Pupil Premium Statement – Tall Oaks Academy Trust

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 the next two academic years and the impact that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

School overview

Detail	Data
School name:	Mercer's Wood Academy
Number of pupils in school:	143
Proportion of pupil premium eligible pupils:	83%
Academic years covered:	2026-27 & 2027-28
Date of publication:	September 2026
Review date:	July 2027 and July 2028
Statement authorised by:	Chris Fitzpatrick (CEO)
Pupil Premium Lead:	Kieran Ola (Headteacher)
Governor / Trustee Lead:	Anita Gledhill (Chair of Academy Committee)

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£190,970
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£190,970

Part A: Pupil Premium Strategy Plan

Statement of intent

Given that over half of our pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium Funding, our spending must reflect a whole-school approach to ensuring all pupils achieve to their optimum level. This means that quality class teaching, targeted academic support, as well as wider strategies are geared towards enabling all pupils to succeed, regardless of background and circumstances. The first focus is to ensure our pupils are in school regularly and are ready to learn emotionally. Attendance, safeguarding and family support are vital to our success, as is emotional support for both children and families. A key evidence base used is the EEF Teaching & Learning Toolkit (https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit) which provides cost/benefit analysis for various approaches.

Challenges

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

Challenge	Detail of challenge
1	Literacy & oral language skills
2	Impact of safeguarding complications, wellbeing & mental health
3	High level of persistent absenteeism
4	Historically low aspiration & ambition
5	Requirement of capacity for ELSA support

Intended outcomes

This explains the outcomes we are aiming for **by the end of our current strategy plan**, and how we will measure whether they have been achieved.

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Improved phonics, leading to strong readers	All pupils off phonics by end of Y3
Improved attainment in reading, writing & maths	Decrease the gap to National attainment
Improved attendance	Attendance ≥95%
Decrease in persistent absenteeism	PA is <18%
Improved Speech & language provision	All pupils have appropriate access to SALT support

Activity in this academic year

This details how we intend to spend our pupil premium this academic year to address the challenges listed above.

Teaching (E.g. CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £35,245

Activity	Supporting evidence	Challenges
Ensure all staff (including new staff) have received high-quality phonics training & resources to deliver the RWI scheme effectively, leading to increased attainment for all in reading.	Oral language skills, retention & memory, reduced wider reading opportunities. High impact for very low cost based on extensive evidence (EEF)	1 & 4 £4400
Ensure all staff are effectively trained for the new spelling curriculum and that appropriate resources are in place.	Oral language skills, retention & memory, reduced wider reading opportunities. High impact for very low cost based on extensive evidence (EEF)	1 & 4 £1435
CPD model for Teaching Assistants to ensure that interventions & support are effective. Also ensure that investment in staff development supports retention.	Oral language skills, retention & memory, wider reading opportunities. Moderate impact for moderate cost based on moderate evidence (EEF).	1, 3 & 4 £5200
External CPD opportunities for Teaching Assistants in specific focus areas (SEND, EYFS, safeguarding)	Create specialist banks of knowledge so that best practice can be shared amongst our staff. Develop the foundational knowledge needed in the early years through specific, focused support.	1, 3 & 4 £4960 £750
Access external training opportunities for teachers in such specialist areas as maths, behaviour, SEND etc. Share best practice amongst staff to sustainably develop workforce.	Create specialist banks of knowledge so that best practice can be shared amongst our staff. Develop future leaders to create sustainability in our schools.	1, 3 & 4 £9200 £750
CPD model for all teaching staff to ensure that the fundamental elements of Teaching & Learning are strong in all classrooms.	Modelling, questioning, AfL, adaptations & retrieval identified as focus areas for CPD. High-quality staff training delivered to all teaching staff & followed up with support & challenge will ensure that T&L is of a consistently strong standard.	1, 3 & 4 £7400
Development of marking & feedback policy, training for staff & time with pupils to implement strategies	Empower pupils to improving their own learning through clear, deliberate & time-efficient feedback. High impact for very low cost based on extensive evidence (EEF)	1, 3 & 4 £1150

Targeted academic support (E.g. tutoring, 1:1 support, interventions)

Budgeted cost: £91,437

Activity	Supporting evidence	Challenges
Target disadvantaged pupils for attendance support (parent meetings, home-visits, rewards, calls, FPNs as needed, parental engagement sessions, parent/child workshops, breakfast provision, uniform support etc)	Social & emotional needs as a result of external factors, health & physical well-being, aspiration in the community. Moderate impact for low cost based on extensive evidence (EEF). We also spend further on AHO salary to support parents, monitor absence & manage attendance	1, 2, 3 & 4 £12,296

