

DISADVANTAGED THREE YEAR STRATEGY

OUR MISSION & BELIEFS

At Ormiston Rivers Academy, we believe that every student, regardless of their socio-economic background, deserves equal opportunities to achieve and succeed. The life chances of those from disadvantaged backgrounds should be no different from those of their peers. Our commitment to equality of experience, enrichment, and academic outcomes for all sits at the heart of our academy's vision. We recognise that what happens in our classrooms—every lesson, every day—is what truly makes the difference. Our Pupil Premium funding is therefore strategically invested to remove barriers, widen access, and ensure that every student can engage fully in learning without question or excuse. Ultimately, higher attainment leads to greater life chances and life choices.

The Pupil Premium (PP) is additional funding provided to schools to help close the attainment gap between disadvantaged students and their peers. This funding is specifically targeted at students who are, or have been, eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), as well as those who are or have been in the care of the local authority. The aim is to ensure that every young person can access the same opportunities, experiences, and support, regardless of financial background. National data consistently shows that students who have been eligible for Free School Meals at any point during their education tend to achieve lower outcomes than those who have never been eligible highlighting the continued importance of effective use of Pupil Premium funding.

Pupil Premium Funding Overview

Since its introduction, the Pupil Premium (PP) has provided additional funding to help schools close the attainment gap between disadvantaged students and their peers. This funding is designed to ensure that every young person—regardless of background—can access the same opportunities, experiences, and support needed to succeed both academically and personally.

For the 2024-2025 academic year, Pupil Premium funding is allocated as follows:

- £1,050 for each secondary-aged student (Years 7-11) who has been eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) at any point in the past six years ("Ever 6 FSM").
- £2,570 for students who are currently looked after by the local authority (LAC), or who have previously been in care and are now adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002, or who have left care under a Special Guardianship or Residence Order.
- £340 for students whose parent(s) are currently serving in the armed forces or are in receipt of a Ministry of Defence pension.

From April 2025, these rates will increase in line with national funding adjustments to:

- £1,075 for secondary Ever 6 FSM students
- £2,630 for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- £350 for service pupils

This targeted funding enables the academy to provide additional academic, pastoral, and enrichment support to ensure that all students—particularly those facing disadvantage—can thrive and achieve their full potential.

What the evidence shows: What happens in the classroom makes the biggest difference: improving teaching quality generally leads to greater improvements at lower cost than structural changes. There is particularly good evidence around the potential impact of teacher professional development; but the supply of high quality training is limited.

What the evidence shows: Targeted small group and one-to-one interventions have the potential for the largest immediate impact on attainment. Some wholeclass and whole-school interventions have shown promise but may take longer to show results.

THE RIVERS' THREE TIERED APPROACH TO CLOSING THE DISADVANTAGED GAP: AN EVIDENCE INFORMED APPROACH

TEACHING & LEARNING

Spending on improving teaching includes professional development, training and support for early career teachers and recruitment and retention. Our aim is to ensure an effective teacher is in front of every class and that every teacher is supported to keep improving their practice. We know this is the key ingredient for success. Curriculum is key and we will look at how all students can find a KS4 pathway that leads to a career pathway, this may include looking at alternative curriculum pathways for some.

PASTORAL SUPPORT

Wider strategies relating to the most significant non-academic barriers to success in our school, including attendance, behaviour and social and emotional support. These include our Pupil Premium Promise to ensure all opportunities are open to all and the provision of specialist counselling, mentoring and psychological specialist support.

TARGETED ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Evidence consistently shows the positive impact that targeted academic support can have, including for those who are not making good progress across the spectrum of achievement. We will consider how classroom teachers and teaching assistants can provide targeted academic support, including how to link structured one-to-one or small group intervention to classroom teaching.



