

Pupil premium strategy statement – *Dixons Croxteth Academy*

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	439 (November 2025)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	59%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year)	2024-2027
Date this statement was published	November 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	Annually
Statement authorised by	Rachael Fidler
Pupil premium lead	Iain Duggan
Governor / Trustee lead	James Barron

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£254,420 230 students eligible out of 407 students (lagged funding) 3 CLA
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year <i>Recovery premium received in academic year 2023/24 cannot be carried forward beyond August 31, 2024.</i>	£0
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (<i>enter £0 if not applicable</i>)	£0
Total budget for this academic year <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>	£254,420

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Dixons Croxteth Academy aims to challenge social and educational disadvantage and ensure that all students succeed at university (or a real alternative), thrive in a top job and have a great life, irrespective of starting points. Our pupil premium strategy draws on research evidence (such as the Sutton Trust toolkit – see Appendix 2) to allocate funding to activities that are most likely to maximise achievement.

- All teaching meets the needs of each learner through quality first teaching, significant investment in teacher development and harnessing the power of feedback.
- Highly tailored targeted academic support focuses on closing gaps through swift intervention and maximising every minute of lessons.
- Barriers to achievement are minimised through well targeted support and the implementation of a range of wider strategies to improve attendance, behaviour, social and emotional wellbeing and strengthen parental engagement.

Quality first teaching is fundamental to our approach, and we understand the importance of ensuring that all teaching meets the needs of each learner through being responsive to common challenges and individual need. Our approach is to significantly invest in teacher talent by delivering a robust and bespoke programme of practice and coaching using data collected from weekly performance walks. In every lesson across our academy, students are supported to self-reflect and improve in response to feedback. The best way to ensure students make progress is to harness the power of feedback so each day has feedback time built into it. This is when the class teacher works with children either one-to-one or in small groups with the aim that no child goes home with a misconception.

Our most important assessment data comes from specific and daily formative assessment which we use to help shape our students learning. Our academy works in 3 cycles where each phase is a cycle of highly effective teaching and assessment used to diagnose areas to improve. This is how we tailor teaching and support through a process known as intervention prevention. In addition to using formative assessment data, we use summative data to gather a snapshot of student attainment which is key to knowing where our students are in their learning and to identifying the best way to reliably inform us of the gaps we need to close. Identifying the gaps and planning the ways that we will support students to close them takes time and effort, so this is built in and protected within each planning cycle.

The school serves a deprived area with families facing significant levels of socio-economic challenge. Our priority is to support students and their families to sustain high aspirations, encourage young people to have a growth mindset, and to progress on to higher education. The message at Dixons Croxteth is that all students have the potential to go to university or a real alternative. Teachers continually talk to students about what they are doing each day to climb their mountains on their educational journey. We expose students to as many inspiring careers, experiences and ideas to support their aspirations and show them the route map to broadening their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Assessments indicate that many of our students, particularly our most disadvantaged, have communication and language skills that are underdeveloped. On entry, our disadvantaged students enter KS3 well below non-disadvantaged students.
2	Assessments confirm that disadvantaged students generally have greater difficulties with reading than their peers. Whilst historically, a high proportion of students met the expected standard, our most disadvantaged students need significant intervention in order to achieve.
3	Internal and external assessments indicate that maths attainment among disadvantaged pupils is significantly below that of non-disadvantaged pupils.
4	Nationally, attendance of PP students is significantly below that of non-Pupil Premium students. Although at DCR disadvantaged students attend school in line with other students, it is important to continue to intervene and maintain the focus on attendance.
5	Our student surveys, information from CPOMS and triaging from the safeguarding team, as well as discussions with pupils and families have identified social and emotional issues for many pupils, such as anxiety, depression and low self-esteem.

6	The changing cohort, most likely due to the cost-of-living crisis and increasingly stretched local services, have led to an uptick in community challenges as per concerns logged on CPOMS. Additionally, there is an increase in behavioural challenges related directly to self-regulation for which disadvantaged students are disproportionately represented.
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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 oral language skills and vocabulary among disadvantaged pupils. Students in KS3 achieve a Good Level of Development by the time they enter KS4	Assessments and observations indicate significantly improved oral language among disadvantaged pupils. Through Fresh Start systematic phonics intervention. This is evident when triangulated with other sources of evidence, including engagement in lessons, book scrutiny and ongoing formative assessment.
Improved Reading across all years and phases of the Academy for disadvantaged students and all gaps on entry closed	All disadvantaged students in KS3 will be reading in line with their chronological reading age and with all other students in the academy at the transition to KS4 Reading outcomes from Fresh Start in 2024/25 show that more than 70% of disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard who took part.
Excellent academic performance in English for disadvantaged students, exceeding or in line with performance of non-disadvantaged students in KS4 national assessments	Disadvantaged students achieve an attainment 8 score in English in line with non-disadvantaged and above national expectations
Excellent academic performance in Mathematics for disadvantaged students, exceeding or in line with performance of non-disadvantaged students in KS4 national assessments	Disadvantaged students achieve an attainment 8 score in Maths in line with non-disadvantaged and above national expectations
To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	The attendance of all students will not be below 90%, with no gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students.

	The percentage of all pupils who are persistently absent will be below 15% with no difference between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students.
To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.	<p>Sustained high levels of wellbeing by 2026/27 demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • qualitative data from student voice, student and parent surveys and teacher observations. • a significant reduction in bullying • a significant increase in participation in enrichment activities, particularly among disadvantaged pupils.

