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 outcomes for disadvantaged pupils last academic year.

School Overview

Detail	Data
School name	Westlands Secondary School
Number of pupils in school	1498 (Y7-11)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	30.6%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers **(3 year plans are recommended)**	3 year plan 2025 - 2028
Date this statement was published	15th December
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2026
Statement authorised by	Miss C Honess
Pupil premium lead	Mrs B Arculus-Pennells
Governor / Trustee lead	Mr A Barham

Funding Overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£480,031
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£0
Catch-up funding rolled forward from previous year (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
School-led tutor funding for Pupil Premium students (enter the proportionate amount if not using the entire fund)	£0
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	£480,031

Part A: Pupil Premium Strategy Plan

Statement of Intent

Our staff are fully committed to making sure every young person, no matter what socio-economic or family background they have, gets the education opportunities and outcomes they deserve.

Crucially, we place the identification and support of our most vulnerable pupils at the forefront of all decision-making. This includes pupils who fall under Pupil Premium (PP), those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and Looked After Children (LAC) or Previously Looked After Children (PLAC). We maintain constant vigilance over these groups, recognising they are at risk of achieving less well, and we ensure additional, targeted support is immediately deployed to mitigate these risks.

Westlands School uses well researched, evidence-based strategies that aim to improve the attainment of our disadvantaged pupils. Based on Sutton Trust research and the school's knowledge of its pupils, its community and what works best for our school, we place the following principles and strategies at the heart of all learning as we believe that they produce the best results for our pupils.

- Having very high expectations in terms of the standards, achievement, attendance, and behaviour of every pupil across the ability spectrum.
- Support from high quality, highly trained, experienced teachers and teaching assistants who have a variety of knowledge and expertise across a range of areas and needs.
- Prioritising pupil premium pupils with high quality, clear feedback about their work and ways they could improve it to move their learning forward.
- One to one support for specific needs, such as learning difficulties or social and emotional matters as well as daily reading and writing.
- Personalised intervention which targets and supports individual pupils' needs.
- Involving our parents and carers in the learning process as much as possible.
- Enabling children in receipt of Pupil Premium to participate in events, trips, and extra-curricular activities so that their cultural capital is developed and they are not disenfranchised from experiences which broaden their understanding of the wider world.
- Ensuring that children in receipt of Pupil Premium participate in activities relating to careers education so that they have high aspirations for adulthood and their future careers/employment.

We keep the strategies and principles above at the heart of our decision-making on expenditure of the Pupil Premium and publish a list of specific learning opportunities based on our principles, on our school website.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	A significant attainment gap in literacy and reading skills exists between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils upon arrival at school. This gap is particularly acute for pupils with intersecting vulnerabilities, such as those who are Pupil Premium and also have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (PP/SEND), and for our Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC). This disparity is well-documented by research from organisations like the Education Policy Institute (EPI). This places a greater urgency on addressing the foundational skills of literacy, with additional, highly-targeted support at the forefront to ensure all pupils can succeed.
2	Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds consistently make slower academic progress than their non-Pupil Premium peers. This attainment gap, confirmed by leading research from the Education Policy Institute (EPI) as being at its widest in over a decade, is magnified by intersecting vulnerabilities. Our data and national trends show that pupils who are Pupil Premium and also have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (PP/SEND), alongside Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC), face the most significant barriers to success.
3	Pupil Premium students face significant attendance challenges, which is a major factor contributing to academic underachievement. Their attendance is below the national average for all pupils. This trend is well-documented by UK government data, as evidenced by the Department for Education's (DfE) statistics, which consistently show a disparity in attendance rates between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.
4	According to school case studies and research from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), children from disadvantaged backgrounds often have weaker social-emotional skills than their peers. This can result in complex social, emotional, and mental health needs that negatively impact their well-being and academic progress. This risk is significantly heightened for our most vulnerable cohorts. Specifically, Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) often present with acute attachment-related trauma, and pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) frequently require additional support to manage their emotional regulation. Therefore, a tailored, individualised approach is crucial for these students, as universal strategies may not be effective.
5	Parental engagement is a significant factor in a student's intellectual and social development, and it has a powerful effect on educational achievement. While all parents want to see their children succeed, some face barriers to engagement, such as time constraints or a lack of confidence in their own academic skills.
6	The number of Pupil Premium students becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) continues to be a national concern, with the social disadvantage gap widening and directly impacting their progression into further education, training, and employment. The proportion of students in Swale categorised as NEET is higher than national average.

