

# Pupil premium strategy statement – Cantell School

This statement details our school’s use of pupil premium (and recovery 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	1284 (at grant allocation)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	41.1% (at grant allocation)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers ( <b>3 year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year</b> )	2024-2027
Date this statement was published	Dec 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	Dec 2026
Statement authorised by	Harry Kutty
Pupil premium lead	Kat Cox
Governor / Trustee lead	Peter Hilditch

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£564,375
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years ( <i>enter £0 if not applicable</i> )	£0
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b> <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>	£564,375

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

### Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Lower average attendance
2	Lower average prior attainment on entry
3	Lower average literacy and numeracy levels on entry
4	Difficulty forming an effective home-school working relationship with the families of some students
5	Lower initial aspirations held by some PP students and difficulties with independence affecting chance of successfully completing post-16 education or training

### 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
Improve the attendance for PP students so that as many as possible are at a level that supports maximum progress (93+% in our current context)	Reduce the percentage of PP students that are persistently absent to 15% (in line with our historic figure for all pupils)
Reduce the percentage gap between PP and Non PP students securing a positive progress 8 score	Reduce to 10%
Reduce the attainment 8 gap between PP and Non PP students	Reduce to 5 points
Reduce the 5+ English and Maths gap	Reduce to 7%
Reduce PP NEETs	Aim for zero NEETs

## 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: £286,565.43

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Development of the 'Creating Experts in...' approach. Which is the basis for all whole school CPD including the professional development cycle, teaching and learning bursts, teaching and learning briefings and training on INSET days.</p>	<p>Our varied CPD for teachers and student-centred support staff is based around fine-tuning a set of ingredients for exceptional teaching and learning. Funding is used for the Lead Practitioner's time, an Assistant Headteacher's time, and time for staff to be trained and then involved in the professional development cycle.</p>	<p>2 &amp; 3</p>
<p>Investment in Initial Teacher Training and recruitment of the strongest resulting teachers.</p>	<p>"Evidence from across the English school system shows that using your pupil premium funding to improve teaching quality is the most effective way to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils."  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-effective-use-and-accountability#non-eligible-pupils">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-effective-use-and-accountability#non-eligible-pupils</a>.            With the national teacher recruitment crisis, we have found that being heavily involved in the initial training of our future teachers is one of the best ways to ensure high quality effective teachers are available to teach our disadvantaged students. Funding is used for the Lead Practitioner's time, an Assistant Headteacher's time and time for staff to be trained in and carry out mentoring.</p>	<p>2,3 &amp; 5</p>

<p>EMPOWER Lead</p> <p>Our EMPOWER programme aims to address social mobility gaps through tailored interventions, high-quality teaching, and enrichment opportunities. It focuses on cultivating essential life skills such as resilience, initiative, organisation, independence, and innovation, ensuring every pupil is equipped to thrive in an ever-changing world and achieve their full potential, regardless of background.</p>	<p>The Skills Imperative 2035 - Shifting Sands: Anticipating changes in the future labour market and supporting the workers at greatest risk – indicates that around 12 million people in England work in occupations that are projected to decline between now and 2035, with more than a million jobs potentially disappearing in the coming decade. With such huge changes in a landscape where employers already reported that many school leavers did not have the necessary skills for their sector, it is important that we have a dedicated member of staff keeping up to date with the latest research and recommendations to lead our EMPOWER programme.</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Pupil Premium Lead</p>	<p>As over a third of our students are classified as disadvantaged, we need a coordinated approach to ensure their needs are being met by the wider staff body, which involves extensive targeted quality assurance and regular communication with staff.</p>	<p>1-5</p>
<p>Non-teaching Year Leaders</p>	<p>This approach has been used successfully for a significant number of years at Cantell. By having non-teaching Year Leaders, it gives them sufficient time to provide the majority of the required pastoral support to our most vulnerable students, freeing up teacher time to focus on the highest quality teaching and learning, which is “the most effective way to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils”, EEF.</p>	<p>1-5</p>