THE RIVERS' THREE YEAR DISADVANTAGED STRATEGY

	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
Teaching & Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed <i>The Rivers' Way</i> in all lesson planning and delivery. • Introduce the Teaching & Learning Coaching Programme providing staff with developmental feedback. • Implement consistent routines to secure and sustain attention throughout every lesson. • Strengthen responsive teaching through targeted questioning, hinge-point checks, and in-lesson feedback. • Increase inclusivity and participation by using whole-class questioning techniques • Integrate AI tools to personalise learning and identify misconceptions early. • Launch a whole-school focus on explicit vocabulary instruction to strengthen reading, oracy, and writing. • Ensure assessment and seating plan data on Go4Schools informs planning and classroom strategies. • Introduce a structured homework and independent learning framework to support high expectations and equitable access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed and refine all 2025-26 priorities through peer-to-peer coaching and collaborative CPD. • Deepen checking for understanding strategies, using student work scrutiny and formative assessment data to adapt teaching in real time. • Use AI insights to identify misconceptions, inform intervention, and enhance curriculum delivery. • Evaluate and refine the whole-school vocabulary programme to ensure consistent practice across subjects. • Strengthen curriculum coherence and retrieval practice to narrow the disadvantaged attainment gap. • Develop staff expertise through coaching cycles focused on instructional routines, feedback, and adaptive teaching. • Expand cross-curricular sharing of best practice through the Rivers CPD network. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain a coaching culture where all staff are reflective practitioners and leaders of learning. • Use longitudinal data to evaluate the sustained impact of Quality First Teaching on disadvantaged student outcomes. • Integrate AI-driven analytics to support early identification of underachievement and inform strategic decisions. • Continue to evolve vocabulary and oracy strategies, embedding them into all long-term curriculum plans. • Position Rivers as a trust-wide model of excellence in adaptive teaching and professional learning. • Maintain consistent, high-quality teaching, questioning, and feedback as hallmarks of classroom excellence.
Targeted Academic support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch the Super 6 Intervention model for Year 11, providing structured small-group support in English, Maths, and Science. • Promote student autonomy and ownership through mentoring, goal setting, and progress tracking within Super 6. • Deliver morning intervention sessions three times per week in English, Maths, and Humanities to reinforce knowledge and address misconceptions. • Deliver bespoke Year 11 assemblies focused on developing a GCSE mindset, resilience, and study discipline. • Identify underperforming PP students through data and apply targeted departmental intervention. • Ensure all academic interventions are tracked via the PP Impact Tracker for consistency and evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed the Super 6 model as the central framework for targeted Year 11 support. • Refine Super 6 activities to include subject-specific mentoring and evidence-informed revision strategies. • Continue morning interventions, adapting frequency and focus based on assessment outcomes. • Sustain bespoke GCSE mindset assemblies, linking motivational themes to mock-exam preparation. • Integrate Super 6 principles into departmental planning and evaluation. • Use data dashboards to inform proactive interventions for PP underperformance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain Super 6 as a high-impact intervention model for Year 11. • Use Super 6 data to identify and address underperformance early through proactive mentoring. • Deliver bespoke intervention sessions led by subject specialists, informed by mock and exam analysis. • Continue GCSE mindset assemblies throughout the examination cycle. • Embed Pupil Premium academic support within all departmental monitoring and improvement processes.
