Pupil premium strategy 2024-2027

Review 1st November 2026

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	The Cornerstone Academy
Number of pupils in school	616
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils (FSM Ever 6)	235 students 38%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2024-2027
Date this statement was published	01/11/26
Date on which it will be reviewed	**1/1/25, 1/9/25, 1/1/26, 1/9/26,** 1/1/27, 1/9/27
Statement authorised by	Mr Chris Phillips
Pupil premium lead	Mr Chris Phillips
Governor / Trustee lead	Marianne Harris Bridge

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£269,500
Service Children	£12,600
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
Total budget for this academic year If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year	£282,100

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At The Cornerstone Academy we believe that social or financial disadvantage should never be an obstacle to a young person's life chances and that each pupil can achieve at the highest levels. Our Pupil Premium Plan uses every funding source and educational strategy to remove any barriers our pupils may face. We encourage every pupil to believe in themselves and to achieve their highest potential.

Our current Pupil Premium Strategy works towards achieving these objectives by identifying barriers to achievement our pupils are challenged by and ensuring we have research-informed solutions funded by our Pupil Premium grant. These are outlined in further detail with rationale below. As a starting point we have used the EEF recommendation of a tiered approach with a focus on teaching, targeted support, and wider strategies.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Attendance of disadvantaged students is less than that of peers, the last national average for FSM students reported in 2018- 2019 was 90.8%. Figures in 2024 showed Pupil Premium attendance at 79.92% compared to 89.57% for non-disadvantaged with persistent absence figures showing 53.28% of disadvantaged students were PA, compared to 32.43% for not Pupil Premium. This challenge will focus on the sense of belonging and the support mechanisms for poor attendance.
2	Attainment of Pupil Premium students in English & Maths is less than that of their peers, with a 30% gap for Basics 4+ and 15% gap for 5+ in 2024. This challenge will focus on quality first teaching and catch up of students during KS3 for Maths and English as well as strong KS4 interventions.
3	Progress for disadvantaged students in Y11. There continues to be a gap between Pupil Premium students and their peers regarding progress and this has widened in 2024. Previous years have seen positive progress for Pupil Premium students at TCA, however 2024 saw the estimated Progress 8 score drop to -0.5. This challenge will focus on quality first teaching, homework completion rates, setting adjustments and links directly to challenge 1, attendance.

4	Character education is an important part of life at TCA and a student's education. Fewer Pupil Premium students (23%) are achieving their Education with Character Awards than non-pupil Premium students (38%). This shows that they are less likely to join clubs, go on trips, take positions of responsibility and gain wider experiences. This challenge will focus on offering a wider variety of opportunities to students and supporting students to attend/take part.
5	A low percentage of disadvantaged students are reading with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age. NGRT reading ages of disadvantaged students are lower than those of their peers. A high percentage of disadvantaged students have a poor understanding of vocabulary and how to use it effectively. This challenge will focus on whole school and individual approaches to support reading.

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
PP-eligible pupils attend regularly. Students targeted by attendance improvement strategies increase their percentage attendance and persistent absence amongst PP students drops.	Data shows that Pupil premium whole school attendance reaches 91% (2024 national average) by 2027 and demonstrates year on year improvement to reach this goal. The PA figure for PP students drops to below 25% by 2027 and shows year on year improvements.
PP-eligible pupils experience excellent teaching in English and Mathematics and make good progress through the Basics curriculum. Their work is of a high standard and compares favourably to that of non-PP peers. Students in KS3 eligible for Pupil Premium experience a broad and challenging curriculum, with a strong core that strengthens their ability to achieve well in all subjects. They build their knowledge and understanding over time and grasp key curriculum concepts, enabling them to demonstrate knowledge and skills confidently in a range of assessments, including summative tests.	Attainment of disadvantaged students in basics is at 45% 5+ (current national average) by 2027 and improves year on year. Mid and End of year assessment alongside classwork demonstrates that disadvantaged students in KS3 achieve in line with peers and are catching up on learning gaps. Work in their books shows a growing body of knowledge and increasingly fluent application of skills, comparable to their non-disadvantaged peers.
Pupil premium students experience a broad and challenging curriculum that is delivered with subject expertise. KS4 interventions are effective, and homework supports students ability to retain information ready for exams. Students receive excellent Information, advice and guidance to ensure destinations are clear and secured. Students make excellent progress in a range of subjects, including those within the EBacc suit.	Pupil premium students in Year 11 achieve positive Progress 8 score that improves year on year and narrows the gap with non-pupil premium. Pupil premium progress 8 is in line with national figures for non-pupil premium students by 2027.

