsted research (2019) places emphasis on improving cultural capital, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Student surveys reflect greater enjoyment and engagement in school as enrichment activities offer children a context for learning and a stimulus to trigger their interest.</p> <p>EEF – sports participation increases educational engagement and attainment. EEF – outdoor adventure learning shows positive benefits on academic learning and self-confidence.</p>	4,7

<i>Provision of snacks at break (in addition to Free School meal) to account for a later lunch following a change to the school day.</i>	Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs - Simply Psychology "When a deficit need has been 'more or less' satisfied it will go away, and our activities become habitually directed towards meeting the next set of needs that we have yet to satisfy. These then become our salient needs." It is crucial that physiological needs are met if we hope for students to focus on growth and development academically.	4,7
<i>Direct funding of resources for disadvantaged students</i>	Acknowledging the importance of identifying the specific needs of individual disadvantaged students (Gross 2021), some PP funding will be used to remove barriers outside of the scope of this strategy.	4,6,7
The Year 7 BBQ is an annual event that invites new parents into our school community, fostering positive working relationships between staff and parents.	Dotterer and Wehrspann (2016) highlight the positive correlation between increased parental engagement and increased attitude to learning and academic achievement. Working with Parents to Support Children's Learning EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) Evidence from the EEF's Teaching and Learning Toolkit suggests that effective parental engagement can lead to learning gains of +3 months over the course of a year.	5

Total budgeted cost: £ 142,472.75

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Challenge 1

The progress of disadvantaged learners as a group is lower than that of the non-disadvantaged learners

Some key attainment measures are improving for our PP learners. In the year academic year 2024-25, Pupil premium gap of students attaining Grade 4+ in English and Maths narrowed from -43 (2024) to -38 (2025). Whilst a gap still exists, this is an encouraging direction of travel that was a key focus last academic year.

Gaps continue to exist when considering Grades 5+ in English and Maths (-10) and overall attainment (-2.32) which will continue to be a focus this academic year.

In 2025, 1 PP student was NEET despite significant work with a transition mentor, and despite reaching a post-16 provider. This young person moved out of county at the end of year 11. Our latest data shows that all others of our students last year progressed to post-16 destinations, whether that be further education, employment or training.

Our current year 11 PP students are all being prioritised for careers advice and a transition mentor. A new data tracking model will support senior and middle leaders to more closely monitor the progress of our students as they move through the school.

Challenge 2

The attendance of disadvantaged learners as a group is lower than that of the non-disadvantaged learners

Sir William Romney's School employs a graduated response to attendance, with all stakeholders – from tutors through classroom teachers and senior leaders – having specific responsibilities. This ensures that all staff hold a shared responsibility for promoting and improving student attendance.

Overall attendance comparison 2024/2025

	<u>Non-PP students</u>	<u>PP Students</u>	<u>GAP</u>
<u>Attendance 2023-2024</u>	92.46%	89.71%	-2.75%
<u>Attendance 2024-2025</u>	92.72%	87.88%	-4.84%

Despite targeted work with Pupil premium students last academic year, the overall attendance gap widened for our PP students. There is a context to be considered, in that there was a reduction of the number of students on roll, meaning a greater percentage swing. Additionally, a key number of students were unable to attend school at all, due to poor physical and mental health.

The Persistent Absence gap remained the same last academic year but demonstrated a slight improvement due to shifting roll numbers.

There is a clear correlation between school attendance levels, and academic and social outcomes of young people. Therefore, the attendance of PP Students is a key focus in the academic year 2025-2026.

Challenge 3

Our disadvantaged learners can have low literacy skills and are more likely to live in homes with limited literacy resources

Literacy and oracy remain firm foundations upon which the SWR curriculum sits. Last academic year there was a clear focus on supporting reading in the classroom and the explicit teaching of tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary in all subject areas. Subject areas have outlined key vocabulary that is to be covered at certain points in the curriculum, which is communicated in lessons and through the curriculum maps on our school website. Staff have received CPD on the explicit teaching of vocabulary.

