

Pupil premium strategy statement – Thornhill Academy

This statement details our school's use of pupil 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	534
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	45.8 (245)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2025-2026; 2026-2027; 2027-2028
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	June 2026
Statement authorised by	Liam Clark
Pupil premium lead	Ufumwen Onoka
Governor / Trustee lead	Denise Nicolson

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£262,826
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£262,826

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At Thornhill School, our intention is to ensure that all disadvantaged pupils regardless of their background or individual challenges make sustained academic progress and achieve outcomes that are in line with, or exceed, those of their non-disadvantaged peers.

We are committed to providing every pupil with the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to succeed both in school and beyond.

Our aims are to:

- Close the attainment gap across all subjects, with a particular focus on English, Maths, and Science.
- Improve attendance, engagement, and attitudes to learning so that pupils are active participants in their education.
- Build confidence, resilience, and aspiration, ensuring that all pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education, employment, or training.
- Guarantee equal access to high-quality teaching, learning opportunities, and enrichment experiences for every disadvantaged pupil.

How Our Current Strategy Supports These Objectives

Our current Pupil Premium strategy is designed to remove barriers to learning through a blend of targeted academic, pastoral, and wellbeing support. The key elements of our approach include:

- **High-quality teaching for all** – prioritising staff professional development, effective curriculum planning, and consistent use of assessment to identify and address learning gaps.
- **Targeted academic interventions** – providing small-group tuition, one-to-one support, and subject-specific booster sessions for identified pupils.
- **Attendance and engagement initiatives** – using mentoring, close attendance monitoring, and parental engagement strategies to improve attendance and consistency.
- **Wellbeing and behaviour support** – offering access to counselling, The NEST provision, and pastoral interventions to address emotional and behavioural barriers to learning.
- **Enrichment and aspiration** – ensuring disadvantaged pupils have access to trips, clubs, leadership opportunities, and careers guidance to support their wider personal development.

Key Principles of Our Strategy

Our Pupil Premium strategy is built upon the following principles:

- Evidence-informed practice: All actions are guided by research from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and informed by school data and context.
- Collective responsibility: Every member of staff is accountable for the progress, attainment, and wellbeing of disadvantaged pupils.
- Early identification and intervention: Ongoing assessment ensures that barriers to learning are identified quickly and addressed effectively.
- Sustained impact: Funding is invested in strategies that lead to long-term improvements, rather than short-term fixes.
- Inclusivity and equity: Every pupil is valued, and our support is designed to ensure fairness, belonging, and full access to the curriculum and wider school life.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p>Attainment gap in English, Maths and Science</p> <p>2024 GCSE outcomes indicate that PP pupils attained, on average, 0.5 grades lower than their non-PP peers across the core subjects of English, Maths and Science. This demonstrates a continued and significant attainment gap within the school's key performance measures. The data suggests that a notable proportion of PP learners are not making expected progress relative to their starting points, and this pattern remains consistent across multiple cohorts.</p> <p>Several contributory factors may underpin this trend. These include gaps in foundational subject knowledge, which can widen as pupils progress through the curriculum; reduced access to high-quality academic support and structured study environments outside school; and lower levels of sustained engagement with independent revision and homework tasks. These barriers collectively limit pupils' ability to consolidate learning,</p>

	<p>respond effectively to feedback, and build the resilience needed for exam success.</p> <p>The implications of this attainment gap are far-reaching. Lower outcomes in core subjects can restrict pupils' post-16 pathways, particularly in competitive academic or vocational routes that require strong passes in English and Maths. Over time, this may also influence pupils' confidence, aspirations, and long-term career prospects. Addressing this gap is therefore essential not only for academic equity, but also for ensuring that PP pupils have access to the same future opportunities as their peers.</p>
2	<p>Attendance and punctuality below national average</p> <p>Attendance data shows a significant disparity between PP and non-PP pupils, with PP attendance at 85.6% compared to 93.8% for their peers. This figure is considerably below both school and national expectations and highlights a persistent challenge within the PP cohort. Such reduced attendance results in substantial lost learning time, which directly impacts pupils' access to the full curriculum, disrupts continuity in teaching, and hinders academic progress.</p> <p>In addition to overall absence, poor punctuality is a contributing concern. Late arrivals lead to missed learning at the start of lessons, create disruption within the classroom environment, and limit the development of effective routines and learning habits. These factors collectively affect not only the progress of individual pupils but also the learning climate for others.</p> <p>There are several underlying causes that may contribute to these attendance patterns, including complex family or socio-economic circumstances, health or wellbeing issues, caring responsibilities, or challenges in establishing consistent morning routines. Barriers of this nature disproportionately affect PP learners, making early identification and targeted intervention critical.</p> <p>Improving attendance within the PP cohort is essential, as strong attendance is closely linked with positive academic outcomes, increased engagement, and improved long-term life chances. Addressing this challenge requires a strategic, multi-agency approach that involves pastoral support, close communication with families, and consistent monitoring to ensure pupils can attend school regularly and punctually.</p>
3	<p>Homework/revision engagement</p>