Pastoral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed the behaviour points system via Go4Schools to ensure consistent recording, monitoring, and celebration of positive conduct. • Integrate external counselling and Mental health providers into the school support plan for targeted PP students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain individual support plans and mentoring for identified PP students with attendance, behaviour, or progress needs. • Expand SSA preventative focus groups to address a broader range of social and emotional needs. Year group specific support. • Work with outside agencies to support with behaviour expectations and emotional regulation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure individualised pastoral and mentoring plans for all PP students, aligned with academic and wellbeing data. • Implement enhanced year-group rewards schemes promoting attendance, effort, and behaviour. • Deliver a broad range of preventative focus groups for targeted PP students.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miss Parry (Attendance Officer) to lead on attendance improvement through proactive monitoring, early intervention, and family engagement. • Implement an attendance tracking system for Heads of Year, with weekly review meetings alongside the Attendance Officer to plan interventions. • Mrs Sexton to lead small-group pastoral and wellbeing sessions for girls, focused on confidence, resilience, social skills, and anxiety support. • Introduce a rewards scheme for attendance and positive behaviours, linked to Go4Schools data. • Establish a “Ticket to the Prom” initiative for Year 11 students demonstrating sustained effort and improvement. • Launch SSA preventative focus groups (Sisters in Strength, Social Skills, Anxiety, Conflict Resolution/Anti-Bullying). • Introduce 30-minute weekly pastoral time for Year11 to strengthen tutor-student relationships and wellbeing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed rewards and recognition within departments and pastoral teams across all year groups. • Launch PP-focused trips and inspirational speakers to raise aspiration and motivation. • Introduce The Brilliant Club (or similar university-linked opportunity) to raise aspirations among PP students. • Continue to develop mentoring and targeted interventions through pastoral teams. • Strengthen collaboration with external agencies and the Local Authority to broaden support pathways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a whole-school focus on attendance, with department-led catch-up processes for absence. • Appoint a dedicated PP Mentor per year group for consistent monitoring and guidance. • Use data from the PP Impact Tracker to inform early intervention and celebrate success.
Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Read Aloud Programme in tutor time twice per week for Years 7-10 to promote reading fluency and engagement. • Implement Lexonik Advance and Lexonik LEAP for targeted literacy intervention and vocabulary development. • Launch the Reading Scholars Programme to raise aspiration and achievement through extended reading challenges. • Maintain open access to the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) before school, during break and lunch, and after school to encourage independent reading. • Use Lexonik Vocabulary Cloud in classrooms to address vocabulary gaps and strengthen disciplinary literacy. • Conduct CAT4 and NGRT reading tests to identify reading age gaps and plan intervention accordingly. • Continue the Book Buzz Programme, ensuring all Year 7 students receive a new book to promote reading for pleasure. • Deliver Library Lessons every two weeks for Years 7 and 8. • Run Jack Petchey Speak Out Workshops for 60 Year 10 students to develop confidence and oracy. • Implement library initiatives, competitions, and rewards to promote whole-school literacy. • Continue Book Club, Debate Club, and reading competitions across all year groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Library Lessons for Year 7 and extend them into Year 8 for deeper reading engagement. • Maintain Lexonik Advance, LEAP, and Vocabulary Cloud provision for targeted intervention and in-class vocabulary support. • Ensure all staff are aware of students’ reading abilities using NGRT and CAT4 data. • Expand extra-curricular literacy clubs (Book Club, Debate Club, Reading Scholars) to increase participation. • Further develop the Read Aloud Programme, ensuring all tutor groups fully engage and contribute. • Embed the explicit teaching of vocabulary across subjects, linked to Tier 2 and Tier 3 terminology. • Continue to reward and celebrate students’ literacy engagement and successes. • Maintain and grow the Book Buzz Programme, encouraging wider student participation and ownership of reading. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Library Lessons to all of KS3, promoting reading fluency and comprehension. • Continue Lexonik Advance, LEAP, and Vocabulary Cloud to target reading and vocabulary gaps. • Increase staff confidence and consistency in teaching reading and vocabulary explicitly in lessons. • Continue Read Aloud sessions during tutor time for Years 7-10. • Develop and embed 1:1 reading intervention strategies for students with significant reading deficits. • Enter local and national literacy competitions, building teams from extra-curricular clubs. • Sustain a strong reading culture through enrichment, oracy events, and cross-curricular projects.

