

Riverside School Pupil premium strategy statement: 2025/26

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium for the 2025/26 academic year 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 the last two years' spending of pupil premium had within our school.

School overview:

Detail	Data
School name	Riverside School
Number of pupils in school	360
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	42%
Academic year that our pupil premium strategy plan covers (this is a 3-year plan as recommended, updated on an annual basis)	2023/24 to 2025/26
Date this statement was published	November 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	November 2026
Statement authorised by	Steve Solomons, Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Charlotte Downs, Deputy Headteacher
Governor lead	Claire Osborn

Funding overview:

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£152,000
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£152,000

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our aim is to use pupil premium funding to help us achieve and sustain positive outcomes for our disadvantaged pupils. Socio-economic disadvantage is not always the primary challenge our pupils face, as in addition, all of our pupils have complex needs and many of our pupils and their families experience discrimination on account of a combination of factors and protected characteristics (intersectionality).

Whilst our robust progress monitoring systems do not highlight any variance in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils across the school when compared to their peers (and those who join us at similar starting points), we are committed to ensuring that pupils from all socio-economic backgrounds always receive the support and interventions required to enable them to flourish and achieve their potential. Our motto “Be All That You Can Be” is one that applies to each and every one of our pupils.

We consider the needs of our pupils and families in a holistic way, with a focus on high quality teaching and learning opportunities, robust assessment systems and a focus on life outside and beyond Riverside, as well as life at Riverside. Although our strategy is focused on the needs of disadvantaged pupils, it will benefit all pupils in our school where funding is spent on whole-school approaches. Implicit in our pledges is the intention that outcomes for non-disadvantaged pupils will be improved alongside progress for their disadvantaged peers. Our strategy is integral to our wider School Development Plan, entitled Building a Brighter Future – The Riverside Way and is particularly pertinent to seven of our ten SDP pledges:

Pledge 1: We will equip our pupils with a profoundly personalised curriculum framework so that they succeed, flourish and leave their mark on the world.

Pledge 2: We will improve the emotional wellbeing of our pupils and their families by placing The Pursuit of Happiness at the heart of our multi-agency work.

Pledge 3: We will ensure current and future pupils make remarkable progress by attracting and developing the highest calibre special educators at Riverside School and beyond.

Pledge 5: We will ensure that families have their lived experiences acknowledged and their voices heard in order to bring about positive change for themselves, their children and other families.

Pledge 6: We will improve community access, inclusion and participation for our pupils and their families and create a ripple in communities up and down the country,

Pledge 9: We will campaign tirelessly with, and for our pupils and their families to amplify the voices of disadvantaged and marginalised communities and create a society which is more equal, just and fair.

Pledge 10: We will promote inclusion and celebrate diversity in all its forms to ensure that everyone in our school community feels a true sense of belonging.

Challenges

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

Challenge	Detail of challenge
1	Through robust quality assurance and regular monitoring of pupil progress files, the granularity of data collection did not provide us with the level of detail required to forensically analyse every single aspect of pupils' attainment and progress.
2	Wellbeing records (supported by wider national research) showed us that a small number of pupils, primarily our disadvantaged pupils (for the purposes of this report, those in receipt of pupil premium funding), returned from periods of lockdown and other absences associated with the pandemic with heightened social anxiety, attachment issues and an increase in the inability to self-regulate, resulting in barriers to their learning and at times, the learning of their peers. Whilst pupils have now been fully back at school for some time now, it is arguable that a COVID legacy remains and as such, this challenge remains one worthy of continued focus.
3	Drop in data, undertaken by members of the Leadership Team and the Sensory Support specialist showed us that engagement for learning for a small number of pupils, primarily our disadvantaged pupils, was being impacted by additional sensory needs that appeared to increase following the pandemic and other socio-economic factors (such as deprivation and housing). The school has also seen an increase in the number of pupils with significant sensory processing needs and as such, this area remains one worthy of continued focus.
4	Parental feedback, both formal and informal, has highlighted the importance of even closer partnership between home and school (both during and post-pandemic) and the importance of sharing curriculum initiatives between home and school in order to reinforce learning and extend parent-child connection and engagement.
5	Feedback from families and pupils has highlighted the fact that disadvantaged pupils generally have fewer opportunities to develop cultural capital outside of school, for example, opportunities to visit places outside their immediate environment, and this impacts negatively on their ability to take wider perspectives about the world.
6	Internal data, supported by national data around employment opportunities amongst young people with learning disabilities highlighted the fact that very few pupils from Riverside were able to access voluntary opportunities or routes into supported employment either within Sixth Form or post-Riverside.