Pupil premium students are actively engaged in the Education with Character program at The Cornerstone Academy. Pupil premium students are engaged with clubs and trips, are taking positions of responsibility. Pupil premium students have a good sense of belonging to the school.	The percentage of pupil premium students achieving their education with character awards increases over time. The gap between PP and non-PP has significantly closed and is negligible by 2027. Students survey results show a good alignment to the schools' values and an increased percentage of PP students are engaged with clubs and trips.
To have a greater percentage of students reading with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age. Reading is prioritised to allow students to access the full curriculum. All students have a wider understanding of vocabulary and how to use it effectively.	NGRT tests show improved reading ages for disadvantaged students. Improved literacy skills that lead to improved Mid and End of Year assessments for all subjects, and particularly English. Improved use of vocabulary, evident in books and exam responses.

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

Budgeted cost: £ 75,296

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Developing high quality teaching through; A CPD programme that develops teaching to apply Rosenshine Principles and Teach Like A Champion techniques; and A quality 'new staff', Trainee and ECT training program, with mentoring and coaching of early careers teachers and staff in need of additional support.	Rosenshine principals focus on review of previous work, scaffolding and guiding students work and providing new material in small steps, where understanding is checked at each stage to ensure a high success rate. EEF teaching and learning toolkit shows that mastery learning can add 5 months to student progress.	2,3

Use of technology to support and supplement quality first teaching with the consistent use of Sparx Reader, Sparx Maths and Seneca to consolidate learning. These packages supplement and are aligned to programmes of study. They speed up and improve accuracy of assessment, with Sparx automatically adapting to responses to deliver homework at the correct level.	The use of these platforms will enhance reading comprehension, will reinforce retention and will develop literacy and numeracy skills. These platforms will also enable staff to use the feedback they give to tailor interventions/lessons. EEF shows both homework and individualised learning adds 5 months progress to a child.	2,3,5
Additional teachers in Maths and English to reduce the class sizes in Y11.	Smaller class sizes offer smaller ratios to support students learning, the EEF toolkit shows reducing class size as adding 2 months progress to learners	2,3,5
Additional weekly lessons in Maths and English. Tutor time lessons for Y11 and power hour lessons for Y10 and 11.	Extra time with specialist subject staff to support learning gaps in targeted sessions. The EEF toolkits shows that extending the school day adds 3 months progress to learners	2,3,
Exam board training for subject specialism.	If subject specialists attend exam board training, they will be able to support student learning. The EEF cites giving students expert feedback as adding 6 months progress to learners.	2,3,
The development of oracy through; DEAR lessons, Turn and Talk, whole school use of sentence stems for discussion, and structured curriculum focused dialogue. **2026 Introduce a new approach to DEAR lessons, focusing on non-fiction texts to develop cultural capital.** **2026 Continue to develop student oracy skills through implementation of a KS3 tutor debate programme.**	The EEF research shows that Oral language interventions can add 6 months progress to students.	2,3,5
2025 Teaching strategies developed that uses NGRT stanine data to tailor lessons the students' reading ability.	The EEF research shows that Oral language interventions can add 6 months progress to students.	1,3,5