All students continue to be tested upon entry to the school for reading age, with those with reading ages below their chronological age identified for intervention. Dependent upon the gap between their reading age and chronological age, students engage with one of two interventions. 'That reading thing' is a phonic recovery programme that re-teaches phonics, allowing students to quickly fill gaps in their understanding of the building blocks of reading. Some students will instead engage with precision teaching over a period of 8 weeks. These interventions continue to be very effective. Key stage 3 pupil premium students, made between 6- and 24-months progress when engaging with reading intervention at SWR.

The development of reading remains an absolute priority as we ensure our Pupil premium students are empowered to engage effectively with the curriculum.

Challenge 4

Our disadvantaged students have a lower engagement with wider curricular opportunities and as a result their accumulation of cultural capital and aspirational goals can be limited.

SWR futures days are very much designed with our Pupil premium students in mind. These drop-down days provide students with invaluable opportunities to build their aspirations and consider life after Sir William Romney's School. During our three enrichment days, students met a number of employers as part of our jobs fayre, engage with panels of employers who gave guidance on entering industries, and visit a number of workplaces. Our Year 10 students visited Higher education institutions, to give them a flavour of university life. As a result of these visits, one of our students completed a university summer school.

Our three enrichment days also offered students important opportunities to engage with a catalogue of trips and visits. These were subsidised for Pupil premium students, to ensure meaningful experiences irrespective of financial position. Our Black History month celebrations showed us play host to an inspirational African Drumming workshop exclusively for our PP students across the school.

We are passionate that alongside futures days and enrichment days, our students have broad and powerful extracurricular experiences as part of the normal school week. The school offers an impressive suite of lunchtime and after school clubs, with more than 30 clubs offered each week at SWR.

Challenge 5

Parents of some of our disadvantaged students are less engaged with their children's learning and some do not have a quiet place to work or access to relevant resources and equipment.

Last Year the school worked with our disadvantaged students to ensure they had sufficient resources to complete home learning. Practically, we ensured students had access to technology by loaning school laptops and walked parents and children through the practicalities of accessing online learning platforms.

We recognise that our school serves a rural county over a wide geographical area. This can pose additional challenges for parents of our pupil premium students who find it more challenging to travel to school events such as parents' evenings and tutor evenings. Last year we ensured a hybrid approach to these important events, offering parents the option of attending online through the school cloud portal. My plan, My Plan+ and EHCP meetings also were conducted as hybrid meetings, ensuring that parents had choices about the way they attended.

Our weekly homework club continues to be well attended, providing a quiet space and adult to support to complete homework tasks. This, alongside our homework mentoring has led to a reduction in homework related sanctions for pupil premium students, and an increased in the level of homework engagement.

Challenge 6

Our disadvantaged students engage less effectively with quality first teaching

Last year, our pupil premium students attained a greater proportion of sanctions than their non-pupil premium peers. Despite making up 24.63% of our student population, pupil premium students spent a disproportionate time out of the classroom through reset referrals and Fixed Term exclusions.

	Non-pupil premium (75.37%)	Pupil premium (24.63%)
D20	52.8%	47.2%
Reset	46.6%	53.4%
Fixed Term Exclusions	57.4%	42.6%

The number of RESET referrals shown a slight decline in 2024-2025, from 55.6% in the previous academic year.

Behaviour and engagement are a key focus in the academic year 2025-2026.

Challenge 7

Some of our disadvantaged students experience low-self-esteem, poor mental health, and aspirations

Our early help offer has been significantly developed meaning we have more comprehensive resources to draw upon to support students who have challenges with their mental health. Our students continue to benefit from support from our school counsellor and low intensity CBT through Young Minds Matter and we have secured further targeted intervention from Musicworks (transition to secondary school) and Art space Cinderfor (circus skills and visual arts) to provide therapeutic support for our students. The school continues to develop strong relationships with external services in order to provide bespoke referrals for students, dependent on their individual circumstances.

Our SEND department deliver Lego therapy, thrive and physical regulation sessions that support our students with their mental health and wellbeing, and enable more focussed engagement with teaching and learning. Our Child-Friendly early help offer is widely promoted around school, providing signposting to students who may not feel ready to talk about their challenges. We continue to offer bespoke referrals to a wealth of external agencies to ensure that our students individual mental health needs are provided for. All students have a termly wellbeing assembly, which embeds the 5 ways to wellbeing and facilitates all students to incorporate evidence based strategies to improve wellbeing into their lives.