Pupil premium strategy statement – Dixons Pennine Academy

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium funding to improve the attainment and wider educational outcomes of disadvantaged students.

It outlines our 2026–2029 strategy, our proposed use of funding in 2026/27 and the outcomes achieved in 2025/26.

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	Dixons Pennine Academy
Number of students in school	613
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible students	51.55%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2026/27, 2027/28, 2028/29
Date this statement was published	October 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	October 2027
Statement authorised by	Rachael Deakin (Interim Principal)
Pupil premium lead	Aqib Ishtiaq (Vice Principal)
Governor / Trustee lead	TBC

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£299,920
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£299,920
If the academy trust pools this funding, state the amount available to this academy	

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our ambition is that every student at Dixons Pennine Academy, whatever their background or starting point, thrives academically and personally, achieves strong qualifications and has the choice of university or a high-quality alternative. We hold equally ambitious expectations for disadvantaged students, including those with high prior attainment and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Pupil premium eligibility is not a measure of ability, aspiration or individual need.

With 51.55% of students eligible for pupil premium, challenging educational and social disadvantage is central to our academy's mission. We will identify barriers through attainment and diagnostic assessment, attendance and behaviour patterns, classroom review and conversations with students and families. We will focus on the factors we can influence rather than assume that all students eligible for pupil premium experience the same challenges.

Our approach follows three connected tiers: high-quality teaching; timely and diagnostic targeted academic support; and wider strategies that enable students to attend, participate and succeed. High-quality instruction, instructional coaching, professional development and consistent responsive assessment are the foundations. We will pay particular attention to mathematics, reading, disciplinary literacy, independent learning and the progress of disadvantaged higher prior attainers. Reading

assessment and Fresh Start will be used where diagnosed need requires them, with SHINE-informed intervention for appropriate comprehension needs.

We will combine academic support with individual attendance and pastoral casework, active partnerships with families, access to breakfast and essential equipment where barriers are identified, and support for enrichment, music, food technology and post-16 transitions. Our planned weekly Girlguiding-related mentoring offer will be targeted to individual needs and evaluated for participation and benefit. Universal provision is intended to remove stigma and support access, but spending will be justified by its contribution to disadvantaged students' outcomes.

The strategy will be reviewed termly using defined baselines and pupil-level evidence. Leaders will check whether activities were delivered as planned, what difference they made and whether to continue, amend or stop them. Outcomes and expenditure will be reported to governors/trustees annually.

Challenges

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Attainment, mathematics and access to high-quality instruction. In 2025/26, disadvantaged Attainment 8 was 33.0 compared with 41.9 for other students (gap 8.8 points, up from 7.3). Disadvantaged English/maths grade 4+ rose to 31.5%, but remained below other students at 50.8%; the grade 5+ gap widened to 16.4 percentage points. Subject and assessment review will identify specific gaps, including mathematical knowledge, extended responses, independent learning and the progress of higher prior attainers.
2	Attendance and lost learning. Disadvantaged attendance fell from 85.0% (2024/25) to 84.2% (2025/26); persistent absence remained 44.8% and severe absence increased to 10.7%. These patterns significantly reduce access to teaching. Case-level analysis and family conversations will identify barriers, recurring patterns and students requiring earlier or intensive support.
3	Behaviour, belonging and emotional needs. Disadvantaged suspension events rose from 221 to 240 during 2025/26 even as whole-academy events reduced from 354 to 310. The academy will investigate which students and contexts account for repeated loss of learning and whether tailored pastoral and instructional responses improve access.
4	Reading and disciplinary literacy. Academy review identifies some students whose decoding, fluency, vocabulary or comprehension restrict access to the curriculum. Hachette reading assessments, Fresh Start diagnostics and subject review will establish which students need which support, including those who are both disadvantaged and have SEND.
5	Equitable access, participation and transitions. The academy provides breakfast, stationery, food technology ingredients and support for music and enrichment. Historical NEET outcomes are encouraging.