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.

Challenge	Intended outcome	Success criteria
1	Improved attainment and progress for disadvantaged pupils across the curriculum, relative to their starting points as identified through their Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) and captured with	A minimum of 85% disadvantaged pupils will achieve or exceed their predicted attainment and progress scores across all focus areas and measures outlined within the Riverside Progress

	the Riverside Progress Scale (RPS) and Unique Profiles (UPs).	Scale. There will be no significant variance between PP and non-PP pupils.
2	All disadvantaged pupils for whom self-regulation and self-management of emotions can be a challenge will demonstrate improved self-regulation strategies in a range of contexts.	80% reduction in pupils requiring physical intervention or adult-directed intervention in order to support pupils' emotional regulation.
3	All disadvantaged pupils exhibiting increased sensory-seeking behaviours (which as a result, create a barrier to learning), will be receiving the additional support required for internal and external specialists.	100% pupils identified within the cohort will receive access to additional support and as a result, 85% will achieve or exceed their predicted attainment and progress scores across all focus areas and measures, in line with non-cohort pupils.
4	Families of disadvantaged pupils will report greater understanding about how they can support their child's learning at home, as well as report greater levels of wellbeing through involvement in key curriculum initiatives (such as the Expressive Arts Family Project).	90% families will report that Home Learning Plans have supported their child's learning and development and will have contributed to their child's home achievement section within their Unique Profile.
5	Disadvantaged pupils will have increased opportunities to visit, learn from and enjoy educational visits to a range of places outside school and the school's revised curriculum framework will incorporate the promotion of pupils' own cultural capital more explicitly within schemes of work.	A minimum of 85% disadvantaged pupils will achieve or exceed their predicted attainment and progress scores across the participation focus areas and generalisation measures outlined within the Riverside Progress Scale.
6	Disadvantaged pupils will have greater confidence when interacting with the wider community and will feel better prepared for adulthood, including during-school work and community experience and post-school employment and volunteering opportunities.	All disadvantaged pupils in KS4/5 will access high quality community and work experience and as a result, a minimum of 85% will achieve or exceed their predicted attainment and progress scores across the participation focus areas and generalisation measures outlined within the Riverside Progress Scale.

Activity in this academic year

This section details how we intend to spend our pupil premium funding this academic year to address the challenges listed above. Due to the interconnectedness of these outcomes, they span the different areas outlined within the latest DfE guidance, including teaching (CPD, recruitment and retention); targeted academic support (including structured interventions); and wider strategies (related to attendance, behaviour and wellbeing). Please also refer to our School Development Plan: Building a Brighter Future: The Riverside Way.

Challenge	Activity	Budgeted cost
1	- External training on curriculum design and assessment models (Equals and Routes for Learning) and frameworks (Curiosity Programme) for key personnel - Internal training on assessment models and frameworks (as above) cascaded for all teachers - External moderation opportunities for key personnel - Purchase of additional Ipods to record and evidence progress - Training and resources to support Little Wandle Reading Scheme - Additional Ipads and associated software assigned to targeted pupils to accelerate opportunities for providing each child with a voice.	£26,000
Evidence which supports this approach: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/feedback https://equals.co.uk/mapp-semi-formal-mapping-and-assessing-personal-progress/ https://www.2simple.com/evidenceme/?campaign=8ab0a5a6-cc10-11ea-a8f4-062a0562a518&gclid=EAlaIQobChMIw6iRvdHa-QIVg7HtCh1MrgTzEAAAYASAAEgLXW_D_BwE https://www.ginadavies.co.uk/parents-services/professional-shop/workshops/workshop-5/mc-faqs-curiosity/ https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/		
2	- Ongoing training for in-house Team Teach trainers - Extension of Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) role - Refreshing of equipment in The Oasis and RWW Soft Play space - Purchase of additional Safe Space - Continued investment in SCERTS training (cascade model) - Continued training of Behaviourwatch software	£26,000
Evidence which supports this approach: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/behaviour-interventions https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/metacognition-and-self-regulation https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/social-and-emotional-learning https://www.teamteach.co.uk/ https://scerts.com/ https://zonesofregulation.com/index.html https://www.elsanetwork.org/ https://eduspot.co.uk/product/behaviourwatch/ https://safespaces.co.uk/		
3	Extension to role of Sensory Lead (TLR and non-class based role)	£36,000