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. Increase level of progress in literacy and reading for pupils with a specific focus on Year 7, 8 and 9 pupils eligible for PP.	By the end of the year the percentage of students in stanines 1-3 will be reduced to below 20% in each year group, with the mean SAS for targeted pupils increasing by 5 points. Intervention records will show successful engagement with reading and literacy skills. All underachieving PP pupils in years 7, 8 and 9 will have access to literacy and reading intervention and termly assessments. 100% of pupils who have a reading age of more than two years below their chronological age will receive tailored intervention.
2. To improve rates of progress for all PP pupils, with a particular focus on KS3 English, geography and MFL and in KS4, English, mathematics, and science.	The gap between PP and non PP pupils in KS3 English and EBacc subjects will be reduced. PP Basics for 4+ and 5+ will have improved compared to historical performance (24/25 32% 4+ and 22% 5+) A8 for PP will improve compared to historical performance (24/25 30.3) and the gap is closing compared to national average. A8 has been selected to measure progress due to P8 not being used as a performance measurement for this academic year.
3. Attendance is in line or better than national average for disadvantaged students, particularly for those in receipt of FSM.	The number of persistent absentees (PA) (in particular those in receipt of FSM) among pupils eligible for PP will reduce and be inline or better than the national average. Overall attendance among pupils eligible for PP to improve (in particular those in receipt of FSM), working towards PP attendance being in line with non PP pupils and the national average. Average PP and FSM attendance gap is closing compared to historical data.
4. Tailored intervention and supportive strategies are put in place for PP pupils which improves attainment as well as supporting social, emotional, and mental wellbeing of our pupils.	KS3 PP pupils with a particular focus on Year 7 and Year 9 are identified and prioritised to receive 1:3 literacy and reading intervention to ensure pupils make expected levels of progress. Evidence-based strategies are in place to ensure that pupils in KS4 are supported with the necessary catch-up and intervention to ensure good outcomes are achieved. Pupil premium funding is utilised effectively so that all PP pupils are given the support needed to make substantial progress by the end of the academic year. Personal guidance interviews with a qualified professional and internal support from identified school staff, allow students to make informed decisions about their future choices and opportunities available to them.
5. To improve the engagement of parents and carers in the learning process.	PP parents' attendance at parents' evenings and other targeted events will improve in comparison from last year as a result of providing both face-to-face and virtual parents' evening opportunities, supported

	through effective and increased liaison and communication from the school. Increased opportunities for parents to become involved in their child's learning such as parental workshops, information and options evenings. Attendance to parental workshops, information and option evenings are tracked and monitored to allow for further focussed parental communication and support.
6. To reduce the number of Yr11/12/13 pupils who are NEET (or maintain at 0%) by targeted CEIAG for Pupil Premium students.	Early identification of potential NEET pupils are raised with the NEET team at TEP (The Education People) to offer workshops and additional guidance for pupils. NEET team interventions are carefully monitored and tracked to ensure effectiveness of impact. Regular communication with TEP is maintained to identify any future NEETs in order to offer further focus support. External support from CXK planned to support PP students as a priority at the beginning of term 1. 0% PP are reported NEET.

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: £136,356.46

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Employ and retain additional teachers in English, mathematics and science.	According to the EEF toolkit, as the size of a class or teaching group gets smaller it is suggested that the range of approaches a teacher can employ and the amount of attention each student will receive will increase, improving outcomes for pupils - resulting in approximately two months' additional progress for pupils, on average.	1 and 2
Employ and retain specialist teachers to teach in our SEND specialist provision.	Those students with a specialist need will be supported by a specialist, withdrawn from selected lessons to receive targeted intervention, to improve access to curriculum content. Evidence indicates that one to one tuition can be effective, providing five additional months' progress on average (EEF).	1 and 2
Classroom strategies – seating plans, class profiles, feedback,	Our targeted questioning, class profiles, seating plans and feedback strategies ensures that we	1 and 2