Intended outcomes

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Disadvantaged students make stronger progress and achieve better outcomes at KS3 and KS4, including in mathematics and at higher prior attainment.	Baseline: disadvantaged Attainment 8 33.0; English/maths 4+ 31.5%, 5+ 18.5%; Attainment 8 gap 8.8 (2025/26). Proposed 2029 ambitions: Attainment 8 at least 40.0; English/maths 4+ at least 50% and 5+ at least 30%; Attainment 8 gap no more than 6 points. Subject-level termly assessment shows reduced diagnosed knowledge gaps, including higher-tariff and extended responses.
Attendance improves and persistent and severe absence fall, enabling greater access to learning.	Baseline: PP attendance 84.2%; persistent absence 44.8%; severe absence 10.7% (2025/26). Proposed 2029 ambitions: PP attendance at least 95%
Fewer disadvantaged students lose learning time through suspension, and targeted students report stronger belonging and engagement.	Baseline: 240 disadvantaged suspension events in 2025/26 Proposed 2029 ambition: at least 25% reduction in PP suspension events per 100 students Track repeat events, rewards, lesson engagement and PP-specific pupil voice termly.
Disadvantaged students who have reading gaps improve decoding, fluency, comprehension and access to subject texts.	Disadvantaged students' average reading age will be at or above age-related expectations. Students accessing reading intervention will show an acceleration of reading age.
Costs do not restrict access to school life, and disadvantaged students achieve sustained positive post-16 destinations.	Establish autumn 2026 PP/non-PP participation baselines for clubs, trips, music, leadership and careers encounters; narrow identified participation gaps by 2029 and use pupil/family feedback to evidence barrier removal. Track every Year 11 leaver's intended, actual and sustained destination, with documented follow-up for every pupil at risk of NEET

Activity in this academic year

This details how we intend to use the proposed £299,920 pupil premium budget in 2026/27.

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £119,968

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Fund instructional coaching and subject-specific professional development focused on modelling, checking for understanding, questioning, responsive feedback and independent practice.	EEF Guide to the Pupil Premium (2026) identifies high-quality teaching as a priority. EEF Effective Professional Development and Dixons/Bradford Research School guidance emphasise rehearsal, feedback and coaching to improve instructional consistency. DfE menu: professional development; teacher coaching.	1, 3, 4
Strengthen assessment-informed teaching and curriculum review in mathematics, English and science. Use KS3/KS4 assessment analysis to target mathematical misconceptions, grade 4/5 thresholds, extended responses and stretch for disadvantaged high prior attainers.	EEF evidence emphasises high-quality, responsive instruction; assessment is valuable when it changes teaching. DfE menu: high-quality teaching, assessment and curriculum responding to pupil need. Monitor subject gaps rather than counting training sessions alone.	1
Develop disciplinary literacy across subjects: explicitly teach vocabulary, reading routines and subject-specific writing, supported by coaching and shared planning.	EEF Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools supports disciplinary literacy and explicit teaching of vocabulary and reading within subjects. DfE menu: high-quality teaching and professional development.	1, 4
Use Hachette reading-assessment information and follow-up subject assessment to adapt teaching, with PP/SEND overlap reviewed jointly by literacy, curriculum and SEND leads.	Robust diagnosis distinguishes decoding, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension needs, enabling an appropriate instructional response. DfE menu: assessment and technology to support high-quality teaching. Do not charge any licence a second time under targeted intervention.	1, 4