	• Monthly Sensory Needs training (based on universal, targeted and specialist model) • Refurbishment of Sensory Room • Additional OT expenditure to supplement LA devolved funding • Purchase and training of Interoception Curriculum model	
Evidence which supports this approach: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/individualised-instruction https://www.sensoryspectacle.co.uk/what-is-spd https://www.autism.org.uk/about/behaviour/sensory-world.aspx https://www.kelly-mahler.com/product/the-interoception-curriculum-a-step-bystep-guide-to-developing-mindful-self-regulation/		
4	• Continued investment (training and PPA) in order to ensure teachers produce the highest quality Home Learning Plans • Consolidation within Expressive Arts Team to increase wider participation opportunities • Further partnership-working with the LA to explore hybrid / blended learning models for children with the most complex medical needs • Utilisation of Google Drive platform and associated hardware (laptops) to support home / blended learning. • Exploration and rollout of most suitable home-school app.	£5,000
Evidence which supports this approach: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/parental-engagement https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/arts-participation https://relationshipsfoundation.org/blog/flexi-schooling-must-be-a-widely-recognised-option-for-uk-pupils/ https://www.artsmark.org.uk/		
5	• Increase in number of Educational Visits Co-ordinators (EVCs) and investment in EVOLVE • Additional purchase of new vehicle to support LOtC on all four sites • Subsidy to support trip to Isle of Wight for disadvantaged pupils • Additional subsidies to support shortfalls in parental contributions	£36,000
Evidence which supports this approach: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/teaching-assistant-interventions https://early-education.org.uk/cultural-capital/		
6	• Continued investment in community experience TA role • Expansion of opportunities within The Riverside Lounge	£23,000

	Continued investment in Talentino and associated work experience networks	
Evidence which supports this approach: https://www.talentinocareers.co.uk/ https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/		

Total budgeted cost: £152,000

Planning, implementation and evaluation

In planning our latest pupil premium strategy, we evaluated why activity undertaken in previous years had achieved varying levels of success. We spoke to colleagues from other schools with particularly positive outcomes for disadvantaged pupils to learn from their approach and looked at reports, studies and research papers about effective use of pupil premium and the intersection between socio-economic disadvantage and SEND. We also looked at a number of studies about the impact of the pandemic on disadvantaged pupils. The pandemic has also given us deeper insights into family life for those from disadvantaged backgrounds and we have been able to forge stronger relationships with families as a result. In addition to the pupil premium funded activity outlined, we have put in place stronger expectations around areas of effective practice and in light of our ever-increasing staff body, we have also put a sharp focus on supporting teachers and teaching assistants to develop their professional practice and train in specialist areas, allowing them to develop expertise and share them with other staff. We have combined the pertinent elements contained within the EEF's [implementation guidance](#) with the implementation plan framework included within the National Professional Qualifications (NPQ) programme to set out our plans and have put in place a robust evaluation framework for the duration of our three-year approach. This will help us to make adjustments and quality improvements to secure better outcomes for pupils over time.

Our pupil premium strategy will be supplemented by additional activity that we are not funding using pupil premium. This will include: working in partnership with local colleges to provide opportunities for pupils to familiarise themselves with the college environment prior to starting; extending our networks to provide more opportunities for work-based learning that enables pupils to have first-hand experience of work; and working with a wider range of Expressive Arts organisations to increase access to, and participation in, the Arts and to extend cultural capital even further. We have extended our use of external training providers programmes and these include, amongst others: SSAT, Little Wandle; Gina Davies; Schema Play; Sensory Spectacle, and EQUALS.