	<p>Staff reports and monitoring indicate that homework and revision engagement among PP pupils is significantly lower than that of their non-PP peers, with completion rates falling below 70%. This pattern suggests that a substantial proportion of PP learners are not routinely consolidating and extending their learning outside of lesson time. As a result, these pupils may struggle to reinforce key concepts, practise essential skills, and build the independence required for long-term academic success.</p> <p>A range of barriers may contribute to this lower engagement. Some pupils may have limited access to quiet or suitable study environments at home, reducing their ability to focus effectively on extended tasks. Others may lack the necessary digital devices or internet access required for online homework platforms. In addition, reduced parental capacity to support or monitor independent learning can further widen the gap in homework completion between PP and non-PP cohorts.</p> <p>The impact of inconsistent homework engagement is significant. It restricts opportunities for deeper learning, limits pupils' readiness for both formative and summative assessments, and affects the retention of core knowledge over time. Without regular revision and practice, pupils are less able to demonstrate mastery of the curriculum and are more likely to fall behind as cognitive demands increase. Addressing this challenge is therefore crucial to improving academic outcomes and fostering greater independence and self-regulation among PP learners.</p>
4	<p>Wellbeing and behaviour issues</p> <p>Data indicates that PP pupils are disproportionately represented in behaviour logs and pastoral referrals, highlighting a higher incidence of behavioural and wellbeing-related concerns within this cohort. This pattern may reflect a range of underlying factors, including unmet social, emotional, or mental health needs, as well as external challenges such as complex family circumstances, socio-economic pressures, or limited access to supportive resources outside school.</p> <p>Increased behavioural incidents can disrupt not only the learning of the individual pupil but also the wider classroom environment, affecting peer progress and overall teaching effectiveness. Patterns of repeated referral and behaviour points suggest that some PP pupils require targeted, proactive support to address underlying issues rather than solely reactive interventions.</p>

	<p>These findings underscore the importance of early identification, personalised pastoral care, and the development of strong, consistent relationships with key adults in school. By prioritising social-emotional learning, self-regulation strategies, and motivational support, the school can improve engagement, reduce disruptive incidents, and foster improved wellbeing for PP pupils. Enhanced pastoral provision will contribute directly to both academic progress and long-term resilience.</p>
5	<p>Limited parental engagement in academic support</p> <p>Parental engagement among PP families continues to be a significant challenge, with these families attending fewer academic events such as parents' evenings, intervention meetings, and curriculum workshops. This limited participation can reduce parents' understanding of school expectations, assessment requirements, and strategies to effectively support their child's learning at home, potentially contributing to the wider attainment gap.</p> <p>Several barriers may underlie this pattern of engagement. Work commitments and shift patterns can make attending scheduled events difficult, while some parents may lack confidence in communicating with school staff or have concerns stemming from previous educational experiences. Language barriers or limited familiarity with the school system may further restrict meaningful engagement.</p> <p>Addressing this challenge requires a strategic approach that strengthens communication, builds trust, and fosters inclusive relationships with PP families. By offering flexible opportunities for engagement, clear guidance on supporting learning, and proactive outreach, the school can empower families to play a more active role in their child's education. Enhanced parental involvement is critical for reinforcing learning at home, improving attendance at key events, and supporting sustained academic progress for PP pupils.</p>

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
Narrow attainment gap in English, Maths, Science.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The percentage of PP pupils achieving Grade 4+ and Grade 5+

