



Department
for Education

Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders

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Contents

Purpose of this document	3
Purpose of pupil premium	4
High-quality teaching of English and maths	4
Targeted tutoring support	5
Attendance strategies	5
Developing and delivering an effective strategy	6
1. Identifying the challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils	6
2. Using evidence	8
3. Developing an effective strategy	9
4. Delivering and monitoring your strategy	11
5. Evaluating and sustaining your strategy	12
Menu of approaches	13
Additional guidance for pupil premium plus	15
Looked-after children	15
Previously looked-after children	15
Further information	16
Additional guidance for service pupil premium	17
Reporting on pupil premium	18
Format of the template	18
Publishing your strategy	19
Checking your allocation and payments	20
‘Get Information About Pupils’ data download	20
Pupils who move schools	20
Errors in payments	20

Purpose of this document

This document provides non-statutory guidance on how to make the best use of pupil premium funding.

The guidance is for school leaders and those involved in managing the use of pupil premium in schools, such as academy trust leaders, trustees and governors. This guidance can also be used to support use of [recovery premium](#) until the end of the 2023/24 academic year. It may also be useful for parents and local authorities who want to know how schools can use their pupil premium effectively, and understand the related reporting requirements.

The guidance will help you to ensure that you adhere to the [conditions of grant](#) for pupil premium, including:

- using pupil premium in line with the 'menu of approaches'
- publishing a strategy statement on your school website by 31 December using the DfE's [strategy statement template](#) (if you have a multi-year strategy, you should publish an updated version each year)

There is a separate guidance document which gives a brief overview of the [pupil premium](#), including eligibility information, for school staff, parents and those interested in the pupil premium.

The EEF's [guide to the pupil premium](#) and accompanying [pupil premium resources for schools](#) complement this document. We encourage all schools to use them in developing their pupil premium strategies.

Purpose of pupil premium

The pupil premium grant, introduced in 2011, is funding to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged 5-16-year-olds in state-funded schools in England.

We know that schools are still recovering from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In England the primary and secondary school attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers grew between 2019 and 2022, having narrowed over the previous 8 years. The disadvantage gap index at [primary](#) level has remained constant between 2022 and 2023. In parallel, the 2023 disadvantage gap index at [secondary](#) continued to increase to its highest level since 2011.

In this context, it is more important than ever that schools use the wealth of evidence of 'what works' evaluated by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), alongside teachers' professional expertise and knowledge of disadvantage in their schools, to drive maximum impact from the pupil premium.

Schools have used the time-limited recovery premium, alongside their pupil premium, on strategies that are supporting pupils to attend regularly and catch up and should continue to do so until the end of this academic year 2023/24, the final year of funding for the recovery premium grant.

Pupil premium is not a personal budget for individual pupils and schools do not have to spend pupil premium so that it solely benefits pupils who meet the funding criteria. Pupil premium can be used to support other pupils with identified needs, or used for whole class interventions that will benefit all pupils.

The challenges disadvantaged pupils may face post-pandemic will vary, but the Government's particular priorities, based on the latest data, are set out below.

High-quality teaching of English and maths

English and maths are the cornerstones of a broad, academic and knowledge-rich curriculum. Based on the latest data about the impact of the pandemic on English and maths attainment, we expect that for many schools, pupil premium spending will include a particular focus on supporting the effective teaching of these areas. In 2023, 44% of disadvantaged Key Stage 2 pupils reached the expected standard in combined reading, writing and maths compared to 66% of other pupils, a difference of 22 percentage points. Whilst the attainment gap has narrowed slightly compared to 2022, it has increased from 20 percentage points in 2019 when 51% of disadvantaged pupils and 71% of other pupils met the expected standard in reading, writing and maths. When considering the balance of spending within the 3-tiered model set out in [EEF's guide to the pupil premium](#), you should bear in mind that the EEF recommends that approaches which support and promote high-quality teaching in schools should be a top priority for pupil premium spending.