Part B: Review of outcomes for disadvantaged pupils last year

We analyse the educational performance of our school's disadvantaged pupils year-on-year drawing on our internal summative, formative and ipsative assessment frameworks and data demonstrates that disadvantaged pupils make as good progress as their "non-disadvantaged" peers (using the pupil premium criteria). Our approach to assessment and full details of the Riverside Progress Scale can be found at <https://www.riversideschool.org.uk/page/?title=Achievement%2C+Assessment+%26amp%3B+Progress&pid=171>. Closing the gap trackers are in place for every pupil who does not meet their predictions and these are robustly scrutinised and challenged by members of the Leadership Team.

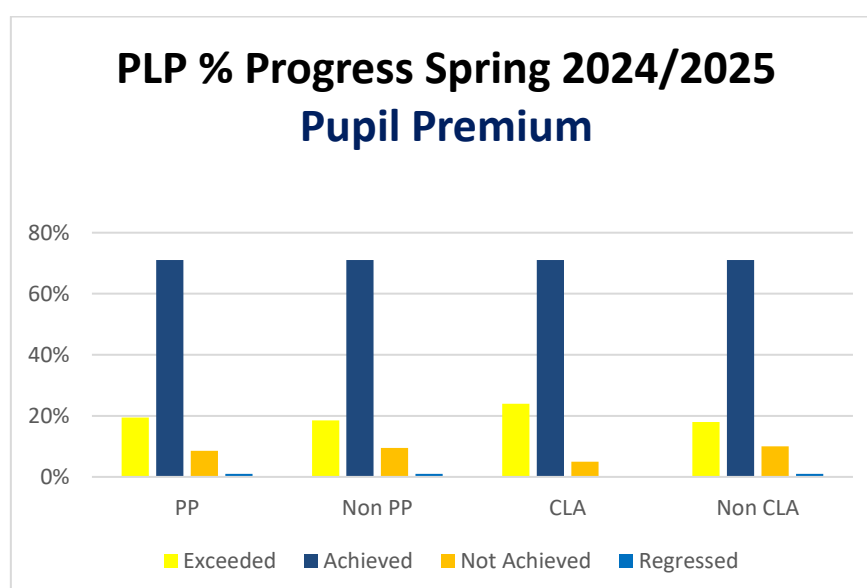
We also analyse our disadvantaged pupils' wider development outcomes, drawing on our own assessments and observations, including, for example: accreditation outcomes; Arts Award qualifications; and attendance data and the data demonstrates that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well and attend as regularly as their non-disadvantaged peers.

Based on our analysis, the performance of our disadvantaged pupils is in line with our expectations and we remain on course to achieve the outcomes we set out to achieve by 2025/26, as stated in the Intended Outcomes section above.

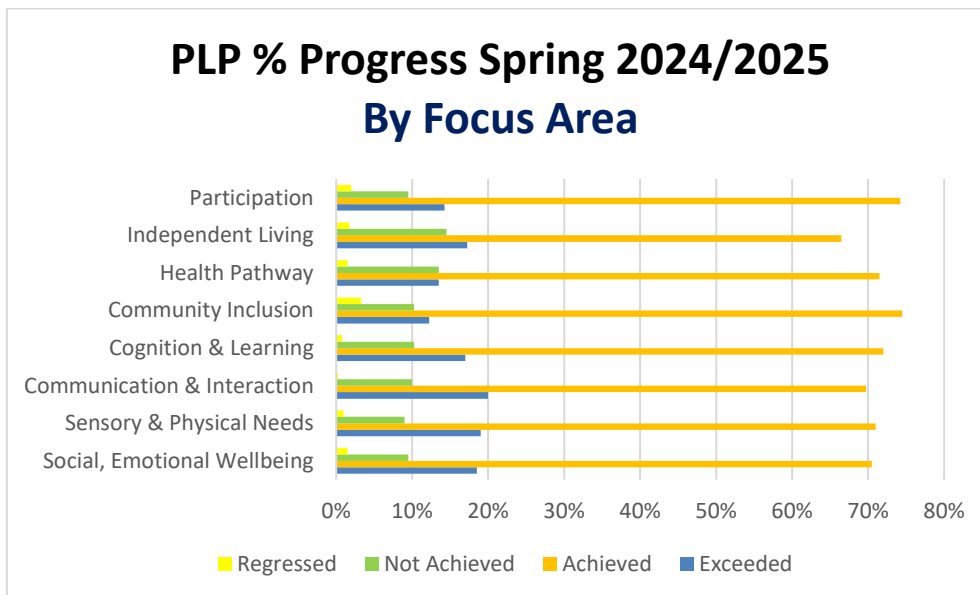
The table below details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the **2024/25** academic year and our evaluation of the approaches delivered last year has enabled us to make the necessary strategic and financial changes to this year's plan.