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: £ 150,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Maximise the effectiveness of Fresh start and Reading Mastery through advisory systems so students read widely / often	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies	2
Embed Reading strategies across the curriculum focusing on comprehension	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies	2
Ensure all teachers and associate teaching staff deliver greater and more impactful same day feedback	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition	All
Design and implement a bespoke CPD programme underpinned by development of a practice culture	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/feedback https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/metacognition-and-self-regulation	1-3, 6
Employ additional staffing to work with under achieving disadvantaged students in the core subjects	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition	1-3, 6
Develop and embed oracy talk protocols and public speaking through student	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/oral-language-interventions	1, 3, 5

council projects, debate mate and CPD		
Fresh Start training to secure stronger phonics teaching for all pupils.	Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base that indicates a positive impact on the accuracy of word reading, particularly for disadvantaged pupils: Phonics Teaching and Learning Toolkit EEF	2, 4
Implementation of evidence informed strategies for teaching writing with a focus on direct instruction (sentence level and vocabulary development)	Writing approaches have a strong evidence base that indicates a positive impact on direct instruction and modelling of writing. Improving Literacy at KS2 Improving Literacy at KS1 Preparing for Literacy (EYFS)	1
Enhancement of our maths teaching and curriculum planning in line with DfE and EEF guidance. We will fund teacher release time to embed key elements of guidance in school and to access resources and CPD (including Maths Mastery and White Rose Hub).	The DfE non-statutory guidance has been produced in conjunction with the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics, drawing on evidence-based approaches: Mathematics guidance: key stages 1 and 2 The EEF guidance is based on a range of the best available evidence: Improving Mathematics in Key Stages 2 and 3	3
Improve the quality of social and emotional (SEL) learning. SEL approaches will be embedded into routine educational practices and supported by professional development and training for staff.	There is extensive evidence associating childhood social and emotional skills with improved outcomes at school and in later life (e.g., improved academic performance, attitudes, behaviour and relationships with peers): Improving Social and Emotional Learning in Primary Schools EEF	5, 6

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

Budgeted cost: £ 54,420

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Additional phonics sessions targeted at disadvantaged pupils who require further phonics support through Fresh Start.	Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base indicating a positive impact on pupils, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds. Targeted phonics interventions have been shown to be more effective when delivered as regular sessions over a period up to 12 weeks: Phonics Teaching and Learning Toolkit EEF	2
Embed Ruth Miskin Fresh Start for students who are under achieving in literacy in Year 7	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/phonics	1, 3
Provide highly tailored catch-up and revision sessions to Year 11 during half-term/weekend	One to one tuition EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) Small group tuition Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF	All
If possible, to overstaff maths and English to ensure that students always have a specialist delivering content	We have had difficulties in recruitment to maths and English. Similarly, when cover has been high this could impact on the delivery of lessons. Overstaffing and double teaching the core is a strategy we want to embed by 2026-27	All
Provide subsidies to reduce barriers for e.g. revision guides and learning resources, uniform and equipment	Experience has taught us over the past year or so that we need a contingency fund to ensure that no student is held back as a result of financial hardship. This includes offering to subsidise uniforms and revision guides and providing equipment for those who need it.	All
Embed effective Morning Mastery in the EBacc	One to one tuition EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) Small group tuition Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF	All

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

Budgeted cost: £50,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<i>Invest in training for the Senior Mental Health Lead in schools to further support the MR team, staff and students</i>	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/senior-mental-health-lead-training	5
<i>Invest in CPD and teaching resources to support delivery of a specific NHS backed evidence informed SEMH programme</i>	My happy mind	5
<i>Employ Pastoral/ Behaviour mentors to support with students struggling to access the curriculum as a result of issues with self-regulation</i>	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/behaviour-interventions	5
<i>Develop the role of the behaviour and attendance officer including training and targeted support to reduce persistent absenteeism and raise levels of attendance</i>	DfE's Improving School Attendance	4
<i>Provide subsidies for residential and day expeditions to provide wider experiences and</i>	http://learningaway.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Learning_Away_Summary_Brilliant_Residentials_and_their_impact_Feb_2017.pdf	5

<i>enrichment opportunities</i>	https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1031445.pdf	
<i>Further develop the extra curricular and co curricular offer</i>	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/arts-participation	5

Total budgeted cost: £ 254,420

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

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

At the end of Cycle 3, all secondary students sat the Dixons Academies Trust common assessment in the EBacc. The outcomes show that interventions are beginning to have a positive impact on outcomes but we still need to support staff to raise both progress and attainment to be in line with National data.

In Secondary, progress of disadvantaged students (0.70) in the outgoing Y11 cohort was broadly in line with their non-PP counterparts (0.88). For students in the current Y11 cohort, disadvantaged students, on average, are making more progress than non-disadvantaged students (Cycle 3 data). Students in the current Y10, on average, made more progress than non-disadvantaged students. Students in the current Y8, on average, made progress in line with or above that of non-disadvantaged students. The average progress and attainment is in line with some schools within our Trust.

Our relentless focus on attendance, including home visits, daily phone calls, well-being calls home from mentors and advisors has resulted in a higher level of attendance for our disadvantaged students. We are still not where we want to be but are confident that the structures in place will support raising attendance.

We employed a primary specialist maths teacher last year. This member of staff has delivered Fresh Start to students and is having positive outcomes. The member of staff is also supporting with student transition from Year 6 to 7 and can support with interventions for disadvantage in KS3

Our assessments demonstrated that pupil behaviour, wellbeing and mental health has continued to provide challenges. The impact was particularly acute for disadvantaged pupils. We used pupil premium funding to provide wellbeing support for all pupils, and targeted interventions where required. We are building on that approach in our new plan.

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.

Programme	Provider
Seneca	Seneca Learning
Sparx Maths	Sparx Maths
Read, Write, Inc	Ruth Miskin
Fresh Start Phonics	Ruth Miskin
Maths Mastery	NW Maths Hub
Learning with Parents	Learning with Parents
SHINE intervention	Rising Stars
Belonging	Anthony Walker Foundation