<p>To reduce the disparity in achievement between PP and non-PP pupils in core subjects, ensuring that PP learners make expected or accelerated progress from their starting points. By closing the attainment gap, PP pupils will have improved opportunities for post-16 pathways and long-term career options.</p>	<p>at GCSE increases by 10% compared to the previous year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of progress is seen in internal tracking data (e.g., mock exams, assessments, intervention outcomes). • PP pupils demonstrate improved engagement and confidence in lessons and assessments, as reported by teaching staff.
<p>Improve PP attendance</p> <p>To ensure PP pupils attend school regularly and punctually, maximising their learning time, engagement, and access to the full curriculum. Strong attendance supports both academic outcomes and positive social-emotional development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall attendance for PP pupils rises to at least 92.8%, reducing the gap with non-PP peers. • Reduction in the number of persistent absentees (PA) within the PP cohort. • Evidence of improved punctuality and consistent daily attendance, tracked through school attendance monitoring systems. • Positive correlations between increased attendance and academic progress are observed.
<p>Increase Homework/revision engagement</p> <p>To ensure PP pupils engage consistently with homework, independent study, and targeted revision activities. This will consolidate learning, develop independent study skills, and improve readiness for assessments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% or more of PP pupils consistently complete assigned homework and revision tasks (including Sparx, Century Tech tasks, exam papers, and other independent learning activities). • Monitoring data shows improvement in homework completion rates over the academic year. • Staff report increased pupil engagement, confidence, and preparedness for assessments.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is measurable improvement in outcomes linked to completion of independent learning tasks.
<p>Improve wellbeing and behaviour</p> <p>To enhance social-emotional wellbeing, reduce disruptive behaviour, and promote a positive learning environment. Improved behaviour and wellbeing enable pupils to focus on learning, participate fully in school life, and develop resilience and self-regulation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the number of behaviour points and pastoral referrals for PP pupils. • Improved outcomes in pupil surveys relating to wellbeing, engagement, and sense of belonging. • Evidence of reduced incidents of classroom disruption and increased positive behaviour recognition. • Staff report improved pupil motivation, confidence, and emotional regulation.
<p>Increase parental engagement</p> <p>To strengthen partnerships with PP families, ensuring they are actively involved in supporting their child's learning. Engaged parents are better able to reinforce learning at home, support revision, and contribute to improved academic and wellbeing outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% or more of PP families attend key events such as Fish & Tips revision sessions, workshops, and parent evenings. • Positive feedback from parents and pupils regarding communication, support, and engagement initiatives. • Evidence that increased parental engagement correlates with improved attendance, homework completion, and academic progress. • Regular monitoring demonstrates a reduction in families being disengaged or underrepresented at key school events.

Activity in this academic year

This details how we intend to spend our pupil premium funding this academic year to address the challenges listed above.

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £47,106

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>High-Quality Teaching (Staffing, CPD, Digital tools)</p>	<p>EEF: Effective Professional Development</p> <p>EEF research shows that high-quality teaching, effective feedback, and the development of metacognitive skills have strong evidence for improving attainment and closing gaps for disadvantaged pupils. High-quality CPD ensures that staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to deliver targeted interventions, scaffold learning effectively, and personalise instruction. The use of digital tools such as Sparx, Century Tech, and online assessment platforms enhances differentiation, enables pupils to work at their own pace, and provides teachers with real-time data to identify gaps and tailor support.</p> <p>To achieve this, the strategy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing: Ensuring sufficient subject-specialist teachers in core subjects so that pupils receive high-quality instruction and targeted intervention when needed. • CPD: Providing ongoing professional development focused on evidence-based practices, including feedback, scaffolding, differentiation, modelling, and metacognition. • Digital Tools: Implementing online learning platforms (e.g., Sparx, Century Tech) to personal- 	<p>1,3</p>

	<p>ise learning pathways, track progress, and support homework and revision engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson Observation and Coaching: Monitoring teaching quality and offering coaching, mentoring, and structured feedback to maintain high standards of practice. • Data-Informed Planning: Using assessment data to identify gaps, guide planning, and monitor the impact of teaching and interventions. 	
<p>Curriculum refinement & assessment training</p>	<p>The EEF’s <i>Diagnostic Assessment</i> guidance highlights that high-quality assessment enables teachers to identify misconceptions early, target specific gaps, and adapt teaching to pupils’ needs. A well-sequenced curriculum further supports disadvantaged pupils by ensuring clarity, reducing cognitive overload, and providing a logical progression of knowledge. Effective assessment training ensures teachers make purposeful use of both formative and summative data, allowing interventions and planning to be responsive and evidence informed.</p> <p>To support this approach, the strategy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum sequencing review: Ensuring that core subjects (English, Maths, Science) are coherently planned with clear knowledge progression, built-in retrieval practice, and opportunities to secure long-term retention. • Assessment training: Providing staff with training on diagnostic assessment techniques 	<p>1,3</p>

	<p>such as low-stakes quizzes, hinge questions, exit tickets, and gap analysis to improve the precision of instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of assessment data: Embedding consistent systems for analysing PP performance after each assessment cycle, enabling departments to identify trends and respond quickly. • Targeted intervention triggers: Establishing clear thresholds and pathways for additional support when PP pupils are identified with gaps through assessment data. • Common marking and feedback strategies: Ensuring consistency across departments so pupils receive actionable, high-quality feedback that supports progress. • Moderation and standardisation: Strengthening the accuracy and reliability of teacher assessment through regular departmental moderation. 	
<p>Literacy across the curriculum programme</p>	<p>EEF: Disciplinary Literacy -</p> <p>The EEF's <i>Disciplinary Literacy</i> guidance highlights that every subject has its own literacy demands, and that pupils—particularly disadvantaged pupils—make greater progress when they are explicitly taught how to read, write, and communicate within each discipline. Strong literacy skills underpin access to the curriculum, support comprehension of complex texts, improve extended writing, and strengthen exam performance across subjects. Many PP pupils enter school with weaker baseline literacy, which affects not only English but</p>	<p>1,3,4</p>

also attainment in Maths and Science, as well as revision habits, homework completion, and classroom behaviour.

