Pupil Premium Strategy Statement 2026/2027

Castle School

School overview

Detail	Information
School name	Castle School
Number of learners in school	232
Proportion of learners eligible for Pupil Premium	33%
Academic year / years covered by this strategy	2026–27
Date this statement was published	November 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	November 2027
Statement authorised by	Charlotte Whysall
Pupil Premium lead	Ben Hawes
Governor / trustee lead	Donna Lovett

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil Premium funding allocation this academic year	£62,720
Pupil Premium funding carried forward from previous years	£0
Other relevant funding included in this plan	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£62,720

Part A: Pupil Premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At Castle School, our aim is to ensure that all disadvantaged learners are supported to achieve their individual potential, develop positive relationships and access a rich, meaningful and inclusive education. We recognise that disadvantage can create additional barriers to learning, participation, emotional wellbeing and social development, particularly when combined with special educational needs and disabilities.

Our approach is child-centred and therapeutic. We aim to provide an environment characterised by safety, trust, collaboration and high expectations, where learners are understood as individuals and supported to take their next steps in learning and development.

Our Pupil Premium strategy will focus on identifying and addressing the barriers that may prevent disadvantaged learners from accessing the curriculum, engaging fully in learning and participating in wider school experiences. Funding will complement specialist provision through personalised learning approaches, appropriate therapeutic support and family support where these are identified as priorities and demonstrate value for money.

We are committed to ensuring that disadvantaged learners have access to high-quality teaching, appropriate assessment, personalised targets and support that reflects their individual needs. We will seek to remove financial barriers to educational visits, residential opportunities and other enriching experiences, helping learners develop confidence, independence, communication and social skills.

Our strategy is underpinned by early identification of need, strong relationships, collaboration with families and professionals, and regular evaluation of impact. We will use evidence from pupil progress, engagement, individual targets,

relevant therapeutic assessments, family feedback and participation in school life to review provision and ensure that funding makes a meaningful difference.

Ultimately, we want every disadvantaged pupil at Castle School to feel safe, valued and included, to make progress from their individual starting point, and to develop the skills, confidence and independence needed for the next stage of their lives.

Challenges faced by disadvantaged learners

Challenge 1: Access to learning and achievement

Learners may experience barriers to learning associated with their individual special educational needs, disabilities, communication, sensory processing, emotional regulation or developmental needs. Accurate assessment and appropriate curriculum planning are essential to ensure that disadvantage does not further limit progress or engagement.

Challenge 2: Emotional wellbeing, self-regulation and engagement

Some learners may need additional support to develop emotional regulation, positive relationships, confidence and readiness to learn. Difficulties in these areas can affect participation, engagement and the ability to access learning consistently.

Challenge 3: Access to enrichment and wider opportunities

Financial disadvantage may prevent some learners from accessing educational visits, residential experiences, outdoor learning and other activities that contribute to social development, independence and wider learning.

Challenge 4: Family support and partnership

Some families may benefit from additional support to navigate services, access advice, strengthen home–school communication and address barriers affecting their child's education and wellbeing.

Intended outcomes

Intended outcome	Success criteria / evidence
Improved access to learning through personalised, needs-led provision.	Progress against individual learning targets, Digital passport reviews, curriculum engagement and relevant assessment information.
Improved emotional wellbeing, self-regulation and readiness to learn.	Support records, observations, behaviour and engagement information, relevant therapeutic assessments and individual outcome reviews.
Increased participation in educational visits, residential activities and enrichment.	Participation records, identification of financial barriers and evidence that eligible learners can access planned experiences.
Improved confidence, social interaction and independence.	Individual targets, observations, progress reviews, pupil voice where appropriate and participation in school/community activities.
Stronger partnership with families and improved access to support.	Family feedback, records of support offered, engagement with relevant services and review of identified barriers.
Effective use of Pupil Premium funding.	Termly review of expenditure, implementation of planned activities and evaluation against intended outcomes.