use of keywords and assessment.	prioritise bespoke strategies which focus on improving outcomes for our PP pupils, emphasising the importance of resilience and independence. EEF has shown that feedback studies tend to show very high effects on learning. Research evidence about feedback was part of the rationale for assessment for learning (AfL). One evaluation of AfL indicated an impact of half of a GCSE grade per student per subject is achievable, which would be in line with the wider evidence about feedback. Our focus on reference to keywords and definitions every lesson, as part of our house style, aims to help extend pupil familiarity of key vocabulary. This is supported by the EEF Improving Literacy Guidance Report (2019), recommendation 2.	
Access to technology.	Pupils' access to technology has been an important factor affecting the extent to which they can learn effectively at home. In particular, lack of access to technology has been a barrier for many disadvantaged children. Digital technology can add up to +4 months progress (EEF, 2020). In 2021 EEF published guidance on how using digital technology can improve learning. They highlight that it can improve the impact of pupil practice as well as improving access to modelling, explanation and feedback.	1,2 and 4
Access to subject specific texts and resources.	The evidence shows according to the EEF toolkit that the impact of homework, on average, is five months' additional progress. Therefore, having access to subject specific text books and other resources, including web-based resources will support attainment and progress. The provision of additional materials to support pupils with their revision will also aid further progression.	1, 2 and 4

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

Budgeted cost: £127,476.16

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Learning Leaders.	Learning Leaders ensure targeted support for focus groups by rigorously evaluating and monitoring pupil progress. They provide tailored strategies to raise attainment, supporting the implementation of targeted academic approaches and coordinating specific intervention, such as one-to-one or small group tuition.	1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
Individual pupil support.	Evidence suggests that TA's can have a positive impact on academic achievement. Where teaching	1, 2 and 4

	assistant impact is measured and student progress reviewed frequently, pupils' needs can be met to support progress in lessons. TA intervention can have limited impact if not targeted effectively and impact monitored (EEF).	
Small group or one-to-one tuition.	Small group tuition has an average impact of four months' additional progress over the course of a year (EEF). One to one and small group tuition are both effective interventions where it is targeted at pupils' specific needs.	1, 2 and 4
Out of School Learning Opportunities.	The average impact of approaches involving extending school time is approximately an additional three months' progress over the course of a year. The school has successfully offered a range of out of school learning opportunities including extending the school day for KS4 and KS5 so that pupils can receive additional intervention and tuition. Prioritising attendance at OSL and holiday sessions, together with targeted intervention for Y11 PP students is a proven strategy to support progress.	1, 2 and 4

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

Budgeted cost: £216,198.38

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Working with families to improve attendance.	The importance of attendance for the whole school environment has increased, with the funding for an additional attendance support worker (TSAS) having a positive impact. This role, which involves regularly meeting with parents, working with community staff, and challenging poor attendance, is crucial. All research indicates that low attendance is the single biggest factor preventing academic progress. This is particularly true for disadvantaged pupils. Analysis from the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), published in Autumn 2024 and based on Department for Education (DfE) data, shows that children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) were nearly four times more likely to be severely absent (missing 50% or more of school) than their peers in the Autumn 2024 term.	3 and 4

