

Pupil premium strategy statement 2025-28

Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) eligible students admitted to The Gilbert School have a history of significantly better outcomes than the vast majority of their comparable peers nationally. In 2024, disadvantaged students achieved a progress score across 8 subjects that we are confident is higher than PPG students nationally. Moreover, those PPG eligible students who attended more than 80% of sessions achieved progress which is significantly better than PPG students nationally and higher than all students nationally. As with schools nationally, the demonstrable impact of the medium-term social changes that COVID-19 lock-down strategies have had on the attendance of the most vulnerable groups continues to be a focus of our intervention. We are not complacent about these outcomes and recognise that to maintain our long-term success, the focus of our PPG plan will remain engagement.

Whilst recognising individual needs, regardless of background or circumstances, all Gilbertians belong to the same school culture of high-expectation. Our 3-year plan is research-led and has clarity of purpose; in short, all students are entitled to the same high-quality educational and co-curricular experience regardless of background. Our plan does not focus on short-term 'silo' interventions. Instead, our aim is to ensure that disadvantaged students experience the highest quality teaching coupled with access to an extensive range of experiences and opportunities that build social and cultural capital, enhance outcomes and improve social mobility. The complex needs of a very small number of PPG eligible students will continue to be met with appropriate and bespoke educational pathways, advice and guidance. The outcomes of these students should be measured using a range of criteria such as destination surveys.

We recognise that performance against accountability measures will be enhanced most efficiently not by targeted 'silo'-interventions but as a by-product of a successful whole-school culture in which students are encouraged at every turn to engage and endeavour with a goal to achieve excellence.

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium in academic year 2025/2026 (which itself forms a part of our 2025-2028 3-year plan) to improve the progress and attainment of our disadvantaged pupils.

It outlines our pupil premium strategy, how we intend to spend the funding in this academic year and the effect that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	The Gilberd school
Number of pupils in school	1578
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	17.74% (280 students)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2025-2028
Date this statement was published	October 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	October 2026
Statement authorised by	Mr J Mitchell
Pupil premium lead	Mrs V Percival
Governor / Trustee lead	Mr R Norfolk

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£295,752
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£106,004
Total budget for this academic year	£401,756

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

The Gilbert School recognises the importance of ensuring all students, whatever their background or circumstance, are provided with an education of the highest quality. By doing so, we will ensure that all Gilbertians are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed within, and beyond, the school. Our strategy plan covers three academic years (2025-2028) and is focussed on reducing the progress and engagement gap between those students we identify as disadvantaged and their peers. This strategy plan is research led and draws heavily on work of The Education Endowment Foundation and National Education Trust's 'Tackling Educational Disadvantage: A Toolkit for Essex School', and other research around school culture, notably Tom Bennett (Creating a Culture). Our strategy has two main goals of equal importance; developing whole-school Quality First Teaching in order to raise the achievement of all students and developing the character of our students so that they may capitalise on the opportunities presented in life. We do this by raising student engagement in our exceptional co-curricular and leadership offer to build the confidence and skills needed to enhance social capital. By delivering this two-pronged strategy, our ultimate aim is to enhance the social mobility of our disadvantaged students.

Challenges

The key challenges to achievement that we have identified among our disadvantaged pupils are:

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Significant lower attendance rates amongst disadvantaged students (6.51% variance since COVID from an historic average of a 2% variance).
2	Lower engagement as measured by attainment of Gilbert Way Awards (for community activities and co-curricular uptake)
3	Higher exclusions rates amongst a small number of eligible students (linked to lower engagement with the wider school community and less capacity to self-regulate behaviour)
4	Lower access to social capital to guide career paths and develop the skills which determine social and career success (social mobility).
5	Slightly lower progress amongst high prior-attaining PPG eligible 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
<i>Narrowed attendance gap</i>	Target 5% variance
Comparable achievement of The Gilbert Way Awards and progression to leadership roles	Data measures by year group compare with negligible difference
Standard of personal conduct/engagement to improve amongst disadvantaged students	Exclusion rates show a narrowing trend
Improved academic outcomes for high prior attaining disadvantaged students	Progress data for eligible students at The Gilbert School will show a narrowing trend compared to non-disadvantaged students nationally