<p>Learning2Learn Provision. An alternative provision for students that struggle in mainstream lessons for a variety of reasons. There is a strong focus on supporting students to reintegrate into mainstream lessons when they are ready.</p>	<p>This approach is also discussed in the wider strategies section from the point of view of the students accessing the provision, but we have also allocated funding from our teaching allocation because we have evidence of the negative impact the behaviour of these students was having on teaching and learning when they were in mainstream without the personalised support they needed. This evidence comes from our behaviour point records.</p>	<p>4-5</p>
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**Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support, structured interventions)**

Budgeted cost: £138,129.85

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Evidence that supports this approach</b>	<b>Challenge number(s) addressed</b>
<p>Intervention Lead</p>	<p>Self-evaluation highlighted that although we had been using lots of successful intervention strategies, we weren't always sharing the best practice across areas and sometimes students were receiving duplicated interventions. During the last strategy period, we appointed an Intervention Lead to coordinate and quality assure our interventions, which has already given us more evidence of which interventions seem to be most successful and allowed us to target them more effectively.</p>	<p>1-5</p>

<p>Reading interventions, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading buddies</li> <li>• Reading ambassadors</li> <li>• Phonics interventions</li> <li>• Comprehension interventions</li> </ul> <p>Staffing includes the Reading Buddies lead, a phonics teacher and two LSAs, and Southampton University provide the pay for a number of University and College students to read with our young people.</p>	<p>DfE Research evidence on reading for pleasure Education standards research team May 2012 – page 9 benefits of reading for pleasure. Success of the reading buddies project in 2021-22.</p> <p>Evidence from reading tests and SATs scores show that a large number of our year 7 PP students arrive to us behind age related expectations for reading, which affects their ability to access the curriculum.</p> <p>From the EEF teaching and learning toolkit. Reading comprehension strategies - Very high impact for very low cost based on extensive evidence</p>	<p>2,3 &amp; 5</p>
<p>Early maths</p> <p>We are funding diagnostic testing to find specific needs of the students at risk of underachieving to ensure the correct intervention can take place.</p>	<p>For the last strategy period our intended outcome for the Grade 5+ in English and maths measure was to reduce the gap to -7%. Unlike the other two academic outcome measures we did not meet our intended outcome within the 90%+ attendance cohort and which gave evidence that there is further work to do here beyond improving attendance. It should be noted that the disadvantaged students with 90%+ attendance do achieve well in maths, but the non-disadvantaged students achieve exceptionally well and we want the same for all of our students.</p>	<p>2 &amp; 3</p>

<p>IAG Lead organises a range of interventions for potential NEETs, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College visits</li> <li>• Post 16 applications and transitional support</li> <li>• Careers advice</li> <li>• Work experience support</li> <li>• Extended work experience placements</li> <li>• Work with local employers</li> </ul>	<p>“The link between time spent NEET and poor health is partly due to an increased likelihood of unemployment, low wages, or low-quality work later on in life. Being NEET can also have an impact on unhealthy behaviours and involvement in crime.” “Because the chances of becoming NEET follow a social gradient, reducing the proportion of people NEET could help to reduce health inequalities.” REF: Reducing the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET). This is a huge priority to ensure a good quality of life for our students in the future.</p>	<p>5</p>
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## Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £139,679.72

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Welfare - Emotional and mental health support Students are prioritised by need but, where possible, PP students will be triaged first and allocated the appropriate support from one of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-teaching year leader support</li> <li>• Mentoring</li> <li>• Wellbeing hub support</li> <li>• Support hub support (for those with SEND)</li> <li>• Attendance support</li> <li>• Safeguarding team support</li> </ul>	<p>Strategies that have been used within Cantell successfully over a number of years – success measured by parent, student and teacher feedback. The wellbeing hub was new in 2023/24 and is already proving successful in improving the attendance of some previously persistent non-attenders.</p> <p>From the EEF teaching and learning toolkit. Mentoring - Low impact for moderate cost based on moderate evidence, but in our context the results seem promising as measured from ImpactEd surveys, so worth persevering and continuing to monitor.</p>	<p>1,4 &amp; 5</p>
<p>Engagement with parents – ensuring parents are able to support their children at home, both academically and pastorally. Non-teaching year leaders (to enable frequent and swift contact home).</p>	<p>From the EEF teaching and learning toolkit. Parental engagement - Moderate impact for very low cost based on extensive evidence.</p> <p>Non-teaching year leaders have been used in our context over a number of years with a very high success – particularly with safeguarding our most disadvantaged students.</p>	<p>4</p>