Activity planned for this academic year

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Provide regular staff development and opportunities to share effective	Staff training records, staff feedback, learning walks/observations and review of how agreed strategies are reflected in classroom practice.	1,2

practice in personalised, inclusive and therapeutic approaches.	Use these sources to evaluate implementation and identify further training needs.	
Use digital passports, individual targets and assessment reviews to ensure teaching and curriculum planning reflect each disadvantaged learner's strengths, needs and next steps.	Digital passport reviews, individual progress information, curriculum engagement records and teacher assessments. Compare progress with each learner's starting point and review whether strategies are supporting access to learning.	1,2,4
Embed relevant recommendations from therapists and other professionals into classroom practice and curriculum planning.	Relevant professional advice, staff planning and observations of learners' access to learning. Review whether recommendations are implemented consistently and whether individual targets show progress.	1,2

Total budgeted cost: £28,500

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

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Provide targeted therapeutic or specialist support where assessment identifies a need and the intervention is expected to improve access to learning.	Individual assessments, professional recommendations and baseline information should identify the need for support. Review intervention records and progress towards agreed outcomes to judge whether support is effective.	1,2
Coordinate teachers, therapists and support staff so that communication, sensory regulation, emotional regulation and social interaction strategies are reinforced across the school day.	Therapy recommendations, PLG Targets, staff observations and review meetings. Look for evidence that strategies are used consistently and that learners are increasingly able to participate in learning and school routines.	1,2,4
Review the impact of targeted interventions regularly (including reading interventions) and adapt or stop approaches where they are not helping learners make progress.	Record baseline information, intended outcomes, frequency of support and review dates. Use progress reviews, relevant therapeutic reports and observations to decide whether the intervention should continue or change.	1,2
Provide music therapy for disadvantaged learners whose assessed needs indicate that a structured, therapeutic music-based intervention may support communication, emotional expression, regulation, engagement or positive relationships	Use baseline information and agreed individual outcomes to identify the purpose of music therapy. Record attendance and participation, therapist observations and relevant feedback from staff. Review progress against individual targets and whether any changes are seen in communication, emotional regulation, engagement or readiness to learn.	1,2,4
Provide art therapy for disadvantaged learners whose assessed needs indicate that a structured, creative therapeutic intervention may support emotional expression, communication, self-	Use assessment information and agreed outcomes to establish a baseline and review progress. Consider therapist feedback, participation records, observations from staff and progress towards individual targets. Evaluate whether the intervention is supporting emotional wellbeing,	1,2,4

esteem, regulation or engagement with learning.	communication, confidence or access to learning.	

Total budgeted cost: £20,250

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

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Remove financial barriers to participation in educational visits, residential activities, outdoor learning and other curriculum enrichment.	Monitor which disadvantaged learners take part, identify any financial barriers, and record support provided. Review participation alongside observations of confidence, social interaction, independence and engagement.	3,4
Provide appropriate family support and signposting to services where this addresses identified barriers to learning, attendance, participation or wellbeing.	Records of support offered, family feedback and follow-up with relevant professionals. Review whether agreed actions improve access to support or reduce barriers affecting the learner's school experience.	2,4
Strengthen home–school communication and collaboration with families and relevant professionals to support consistent approaches around individual learners.	Home–school communication records, review meetings, family feedback and agreed actions. Evaluate whether information is shared effectively and whether support plans are understood and implemented consistently.	1,2,4
Provide opportunities for learners to develop positive relationships, confidence, self-esteem and independence through appropriate school and community experiences.	PLG targets, participation records, staff observations and progress reviews. Where appropriate, include learner voice and family feedback to understand whether learners are becoming more confident and independent.	2,3,4
Provide access to horse riding or equine-assisted activities where appropriate to learners' assessed needs, interests and individual plans, supporting enrichment, confidence, communication, emotional regulation, physical participation and independence.	Record participation and any barriers to access, alongside agreed individual targets and observations from school staff and the provider where available. Review changes in confidence, communication, regulation, engagement and independence, and gather learner or family feedback where appropriate. Ensure provision is suitable for the learner and delivered with appropriate safeguarding and risk assessments.	2,3,4
Provide structured opportunities to interact with appropriately assessed therapy dogs, where suitable for individual learners, to support wellbeing, confidence, communication, emotional regulation and positive engagement with school.	Record participation and review agreed outcomes through staff observations, individual targets, engagement information and learner or family feedback where appropriate. Consider whether learners show changes in calmness, confidence, communication or readiness to participate in learning. Check individual suitability, allergies or fears, safeguarding arrangements and the provider's relevant welfare procedures.	1,2,4

Total budgeted cost: £18,750

Budget summary

Spending category	Planned allocation
Teaching and staff development	£28,500
Targeted academic and specialist support	£20,250
Wider strategies, family support and enrichment	£18,750
Total planned expenditure	£67,500

Part B: Review of the previous academic year (2025/2026)

Outcomes for disadvantaged learners

The school's previous published strategy described work involving therapeutic support, digital passports, staff training, behaviour support and access to educational experiences. The following review section must be completed using Castle School's actual 2025–26 expenditure and impact evidence; no outcomes or figures have been assumed in this draft.