Targeted tutoring support

The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) is providing funding over the 2020/21 to 2023/24 academic years to support pupils to catch up on education lost because of the pandemic. Tutoring is intensive one to one or small group academic support, delivered in regular sessions over a period of time, by a teaching professional or tutor. Tutoring is an effective and well-evidenced targeted approach to increase the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. Tutoring should supplement and be linked explicitly to high-quality classroom teaching. We strongly encourage schools to continue to fund tutoring using pupil premium from September 2024, following the final year of the NTP. The EEF has a [resource](#) page on how to make a difference with effective tutoring.

For the 2023/24 academic year, schools receive NTP funding based on their number of pupil premium-eligible pupils. This funding can be used to cover up to 50% of the cost of tutoring delivered. Schools are required to meet the remaining cost from their own budgets, which may involve using pupil premium or other funding. Schools may not use the recovery premium for this purpose, as set out in its conditions of grant for the 2023/24 academic year. For further information on NTP funding, please refer to the [National Tutoring Programme: guidance for schools, academic year 2023/24](#).

Attendance strategies

Excellent pupil attendance at school is important for children's wellbeing, safety and long-term development. The barriers to regular school attendance are wide-ranging and specific to individual children, and can be complex. They include: barriers associated with poor mental or physical health, academic challenges, social barriers, and barriers arising from a pupil's home environment and personal circumstances.

Absence rates in schools have been 50% higher since the pandemic, with persistent absence doubling to 22.3% in 2022/23. Disadvantaged pupils have higher absence rates than their peers, with pupils eligible for free school meals missing an average of 4 weeks of school in 2022/23/ and looked after children missing nearly 6 weeks in 2021/22.

Research shows that pupils who miss more school have lower attainment on average, so this extra absence may have contributed to the widening attainment gap. Controlling for prior attainment (KS2) and pupil traits, [analysis](#) of schools' 2013/14 cohort found that each additional half day of absence reduced the likelihood of achieving 5A*-C grades at GCSE by 1.8 per cent.

Schools should consider using their pupil premium to support improving attendance, where appropriate, including tackling underlying causes of absence. Approaches to support attendance are outlined in the [working together to improve school attendance guidance](#) and on the [DfE best practice page](#).

Developing and delivering an effective strategy

This section explains how you can make the best use of your pupil premium through a '5 step' approach:

1. Identifying the challenges faced by the school's disadvantaged pupils
2. Using evidence
3. Developing an effective strategy
4. Delivering and monitoring your strategy
5. Evaluating and sustaining your strategy

Effective implementation of your strategy is important for making best use of pupil premium. Implementation should be treated as a process executed over a series of stages, not as an event. The EEF's [guide to implementation](#) supports schools to embed an evidence-informed approach to implementation

1. Identifying the challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils

Diagnostic assessment, using data from internal and external assessments, is important for identifying the specific areas where intervention and support will improve each pupil's academic progress.

You should also draw on data to develop an understanding of any non-academic challenges that pupils are facing which negatively affect their education and readiness to engage with education, for example:

- attendance and levels of persistent and severe absence
- behaviour incidences and exclusions data
- wellbeing, mental health and safeguarding concerns

When identifying the main challenges pupils are facing, it is important to consider the underlying academic and non-academic causes of them. For example, low attainment may be an outcome of poor early language development. This is further set out in the [EEF's guide to implementation report](#).

When identifying challenges, you should draw on a range of data sources, including internal assessments and [performance data](#), discussions with teachers and support staff and engagement with pupils and families.

See the EEF's [diagnostic assessment](#) resource for further support on diagnosis.

When diagnosing the needs of your disadvantaged pupils, you should bear in mind that you do not have to spend your pupil premium so that it solely benefits eligible pupils. You can use it to support other pupils with identified needs, for example those who have or have had a social worker or are a carer. You can also use it on whole class approaches, for example high-quality teaching, which will also benefit all pupils.

You should diagnose the challenges facing higher attaining eligible pupils to help you identify how to improve their progress further. Evidence shows that eligible pupils who are among the highest performers at Key Stage 2 are more likely than their non-eligible peers to fall behind by Key Stage 4.

2. Using evidence

Using evidence to inform decision-making throughout pupil premium strategy planning is vital in order to achieve the biggest impact on pupil outcomes.

To support schools to make best use of their pupil premium, we have introduced a 'menu of approaches', based on the evidence of how best to improve attainment. Using pupil premium in line with the menu will help you to develop your pupil premium strategies.