Targeted academic support

Budgeted cost: £ 86,490

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Academic mentoring - 1:1 support with student and mentor. Mentors are given 1 period a week to mentor their tutees. These sessions are used to review attendance, attainment and behaviour and enable students to develop learning and organisational skills ensuring they are prepared for lessons and exams. **2025 – introduction of KS3 progress tracking to compliment the KS4 process, enabling staff to identify and support students in KS3 to make the best possible progress.**	The EEF toolkit cites academic mentoring as having 2 months progress on learners.	1,2,3,4,5
Small group and 1 to 1 careers interviews for all students in Years 9-11 and mentoring programmes	Past cohorts have shown students with clear pathways of progression are more able to work with a purpose.	1,2,3,4
Reading programme. All students participate in regular reading programme during tutor time and a dedicated DEAR lesson at KS3. Sparx reader used to tailor reading homework to ability level and improve analysis and tracking of reading tasks. **2026 Introduce a new reading intervention to support students with fluency and comprehension.** **2026 Handwriting intervention for identified students. Clear strategy and support in place for laptop users.**	The EEF cites reading comprehension strategies as having 6 months progress for learners. The EEF cites both homework and individualised learning as having 5 months progress on learners.	2,3,4,5
Power Hour Intervention (KS4) - Increased teaching time for students to receive intervention to support their progress at KS4.	The EEF cites 3 months progress on learners through extending the school day.	2,3,
Homework timetables in place with strong accountability for completion rates. Homework clubs at lunch and after school are in place support students with their homework. Centralised 'study zones' for incomplete HW each week which are supported by longer SLT study zones on a Friday.	Students have clear homework set based on knowledge recall and independent practice and are supported well to complete this. The EEF cites 5 months progress for learners based on the completion of homework and 4 months progress for behaviour interventions.	2,3,5

Mentoring from external role models to support aspirations, organisation attendance and mental health including; Boys Network, Shine Project, SHIFT Dance, Thrive for Boys, SUN empower program for boys and the SCiP alliance.	The EEF research shows that mentoring adds 2 months progress on learners.	1,2,3,4
IT support - students without access to suitable electronic devices at home are provided with a laptop or equivalent to support independent learning. Removing this barrier ensures all students have access to home learning	. Homework can add 5 months of progress to learners according to the EEF.	1,2,3,5
Numeracy support - Teaching the gaps of the 4 concrete skills for targeted students. Sparx programme to support numeracy skills and independent learning for whole school.	Small group work can add 4 months progress and Homework can add 5 months of progress to learners according to the EEF.	2,3,
Targeted Lexonik and Lexonik leap Literacy support for small groups and 1 to 1. Groups targeted from baseline assessments and support struggling readers with cumulative phonics skills	EEF shows phonics intervention has adds 5 months progress to learners.	2,3,5
Key workers for SEND students	Teaching assistants are assigned students as keyworkers. The EEF cites this has 4 months progress on learners	1,2,3,4,6

Wider strategies

Budgeted cost: £ 120,314

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Breakfast Club each morning where all students able to get a free breakfast each day before the school day begins.	EEF shows that the implementation of Magic Breakfast add 2+ months of progress to students	1,2,3
Improving attendance - Increased staffing including the appointment of an Assistant Principal in charge of attendance. A comprehensive series of rewards and incentives for good or improved attendance.	Parental engagement adds 4+ months progress to learners according to the EEF. National and School data shows a direct link between attainment/progress and attendance.	1,2,3,4,5

Responsive communication and interventions to attendance issues. Morning minibus shuttle for targeted students. Employment of an Educational Support Worker who supports families of persistently absent students. **2025 – the introduction of A'Star attendance tracking to trigger and track interventions.** **2026 – Pastoral team taking a strong role in attendance call to resolve any issues swiftly.**		
Bespoke provisions on site to support students who have medical, mental and emotional heath barriers. The Gateway provides smaller groups learning environment and specialist teachers. The Transition Learning Centre (TLC) is in place for the most vulnerable students who arrive in Year 7. The TLC have a much slower integration into Academy life to match their individual needs. This is led by an HLTA (their tutor) and accompanies the students to all of their lessons.	Teacher Assistant Interventions can add 4+ months of progress to learners according to the EEF with small group tuition as adding 4 months progress.	1,2,3,4,5
External companies to support aspirations Careers fair, Southern Universities Network, Bournemouth and Southampton University are external providers that have historically been used to support aspirations.	Theses have seen improved attendance and attainment from students who participated in the programmes.	1,2,3
Enrichment - Subsidised trips and visits to develop cultural knowledge capital and Education with Character.	EEF research shows that Arts participation can add 3+ months progress and physical activity can add 1+ months.	1,4
2025 - introducing a greater number and variety of clubs (1 compulsory club, a year, for all KS3 students). Close tracking and intervention for completion of the education with character awards to develop the sense of belonging.	EEF research shows that Arts participation can add 3+ months progress and physical activity can add 1+ months.	1,4
Emotional Literacy - Small group support in resilience, social communication and literacy from specialist trained TA.	The EEF cites learner make up to 4 months progress for social and emotional learning.	1,4,5