THE RIVERS' THREE TIERED APPROACH: AN EVIDENCE INFORMED STRATEGY

Alignment with the EEF Model

Ormiston Rivers Academy's Pupil Premium Strategy is fully aligned with the Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) evidence-based three-tier model for closing the attainment gap. The academy's approach ensures that Pupil Premium funding is deployed with precision, sustainability, and measurable impact.

1. High-Quality Teaching

The foundation of the strategy is excellent teaching for all. Through *The Rivers' Way* and a comprehensive Teaching & Learning Coaching Programme, staff continually refine practice in questioning, feedback, and adaptive instruction. Professional development focuses on securing student attention, checking for understanding, key vocabulary instruction, and AI-supported task design—all of which have proven impact on disadvantaged learners. High-quality teaching benefits every pupil, but it has a particularly positive effect on those eligible for the Pupil Premium.

2. Targeted Academic Support

Where diagnostic data identifies gaps, targeted academic support ensures swift and effective response. The Super 6 Intervention model provides structured small-group tuition and mentoring for Year 11 students in English, Maths, and Science. Morning interventions, bespoke GCSE mindset assemblies, and rigorous departmental tracking ensure that underperformance is quickly addressed. Each intervention is evaluated through the Pupil Premium Impact Tracker, ensuring accountability and evidence of progress.

3. Wider Strategies: Pastoral, Literacy, and Family Engagement

Beyond the classroom, the academy delivers a robust programme of pastoral and literacy support designed to remove non-academic barriers to success. Initiatives include individualised mentoring, weekly pastoral sessions, counselling access, attendance tracking, and wellbeing and resilience workshops led by specialist staff such as Miss Parry and Mrs Sexton.

The whole-school literacy programme, led by LSS, strengthens reading, vocabulary, and oracy across all key stages through Lexonik, Read Aloud, and the Reading Scholars Programme. Family engagement is prioritised through early-access Parents' Evening bookings, Go4Schools communication, and structured support for attendance and readiness to learn.

Summary

By focusing on quality first teaching, targeted intervention, and wider pastoral and literacy strategies, Ormiston Rivers Academy ensures that every disadvantaged learner has the opportunity, support, and challenge required to thrive academically and personally. This tiered approach reflects the EEF's central message:

“Great teaching, well-implemented interventions, and a culture of reflection close the disadvantage gap.”

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and the Attainment Gap

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is an independent charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement.

The Attainment Gap: The School Perspective

- The attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers remains one of the most persistent challenges in the English education system. Despite small gains at primary level, progress in closing the gap has largely stalled since 2019, and in some measures the gap has widened.
- The gap is not limited to lower-performing schools – EEF and EPI analyses show that even schools rated Outstanding by Ofsted can have substantial disadvantage gaps. This demonstrates that the issue lies not solely in overall school performance, but in the consistency and quality of teaching, curriculum, and support for disadvantaged pupils.
- There remains no simple relationship between increased funding and increased attainment. Evidence from the NAO (2024) confirms that what matters most is how schools effectively and efficiently use their resources – financial, human, and cultural – to deliver maximum impact.
- The Pupil Premium remains a key lever for tackling disadvantage, but it should be viewed within a broader strategy: improving the quality of teaching for all, providing targeted academic support for those who need it most, and addressing wider barriers such as attendance, behaviour, and wellbeing.
- There is significant variability between schools with similar levels of disadvantage. A minority of schools achieve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils that meet or exceed the national average for all pupils, proving that closing the gap is possible when strong teaching, culture, and leadership align.

Regional variation persists:

- London continues to outperform many other regions, with a Level 3 attainment gap of 14.3 percentage points compared with 27.9 points elsewhere (Trust for London 2024).
- However, progress within London has plateaued in recent years, highlighting the importance of sustained improvement rather than reliance on past success.
- Schools where disadvantaged pupils are currently attaining below the national average for similar pupils should focus first on reaching that benchmark. Achieving this would make a significant difference to outcomes and contribute meaningfully to closing the national attainment gap.