The menu can be found on page 13 of this guidance. The [conditions of grant](#) require schools to spend their pupil premium in line with the menu.

It is for school leaders to decide how to use their pupil premium within the framework set out in the menu. You do not have to allocate pupil premium to every item on the menu; instead, you should focus on approaches that best address the challenges identified in step 1.

You should consider a range of external evidence, alongside your own knowledge of your pupils. External evidence can help you to better understand:

- which specific activities have been found to be the most effective in addressing the types of challenge that your pupils face
- how to successfully implement your chosen activities
- the relative impact of different approaches

For further support about using evidence, see the EEF website for:

- a guide to [using pupil premium effectively](#) which complements this guidance
- an [evidence brief](#) which signposts high-quality evidence and practical resources for each approach in the menu
- the [Teaching and Learning Toolkit](#) which provides an accessible summary of evidence of approaches
- [guidance reports](#) which provide a summary of evidence on specific approaches

3. Developing an effective strategy

The pupil premium [strategy statement](#) template reflects the previous outlined steps and should help you to develop your strategy effectively and efficiently, based on the challenges you have identified, the menu of approaches and the evidence of effective approaches.

The DfE recommends that schools develop a 3-year pupil premium strategy. To note, if you have developed a multi-year strategy you must still review your strategy and renew your school's published strategy statement every year.

If you already have a multi-year plan, and any of the activities you fund do not fall under one of the approaches on the menu, you should amend your plan as soon as possible.

The menu of approaches aligns with the EEF's evidence-informed tiered approach, as set out in EEF's [guide to the pupil premium](#), which helps schools allocate spending across three key areas:

- developing high-quality teaching
- providing targeted academic support
- tackling non-academic barriers to academic success

When considering the balance of spending within the 3 tiers, you should bear in mind that the EEF recommends that approaches which support and promote high-quality teaching in schools should be a top priority for pupil premium spending. However, the exact balance of spending between categories will vary depending on the specific needs of your pupils and the relative size of your pupil premium cohort.

Your strategy should:

- focus on the challenges that are having the most significant impact, and are within your control
- set ambitious, but realistic, target outcomes
- allocate funding to activities most likely to deliver those outcomes, based on evidence of what works

You should also consider how your strategy aligns with other strategic school improvement documents, such as your school improvement plan, to ensure that addressing disadvantage is a whole-school approach.

If common challenges are identified across academies when identifying pupil need in individual settings, academy trusts may wish to pool resources and set a strategy for use of pupil premium across multiple academies. Trusts must ensure that any such strategy is driven by the needs of each school's disadvantaged pupil cohort, and each academy within the trust must publish a separate pupil premium strategy statement each year.

You should ensure that you consult governors, trustees and academy trust leaders (as appropriate to your setting), and relevant staff members when developing your strategy - for example, the designated safeguarding lead, the designated teacher for previously looked-

after children, and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). You should also consult relevant external partners, such as the Virtual School Head.

4. Delivering and monitoring your strategy

The key factors you should consider when planning the delivery of your strategy include:

- Coherence with curriculum: how to integrate any planned activity with the curriculum, and ensure that pupils receiving targeted support do not miss out on core curriculum content
- Collective responsibility: how to ensure that all staff promote the principles and ethos of your strategy, and ensure that professional development requirements are taken into account
- Targeting and monitoring: which pupils will benefit from which activity, when and in what group size, any resourcing or timing requirements of external providers (if you are using them), and what data and resources will be required to monitor the impact of each activity

5. Evaluating and sustaining your strategy

When evaluating the impact of your approaches, you should:

- measure success based on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils
- implement a robust and transparent evaluation framework and report outcomes against this
- ensure that evaluation is an ongoing process - strategies that have been effective in one year may not continue to be effective the next

When evaluating impact, you should not:

- use data that does not focus on pupil outcomes
- base evaluation on the perceptions of those delivering the activity
- use vague intended outcomes, which make an accurate assessment of improvements more difficult

The outcome of your evaluation should inform your decision on whether to sustain or stop each activity.