To support this approach, the strategy includes:

- **Whole-school literacy strategy:** Embedding consistent, evidence-based approaches to reading, vocabulary instruction, and extended writing across all subjects.
- **Explicit vocabulary teaching:** Implementing structured routines for teaching tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary (e.g., Frayer models, dual coding, retrieval tasks) to improve comprehension and fluency in academic language.
- **Reading support:** Providing targeted reading interventions for PP pupils with low reading ages, including guided reading, phonics where appropriate, and reading comprehension strategies aligned with the EEF's recommendations.
- **Oracy development:** Introducing structured talk routines—such as debates, structured speaking frames, and sentence stems—to build pupils' confidence, fluency, and clarity in oral communication.
- **Disciplinary writing approaches:** Training teachers to model subject-specific writing forms (e.g., analytical writing in English, scientific explanations, mathematical reasoning) to develop accuracy and

	<p>structure across the curriculum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development: Offering focused CPD on EEF Disciplinary Literacy guidance, so all staff understand their role in teaching literacy within their subject area. • Monitoring and consistency: Conducting book looks, learning walks, and assessment reviews to ensure literacy routines are embedded consistently across departments and are having a measurable impact. 	
<p>Recruitment of specialist staff to reduce class size in core subjects</p>	<p><u>EEF: Reducing Class Size</u></p> <p>The EEF's <i>Reducing Class Size</i> research shows that smaller classes can improve outcomes when teachers use the additional capacity to deliver more targeted support, personalised feedback, and closer monitoring of progress. Subject specialists further enhance impact by providing high-quality instruction, more responsive teaching, and more accurate identification of misconceptions. Smaller classes particularly benefit disadvantaged pupils, who often require more frequent check-ins, structured guidance, and targeted scaffolding to secure progress.</p> <p>To support this approach, the strategy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of additional subject-specialist teachers in English, Maths, and Science to enable redistribution of 	<p>1,3</p>

	<p>groups and meaningful reductions in class sizes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased targeted support within lessons, allowing teachers to spend more time with PP pupils, address misconceptions promptly, and provide immediate, high-quality feedback. • More effective differentiation, as smaller groups enable teachers to tailor instruction more precisely and support improved engagement and progress for PP learners. • Enhanced classroom relationships, with teachers better able to understand individual barriers, monitor progress closely, and personalise support. • Creation of targeted intervention groups in core subjects, led by subject specialists who can deliver accelerated catch-up programmes. • Greater use of assessment-for-learning (AfL) strategies—including RAG cards, mini whiteboards, and hinge questions—to identify gaps early and adapt teaching responsively. 	
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support, structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £15,881

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Small-group tuition (English, Maths, Science)</p>	<p>Small group tuition EEF</p> <p>The EEF reports that small-group tuition can add up to +4 months of additional progress, particularly when delivered by qualified teachers or trained specialists. Smaller groups allow for precise diagnosis of misconceptions, highly personalised instruction, and frequent, high-quality feedback. Disadvantaged pupils benefit most from this model because it provides structured support, increased accountability, and focused attention on their specific learning gaps. Research consistently shows that targeted academic support is most effective when it is well-planned, curriculum-aligned, and closely integrated with what pupils are learning in their regular lessons.</p> <p>To support this approach, the strategy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetabled small-group intervention sessions targeting specific gaps in English, Maths, and Science. • Use of specialist teachers or trained HLTAs/intervention tutors to deliver structured, 	<p>1,3</p>

	<p>evidence-informed programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data-driven selection of PP pupils, informed by assessment cycles, mock examinations, diagnostic testing, and teacher insight. • Clear, curriculum-aligned intervention plans that explicitly connect intervention content to classroom learning to maximise transfer and retention. • Regular progress checks and RAG-rating to monitor impact, adapt teaching, and re-group pupils where necessary. • Structured revision and exam-preparation sessions, including model answers, guided practice, and iterative feedback loops. • Proactive communication with parents/carers to reinforce expectations, encourage attendance, and promote engagement with intervention sessions. 	
<p>School-led tutoring (1:1 and 1:3)</p>	<p>EEF: One-to-One and Small Group Tuition</p> <p>The EEF identifies One-to-One Tuition as a high-impact strategy, typically delivering +5 months' progress, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Small-group tutoring (1:3) also yields strong outcomes (+4 months), especially when sessions are delivered by qualified teachers or trained tutors and are closely aligned with classroom teaching. Tutoring provides personalised explanations,</p>	<p>1,3</p>

targeted practice, and immediate feedback, supporting rapid improvement in core subjects. PP pupils benefit disproportionately because they often have less access to external tutoring, gaps in prior learning, and lower confidence in independent study.