Focus Area	Activities undertaken	Cost	Impact	Cost benefit	Next steps
Achievement and progress	External training on assessment models for key personnel Internal training on assessment models (cascaded) for all teachers External moderation opportunities for key personnel Purchase of additional hardware (Ipods) and software (Evidence Me)	£21,000	Through the targeted training, moderation and investment, RPS data indicates that PP and CLA pupils achieved in line with non-PP and non-CLA pupils – <i>please see Graph 1 below*</i>	High impact for medium cost	Continue with increased level of investment (due to increased pupil and staff numbers)
Self-regulation	Training new in-house Team Teach trainer Introduction of Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) role Re-positioning of the Peaceful Pod Rebranding of Blue Room to The Oasis Continued investment in SCERTS training (cascade model)	£24,000	Through the investment in a new Team Teach trainer and ELSA, plus re-positioning and re-branding of regulation spaces, Unique Profiles, Happiness Passports and drop in data demonstrate an increase in self-regulation strategies and decrease in adult-directed physical interventions	High impact for medium cost	Continue with increased level of investment (due to increased number of pupils requiring targeted support)
Sensory needs	Introduction of new Sensory Lead (TLR and additional time out of class) Termly Sensory Needs training (based on universal, targeted and specialist model) Expenditure on sensory items (weighted clothing, chewellery, trampette, mangle, etc) Additional OT expenditure to supplement LA devolved funding	£32,000	Through the high level of focussed training provided by the new Sensory Lead and increased expenditure in sensory supports, Unique Profiles, Happiness Passports and drop in data demonstrate that pupils' sensory needs are being met more effectively than previously, with positive impacts on their ability to self-regulate and readiness to learn behaviours	High impact for medium cost	Continue with increased level of investment (due to increased number of pupils requiring targeted and specialist support)