Activity in this academic year (2025/26)

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

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £227,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Quality first teaching: core subject staff allocation (£105,000)	EEF guidance reports including feedback, metacognition and self-regulation, homework and mastery learning all show very significant impact.	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
Tutoring £70,000	Additional fund to commission 1-1 mathematics and literacy tuition for students who require this to close progress gaps.	
STEPS (£4,000)	Successful outcomes for students accessing this intervention previously, as measured by attendance, engagement and progression. Greater opportunity to concentrate on metacognition and self-regulation plus small group intervention.	1, 2 & 4
Departmental Focus Bids (£30,000)	Learning looks different in different subjects. It is therefore important to give agency to subject areas to work to tailor approaches, such as meta-cognition and self-regulation or resource	1, 3, 4, 5

	development so that it is appropriate for their learners' needs.	
SALT specialist support in lessons and CPD programme for staff (£18,000)	EEF guidance shows phonics and oracy interventions to have an effect size of +5 and +6 respectively. By engaging this support, we are empowering staff to maximise these impacts.	3, 4 & 5

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

Budgeted cost: £40,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Tuition (£30,000)	EEF guidance states that small group tuition and one to one tuition have an effect size of +4 and +5 respectively.	4 & 5
Essential curriculum trips (£5000)	Trips and visits are a core part of school life at The Gilbert School. Ensuring support for all students to attend helps build cultural capital for those students as well as access to core learning.	1, 2, 4, 5
Co-curricular resources bids (£5000)	This budget is designed to create a range of opportunities for students that go beyond the classroom and open up new opportunities linked closely to academic subject areas. A range of clubs and master classes will open a range of new opportunities for students	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5

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

Budgeted cost: £134,756

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Attendance Welfare Support (£20,000)	Rigorous pursuit of attendance and punctuality for all students is an expectation. Having structures and staff in place to support this is a key element in supporting vulnerable.	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
LABS/SEN (£50,000)	<p>Learning, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding systems. Ofsted's 'Education Inspection Framework' states there must be 'a culture of safeguarding that supports effective arrangements to; identify learner who may need early help, or who are at risk of neglect, abuse, grooming or exploitation; help learners reduce their risk of harm by securing the support they need'.</p> <p>Regular LABS meeting ensure this is the case for all students.</p>	1, 2, 3 & 4
Family Support (£3,000)	<p>Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework states there must be a "culture of safeguarding that supports effective arrangements to: identify learners who may need early help or who are at risk of neglect, abuse, grooming or exploitation; help learners reduce their risk of harm by securing the support they need".</p> <p>This is a cornerstone of that support for vulnerable families.</p> <p>EEF guidance states social and emotional learning as having an effect size of +4.</p>	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
Gilbert Way Awards Raising Aspiration (£10,000)	National Education Trust in their 'Tackling Educational Disadvantage: A Toolkit for Essex schools' cite the importance of academic success as a long-term tool for raising self-esteem, employability and independence. Whilst EEF guidance show inconclusive evidence of the effectiveness of aspiration interventions, internal data shows over 90% of students positively engaging in the awards scheme and as such, the broader and positive life of the school and beyond. This programme	1, 2, 3, 4, & 5