Emotional Literacy – 1:1 counselling can be provided for students who are waiting 6 weeks of more for therapeutic support from CAMHS.	The EEF cites learner make up to 4 months progress for social and emotional learning.	1,4,5
Subject support - Subsidised materials for academic learning i.e. art materials, food tech ingredients, music lessons, revision guides. Subsidised uniform and academic equipment. This supports our wider focus of education with character and removes' barriers to academic learning.	EEF research shows that Arts participation can add 3+ months progress and physical activity can add 1+ months.	1,2,3,4,5

Total budgeted cost: £282,100

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

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

Pupil premium strategy outcomes September 2026

Intended outcome	Impact
PP-eligible pupils attend regularly. Students targeted by attendance improvement strategies increase their percentage attendance and persistent absence amongst PP students drops.	*2025 - Overall attendance has improved by 1.5%, with PP increasing at a faster rate than non-PP (+ 2.4% compared to +0.9%).* *Overall persistent absence has decrease by 4.4%, with PP persistent absence reducing at a faster rate than non PP (5.6% compared to 3.8%)* *This shows the strategies employed are having impact on the whole school and closing the gaps between PP and non PP. The school will continue with the attendance strategies and will be introducing 'A Star' attendance to help support the tracking and instigating of interventions.* ***2026 -Overall attendance improved by 0.2% however PP attendance declined in 2026 by 0.6%. Persistent absence reduced by 0.5% overall, however PP persistent absence increased by 2.3% in 2026. PP attendance plan adjusted to focus on these key areas.***

PP-eligible pupils experience excellent teaching in English and Mathematics and make good progress through the Basics curriculum. Their work is of a high standard and compares favourably to that of non-PP peers. Students in KS3 eligible for Pupil Premium experience a broad and challenging curriculum, with a strong core that strengthens their ability to achieve well in all subjects. They build their knowledge and understanding over time and grasp key curriculum concepts, enabling them to demonstrate knowledge and skills confidently in a range of assessments, including summative tests.	*2025 -Basics 4+ improved by 1% this year and 5+ improved by 7%.* *Basics 4+ improved at a greater rate for PP at 4+ with a 6% improvement compared to –3% for non PP.* *Basics 5+ increased by 5% for PP students however this was at a lesser rate than non-PP which increased by 8%.* *Overall Attainment 8 improved by 0.7 with PP students improving at a greater rate than non-PP. (+1.4 compared to –0.3). Closing the GAP between PP and non PP.* *KS3 United Learning end of year data shows PP students making progress in Maths and English, with Y8 English PP students making greater progress than non PP.* ***2026 results indicate that disadvantaged students are achieving above disadvantaged national averages. The gap between disadvantaged students and national non-disadvantaged pupils at both 4+ (54%) and 5+(35%) has narrowed significantly over the past two years.*** ***Attainment 8 has improved over the last two years. Overall Attainment 8 is now in line with national averages, while disadvantaged Attainment 8 (38.8) is above national disadvantaged figures (35.6) with the gap closing between disadvantaged and no-disadvantaged.***
Pupil premium students experience a broad and challenging curriculum that is delivered with subject expertise. KS4 interventions are effective, and homework supports students ability to retain information ready for exams. Students receive excellent Information, advice and guidance to ensure destinations are clear and secured. Students make excellent progress in a range of subjects, including those within the EBacc suit.	*Best English 5+ attainment increased at greater rate for PP (+7.8% compared to +6.1%)* *History 5+ attainment increased at a far greater rate for PP (+15.9% compared to +2.6%)* *Maths 5+ attainment increased by 6.9% for PP students.* *Science 5+ attainment increased by 7.4% for PP students.* *French 5+ attainment increased by 4.4% for PP students.* *There was a greater change in 4+ grades for GCSE's with a 7% increase compared to a 1% increase for non-PP.* *Regular book looks and learning walks show little or no difference between PP and non-PP work.* *This year the school will work on increasing the rate of 5+ improvements further still for PP.* *The school to introduce detailed progress tracking for KS3 assessments that then inform interventions and ensure that PP progress at a greater rate.* ***2026***