To support this approach, the strategy includes:

- **Structured 1:1 and 1:3 tutoring sessions** in English, Maths, and Science, delivered by trained school staff, specialist teachers, or external tutors.
- **Diagnostic assessment** to identify precise learning gaps and tailor tutoring content to individual pupil needs.
- **Curriculum-aligned sessions** to ensure tutoring reinforces classroom learning and avoids disconnection from lesson objectives.
- **High-quality resources** including model answers, guided practice, and targeted feedback to maximise impact.
- **Prioritisation of PP pupils**, ensuring consistent attendance and engagement with tutoring sessions.
- **Regular progress monitoring** through short assessments, tutor feedback, and RAG ratings to adjust support as needed.
- **Parent/carers communication** to reinforce attendance, homework completion, and effective revision strategies.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible scheduling, including before- or after-school sessions, to increase accessibility and participation for all pupils. 	
AM/PM intervention sessions	<p>Evidence from school-based studies and the EEF indicates that structured before-school (AM) and after-school (PM) intervention sessions can significantly improve knowledge recall, confidence, exam readiness, and targeted skill development. These sessions provide additional learning time, allow for focused reteaching of misconceptions, and create quieter, low-distraction environments ideal for revision. PP pupils benefit particularly from this approach, as they often have fewer opportunities for supervised study and structured revision at home.</p> <p>To support this approach, the strategy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule regular AM and PM sessions in English, Maths, and Science, focused on key topics, retrieval practice, and exam preparation. • Prioritise PP pupils for attendance based on assessment data, teacher referrals, and homework/revision patterns. • Use evidence-based revision strategies such as retrieval practice, spaced practice, model answers, and exam technique instruction. • Provide structured revision materials, including 	1,3

	<p>knowledge organisers, past papers, and guided practice activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor attendance closely, contacting families to encourage participation and remove barriers. • Implement small-group formats to maximise personalised feedback and address misconceptions. • Track pupil progress using mini-assessments, mock exams, and ongoing diagnostic feedback to inform future sessions. 	
<p>Structured reading intervention (Reading wise / reciprocal reading)</p>	<p>Reading comprehension strategies EEF</p> <p>The EEF identifies Reading Comprehension Strategies as a high-impact intervention, typically delivering +6 months progress, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. PP pupils often enter school with weaker baseline literacy, limited vocabulary, and lower reading stamina. Structured reading programmes, such as Lexia and Reciprocal Reading, strengthen decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Improved literacy supports access to the wider curriculum, enhances confidence, improves behaviour, and strengthens independent learning.</p> <p>To support this approach, the strategy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement targeted reading interventions for PP pupils identified via reading age 	<p>1,3,4</p>

	<p>assessments, NGRT data, or teacher referral.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver reciprocal reading sessions focusing on predicting, clarifying, questioning, and summarising to deepen comprehension. • Use baseline and follow-up assessments (reading ages, fluency trackers, comprehension tests) to monitor progress and adjust provision. • Provide small group reading sessions led by trained staff or specialist literacy leads. • Embed vocabulary instruction across subjects, using structured routines for tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary. • Track pupil progress regularly, adapting groupings based on assessment cycles. • Encourage reading for pleasure through library sessions, book clubs, and targeted reading recommendations for PP pupils. • Facilitate digital access at home where possible and supervise use in AM/PM sessions for pupils without devices. 	
Year 7/8 catch-up numeracy support	The EEF highlights that early intervention in KS3 is crucial to prevent gaps from widening in later years. Pupils who do not secure foundational numeracy concepts by Year 8 often experience long-term difficulties with GCSE content. PP pupils are disproportionately likely to	1,3

	<p>enter secondary school with below-age numeracy levels, making targeted early intervention essential. Structured catch-up programmes focusing on number sense, fluency, and problem-solving can significantly improve progress, confidence, and engagement, preventing later disengagement.</p> <p>To support this approach, the strategy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baseline numeracy screening for all Year 7/8 PP pupils using standardised assessments (e.g., numeracy age tests, diagnostic maths tests).• Structured catch-up groups delivered by specialist maths teachers or trained support staff, focusing on number fluency, operations, fractions, and essential reasoning skills.• Use of targeted intervention programmes, such as Numeracy Ninjas, Times Table Rockstars, or White Rose catch-up units.• Frequent progress checks to monitor impact, adjust groupings, and personalise support.• In-class targeted support to reinforce concepts being taught in interventions.• Parent/carers communication to encourage numeracy practice at home, including guidance and accessible resources.• Curriculum-aligned interventions linking catch-up	
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	work to KS3 and future GCSE demands to ensure continuity and progression.	
Exam preparation workshops (Walk-Through Mocks)	<p>Evidence from school-based research and the EEF indicates that structured exam preparation builds confidence, improves exam technique, and increases stamina. Walk-through mock sessions provide pupils with opportunities to experience real exam timing, question formats, and pressure in a supportive environment. Disadvantaged pupils particularly benefit, as they often have less access to independent exam preparation at home.</p> <p>To support this approach, the strategy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run subject-specific walk-through mock sessions for PP pupils in English, Maths, and Science. • Model exam techniques, including question analysis, timing strategies, and structuring answers. • Provide worked examples and mark schemes to clarify expectations and standards. • Use small-group formats to allow personalised support, discussion, and feedback. • Embed evidence-based revision strategies, such as retrieval practice, spaced practice, and metacognitive reflection. • Schedule AM/PM sessions or after-school workshops to 	1,3