Where a strategy is successful, it is particularly important to continue monitoring implementation. Enthusiasm for approaches may reduce in subsequent years and additional professional development and resources are likely to be required for new and existing staff to maintain successful outcomes.

If you have developed a multi-year pupil premium strategy you must review your strategy and renew your school's published strategy statement every year. If your school's allocation is based on more than 5 eligible pupils, it is a requirement of the conditions of grant to publish an updated strategy statement annually.

Menu of approaches

In line with the [conditions of grant](#), any activity that you fund using pupil premium must fall under an approach listed in the table. The menu has been developed in line with the EEF's 3-tiered approach, as set out in its [guide to the pupil premium](#).

The EEF's [Menu of Approaches: Evidence Brief](#) signposts to evidence-informed resources related to each strand of the menu.

When using the pupil premium to purchase external programmes, you should consider programmes which are well-supported by evidence and assess their suitability for your context.

3 tiers	Approaches that you could implement
High-quality teaching	Developing high-quality teaching, assessment and a broad and balanced, knowledge-based curriculum which responds to the needs of pupils
	Professional development to support implementation of approaches, for example, training provided by a DfE validated systematic synthetic phonics programme , mastery based approaches to teaching or feedback
	Mentoring and coaching for teachers
	Supporting the recruitment and retention of teaching staff, for example, providing cover time to undertake professional development such as National Professional Qualifications (NPQs)
	Technology and other resources that support high-quality teaching, for example software to support diagnostic assessment
Targeted academic support	One to one and small group tuition
	Peer tutoring
	Targeted interventions to support language development, literacy and numeracy
	Targeted interventions and resources to meet the specific needs of disadvantaged pupils with SEND
	Teaching assistant deployment and interventions, for example by supporting high-quality provision within the classroom or delivering structured interventions
Wider strategies	Supporting pupils' social, emotional and behavioural needs
	Supporting attendance
	Extra-curricular activities, including sport, outdoor activities, arts and culture, for example music lessons and school trips
	Breakfast clubs and meal provision
	Communicating with and supporting parents

When selecting approaches from the menu, you should also consider how you are using the funding to support:

- Effective identification of pupil needs, for example through diagnostic assessment
- Successful implementation of approaches
- Effective monitoring and evaluation of approaches

Schools may be justified in funding items not listed where this is necessary to overcome specific barriers to pupil attainment, for example to meet acute needs around pupil equipment to ensure readiness to learn.

Additional guidance for pupil premium plus

Pupil premium plus refers to the portion of the pupil premium grant for children who are looked-after by the local authority or were previously looked-after by a local authority or other state care. Looked-after and previously looked-after children achieve significantly poorer outcomes than non-looked after children. In many cases the impact of pre-care and care experience can be a significant barrier to their educational achievement. To help close the attainment gap between looked-after children and their peers, the Government has introduced a number of measures, including the pupil premium plus for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

As with the main pupil premium budget, it is not a personal budget for individual children and schools must spend their funding in line with the 'menu of approaches'.

Looked-after children

Pupil premium allocations based on the eligibility of looked-after children are managed by the local authority's Virtual School Head (VSH).

Your [designated teacher](#) should work with VSHs to ensure that pupil premium benefits looked-after children in your school. The funding should be used on evidence-informed interventions that are clearly linked to robust Personal Education Plans and in line with the menu of approaches.

The VSH should ensure that there are arrangements in place to discuss how the child will benefit from the pupil premium grant for looked-after children grant with the designated teacher or another member of staff in the child's education setting who best understands their needs. Processes for allocating funds to a child's education setting should be as simple as possible to avoid delay.

Local authorities are expected to release these payments as soon as possible to schools, but they may choose to retain a portion of the grant to fund activities that will benefit a group, or all, of the authority's looked-after children.

Previously looked-after children

Pupil premium funding based on the eligibility of previously looked-after children is part of your school's pupil premium allocation.

The [designated teacher](#) has a key role in ensuring that the specific needs of previously looked-after children are reflected in how you use your pupil premium plus.