<p>Dedication of Deputy Headteacher's time to whole school drive on attendance. Involves targeted approach for PP students with intervention ranging from lesson A conversations to 1:1 meetings, depending on % attendance for the student and their circumstances.</p>	<p>Attendance is our biggest barrier to progress for our PP students as identified in the analysis of GCSE results for a number of years and therefore needs to be a high priority at all levels of Leadership.</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>Learning2Learn Provision. An alternative provision for students that struggle in mainstream lessons for a variety of reasons. There is a strong focus on supporting students to reintegrate into mainstream lessons when they are ready.</p>	<p>A number of studies report that a disproportionate number of PP students are excluded from schools in the UK and this can have a significant negative impact on their future life chances.</p> <p>School exclusion: a literature review on the continued disproportionate exclusion of certain children reports: "Many interesting themes emerged in the literature around alternative provision (AP), including a range of studies in which pupils reported positive experiences of AP" There were negative effects found where APs lacked enough quality of teaching or curriculum coverage. This is why we have invested heavily in our Learning2Learn provision and timetable our most experienced teachers to teach there with the support of specialist staff that work just with those students (the majority of which are PP). Success over past years also shows the positive impact on students in mainstream lessons while their peers are given the support needed to be able to reintegrate into mainstream lessons at a later date without negatively affecting learning for the rest of the class.</p>	<p>1-5</p>

<p>Trips and visits – to increase the cultural capital of our students, ensure the curriculum has real world meaning to them and give them further opportunities to develop their EMPOWER skills in an engaging way. We allocate funds to ensure PP students can access a wide range of trips and ensuring our head of Student Experience has sufficient time to ensure all PP students are experiencing a range of trips.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Subject-to-background1-1.pdf">https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Subject-to-background1-1.pdf</a> demonstrates the positive impact that trips and visits can have on our PP students, especially those that are HPPA (high potential or prior attaining).</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Support Hub - We have invested in two Deputy Leaders of SEND to recognise the large cross over between our PP cohort and our SEND cohort. Both groups tend to underachieve nationally and therefore we have increased capacity to ensure they can receive the specialist support necessary.</p>	<p>The extra capacity allows us as a school to act on the EEF's 5 recommendations to support special educational needs in mainstream schools. Particularly when it comes to offering advice to teachers to 'ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching'.</p>	<p>2, 3 &amp; 4</p>

**Total budgeted cost: £564,375**

## Part B: Review of the previous academic year

### Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

#### All 2025 data is based on SISRA estimates

This strategy takes us into the second year of a 3 year pupil premium strategy plan, below is the assessment of our progress towards the intended outcomes.

NB – As stated by the DfE “Performance measures based on qualification results from 2022/23 cannot be directly compared to measures from 2021/22. This is because a different grading approach was used in 2021/22, to take account of the impact of the pandemic.” In addition to this CAGs (centre assessed grades) were awarded in 2020 and TAGs (teacher assessed grades) were awarded in 2021. Progress measures were not used for the 2025 leavers as they did not have KS2 scores, so any included below are SISRA estimates.

**Prior Attainment KS2 banding** – To be able to compare the results of different cohorts, we need to be mindful of their starting points.

- 2018 leavers: Lower 14%, Middle 39%, Upper 23%, NA 23%
- 2019 leavers: Lower 10%, Middle 47%, Upper 26%, NA 17%
- 2020 leavers: Lower 14%, Middle 39%, Upper 24%, NA 23%
- 2021 leavers: Lower 37%, Middle 34%, Upper 8%, NA 20%
- 2022 leavers: Lower 27%, Middle 39%, Upper 9%, NA 25%
- 2023 leavers: Lower 25%, Middle 47%, Upper 17%, NA 11%
- 2024 leavers: Lower 27%, Middle 49%, Upper 18%, NA 7%
- 2025 leavers: Lower 22%, Middle 53%, Upper 7%, NA 18%

**Progress 8** – Our intended outcome was to reduce the percentage gap between PP and Non PP students that secure a positive progress 8 score, to -10%.