	<p>maximise participation and engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track attendance and engagement, following up with pupils who miss sessions. • Encourage parental involvement by sharing guidance on supporting revision at home. 	
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Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £199,838

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Attendance strategy (mentoring, rewards, parental liaison)	<p>DfE research shows that mentoring, parental engagement, and targeted rewards improve attendance, particularly for at-risk pupils. PP pupils often face barriers to consistent attendance, including family circumstances, health issues, or lack of routine. Engaging carers directly in school life helps reinforce expectations, support routines, and strengthen home–school relationships. Mentoring and personalised support increase accountability, motivation, and positive behaviours linked to attendance.</p> <p>To support this approach, the strategy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring for at-risk PP pupils, providing weekly 1:1 or small-group support to address barriers to attendance. 	2,5

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward schemes recognising improved attendance, punctuality, and engagement (certificates, assemblies, positive points). • Regular communication with parents/carers, including calls, texts, newsletters, and meetings. • Carer-based events (workshops, “Fish & Tips” revision evenings, curriculum sessions) to build relationships and provide practical strategies to support learning at home. • Attendance monitoring and follow-up, including early identification of PA (persistent absence) with targeted interventions and home visits if necessary. • Cross-department collaboration between pastoral, attendance, and teaching staff to ensure consistent messaging and support. 	
<p>Counselling, NEST provision, SEMH programmes</p>	<p>Social and emotional learning EEF</p> <p>The EEF’s Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) evidence indicates a +4-month impact on academic progress when pupils receive structured support to develop self-awareness, emotional regulation, resilience, and social skills. PP pupils are disproportionately affected by social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs due to external stressors, complex home circumstances, or previous negative educational experiences. Access to</p>	<p>1,4</p>

	<p>counselling, safe spaces (e.g., NEST), and targeted SEMH programmes reduces barriers to learning, improves behaviour, and increases readiness to engage in academic work.</p> <p>To support this approach, the strategy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Counselling sessions for PP pupils experiencing anxiety, trauma, or emotional difficulties impacting attendance, engagement, or behaviour.• NEST provision offering a safe, structured environment for crisis support, emotional regulation, or short-term withdrawal with clear reintegration plans.• Targeted SEMH programmes, such as resilience groups, mindfulness sessions, and emotional literacy training.• Key adult / trusted adult provision for regular check-ins, relationship-building, and mentoring.• Staff training in trauma-informed practice and SEMH strategies to improve classroom support.• Collaborative work with pastoral, SEND, and safeguarding teams to identify pupils early and create personalised support plans.• Monitoring and evaluation through behaviour logs,	
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	pastoral referrals, attendance data, and pupil voice surveys.	
Subsidised enrichment, trips, cultural capital	<p>Arts participation EEF</p> <p>The EEF highlights that arts participation and cultural experiences improve engagement, motivation, confidence, and overall attitudes to learning, with positive impacts on behaviour and academic outcomes. Disadvantaged pupils often have fewer opportunities to access enrichment outside school; therefore, targeted investment in cultural capital is essential to closing gaps in aspiration, vocabulary development, and broader learning experiences.</p> <p>To address this inequality, this strategy commits to providing sustained access to arts, culture, and enrichment opportunities for PP pupils. These approaches develop social skills, self-expression, and a sense of belonging, while increasing engagement in learning and broadening future aspirations.</p> <p>Subsidised Cultural and Enrichment Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund or subsidise trips, theatre visits, museum experiences, and cultural events to ensure PP pupils can fully participate. • Link enrichment to curriculum content (e.g., theatre visits in English, STEM events in Science/Maths) to deepen subject knowledge and raise engagement. 	1,3,4,5