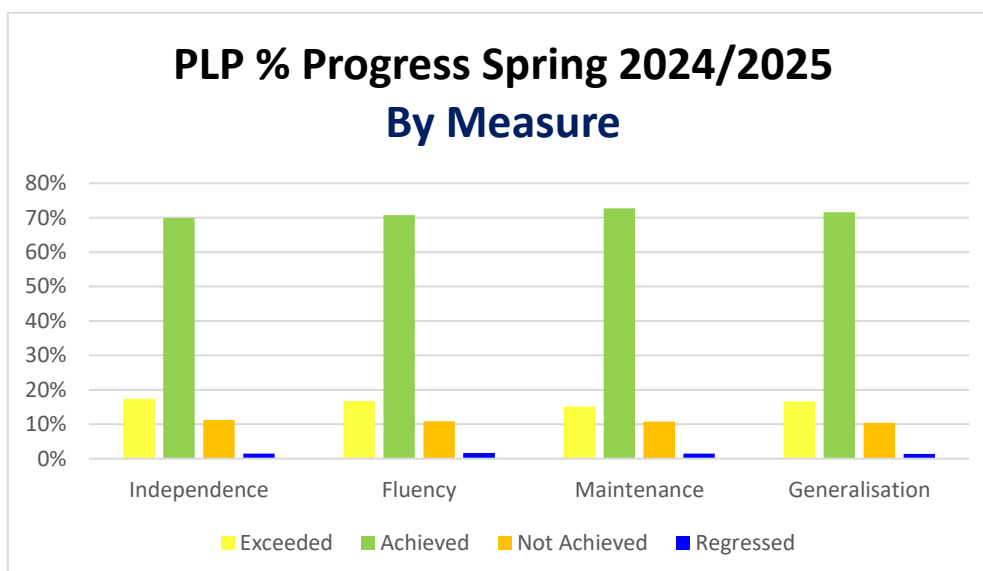
Home support	Continued investment (training and PPA) in order to ensure teachers produce the highest quality Home Learning Plans (HLPs) Expansion of Expressive Arts Team to increase wider participation opportunities Further exploration into hybrid / blended learning model for children with the most complex medical needs	£6,000	Through the focus on high quality, safeguarded line leadership meetings, HLPs are high quality and feedback from families indicate they are well-regarded and supportive of home learning. Feedback from families involved in the Family Choir and Family Project demonstrates the positive impact on their wellbeing as a result	High impact for high cost	Continue with reduced level of investment (as training / HLPs now embedded and EA Team now established)
Learning outside the classroom	Increase in number of Educational Visits Co-ordinators (EVCs) and investment in EVOLVE Additional purchase of new vehicle to support LOtC on all three sites Additional subsidies to support shortfalls in parental contributions	£32,000	RPS data evidences that 88% pupils achieved their predicted progress scores within the Participation Focus Area and 87% pupils achieved their predicted progress scores within the Community Inclusion Focus Area (target for both was 85%) – <i>please see Graph 2 below*</i>	High impact for high cost	Continue with increased level of investment (due to four-site and pupil expansion)
Community participation	Creation of new part-time community experience TA role Creation of The Riverside Lounge Investment in Talentino and associated work experience networks	£23,000	RPS data evidences that 89% pupils achieved their predicted progress score within the Generalisation measure (target was 85%) – <i>please see Graph 3 below*</i>	High impact for medium cost	Continue with same level of investment (in line with community focus in new curriculum framework)



* Graph 1 showing pupil progress for PP / non-PP and CLA / non-CLA pupils during the 2024/25 year.



* Graph 2 showing pupil progress within the Participation Focus Area and Community Inclusion Focus Area during the 2024/25 year.



* Graph 3 showing pupil progress within the Generalisation Measure during the 2024/25 year.

Appendix 1: Historic Pupil Premium Principles at Riverside School

At Riverside School we have the very highest expectations of, and aspirations for, all our pupils. Our Governing Board share our belief that every pupil should have equal opportunities to achieve the best possible life chances, and where no child gets left behind. We share the drive to ensure that every pupil is given every opportunity to **Be All That They Can Be**.

We make every effort to ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive outstanding support and believe that our core business is to ensure our pupils make outstanding progress as a result of outstanding teaching. The Department for Education (DfE) provides additional Pupil Premium Funding (PPF) to all schools based on the number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and the number of children who are looked-after (CLA) and the aim of PPF is to support schools in raising the achievement of the most disadvantaged pupils.

As a school, we recognise that it is not the funding itself that will improve achievement and attainment, but how it is used. The Department for Education (DfE) expects us to use PPF appropriately and to be accountable for the decisions we make. We also know that Ofsted consider the active involvement of governors as one of the characteristics of schools that are successfully using their PPF to improve achievement and that successful schools *“thoroughly involve governors in the decision-making and evaluation process”*. At Riverside School, through effective and rigorous planning and controls, governors ensure the efficient management of PPF and this leads to the effective deployment of staff and resources to the benefit of all groups of pupils.