- 2018: PP 42.4%, Non-PP 59.7%, GAP -17.3%
- 2019: PP 47.9%, Non-PP 70.4%, GAP -22.5%
- 2020: PP 52.6%, Non-PP 65.4%, GAP -12.8% CAGs
- 2021: Not available TAGs
- 2022: PP 53.2%, Non-PP 75.5%, GAP -22.3% different grading approach to take into account effect of the pandemic.
- 2023: PP 34.8%, Non-PP 65.7%, GAP -30.9%
- 2024: PP 48.1%, Non-PP 70.3%, GAP -22.2%
- 2025: Measure not used for 2025

Nationally the KS4 disadvantage gap index has narrowed slightly compared to 2023/24, from 3.93 to 3.91. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-performance> (accessed 10/12/25).

It is pleasing to see that despite all of the challenges that the pandemic brought to our students, the percentage of students scoring a positive progress 8 score returned to

the pre-pandemic 2019 level by 2024. We now must do everything we can to reduce the gap so that they can make progress in line with their non-disadvantaged peers

If we consider just those students with attendance over 90%, we can see that our intended outcome was met for 2024.

- PP 71.4%, Non-PP 72.9%, GAP -1.5%.

This indicates that disadvantaged students make excellent progress at Cantell if they attend their lessons and that the gap could be closed if we can further improve the attendance of PP students. The attendance of our PP students is already close to that of PP students nationally, but we want it to be in line with non-PP students to give our students the best possible life chances. Attendance is discussed in a further detail in a later section.

**Attainment 8** – Our intended outcome was to reduce the A8 gap between PP and Non PP

students to -5 points

- 2018 - PP 41.27, Non-PP 46.95, GAP -5.68
- 2019 - PP 40.62, Non-PP 51.57, GAP -10.95
- 2020 - PP 41.87, Non-PP 49.45, GAP -7.58 CAGs
- 2021 - PP 36.97, Non-PP 49.12, GAP -12.15 TAGs
- 2022 - PP 41.32, Non-PP 50.61, GAP -9.29 different grading approach to take into account effect of the pandemic.
- 2023 - PP 32.11, Non-PP 51.93, GAP -19.82
- 2024: PP 36.80, Non-PP 50.34, GAP -13.54
- 2025: PP 37.17, Non-PP 54.89, GAP -17.72

The attainment 8 score for pupil premium nationally in 2023 was 34.9 and non-PP was 50.3 (<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-performance-revised> accessed 12/12/2025) so whilst it is pleasing that the attainment of our students was above that nationally for both groups, there was a bigger gap than there is nationally due to our non-PP being further above national. Despite the positive picture compared to national, the persistence of a gap is not acceptable to us. We are passionate that all young people should have the same success and opportunities regardless of their background.

If we consider just those students with attendance over 93%, we can see that our intended outcome is almost met for 2025.

- PP 47.58, Non-PP 58.44 GAP -10.86 points.

This provides evidence that teachers and support staff are having a positive impact on PP students when they attend lessons, and again that attendance is currently one of the biggest barriers to closing the gap.

**Grade 5+ in English and maths** - Intended outcome was to reduce the 5+ English and Maths gap to -7%.

- 2018: PP 28.8%, Non-PP 43.3%, GAP -14.5%

- 2019: PP 29.3%, Non-PP 44.0%, GAP -14.7%
- 2020: PP 32.5%, Non-PP 43.2%, GAP -10.7% CAGs
- 2021: PP 14.7%, Non-PP 46.0%, GAP -31.3% TAGs
- 2022: PP 41.6%, Non-PP 54.5%, GAP -12.9% different grading approach to take into account effect of the pandemic.
- 2023: PP 20.3%, Non-PP 52.0%, GAP -31.7%
- 2024: PP 30.2%, Non-PP 54.5%, GAP -24.3%
- 2025: PP 36.7%, Non-PP 59.9%, GAP -23.2%

It is pleasing that we have seen an improvement since 2024 and that performance against the measure is better than national for both groups of students (PP 25.6%, non-PP 52.8%) <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-performance> (accessed 10/12/25), however, the gap persists.