Aim / area	Evidence and impact
Improve access to learning through personalised targets and assessment.	Personalised learning remained central to supporting disadvantaged learners at Castle School. Learner Passports and individual learning targets helped staff identify learners' strengths, needs and next steps, enabling support to be tailored to individual circumstances. Staff continued to use information from assessments, observations and professional recommendations to inform planning and adapt learning opportunities. This approach supported a consistent focus on learners' individual progress, participation and engagement. **Evidence: PLG Outcomes, Assessment against Curriculum Frameworks**
Develop staff understanding of therapeutic approaches and factors affecting behaviour and engagement.	Staff continued to develop their understanding of learners' individual needs and the factors that can affect behaviour, communication and engagement. Training and guidance in behaviour management, de-escalation and safe, positive physical interventions supported staff in responding to learners in a consistent and appropriate manner. Support from the Behaviour Support Hub and collaboration between staff helped promote a shared approach to understanding and responding to learners' needs. **Evidence: CPD Records, Staff Feedback Forms, RI data, Behaviour Incidents Data**
Improve emotional wellbeing, self-regulation and engagement.	Emotional wellbeing remained an important priority. Therapeutic approaches and specialist input, including Art Therapy and Music Therapy where appropriate, supported learners with communication, emotional expression and self-regulation. Staff continued to use individualised strategies to help learners feel safe, supported and ready to engage in learning. The school also continued to recognise the importance of developing social communication, positive relationships and independence, particularly for learners who needed additional support following disrupted educational and social experiences. **Evidence: PLG Information, Therapist Reports, Learning Walk Feedback**

Improve access to the curriculum through specialist support.	Support from specialist professionals, including Art Therapy, Music Therapy and Occupational Therapy where appropriate, has formed part of the school's approach to meeting learners' individual needs. Working alongside teaching and support staff helps ensure that recommendations can inform classroom practice and learners' daily routines. This provision aims to support communication, emotional expression, sensory regulation and engagement with learning. A personalised approach enables staff to consider the needs of each learner and adapt support accordingly, helping learners develop the skills and confidence needed to access learning and participate more fully in school activities. **Evidence: PLG Information, Assessment against Curriculum Frameworks**
Ensure disadvantaged learners can participate in educational visits and enrichment.	Educational visits and enrichment opportunities continued to be an important part of supporting learners' social development, confidence and independence. Off-site visits were fully subsidised for learners, ensuring that financial barriers did not prevent disadvantaged learners from accessing these valuable experiences. These opportunities enabled learners to develop communication skills, build positive relationships and experience different environments with appropriate support. This was particularly important for learners who required additional opportunities to develop social skills and independence. Providing access to experiences beyond the classroom supported inclusion and enabled learners to participate more fully in the wider life of the school. **Evidence: Educational Visits Records, Residentials**
Strengthen support for families.	Working in partnership with families continues to be an important part of supporting learners' progress and wellbeing. Regular communication between home and school helps staff develop a better understanding of learners' needs and promotes consistency in the approaches used to support them. Where appropriate, the school works with families and external professionals to identify barriers and access additional advice and support. Particular attention is given to areas of development that may require continued input, including independence, personal care, social communication and the development of safe and positive relationships. This collaborative approach helps ensure that support remains responsive to learners' changing needs and individual circumstances. **Evidence: Parental Feedback Forms, Referrals, Annual Review Feedback**

Overall evaluation

Castle School will evaluate the impact of its Pupil Premium strategy by considering whether the support provided has improved disadvantaged learners' access to learning, engagement, wellbeing, progress towards individual outcomes and participation in wider school experiences. The evaluation will draw on multiple sources of evidence, recognising that meaningful progress may include developmental, communication, emotional and independence outcomes as well as academic achievement.

Findings from the review will inform future spending decisions, enabling the school to continue effective approaches, adapt provision where necessary and ensure that funding remains focused on the needs of disadvantaged learners.

Further information

The strategy will be reviewed regularly by school leaders and relevant governors. Expenditure and impact will be monitored against the agreed intended outcomes, and the published statement will be updated annually in line with Department for Education requirements.