Reading intervention and effective response to analysis of reading data.	Components of language identified as an area of weakness from moderation and historic gap analysis. SAT English network groups have successfully trialled this approach using literacy intervention strategies. EEF research shows on average, reading comprehension approaches, deliver an additional six months' progress. Standardised tests, e.g. NGRT reading tests, can provide valuable insights into the specific strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils.	1 and 2
Working with families to improve parental engagement.	International research has shown that parental engagement (of various kinds) has a positive impact on many indicators of student achievement. (Family School & Community Partnerships Bureau). This is also supported by the EEF Toolkit- parental engagement suggests +3 months progress.	3, 4 and 5
Aspirational exposure.	Although the Sutton Trust Toolkit suggests that aspirational interventions have little impact on educational achievement, we have, in school case studies, shown that raising our pupils' aspirations incentivises them and therefore improves attainment. It has also shown that it improves confidence and resilience aligning with our core RADAR principles. Providing careers guidance that links to the GATSBY benchmarks will allow pupils to make links between subject content and career opportunities.	1, 2, 4, 5 and 6
Enrichment opportunities.	Research suggests that PP pupils accessing extra-curricular activities, trips and experiences promotes high aspirations about their future which leads to higher academic progress.	1, 2, 4, 5 and 6
Uniform and equipment.	Many PP parents experience material poverty in terms of resources and equipment, so providing equipment and uniform allows PP students to fully access the curriculum and school community.	3 and 5
Whole school focus on improving attendance of PP pupils, in particular those in receipt of FSM.	Research from the Department for Education (DfE) consistently shows a strong link between attendance and academic attainment at Key Stage 4. The latest data reveals that pupils with higher rates of absence achieve significantly lower GCSE grades on average. For example, pupils who are persistently absent (missing 10% or more of school) are far less likely to achieve a strong pass in English and maths than their peers with good attendance. This reinforces that school attendance is a fundamental factor in a student's educational success.	2,3,4 and 6

Total budgeted cost: £ 480,031.00

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Pupil Premium Strategy Outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the 2024 to 2025 academic year.

Please find an outline of some of the internal measures that have been used to evaluate the impact of last year's Pupil Premium Strategy.

Teaching

In line with the school's philosophy of promoting quality first teaching and learning, last year funds were deployed for specialist teachers within the English, mathematics, science, and specialist educational needs department.

Additional TLR posts were sustained to provide further capacity to our core areas of focus:

- Pupil Premium Coordinator
- Pupil Premium + Coordinator
- KS3 Reading Coordinator
- Three Deputy SENCo's, Pyramid Centre Manager and two Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA)
- Punctuality Improvement Coordinator

Specifically, the additional colleagues employed for the specialist educational needs TLR posts were deployed to prioritise support for pupils identified as Pupil Premium (PP) who also have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

In addition:

- The Pupil Premium + Coordinator was responsible for supporting students who fall under the Pupil Premium + category (those who are Looked After Children or Previously Looked After Children).
- A separate Pupil Premium Coordinator coordinates and liaises with colleagues across the school to ensure effective implementation of the funding strategy.

The National College offers a wide range of professional development and training resources. It allows for Professional Development (CPD) and upskilling in areas such as teaching and learning, curriculum, SEND and evidence based research. It also facilitates the completion of mandatory training such as safeguarding, data protection (GDPR), and health and safety. The use of this online platform has ensured that staff are not only compliant in all mandatory and essential training but able to benefit from the rich array of professional development opportunities to ensure quality first teaching. For the academic year 2024-2025, 1580 courses were completed by staff.

Targeted support

Small group internal tuition was delivered to 28 PP pupils in preparation for GCSE examinations in Y10 and Y11. 192 pupils received intervention overall, meaning 16% of pupils targeted engaging with the intervention were PP.

The impact of our reading and language development utilises NGRT testing to identify those students who need intervention. Strategies are in place to accelerate the impact on students' literacy levels, boost student engagement and embed reading skills more deeply by ensuring very regular, deliberate, practice. NGRT assessments have been chosen because they will permit detailed diagnosis of exactly what each student's needs are.

KS3 PP pupils received 1:3 literacy and reading support and were NGRT tested more frequently than non PP students. Pupils were regularly exposed to the academic word list taught in English lessons and implicitly taught across the curriculum.

NGRT data evidenced that underachieving PP pupils who were retested made significant improvements, with the number of pupils in Y9 who were below expected reading age decreased by 29% throughout the year, with Year 7 decreasing by 10% from a stronger starting point. While the number below chronological age did not decrease for Year 8, progress was within stanines 1-3 and improvements were made at the top end with the number of PP pupils above chronological age increasing by 35%.

NGRT data shows that Y7 PP students made significant progress throughout the year, with the mean SAS increasing by 2 points (96-98). The same occurred for Y8 and Y9, (93 to 95 and 91 to 93).

Dyslexia Gold improved the reading ages of targeted pupils and classes, primarily focusing on students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Pupil Premium (PP) eligibility.