Meet social & emotional needs through ELSA & Pastoral support	Social & emotional needs resulting from external factors. Poor health & physical well-being. Low aspiration in the community. Improve pupils' decision-making skills, interaction with others and their self-management of emotions. Moderate impact for low cost based on limited evidence (EEF)	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 £13,545
Increase rate of progress in reading, writing & maths for disadvantaged pupils with SEND, through vital SEND support	Oral language skills, retention & memory, wider reading opportunities. Reading is the key to the curriculum & by creating strong readers, we will improve life chances. Moderate impact for moderate cost based on moderate evidence (EEF).	1 & 4 £34,908
Increase rate of progress in reading, writing & maths for disadvantaged pupils with SEND, through targeted interventions (including one-to-one)	Oral language skills, retention & memory, wider reading opportunities. Reading is the key to the curriculum & by creating strong readers, we will improve life chances. Moderate impact for moderate cost based on moderate evidence (EEF).	1 & 4 £21,022
Speech & Language support	Poor oral language & literacy skills. Very high impact for moderate cost (EEF)	1 & 4 £9,666

Wider strategies (E.g, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £64,288

Activity	Supporting evidence	Challenges
Personal Development plan & timetable to guarantee enrichment opportunities. (targeted after-school clubs, Bikeability, cultural events, language support, author visits, subsidised trips, adult & family sessions etc)	Improving attendance and readiness to learn for the most disadvantaged pupils, low aspiration & opportunity for social mobility.	1, 2, 3 & 4 £13,870
Safe & ready to learn (SM role). Ensure that safeguarding protocols are tightly adhered to and that there is sufficient capacity in school to manage all concerns & cases comprehensively. This includes training DDSLs to increase capacity.	Improving attendance and readiness to learn for the most disadvantaged pupils. Providing essential support to significant numbers of families to enable pupils to live in safe, happy homes & to access the full school offer	2, 3 & 5 £50,418

Total budgeted cost: £190,970

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Pupil Premium Strategy Outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium approaches had on pupils in the 2025-26 academic year.

Aim	Outcome
Phonics training	Regularity of phonics sessions, as well as RWI development days contribute to successful phonics provision. There will be work to do with the incoming Y3 pupils. RWI is a key investment again, as are bespoke pathways for each teacher & TA. The new reading curriculum & work on fluency is also helping to bridge the gap between RWI & reading competency.
Retention & long-term memory	Improving retention throughout school. Pupil interviews in monitoring showed that pupils are able to discuss & explain their learning of our curriculum but this still needs work.
Improve attendance & decrease persistent absenteeism	Since Covid, National attendance & PA have worsened. However, our school has bucked that trend to an extent. Although slightly lower than pre-Covid, attendance is at the National level, and higher than schools in areas sharing similar demographics. However, PA still remains high. External monitoring was positive about our approaches to tackling attendance & we regularly review & further improve these. Strategies to continually improve attendance (work with Attendance Champions & Teaching Hub) more focus on highest PA pupils initially (88%-88.9%). AHO work monitors & challenges PA. AC & AHO regularly meet & work ELSA work is important in this, as are PSPs & BOSS intervention. SM work is vital. CP, CIN, TAC is closely monitored alongside attendance, SEND & behaviour (BASS meetings). Parental engagement & relationships are mostly very strong.
ELSA & pastoral work	ELSA work is pivotal. Effective transition took place & groups continue for those pupils that need it. Increased capacity next year. PSP work & BOSS intervention as needed has been successful. SM work is vital. CP, CIN, TAC is closely monitored alongside attendance, SEND & behaviour (BASS meetings).
Targeted interventions	Work needs to be done to analyse the effectiveness of interventions. Pupil progress processes were improved but specific interventions need to be more carefully monitored & their efficacy assessed, possibly using a different platform to track data.
Improved Speech & language provision	The level of need of SALT provision is an indicator as to the necessity of this spend. Successful interventions have taken place but will need further work to ensure the regularity of these.
One-to-one or small group tutoring	RWI tutoring has been effective for our most disadvantaged pupils, though the level of need is so significant that the capacity of the tutoring is stretched.
Enrichment	These provide key life experiences for our most disadvantaged pupils and support our school curriculum. After school clubs need to be carefully planned out in an attempt to engage all pupils but particularly those who do not have access to out-of-school clubs.
SM role	Safeguarding work is vital. CP, CIN, TAC is closely monitored alongside attendance & behaviour (BASS meetings). Parental engagement has improved & relationships are very strong. That said, SM role needs reassessing in terms of in-school capacity for caseloads.