The Forest Academy - Pupil premium strategy statement

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 impact that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

School overview – updated December 2024

Detail	Data
School name	The Forest Academy
Number of pupils in school	782 (plus 180 in Beal 6th form campus based at Forest Academy)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	31%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers **(3 year plans are recommended)**	2024-2027 *This is year 2 of a 3 year plan.*
Date this statement was published	**Year 2**– December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2026
Statement authorised by	Will Mackintosh – Acting Principal
Pupil premium lead	Will Mackintosh – Acting Principal
Governor / Trustee lead	Stephen Smith – Vice Chair of LGB

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£269,825
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£0
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	£269,825

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intent at The Forest Academy is to enrich the lives of all our students, no matter their background or prior attainment. We aim to both raise achievement of all our students, as well as ensuring that we close the gap between our cohorts of student groups, particularly between the most and least advantaged students nationally. Our aim is to ensure all student needs are met, focusing particularly on our most disadvantaged through:

1) **Whole school approaches**: High quality curriculum and teaching, pupil assessment & feedback, transition support having an impact on disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students in the school. Our intention is to close the disadvantaged attainment gap whilst at the same time this being beneficial to our non-disadvantaged.

2) **A broad, tailored and aspirational curriculum which meets the needs of all students**

3) **Targeted academic support and robust assessment** is used to ensure we are responsive to challenges/individual student needs: such as tutoring, speech and language therapy

4) **Wider Strategies**: thoughtful personal development for all students, tackling non-academic barriers to success in school such as attendance, behaviour, social and emotional support and successful progression.

We aim that 100% of students go on to high quality destinations at post-16 and post-18. We aim to widen participation and robustly support social mobility through ensuring that high numbers of students move on to destinations within universities and HEIs or onto further training through high-quality careers and apprenticeships.

We will focus on a small number of priorities each year in areas that are likely to make the biggest difference, with a focus on effective implementation focusing specifically on supporting students who are disadvantaged. Some of this support will be shared by students who are not in receipt of Pupil Premium funding, and we do this to promote good progress for all children.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	**Academic Gap** - In 2024 there is a gap in outcomes between disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged students. 		2023-2024 Exam Grades	
	All Students	Gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged
Progress 8	+0.08	-0.15
Attainment 8	44.0	-8.0
% 4+ E&M	57%	-4%
EBACC Entry	81%	-11%	
2	**Attainment on entry** - Attainment on entry of our current Year 7 cohort shows that there is a significant gap across all KS2 SATs tests: It is worth noting as well that the IDSR (Nov 2024) noted that overall prior attainment for the Year 8 (24/25), Year 9 (24/25) cohorts was overall below the national average on arrival at TFA.
3	**Attendance** - Attendance at TFA is well above national average (highest quintile – IDSR 2024), with persistent absence below national average (lowest/best quintile for schools with similar level of deprivation but also compared to all schools), but there is a gap between disadvantaged students and their peers in attendance. This gap reduced in the last academic year but we still need to narrow this further. |	Pupil Premium Attendance	Non-PP Attendance	Gap
2020-2021	94.7%	95.3%	0.6%
2021-2022	94.7% (no change)	95.7% (up 0.4%)	1.0%
2022-2023	90.0% (down 4.7%)	93.7% (down 2.0%)	3.7%
2023-2024	94.2% (up 4.2%)	95.3% (up 1.6%)	0.9%	

4	**Hardship** - Many of our families, both disadvantaged and those who are not, have experienced significant levels of financial hardship since the onset of the pandemic.
	Many report through parent meetings and our parent voice activities that they struggle for IT and internet access at home, as well as quiet places for students to complete their homework. Many are struggling to afford school uniform.
5	**Wellbeing** - Many of our students have experienced challenges during and since the pandemic including the more recent cost of living crisis. This has exacerbated mental health concerns and well-being issues. We have experienced a significant spike in safeguarding referrals, need for counselling and mentoring across the school. These issues are repeated nationally.
6	**Progression** - Due to wider national and international issues, school absence and issues related to the pandemic, there is an increased risk of students becoming NEET (Not in education, employment or training) when they leave school without appropriate careers and progression mentoring.
7	**EAL** - A significant number of our students who are disadvantaged, join us mid-phase, often with limited proficiency in English. This makes it challenging for them to make progress initially, without additional support. We have a significant number of refugee students attending the school.
8	**Destinations –** Destinations for disadvantaged students in the 2024 IDSR noted the percentage progressing to sustained education, employment or training as 'average' at 92%. We aim to improve this for our students.