	acknowledges the positive contribution students make to their community in addition to their attitude and dedication in the classroom. It is a programme that we have demonstrated to many other Trusts and Schools where similar models have been explored.	
Soft Skills/Character education (£5,000)	Research from National Education Trust in their 'Tackling Educational Disadvantage: A Toolkit for Essex schools' clearly states that disadvantaged students should be given opportunities to play a prominent and wider role in the school community. Lack of self-belief and confidence is a key barrier to achieving this for some. This budget ensures every Year 7 student is given a full 1-day public speaking master-class by a qualified professional.	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
Readiness for school support (£5,000)	National Education Trust research identifies the need for schools to understand the complex range of barriers that disadvantaged students face. This budget seeks to ensure no student is worried about attending school on the grounds of uniform, equipment or access to the co-curricular activities that have a cost element.	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
Cultural and environmental enhancement (£10,000)	The link between self-esteem and self-efficacy is documented by the National Education Trust in their 'Tackling Educational Disadvantage: A Toolkit for Essex schools'. This budget aims to transform the school environment into one where there is a tangible celebration of success and a visual representation of the high standards our students achieve. These enhancements are made in such a way as to ensure the full-range of students are invested in them.	2,4,5
Sports Coaching (£10,000)	Cultural capital development opportunities.	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
Combined Cadet Force (£1000)	The introduction of a Combined Cadet Force is one that is research-led. The University of Northampton commissioned independent research identifies the social and academic performance gains that result from participation in the cadets. This is a certificated course that is carefully recruited to ensure disadvantaged students work closely with a diverse	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5

	range of peers. It offers the development of self-regulation, leadership and a certificated taught curriculum.	
Duke of Edinburgh Award (£1000)	Independent research by the University of Northampton identifies a number of benefits to young people participating in this scheme. Improved self-belief/self-efficacy is a key factor to tackle challenge numbers 1-3. This budget will pay for licences, insurance and equipment so that the programme can be free-of charge to all students.	1, 2, 3
STEAM (£3,000)	Investment to drive up participation in the science and arts based co-curricular activities.	2, 4 & 5
Contingency (£16,756)	For emerging situations requiring support for disadvantaged students	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5

Total budgeted cost: £401,756

Part B: Review of outcomes for academic year 2024/25

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

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

Quality first teaching: core subject staff allocation

The progress 8 score for the disadvantaged, with 80% attendance and above, in English overall was 0.10, the progress 8 score for this cohort in Maths was 0.02; PPG eligible students therefore made progress in the core subjects above national average in 2024. Given that PPG eligible students make significantly lower progress than non-PPG eligible students nationally, we can deduce from these outcomes that our PPG eligible students made significantly more progress than similar students in other schools. The picture is very similar for the overall Progress 8 score which for PPG eligible students with an attendance of 80% and above was 0.04 (over all students nationally). By employing additional staff in the core subjects, deploying highly experienced teachers to areas of most need coupled with a carefully design curriculum model, we continue to yield significant progress. This approach ensures strong teacher-student developmental relationships (DREAM study, Search institute, May 2021) to improve motivation.

Attendance Welfare Support

The gap between the attendance of PPG eligible students in comparison to our non-PPG eligible students is similar to last year but overall, showing a very slight increase. The widened gap in 2022-2023 was an anticipated medium-term impact of the extended school closure period. The national picture has shown that PPG students have become the hardest group to re-engage post Covid, however numerous additional resources and interventions have been deployed to ameliorate the impact of this. The school is aware these issues cannot be solved in one year, but will form part of a long term strategy of re-engagement and reintegration. The table below shows that attendance at The Gilbert School is still above regional and national levels.

There is not a national benchmark for PPG students, so we use the measure of FSM (ever 6). However, SEND students record the lowest attendance and there is a significant cross over between FSM and SEN E and K. FSM/SEND also account for the largest group undertaking alternative provisions or are in receipt of personalised and bespoke educational packages. Whilst this has a significant effect on the attendance of this cohort, the school makes the decision that is in the best interests of the child.

It is clear that the students in lower school have benefitted from uninterrupted study, full staffing and additional interventions to support their learning. The attendance rate in key

stage 3 is significantly above national average, therefore proving the attendance strategies and support have been successful and students are in much better attendance habits. A great deal of support has gone into the year groups that have been most affected by Covid and RAAC and whilst this may not be borne out in their attendance figures, many have achieved significantly higher than they would had this not been in place.