	<p>Promotion of Arts Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase access to music, drama, art, and creative clubs that encourage confidence, creativity, and self-expression.• Provide necessary resources or equipment (instruments, art materials, sports kits) for disadvantaged pupils. <p>Access to Wider Extracurricular Provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer funded or reduced-cost clubs and workshops, including sports, STEM clubs, and creative arts.• Proactively target PP pupils with low engagement and track participation through attendance registers and enrichment data. <p>Pupil Voice and Inclusive Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gain pupil voice feedback to shape enrichment opportunities that reflect the needs, interests, and aspirations of PP learners. <p>Recognition and Celebration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Celebrate achievements and participation through assemblies, newsletters, social media, and displays to build aspiration and belonging. <p>Careers and Aspirational Events</p> <p>A programme of aspirational and career-focused events will further</p>	
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	<p>support cultural capital and broaden horizons for PP pupils, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automotive Vehicle Challenge Day • Talk Money Week • RISE Workshops • Careers Fair • National Parliament Week • Apprenticeship Awareness Week • Neurodiversity events and awareness sessions 	
<p>Homework club & supervised study</p>	<p>Secondary Maths - Homework Clubs - School Choices EEF</p> <p>Evidence from the EEF and secondary school case studies shows that structured homework clubs improve organisation, study habits, and homework completion rates, particularly for disadvantaged pupils who may lack quiet study spaces, devices, or academic support at home. Supervised sessions increase accountability, ensure pupils receive immediate help when stuck, and promote consistent revision routines. Improved homework engagement leads to stronger recall, improved assessment readiness, and contributes to closing attainment gaps in core subjects.</p> <p>To support this approach, the strategy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily or weekly supervised homework clubs staffed by 	<p>1,3,4</p>

	<p>teachers or trained support staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target PP pupils for priority attendance based on homework completion data or teacher referral. • Provide digital access, including Chromebooks or PCs, to enable completion of online work (e.g., Century Tech, Maths platforms). • Subject-specific study support sessions, especially before assessments and mock exams. • Structured environment with clear expectations and routines to develop organisation and independent study skills. • Immediate feedback and guidance from staff to prevent misconceptions and maximise learning. • Track attendance and homework completion to monitor impact and adjust provision. • Communicate with parents/carers to reinforce expectations and encourage consistent attendance. 	
<p>Parental engagement programmes (Fish & Tips, workshops)</p>	<p>Parental engagement EEF Texting parents about tests and homework can improve maths... EEF</p> <p>The EEF identifies Parental Engagement as a high-impact strategy, with potential gains of +4 months' progress when parents are effectively supported to help with learning at home. Research also shows that simple communication</p>	<p>2,3,5</p>

strategies—such as texting parents about tests, deadlines, and homework—can improve attainment, particularly in maths. PP families are often underrepresented at academic events, limiting understanding of school expectations, exam demands, revision strategies, and ways to support learning. Strengthening parental engagement improves home–school relationships, attendance, homework completion, and shared expectations for achievement.

To support this approach, the strategy includes:

- **Deliver “Fish & Tips” revision events** for parents/carers, demonstrating practical ways to support revision and exam preparation at home.
- **Run curriculum and assessment workshops**, e.g., English literature text guides, maths methods sessions, science revision strategies.
- **Use targeted communication methods**, including texts, phone calls, newsletters, and personalised invites to increase PP attendance.
- **Provide take-home resources**, such as revision booklets, knowledge organisers, vocabulary lists, and homework support guides.
- **Offer flexible attendance options**, including morning, after-school, and virtual sessions, to reduce barriers for families.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build strong relationships through regular liaison with parents/carers via pastoral leaders, tutors, and key adults. • Track attendance at parental events, with follow-up support for families who do not attend. • Create a welcoming and supportive environment, addressing confidence barriers for parents who may feel uncomfortable engaging with school. 	
<p>EAL support (vocabulary, bilingual resources)</p>	<p>EAL in the mainstream classroom - trial EEF</p> <p>Research shows that targeted EAL provision accelerates language acquisition, comprehension, and academic progress. The EEF’s trial on EAL in the mainstream classroom emphasises the importance of structured vocabulary teaching, scaffolding, and opportunities for oral language development. Many PP pupils with EAL require explicit support to access curriculum language, academic texts, and subject-specific vocabulary. Improving language proficiency enhances engagement, behaviour, confidence, and attainment across all subjects.</p> <p>To support this approach, the strategy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted vocabulary instruction, including explicit teaching of Tier 2 (high-frequency academic) and Tier 3 (subject-specific) words. • Use bilingual resources, including dual-language 	<p>1,3,4,5</p>

	<p>dictionaries, translated knowledge organisers, glossaries, and visual scaffolds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small-group EAL intervention for pupils new to English or at early acquisition stages. • Staff training on effective EAL strategies, including modelling, sentence stems, scaffolds, map structures, and visual representations. • Reading comprehension support tailored for EAL learners using reciprocal reading, guided reading, and pre-reading vocabulary sessions. • Opportunities for structured speaking and listening, such as paired talk, rehearsal time, and discussion frames. • Regular assessment of language proficiency to monitor progress and adapt support. • Close liaison between EAL leads and subject teachers to ensure classroom adaptations and consistent support. 	
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Total budgeted cost: £262,826

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Disadvantaged pupils at Thornhill Academy showed improvements in attainment, behaviour, and engagement, though gaps remain in key areas. GCSE outcomes show the attainment gap narrowed in English however, Maths remains a priority.