Improvement in reading ages of pupils engaged on the Dyslexia Gold reading scheme was as follows:

Intervention	Number of Participants	The percentage of participants with RA increased by 6 months or more.
Dyslexia Gold (24/25)	78	100%

Additional specialist outside intervention for mental health and anxiety concerns by Willow counselling was delivered to target pupils throughout last year in order to support pupils' social and emotional needs.

Wider strategies

PP attendance has improved cumulatively by 3.8% compared to 23/24. FSM attendance was 85.6%, which is 0.8% lower than the national average. However, it is 0.7% higher when compared to the national similar school data provided by the DfE. Whole school attendance has significantly improved compared to 23/24, exceeding the DfE national similar school data by 0.8%. Despite this progress, the figure remains 0.2% below the national average, indicating that attendance must remain a key focus.

SEASS attendance team supported pupils and families last year specifically with persistent absentees, many of whom are eligible for PP. Cases were reviewed on an individual basis and showed an improvement of reducing persistent absence compared to the previous academic year. As a result persistent absence for PP pupils decreased by 9.8% from 23/24.

Specialist Pupil Premium + provision for LAC/PLAC includes targeted academic intervention (small group/one-to-one tuition) and comprehensive emotional wellbeing support, featuring both internal and external workshops and counselling. This support is strategically managed by a PP+ Coordinator, working alongside a dedicated Pastoral Support Manager to ensure every student's specific academic and pastoral needs are met.

We continue to maintain strong working relationships with The Education People NEET Team where 'at risk' pupils were identified for additional support and guidance. WSS career lead met with 'at risk' students to support applications and placements and were prioritised to receive CXK careers advice. Personal guidance was strategically planned throughout the year and 'at risk' pupils were monitored carefully and identified to the NEET team.

A hybrid of both virtual and face-to-face parents' evening opportunities were offered last year with the continued purchase of a digital virtual parents' evenings platform to allow more opportunities for parents and guardians to attend parents' evenings.

Year 11 parental workshops opportunities were provided to PP parents and guardians in the lead up to mock and real summer examinations. The workshops focussed on how parents and guardians can support their child in effective revision strategies. A Year 7 transition programme was designed alongside a Year 7 parental information evening in order to support the transition for pupils in Year 6 to Year 7. A Year 7 parental and pupil workshop was delivered by mathematics and science teachers to guide parents as to how best to support their children in these subject areas.

A range of trips and extra-curricular activities opportunities were provided to pupils and financial contributions were given to PP pupils.

Assessment and Outcomes

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

In 2025, the school's Pupil Premium (PP) Attainment 8 (A8) score was 30.3, which was within 1.8 points of the PP Local Authority (LA) average (32.1).

	All Pupils		Disadvantaged	
	Grade 5+	Grade 4+	Grade 5+	Grade 4+
Cohort (#)	316		85	
Basics (En/Mm)	**35%**	**57%**	**23%**	**33%**
School 2024	30%	58%	17%	39%
English (BoB)	**50%**	**64%**	**33%**	**39%**
School 2024	46%	70%	32%	51%
Mathematics	**44%**	**66%**	**26%**	**41%**
School 2024	42%	69%	28%	48%
Science (2x)	**38%**	**56%**	**28%**	**36%**
School 2024	39%	55%	26%	40%
Languages* %	**74%**	**91%**	**71%**	**100%**
School 2024	31%	60%	67%	100%
Humanities %	**31%**	**43%**	**19%**	**27%**
School 2024	23%	34%	10%	19%