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
Disadvantaged students have well-above national average (for disadvantaged students) for P8, A8 and E&M 4+. Disadvantaged students who have been at TFA for at least 2 years have at least national-average (for all students) for P8, A8 and E&M 4+.	Reduction in Attainment gap 8 from the 2024 results (-8.0 in 2024)
Disadvantaged students have well-above national average entry rate for EBACC subjects at KS4.	Maintain disadvantaged EBacc entry rates above the national average Reduce the gap between entry for disadvantaged vs non from the 2024 results (-11%)
Disadvantaged students have at least national average attendance Disadvantaged students have below national average (all students) of persistent absence	Attendance for disadvantaged students is in line with all students at TFA (target 96%) and at least national average for all students. Maintain attendance within the top (best) and persistent absence in the bottom (best) quintile for disadvantaged students
To improve the literacy of all of our students through focus on disciplinary literacy and to embed this within our great teaching plan. This will require: • A focus on developing oracy – ensuring that high quality dialogue supports students to be confident communicators • Strategies to drive improvements in Reading for Pleasure and to improve students' confidence and love of reading, including a focus on activating prior knowledge before reading • Explicit teaching of key vocabulary in each subject using strategies such as breaking down the morphology and etymology of words • For direct instruction of writing to be used to support students to construct written pieces.	Lesson observation data will indicate that staff are guiding practice with regards to reading, writing and key vocabulary. Explicit techniques will be seen during learning walks. Staff will report that they are able to use a range of strategies to embed explicit teaching of disciplinary literacy within their subject areas. Book monitoring will indicate that the extended writing of students is improving over time. Students will be able to tell us the meaning of key vocabulary within subjects and will be able to read well. Sparx Reader data demonstrates consistent completion of homework (we are currently baselining this data). Other sources of data e.g. e-Reader, library book borrowing, Unifrog indicate an increase in Reading for Pleasure

All students progress on to high quality post-16 and post-18 education, employment or training.	100% progression from TFA Y11 to high quality post-16 routes. 0% NEET
To ensure equal access to trips, visits and enrichment opportunities	Monitoring data indicates that disadvantaged students have engagement in relevant opportunities which is at least as high as other students
To use our Personal Development programme to achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all students – ensuring all are aware of their own wellbeing, know how to improve their own wellbeing and personal development and how to get support.	QA cycle data show 100% of tutor time personal development sessions are good or better. Curriculum QA demonstrates full coverage of PSHE and statutory programmes, as well as regular refining of curriculum plans.
To use our Pastoral Support programmes to achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all students who need additional support through high quality pastoral intervention, including counselling, mentoring and careers/progression support.	Counselling Provision – all students deemed in need of additional counselling support are provided with it. Re-referrals are limited, and where necessary are accompanied by wider medical/pastoral support – those whose needs are deemed 'ongoing'. Mentoring provision – all students deemed in need of additional mentoring are provided with it – either through Lifeline or the Careers and Progression Mentor. All members of SLT to have received relevant training in aspects of safeguarding e.g. Level 3 Safeguarding Training, Understanding Thresholds Training, as well as developing understanding of key contextual safeguarding risks Attendance above national average
To improve the welfare of all of our students, through supporting financial hardship, increased before and after school support/provision, including a free breakfast for all students every day.	Average of 100+ students served free breakfast every day Average of 30 students accessing after school library and homework supervision each day Financial hardship support for families is clearly accessed (through local council, foodbanks, and uniform/equipment support in school)

Activity in this academic year

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

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: **£30,000**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Curriculum and Teaching Improvement – **CPD** - Implementation of BMAT teaching principles and BMAT Curriculum Principles, based on Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction meets the needs of all learners in the classroom and facilitates stretch and challenge for all students. CPD for teaching support staff to improve literacy support of disadvantaged students, with an explicit focus on the teaching of phonics. Internal CPD Programme focused solely on curriculum and teaching. Specific CPD for senior leaders on data analysis and putting actions in place – to support continued improvement in outcomes for all.	EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit: Metacognition and self-regulation Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction: https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/Rosenshine.pdf SLT senior leaders training.	1, 2, 6,7,8
Revision - Improved revision/consolidation approach including staff training and student technique training to prepare for exams and ensure all students have access to high quality revision teaching and	**Dunlosky, J., Rawson, K. A., Marsh, E. J., Nathan, M. J., & Willingham, D. T. (2013).** "Improving Students' Learning With Effective Learning Techniques: Promising Directions From Cognitive and Educational Psychology." *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 14(1), 4-58. This is the seminal meta-analysis that reviewed 10 common revision techniques and identified **practice**	1,2,6,7,8