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

Budgeted cost: £59,984

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Deliver Fresh Start for students identified by phonics/word-reading diagnostics as having significant decoding needs. Trained staff will teach structured sessions and record baseline, dosage, progress and exit decisions.	EEF secondary Fresh Start trial and phonics evidence support systematic instruction for older students who still need decoding teaching, with diagnostic targeting and reassessment. DfE menu: targeted interventions in literacy; teaching-assistant interventions where appropriate.	4
Use Hachette reading data and SHINE-informed structured comprehension support for students whose principal barrier is vocabulary, inference or comprehension rather than decoding. Plan intervention goals with English/subject staff and reassess.	EEF Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools recommends diagnosis and explicit comprehension support. A clear distinction between assessment and intervention avoids assuming that testing itself improves reading. DfE menu: targeted literacy interventions.	1, 4
Provide time-limited, diagnostic small-group or one-to-one teaching in maths, English and science, prioritising students with specific learning gaps, including disadvantaged higher prior attainers. Link content to classroom teaching; use pre/post measures.	EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit: small-group and one-to-one tuition are most effective when linked to assessed needs, delivered by appropriately supported staff and integrated with curriculum teaching. DfE menu: one-to-one and small-group tuition.	1
Use assess–plan–do–review for disadvantaged students with SEND whose identified barriers require targeted academic interventions or specialist input. Record pupil/family voice and evaluate access to class learning.	EEF Special Education Needs in Mainstream Schools and the SEND Code of Practice support a graduated response based on individual learning needs. DfE menu: targeted SEND interventions and resources.	1, 3, 4

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

Budgeted cost: £119,968

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Provide additional capacity for early attendance analysis, personalised casework and sustained family liaison for students with persistent or severe absence. Review individual plans at least half-termly, monitoring attendance and specific barriers.	EEF Supporting School Attendance and DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance emphasise timely identification and multi-component, family-centred approaches matched to barriers. DfE menu: supporting attendance; communicating with and supporting parents.	2
Provide targeted pastoral and behavioural support for students with repeated suspensions or reduced access to lessons; coordinate inclusion, SEND and safeguarding support and check repeat-event and pupil-voice data.	EEF Improving Behaviour in Schools supports coherent whole-school systems supplemented by tailored interventions where needed. Track suspension events per pupil alongside whole-school trends. DfE menu: students' social, emotional and behavioural needs.	2, 3
Continue free breakfast available to every pupil each morning; monitor uptake, punctuality and pupil/family feedback to test whether it reduces barriers to readiness to learn.	DfE menu explicitly includes breakfast clubs and meal provision. The potential benefit is greater where breakfast responds to an identified readiness or access barrier; attendance gains should not be assumed.	2, 5
Provide essential stationery where individual students face acute equipment barriers, and remove documented cost obstacles to food technology, music and wider curriculum access. Record how support is targeted and funded, without double counting in teaching.	DfE pupil premium guidance permits exceptional provision for acute equipment needs when necessary to address attainment barriers. Curriculum access and arts participation must be linked to identified need; music and enrichment align with the DfE enrichment approach.	1, 5
Increase access to trips, clubs, culture, physical activity, leadership and careers experiences. Offer targeted weekly Girlguiding-linked mentoring; track participation and reported confidence. Follow up Year 11 students at risk of NEET, checking intended, actual and sustained destinations.	DfE menu: enrichment and support for social/emotional needs. Mentoring and careers provision should address identified pupil barriers, with local evaluation of engagement and sustained post-16 destinations rather than assuming benefit from attendance alone.	3, 5

Total budgeted cost: £299,920

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

Outcome 1: Improve disadvantaged attainment and progress, closing gaps with peers. PARTIALLY MET.

Disadvantaged Attainment 8 increased from 31.6 to 33.0, English/maths grade 4+ from 18.2% to 31.5% and grade 5+ from 4.5% to 18.5%. However, other students also improved, the Attainment 8 gap widened from 7.3 to 8.8 points and the grade 5+ gap widened from 15.2 to 16.4 percentage points. Mathematics, higher attainment and diagnostic teaching remain priorities.