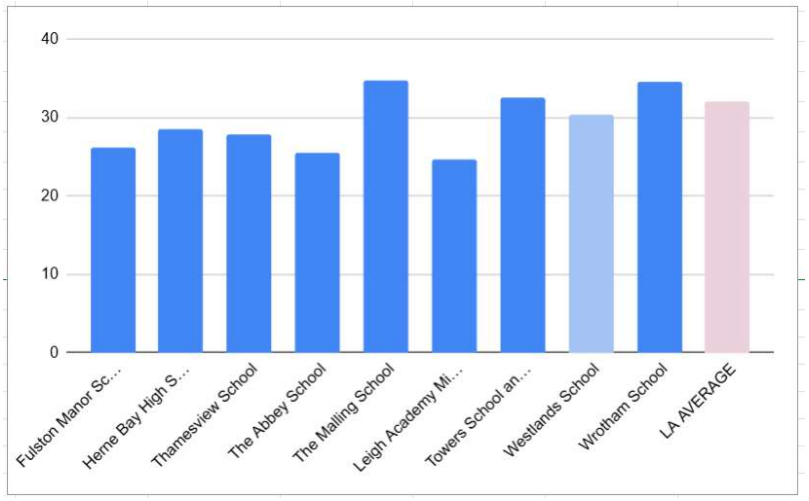
When comparing outcomes to 2023/24, a higher percentage of PP students achieved a '5+ Basics Measure', and the gap between PP and non-PP for this measure has closed by 6% from 2024.

Grade '5' in English and Science also improved when compared to last year. There were also significant improvements in PP pupil outcomes at 4+ and 5+ in Modern Foreign Languages and Humanities.

Based on our internal calculations using our data analysis software and national data, overall student progress improved by 0.1 compared to 2023/24.

Our monitoring of the progress of our Pupil Premium pupils continues to be a focus area, with relevant interventions being adapted to suit pupils' needs.

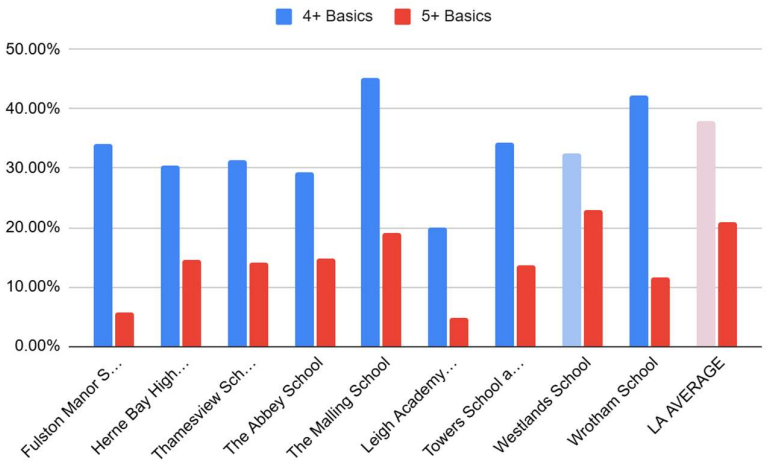
The impact of these strategies is seen in:
The average A8 score of our disadvantaged pupils when compared to some other non selective schools in Kent.



The Open basket was our strongest area for PP attainment and contributed to our overall PP A8 score which is marginally below the Local Authority average. The graph below shows our performance in the Basics Measure for

PP students. At 5+, our PP students achieved higher than the Local Authority average whilst we are lower at the 4+ measure. This is an area of focus for the forthcoming academic year.

The 'Basic Measure' of our disadvantaged pupils when compared to some other non selective schools in Kent.



Externally Provided Programmes

Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you purchased in the previous academic year. This will help the Department for Education identify which ones are popular in England.

Programme	Provider
Dyslexia / Literacy Gold	Dyslexia / Literacy Gold
CAT 4s	GL Assessments
NGRT	GL Assessments
Accelerated Reader	Renaissance Learning
Sparx	Sparx
Seneca	Seneca

Additional activity

Our pupil premium strategy will be supplemented by additional activity that is not being funded by pupil premium or recovery premium. That will include:

- embedding more effective practice around feedback. EEF evidence demonstrates this has significant benefits for pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils.
- ensuring pupils and parents know the content of the curriculum to be delivered and associated Driving Questions.
- utilising support from our counselling providers which provide specialist outside intervention for mental health and anxiety concerns.
- offering a wide range of high-quality extracurricular activities to boost wellbeing, behaviour, attendance, and aspiration. Activities (e.g., The Duke of Edinburgh's Award), will focus on building life skills such as confidence, resilience, and socialising. Disadvantaged pupils will be encouraged and supported to participate.