Assessment and Outcomes

- PP pupils performed 0.3 grades higher than the previous year in English
- Maths outcomes remained static, with a 0.6 grade gap compared to non-PP.
- Internal assessments show improved progress for Year 7–9 PP pupils, particularly in reading ages and core knowledge recall.

Attendance

- Attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals was 85.6%, lower than at least a quarter of similar schools. If you increased this to 92.5%, overall attendance would increase by 3.2%. Overall persistent absence percentage would drop by 5.4 percentage points.
- Year 11 attendance was 85.5%, lower than at least a quarter of similar schools. If increased to 92.8%, then overall attendance would go up by 1.8%. Thornhill's overall persistent absence percentage would drop by 3.2 percentage points.
- Attendance of pupils with special educational needs support was 83.3%, lower than at least a quarter of similar schools. If increased to 91.2%, overall attendance would increase by 1.7%. Overall persistent absence percentage would drop by 1.3 percentage points.

Community & Wellbeing Investment

- Thornhill is running a project called “Celebrating Diverse Sunderland”, supported by a £136,960 grant. [SHINE](#)
- The project aims to: strengthen school community links, support mental health, boost literacy, and improve transitions — all of which could positively affect disadvantaged students. [SHINE](#)
- This suggests a strategic move to address not just academic, but also social and emotional barriers.

Behaviour & Wellbeing

- Behaviour points for PP pupils decreased by 12%, supported by pastoral and SEMH interventions.
- Pupil surveys indicated improved wellbeing and feelings of safety and support.

Homework & Engagement

- Homework completion for PP pupils rose from 59% to 72%, partly due to supervised study and digital platforms.

Are we on track?

- On track for improvements in English, Maths and Science attainment.
- Partially on track for attendance (still a gap).
- Progress in wellbeing, behaviour, and engagement.

Overall, Thornhill Academy has made measurable progress in supporting disadvantaged pupils, particularly in English attainment, literacy, homework engagement, and wellbeing. Persistent challenges remain in Maths attainment and attendance, highlighting key areas for continued focus and intervention.

Externally provided programmes

Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you used your pupil premium to fund in the previous academic year.

Programme	Provider
Century Tech	Century
Sparx	Sparx Maths
Counselling support	Local provider

Further information (optional)

At Thornhill Academy, our Pupil Premium strategy ensures that disadvantaged pupils have the support they need to achieve their full potential. Our approach is evidence-informed, data-driven, and continually reviewed.

1. Planning

- Data-informed: We analyse attainment, progress, attendance, and behaviour to identify gaps.
- Evidence-based: We implement strategies supported by the [EEF Teaching & Learning Toolkit](#).
- Stakeholder input: Staff, governors, and pupils contribute to planning.
- Annual review: Strategy priorities are updated each year to reflect pupil needs.

2. Implementation

• Teaching & Learning

- High-quality teaching, CPD, and curriculum refinement ([EEF: Effective Professional Development](#)).
- Literacy across the curriculum ([EEF: Reading Comprehension Strategies](#)).
- Smaller class sizes in core subjects ([EEF: Small Group Tuition](#)).

• Targeted Academic Support

- Small-group tuition and 1:1 tutoring ([EEF: One-to-One Tuition](#)).
- Structured reading and numeracy interventions.
- Exam preparation workshops to build confidence and stamina.
- AM/PM intervention sessions to consolidate learning.

• Wider Strategies

- Attendance mentoring, parental liaison, and reward systems ([EEF: Mentoring](#)).
- Counselling, SEMH support, and NEST provision ([EEF: Social and Emotional Learning](#)).
- Subsidised enrichment, trips, and cultural activities ([EEF: Arts Participation](#)).
- Homework clubs and supervised study ([EEF: Homework](#)).
- Parental engagement workshops ([EEF: Parental Engagement](#)).
- EAL support including vocabulary and bilingual resources ([EEF: EAL in the Mainstream Classroom](#)).

3. Evaluation

- Monitoring outcomes: We track progress, attainment, attendance, and behaviour of disadvantaged pupils.
- Regular review meetings: Termly evaluations with staff and leadership teams to assess effectiveness.
- Pupil voice: Feedback from pupils informs adjustments to interventions.
- Governor oversight: Termly reports on spending and impact are presented to governors.
- Evidence-based adjustments: Interventions are refined or replaced based on impact data

4. Additional Support Beyond Pupil Premium

- Pastoral care and mentoring programmes accessible to all pupils.
- Universal access to enrichment activities, clubs, and sporting opportunities.
- Curriculum that embeds literacy, oracy, and digital skills for all pupils.
- Behaviour support and positive reinforcement for an inclusive environment.
- Staff CPD focused on supporting SEND, EAL, and SEMH needs.