Those adversely affected by Covid school closures, industrial action and the associated RAAC issues (TGS school specifically) record the lowest attendance. In particular this has created an increasing number of students whose absence is recorded as EBSA (emotionally based school avoidance) and parents are unable to ensure their child's attendance despite school and home trying a raft of measures to re-engage. This remains a challenge but one that has received the most considerable amount of financial support in an attempt to mitigate the impact of the issues facing our most vulnerable cohorts.

	2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
YEAR GROUP	ATTENDANCE	NATIONAL FIGURE	ATTENDANCE	NATIONAL FIGURES	ATTENDANCE	NATIONAL FIGURES
Year 7	95.28%	93.04%	95.39%	93.18%	95.97%	
Year 8	93.99%	91.50%	93.61%	91.55%	93.90%	
Year 9	92.33%	90.40%	92.23%	90.52%	93.06%	
Year 10	91.01%	89.90%	91.36%	90.05%	90.87%	
Year 11 (UP To	90.14%	89.43%	90.25%	89.56%	89.93%	
Total	92.59%	90.99%	92.67%	91.11%	92.91%	91.40%

Our bespoke and flexible reading intervention programme continues to have an impact. Each half term data is reviewed to ensure the most vulnerable readers have three individual sessions a week with a qualified teacher to develop their phonic confidence, fluency, and enjoyment of reading. Our Year 7 average reading age grew from 11.7 – 12.2 years; this figure was 12.4 – 13 years in Year 8 and in Year 9, 13 – 13.7 years. The number of students who are at or above their age expected reading age by the end of the academic year was for Year 7, 8 and 9 respectively – 78%, 85% and 88%. Across each cohort we demonstrably 'catch up' students.

A review of last year's data shows that: the gender gap in reading outcomes is closing by Year 8 and almost completely gone by Year 9. In Year 7 our disadvantaged students average reading age was appropriate at 11.7; the same measure was age appropriate in Year 8 and 9, although a small gap still exists between PP and non-PP – reflective of lower expected standards on entry.

OFSTED Have recognised that, "Reading is the backbone of the curriculum. Pupils read widely and often. The school quickly identifies those pupils who struggle with reading. They accurately identify and address the specific barriers individual pupils have. These pupils access individually tailored programmes to help them catch up. They rapidly become fluent, confident readers." As of the second week of term 2024-25, our reading tutors are working with students in Years 8, 9 and 10 as we test the most vulnerable Year

7 students (those who failed to reach the expected standard according to Key Stage 2 data) ready to instigate early reading catch up for them in the next few weeks.

Form time reading has had positive feedback from tutors and students. Students in Years 7 – 10 share a weekly reading experience curated for their age and learning focus. Paired reading has continued to bring together older and younger peers with a view to developing positive and effective reading experiences to promote confidence.

Participation in our co-curricular offer has seen a significant increase in the number of PPG eligible students regularly attending high quality provision; this includes The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, the Combined Cadet Force and many other clubs and societies. 65% of PPG students across all year groups engaged in our Co-curricular offer academic year 2024-25 with excellent attendance in Year 7 (83%) and Year 8 (76%).

Significant resources have been deployed to support the welfare of PPG eligible students. Whilst the outcome of this expenditure is difficult to disaggregate from other factors (and therefore measured in a quantitative way), records clearly show the level of support for the disadvantaged students to be exceptional.

Departmental Focus Bids

To augment quality first teaching, departments have used PPG funding to provide a range of extra support including revision sessions, resources and support with trips to enhance the progress of PPG eligible students. The impact on PPG eligible students EBACC outcomes was significant with a Progress score of 0.04 for those students with over 80% attendance.

PPG Destination Data 2024-25

All PPG eligible students received impartial Careers Information Advice and Guidance that is independent of the School, thereby meeting the School's Statutory obligations in accordance with the 'Education Act 2011' and 'The Careers Guidance and access for education and training providers October 2018'.

All PPG eligible students applied to one or more Post-16 Provider, either at Colchester Institute, Colchester 6th Form College, Colchester Royal Grammar School/Colchester County High School for Girls or work-based training providers. At the time of data collection there were no NEET students.