resources. Additional revision sessions for disadvantaged students that are targeted for this support.	**testing** and **distributed (spaced) practice** as the most effective strategies. [Downloadable Materials — The Learning Scientists](#)	
Targeted approach to student tracking - Targeted department action plans and target setting at student/class/department level. Targets set for every class/every department based on number of grades achieved – this ensures all students across the comprehensive range are targeted, staff are aware of what each student should be getting and adapts teaching to meet needs of the students. This is supported by middle/senior leader training and development in data analysis and actions. Department Evaluation and Quality Improvement Planning (DEQIP) process is targeted at highest leverage actions, which will improve outcomes for all students compared to 2024-25 outcomes.	**Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (1990).** *A Theory of Goal Setting and Task Performance*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. Replicating this approach in for all students and staff – "Specific, difficult goals lead to higher performance than easy goals, 'do your best' goals, or no goals" Targeted intervention and progress monitoring of Year 11/13 by their HOY/HOS/SLT, enabling them to self-regulate and be well prepared for their GCSEs/A-levels.	1, 2,6,7,8
Literacy and numeracy interventions - Adaptive reading and maths programmes Wider roll-out/embedding of Sparx Reader/Sparx Maths to support to increase baseline reading and numeracy. These adaptive,	Evidence from EEF around how to improve literacy in secondary schools: [Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools](#) Evidence for improving literacy linked to attainment in English and Maths: [word-gap.pdf (oup.com.cn)](#) Reading comprehension strategies evidence of impact from EEF:	1,2,6,7,8

curriculum aligned programmes increase the impact of homework/independent learning. Time is built in to curriculum to check on progress/support students, and those unable to access computers at home can use library (see below) or be provided with a device at home.	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies	
**External CPD programme – ** particular focus on CPD for raising attainment in all departments, including funding/time/cover funding for external training and exam board training		1,2,6,7,8

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

Budgeted cost: **£110,000**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Academic support – each key stage has a defined full-time non-teaching SEND-specific deputy head of year. They support students, particularly those with SEN-K in school, parent liaison and tracking/intervening where support needed. Personalised support and access arrangements for SEND students.	Improve pupils' decision-making skills, interaction with others and their self-management of emotions: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/social-and-emotional-learning Providing targeted interventions: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/teaching-assistant-interventions	1,2,3,6.7.8

Tutoring Small Group tuition for students across subjects based on progress/attainment – identified using data tracking, and prioritised for students who need additional support	Evidence from EEF that small group tutoring can, when appropriately targeted, be used to close knowledge and attainment gaps. [Small group tuition	Toolkit Strand	Education Endowment Foundation	EEF](#) One-to-one tutoring evidence. [One to one tuition	EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)](#)	1,2,3,4,6,7,8
Online education platforms to develop strong independent learning (Sparx Maths/English/Science; Learning village)	We have found that online platforms are an accessible way for our pupils to access resources easily at home, especially over the lockdown period.	1,23,6,7,8
EAL small group support – full time EAL specialist staff who provide students with language support and intervention to build confidence, language skills and enable them to integrate in to mainstream lessons and accelerate academic progress - Use of online platform Learning Village to support with independent learning. Group size kept small for students who need additional support in English and Maths	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/teaching-assistant-interventions	1,2,3,6,7,8
Transition Support - providing support for those that need help to transition to secondary school. E.g. running 5 dedicated transition events to support pupils starting a new school EAL staff and SEND DHOY involvement with students/families	Parental engagement: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/parental-engagement	1, 2, 3, 6,7,8
Funding for curriculum school trips – all curriculum trips are fully	EEF Outdoor Adventure learning.	1, 2, 3, 4,6,7,8

funded for all FSM/PP students to ensure full equitable access to the curriculum		
Progression/careers programme support - Implement a **golden thread of careers and progression** advice and guidance for all students, incorporated into our use of Unifrog (KS3 – KS5) - Embed whole school **Careers strategy** to ensure successful progression for all. To include careers support programmes including careers advisor	Evidence from Careers and Enterprise Company of "Effective Careers Interventions for Disadvantaged Young People: Evidence review" https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/3ogdxqu1/bit67-cec-report_v3.pdf Careers interviews/drop down sessions	1,2,3,6,7,8