The Attainment Gap: Its Impact on Children and Young People

- The attainment gap is largest for pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) – the best available proxy for economic disadvantage – and for those identified with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- The gap emerges early, evident by age 5, and widens at each key stage:
 - By the end of primary school, disadvantaged pupils are on average 9 months behind their peers.
 - By age 16, the gap has grown to around 18 to 19 months of learning (EPI 2025). This highlights the need for early and sustained intervention throughout a child's educational journey.
- Attendance and engagement have become major drivers of the attainment gap. The EPI (2025) found that if disadvantaged pupils had the same absence rates as their peers, the GCSE attainment gap would shrink by over four months.
- The majority of 19-year-olds who were eligible for free school meals do not achieve Level 2 passes in English and Maths – qualifications that remain essential for progression in education and employment.
- While the gap has narrowed slightly at primary phase compared to 2011, the overall rate of improvement is too slow. At the current pace, the disadvantage gap would persist for decades, making sustained, evidence-based action a moral and economic imperative.
- Even modest improvements in GCSE attainment for disadvantaged pupils yield significant lifetime productivity gains, benefiting both individuals and the wider economy.

Summary

The evidence remains clear:

High-quality teaching is the single most important factor in closing the attainment gap.

Schools must build a sustained, multi-tiered approach that includes:

1. Excellent teaching for all - evidence-based pedagogy, adaptive instruction, and strong curriculum design.
2. Targeted academic support - precision intervention, tutoring, and mentoring driven by diagnostic data.
3. Wider strategies - attendance, wellbeing, and parental engagement.

Ultimately, closing the attainment gap requires the alignment of leadership, culture, and evidence-informed practice. It is not inevitable — but it demands relentless focus, smart resource allocation, and shared accountability across every level of the system.

Pupil Premium In Action



Culture & Ethos

Teachers communicate high expectations for every PP pupil.
Disadvantage is never seen as destiny – barriers are identified, not excuses.
Classrooms have a calm, focused culture where PP learners feel secure to contribute.
Relationships are warm, consistent, and anchored in trust – PP students feel seen and known.

Secure Attention

- Teachers actively check for attention before delivering key content.
- Seating plans place PP students where the teacher can easily check engagement and never sat together.
- Mini whiteboards or cold-calling routines ensure all pupils are cognitively active.

Understanding

- Frequent, low-stakes formative assessment (no opt-out questioning, hinge questions).
- Targeted feedback prioritises PP students to close gaps quickly.

Explicit Vocab

- Key academic vocabulary is pre-taught, displayed, and rehearsed verbally.
- PP students are given additional scaffolding (e.g. sentence starters) without lowering challenge.

Model & Scaffold

- Strong "I do, We do, You do" structures help PP learners see what success looks like.
- Visualisers and worked examples reduce cognitive load.



Feedback

PP learners receive precise, actionable feedback – both verbal and written.
Teachers use retrieval routines to ensure feedback sticks over time.
Assessment data is used proactively, not retrospectively – teachers plan re-teaching or mini-interventions based on emerging PP gaps.



Relationships

Teachers know each PP pupil's context, barriers, and motivators.
Pastoral insight informs academic strategy (attendance, home learning, wellbeing).
Structured adult check-ins, mentoring, or "trusted adult" systems reinforce belonging.
Parents Evenings are scheduled to support PP attendance



Metacognition

PP students are taught how to learn: planning, monitoring, and evaluating their work.
Teachers model thinking aloud and make metacognitive strategies explicit.
PP learners are praised for effort, strategy, and persistence – not just outcomes.

Curriculum & Cultural Capital

Curriculum planning ensures access to powerful knowledge, not just engagement tasks.
Trips, enrichment, and creative experiences are used to close gaps in cultural capital.
Reading, oracy, and background knowledge are systematically developed across subjects.



Tracking

Teachers and subject leads know their PP students by name and need.
Department reviews and meetings interrogate PP progress and participation.
Interventions (academic or pastoral) are measured for impact, not activity.