	Maths attainment at Grade 4+ for disadvantaged students have strengthened significantly, increasing from 46% in 2024 to 66% in 2026, and are now consistently above national disadvantaged pupil performance. ***Maths attainment at Grade 5+ disadvantaged students have improved significantly, increasing from 28% in 2024 to 51% in 2026, and remain well above national disadvantaged pupil performance.*** ***English attainment at Grade 4+ disadvantaged students improved markedly from 52% in 2024 to 77% in 2026, exceeding national disadvantaged outcomes and close to national non-disadvantaged pupils.*** ***English attainment at Grade 5+ disadvantaged students also improved strongly, increasing from 30% in 2024 to 52% in 2026, exceeding national disadvantaged outcomes and significantly narrowing the gap with national non-disadvantaged pupils.*** ***Attainment in Science 4+ disadvantaged above national disadvantaged figures for the last 2 years.*** ***Attainment in Science 5+ disadvantaged has also remained above national disadvantaged figures for the last 2 years.*** ***Languages 4+ Sig+ against national. Disadvantaged is now above national non dis at 80%.*** ***Languages 5+ disadvantaged is now above national non disadvantaged at 80%*** ***Humanities 4+ disadvantaged 70.6% could now be above national non-disadvantaged figures.*** ***Humanities 5+ disadvantaged well above national disadvantaged figures at 44.1%***
Pupil premium students are actively engaged in the Education with Character program at The Cornerstone Academy. Pupil premium students are engaged with clubs and trips, are taking positions of responsibility. Pupil premium students have a good sense of belonging to the school.	*Equal percentages of PP students compared to non-PP students have taken part in school trips.* *PP students were under-represented in Education with Character Rewards (23.5% of rewards going to PP, where 42% of students are PP).* *The student survey in October 2024 showed that a higher than national percentage of students said that they feel like they belong in the school, however there was a gap between PP and non-PP perceptions. (74% positive response compared to 87%).* *This year the school will be introducing a greater number and variety of clubs, improving the tracking and intervention for completion of the education with character awards and introducing 1 compulsory club, a year, for all students in KS3. We will also be conducting this year's student survey in October 2025.*

	2026 Pupil Premium participation in enrichment, trips and clubs increased from 50% to 78.4%. and is broadly in line with non-pupil premium. Pupil Premium participation in clubs increased to 67% and is closing the gap to non-PP. ***34% of Bronze Awards were Pupil Premium students, but is below the percentage of non-pupil premium students. Overall award completion rates stand at 24%.***
To have a greater percentage of students reading with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age. Reading is prioritised to allow students to access the full curriculum. All students have a wider understanding of vocabulary and how to use it effectively.	*2025 - Pupil Premium students improved their reading ability through focussed interventions and the whole school reading strategy. NGRT data showed that, on average, PP students made 0.7 years progress in reading age during the 24/25 academic year, however this was slightly behind non-PP (0.9). Similar proportions of PP and non-PP improved in NGRT stanines over the year. With 38% of PP students improving reading stanines by at least one compared to 42% for non-PP.* *This year the school will be working on how to use NGRT stanine data to tailor lessons the students' reading ability.* ***2026 - NGRT data shows a strong trajectory of reading improvement through the school. The proportion of pupils in Stanines 1–3 decreases across every year group, with the strongest improvement in Years 9 and 10. Gaps for PP, SEND and gender narrow substantially from Year 8 onwards.*** ***There is a clear closing of the PP/non-PP gap from Y8 onwards, with the gap completely closed by Y9 and Y10.***