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

Budgeted cost: **£130,000**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Extending school day, including widening access to enrichment and hardship support across our school community -Providing homework club for all students every day after school -Hardship fund to support with individual barriers to learning and families with short-term financial hardship - Free breakfast club for all students, with PP students targeted. -Increased extra-curricular programme with clear tracking of disadvantaged students. - Ensure all disadvantaged students have access to **technology** to support learning. Investing in resources that boost student	Evidence for extended school day impacting on student progress: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/extending-school-time Evidence for impact of improving student physical activity and arts participation through extra-curricular programme.	1-8

learning, such as laptops - Personalised support provided by our Respite and Reintegration provision + mentoring. - ELSA (Emotional Literacy support) training for TAs/SEND DHOYs		
Ensuring high levels of attendance for all students -Rigorous tracking processes, focusing on PP as well as non-PP. - EWO support - Attendance training for key pastoral staff -Attendance officer significant capacity and daily/weekly processes - Senior leadership responsible for attendance	EEF Review of attendance https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/attendance-interventions-rapid-evidence-assessment?utm_source=/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/attendance-interventions-rapid-evidence-assessment&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=site_search&search_term=attendance Embedding principles of good practice set out in DfE's Improving School Attendance advice.	3 (and therefore associated 1-8)
Summer school – fully funded KS3 summer school – supporting transition from primary to secondary, including outdoor learning and sport. Communication with PP families to ensure attendance.	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/summer-schools https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/physical-activity	1, 2, 6
Counselling	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/social-and-emotional-learning Significant evidence from Anna Freud centre – recent, open-access publications, with evidence of impact of counselling as part of mental-health https://www.annafreud.org/research-and-policy/research-policy/resources/articles/	6 (and therefore 1-5)

Enhanced Work with families including through parents' evenings, SEND DHOYs and parent support advisors	Using the evidence published by the EEF in its guide, [Communicating effectively with families.](#) to inform practice.	6 (and therefore 1-5)
Cultural capital including access to trips, clubs and wider experiences such as Duke of Edinburgh award being fully funded (including equipment) for all students, making taking open to all.	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/physical-activity	1-8

Total budgeted cost: £270,000

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 for the last 3 year plan which ended in summer 2024.

Despite national attendance challenges continuing in 2024-25, including a national attendance rate of 90.9% in state-funded secondary schools, our attendance interventions are having a significant impact. Our pupil premium attendance (and non-pupil premium attendance) is significantly above the national average, demonstrating that our PP students have excellent attendance and providing clear evidence of the impact of our PP strategy. Attendance is in the top quintile of all schools and in the top quintile of similar schools.

	Pupil Premium Attendance	Non-PP Attendance	Gap
2020-2021	94.7%	95.3%	0.6%
2021-2022	94.7% (no change)	95.7% (up 0.4%)	1.0%
2022-2023	90.0% (down 4.7%)	93.7% (down 2.0%)	3.7%
2023-2024	94.2% (up 4.2%)	95.3% (up 1.6%)	0.9%
2024-2025	93.54 (down 0.66%)	94.98 (down 0.32%)	1.44%

*comparison with 2019 outcomes as COVID means that 2020 and 2021 outcomes are not directly comparable

The improvement in our Progress 8 score overall but also for our disadvantaged students also provides clear evidence of the impact of our Pupil Premium strategy. The percentage EBacc entry has also significantly increased from 2019, with a narrowing of the gap between disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged students. The reduced gap for the percentage of students achieveing 4+ at GCSE provides further evidence that our PP strategy is effective. We are confident that continued work on strengthening quality of curriculum and teaching and staff CPD across the school will continue to impact on PP outcomes.

	2018-2019 Exam Grades*		2023-2024 Exam Grades		2024-2025 Exam Grades	
	All Students	Gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged	All Students	Gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged	All Students	Gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged
Progress 8	-0.04	-0.17	+0.08	-0.15	NA	NA
Attainment 8	44.8	-6.9	44.0	-8.0	42.15	-5.08
% 4+ E&M	56%	-18%	57%	-4%	58%	-18%
EBACC Entry	34%	-17%	81%	-11%	86%	-4.9%

Externally provided programmes

Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you purchased in the previous academic year. This will help the Department for Education identify which ones are popular in England

Programme	Provider
Mentoring and Support	Lifeline Community Projects London Young Counsellors Adapt and Evolve Mentoring
Breakfast Club	National School Breakfast Programme
Attendance Support	EWASS

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information:

Measure	Details
How did you spend your service pupil premium allocation last academic year?	n/a
What was the impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils?	n/a