If we consider just those students with attendance over 93%, we get the following figures for 2025:

- PP 54.5%, Non-PP 68.1% GAP -13.6% points, with maths contributing to this gap the most (63.6% v 73.5% compared to English 61.8% v 73.5%)

Unlike the previous two measures this still does not meet our intended outcome and there is further work to do here beyond improving attendance, but it is significantly closer.

**Attendance** – Our intended outcome was to improve PP student attendance to match national average

- 2020 attendance for FSM was 91.4%, 0.6% above national average for FSM.
- 2021 attendance for FSM to May was 87.6%, which had dropped below national average, but was being skewed by vulnerable students that didn't attend during the school closures. Our FSM attendance from Sept 21 to 10/12/2021 was 90.6%, which is in line with national and very pleasing.
- 2022 attendance for FSM was 86.6%, 1.5% above national average for FSM.
- 2023 attendance for FSM was 86.4%, 1.3% above national average for FSM.
- 2024 attendance for FSM was 88.3%, 2.9% above national average for FSM.
- 2025 attendance for FSM was 88.1%, 1.3% below national average for FSM.

Whilst being above national average shows that our strategies to improve attendance are having a positive effect, attendance will continue to be our highest priority due to the impact it has on student outcomes.

**NEETS** – Our intended outcome was to achieve zero PP NEETS

- 2020 leavers PP NEETS 7.1%, which was 6 individuals (11% according to <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/116469/cantell-school/secondary/results-by-pupil-characteristics?accordionstate=0> and ASP, but we have reconciled with SCC).
- 2021 leavers PP NEETS 11.8%, which was 8 individuals.(17% according to <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/116469/cantell->

[school/secondary/results-by-pupil-characteristics?accordionstate=0](https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/116469/cantell-school/secondary/results-by-pupil-characteristics?accordionstate=0) and ASP, but we have reconciled with SCC).

- 2022 leavers PP NEETS 6.7%, which was 6 individuals. (17% according to <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/116469/cantell-school/secondary/results-by-pupil-characteristics?accordionstate=0> and ASP, but we have reconciled with SCC).
- 2023 leavers PP NEETS 10.7%, which was 9 individuals. (23% according to <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/116469/cantell-school/secondary/results-by-pupil-characteristics?accordionstate=0>, but we have reconciled with SCC).
- 2024 & 2025 leavers PP NEETS TBC

There are many factors outside our control which contribute to individual cases, but that will not prevent us from striving to meet this intended outcome because the impact on each individual can be significant. This will continue to be a priority in our next three-year plan, but we need to take into account additional information that has been gathered when formulating approaches. We know that our approaches have been successful in supporting our PP students to secure college/apprenticeship places, but feedback from colleges has indicated that some struggle to complete courses once our support is withdrawn as they are lacking in independence.

**Summary for the evaluation of the first year of the 2024-27 strategy** – Overall we can see that what the staff, parent and student members of the Cantell family have been doing works well for our disadvantaged students that have 93%+ attendance and therefore we should not make any big changes to how we have allocated the Pupil Premium funding. Analysis of 2025 cohort data does show a moderate negative correlation between behaviour points and attainment (English  $r \approx -0.43$ ; Maths  $r \approx -0.34$ ), confirming that poor behaviour can significantly impact outcomes. However, the number of students with high behaviour points is very small, and most pupils have no or minimal incidents. This means our current targeted behaviour strategies (such as our non-teaching Year Leaders) are proportionate and effective. The main barrier to progress continues to be attendance and this is our biggest priority moving forward.

## Externally provided programmes

*Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you used your pupil premium (or recovery premium) to fund in the previous academic year.*

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Provider</b>
Free Music Lessons for PP students	Southampton Music Service
DofE places provided for PP students	DofE
Reading Buddies	University of Southampton
Lexia	Lexia Learning
Read Write Ink Fresh Start	Ruth Miskin Literacy

## Further information (optional)

Engagement with 'No limits' used to support PP students, but no cost.