KS4 attainment measure	PP 2024/25	PP 2025/26	Non-PP 2025/26
Attainment 8	31.6	33.0	41.9
English & maths grade 4+	18.2%	31.5%	50.8%
English & maths grade 5+	4.5%	18.5%	34.9%
Disadvantaged / non-disadvantaged gap	A8 7.3 points; 4+ 27.7pp; 5+ 15.2pp	A8 8.8 points; 4+ 19.3pp; 5+ 16.4pp	—

The Year 11 cohort increased from 105 to 117; the 2025/26 extract identifies 52 disadvantaged students (44%) in that examination cohort. This must not be confused with the academy-wide pupil premium proportion of 51.55%. Whole-school Attainment 8 rose from 35.8 to 37.96; whole-school English/maths 4+ from 34.3% to 42.7% and 5+ from 13.3% to 27.4%.

Outcome 2: Improve disadvantaged attendance and reduce persistent and severe absence. NOT MET.

Disadvantaged attendance fell from 85.0% to 84.2%; persistent absence changed only from 44.9% to 44.8%, while severe absence increased from 10.5% to 10.7%. The new strategy prioritises earlier individual identification, coordinated family liaison and monitoring of students' improvement from baseline.

Outcome 3: Reduce disadvantaged suspensions and improve engagement and wellbeing. NOT MET.

Whole-academy suspension events decreased from 354 to 310, but events involving disadvantaged students rose from 221 to 240. Whole-academy Edurio responses were positive in some areas (76% understood behaviour expectations, against a 74% comparison), but this is not evidence of a disadvantaged-specific improvement.

Outcome 4: Improve reading fluency and comprehension. PARTIALLY EVIDENCED

Lexonic, Fresh Start, Hachette reading assessments and SHINE are part of the academy's reading offer. Internal reading assessment data indicates improvements in reading age and reading comprehension for students participating in targeted interventions, although further analysis of disadvantaged pupil outcomes will be undertaken during 2026/27.

Outcome 5: Remove financial and social barriers to full participation. PARTIALLY EVIDENCED.

Participation rates remained strong across enrichment activities, with pupil feedback indicating that financial barriers were reduced through targeted support. However, more detailed disadvantaged pupil participation data will be collected from 2026/27 to strengthen evaluation.

Outcome 6: Support students into sustained post-16 education, employment or training. MET

Earlier published NEET figures show improvement from 4.1% (2019) to 1.8% and subsequently 1.65%, below the cited 3.5% local comparison. The academy reports positive internal destination tracking. Further analysis will continue during 2026/27 to refine understanding of these trends.

Evaluation of activities and implications for 2026/27

Strategy area	What the available evidence shows	Change or monitoring requirement for 2026/27
Teaching and targeted attainment	Disadvantaged GCSE outcomes improved but the A8 and grade 5+ gaps widened; there is no activity-specific evidence attributing gains to coaching or tutoring.	Define coaching implementation measures and use common subject assessments to evaluate gaps; link tutoring to diagnosed mathematics, English and science needs and pre/post change.
Reading and literacy	Programmes are named but robust PP-specific reading gains and delivery data are not supplied.	Use common entry/exit measures, standardised assessments, attendance and dosage records; review intervention effectiveness each term.
Attendance	PP attendance reduced and almost 45% of PP students were persistently absent.	Fund and evaluate casework by monitoring individual attendance before and after intervention and the reasons for absence.
Behaviour and wellbeing	PP suspension events rose despite a decrease in total academy events; all-pupil survey results cannot establish PP impact.	Measure PP events per 100 students, students with repeat suspension, in-class engagement, tailored support and PP pupil voice.
Access and destinations	Provision is described, but participation gaps and current PP sustained-destination figures are missing.	Establish PP/non-PP engagement baselines; record reasons for non-participation and obtain confirmed PP-specific destination data.

Externally provided programmes

Programme (2025/26 PP spend)	Provider
Read Write Inc. Fresh Start	Ruth Miskin Training / Oxford University Press
Lexonic reading intervention	Lexonic
Hachette reading assessments / SHINE	Hachette Learning