Your designated teacher should:

- encourage parents of eligible previously looked-after children to tell the school if their child is eligible to attract Pupil Premium Plus funding

- consult the Virtual School Head on how to use the funding effectively, where appropriate
- encourage parents and guardians' involvement in how Pupil Premium Plus funding is used to support their child
- be the main contact for queries about how pupil premium is being used to support previously looked-after children

Further information

There are sections on pupil premium in the statutory guidance for:

- [designated teachers](#)
- [local authorities](#)

Additional guidance for service pupil premium

Service pupil premium is additional funding for schools with pupil(s) who have parent(s) serving in the armed forces. It has been combined into pupil premium payments to make it easier for schools to manage their spending. Details on eligibility are on the [pupil premium overview page](#).

The principal purposes of the service pupil premium are to:

- enable schools to offer mainly pastoral support to eligible pupils during challenging times
- help mitigate the negative impact on service children of family mobility or parental deployment
- help improve the academic progress of eligible pupils if the school deems this to be a priority

The strategy statement template includes a section to report on how you are using the service pupil premium and its impact on eligible pupils.

There is separate guidance on service children and service pupil premium available on [GOV.UK](#).

Reporting on pupil premium

In line with the [conditions of grant](#), schools whose allocation for pupil premium is based on more than 5 eligible pupils must publish a strategy statement annually their school website using the [DfE template](#). Schools whose allocation is based on 5 eligible pupils or fewer are not required to publish a strategy statement. The DfE template is designed to help you develop your strategy effectively and efficiently, in line with the steps outlined in this document.

The strategy statement template can be found on the [guidance page](#), along with some completed examples to illustrate how to complete the form. You must develop your own strategy and reflect this accurately in your statement.

The strategy statement is a tool for you to demonstrate how your school is using pupil premium to help disadvantaged pupils to raise their attainment. It is published primarily for the benefit of parents, governors and trustees. You should write it with them in mind.

The Department for Education will review a sample of schools' published statements each year to ensure that plans for use of funding comply with the [conditions of grant](#) – including that activities are in line with the 'menu of approaches'.

If your school is selected for an inspection, Ofsted may use your pupil premium statement to help them to prepare for the visit.

Format of the template

The format of the strategy statement template has been designed to reflect the 5 step process to developing an effective strategy for use of pupil premium which is set out in this guidance.

Part A is for you to outline your strategy and the approaches that your pupil premium is funding in the current academic year. The format is designed to reflect the steps needed to develop an effective strategy, in order to help you with that process.

Part B is for you to explain what outcomes were achieved for disadvantaged pupils in the previous academic year, including reference to performance measures data. It can be challenging to evaluate the impact of any activity that is not directly linked to academic outcomes, such as activity supporting social and emotional wellbeing. You should still write about this in your online statement and refer to any evidence that shows you are making progress.

There is an optional further information section to provide any additional information you wish to publish.

Publishing your strategy

You have until 31 December each year to publish your statement. This will enable you to take the needs of your new intake into account.

If you have developed a multi-year strategy for pupil premium, you must review your strategy and publish an updated statement every year.

Although multi-academy trusts (MATs) can pool resources and set a plan for use of pupil premium funding across multiple academies, each academy within the MAT must publish a separate pupil premium strategy statement each year.

Checking your allocation and payments

Pupil premium is a financial year grant from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. Information about the pupil premium funding your school will receive is available in the [allocations document](#). The technical note shows the payment timetable and explains how each school's allocation has been calculated.

'Get Information About Pupils' data download

If you need to check which pupils your school's allocation is based on you can consult [Get Information About Pupils \(GIAP\)](#) from April each year.

GIAP should not form the sole basis on which schools plan their PP strategy, as it is a retrospective list of eligible pupils based on the October census. For pupils in alternative provision settings, GIAP is based on the January census.

Pupils who move schools

As pupil premium is not an entitlement for individual pupils, you will not get an adjustment if a pupil leaves your school or joins another school. The only exception is for permanently excluded pupils.

The excluding school's pupil premium will be reduced by the value of one pupil, pro-rated to the point in the financial year when the pupil left.

The school that receives the pupil will be credited by the value of one pupil, pro-rated to the point in the financial year when the pupil left the excluding school.

Errors in payments

[Contact DfE](#) if you have mistakenly recorded a pupil as eligible for the pupil premium.

We can change the national pupil database for you to correct individual pupil errors, but we cannot amend your census return.



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