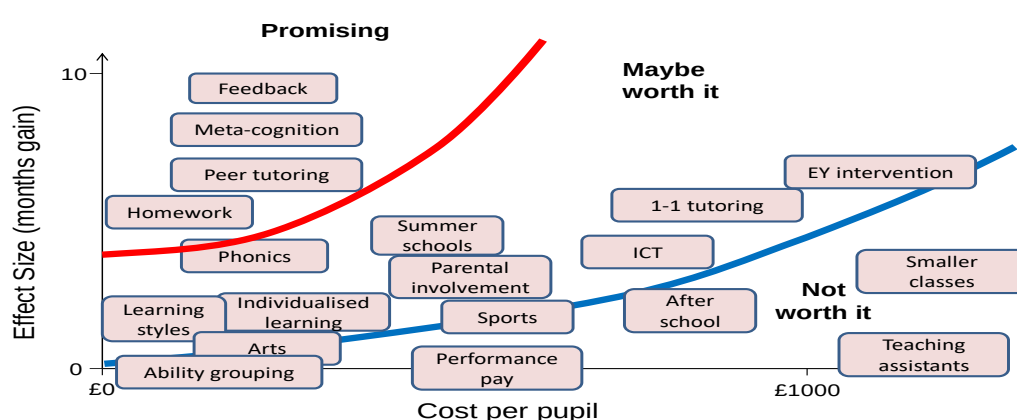
We have been asked whether PPF should be used exclusively for pupils on FSM and we believe that it is difficult to spend PPF on the improvement of teaching and learning without the benefits impacting on other pupils. Equally, it is morally difficult to exclude a child who is not on FSM from accessing any initiatives if they could clearly benefit from them. However, we are also clear in the way that interventions are targeted to ensure FSM pupils benefit from PPF. Research published by the DfE suggests that nationally, 14% of families entitled to FSM are not claiming them and this figure rises to 25% in the South East. Recent correspondence to schools from His Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) advises that as long as schools can show they have narrowed the gap between eligible pupils and others and the PPF has contributed to this, then the PPF may also have an impact on non-eligible pupils.

At Riverside School, our aims and rationale for PPF expenditure are based on a number of factors. Using a range of data sources, we critically analyse aspects of day-to-day teaching in order to identify achievement and underachievement and from this, we are able to implement interventions to improve outcomes for individuals and groups. We believe that educational research from both mainstream and specialist settings is invaluable in informing practice, both in terms of deciding upon the efficacy of specific interventions and in implementing strategies as effectively as possible. In addition to widely-researched interventions linked to the education of pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties, we have used the Sutton Trust-EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit to support our decision-making in identifying high impact strategies (+3 months and above). Please see overview below and refer to <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk>

Overview

Approach	Potential gain	Cost	Applicability	Evidence estimate	Overall cost benefit
Feedback	+ 9 months	££	Pri, Sec, Eng, Maths, Sci	★★★★	Very high impact for low cost
Meta-cognition	+ 8 months	££	Pri, Sec, Eng, Maths, Sci	★★★★	High impact for low cost
Peer tutoring	+ 6 months	££	Pri, Sec, Eng, Maths	★★★★	High impact for low cost
Early years intervention	+ 6 months	£££££	Pri, Eng, Maths	★★★★	High impact for very high cost
One-to-one	+ 5 months	£££££	Pri, Sec, Eng, Maths	★★★★	Moderate impact for very high cost
Homework	+ 5 months	£	Pri, Sec, Eng, Maths, Sci	★★★★	Moderate impact for very low cost
ICT	+ 4 months	££££	Pri, Sec, All subjects	★★★★	Moderate impact for high cost

Using Sutton Trust data, Durham University represented value for money interventions in the following way:



In addition, the school keeps abreast of the latest research around effective Pupil Premium Practice and draws upon the very recent findings of researchers and educationalists who have published papers in recent months. Burnage identifies five general interventions, namely: know your Pupil Premium learners; consider your learning environment; plan your behaviour management strategies; target Pupil Premium learners for support; and remove barriers to learning. He also describes eight targeted interventions that can be particularly effective, including feedback; peer support; independent learning; differentiation; timely interventions; 1:1 interventions; collaborative learning; and learning outside the classroom. Rollett describes the importance of developing a five-step plan to: identify the gaps; find out what works best; create a strategy; grow the culture; and ensure oversight and evaluation. From his work as National Pupil Premium champion, Sir John Dunford emphasises 12 commonly found characteristics of effective Pupil Premium practice in successful schools and Riverside School has borne these in mind when considering its own Pupil Premium practice (as well as guiding practice for the wider pupil population). The 12 characteristics include:

- Excellent collection, analysis and use of data relating to individual pupils and groups;
- Unerring focus on the quality of teaching;
- Identification of the main barriers to learning for PP-eligible pupils;
- Frequent monitoring of the progress of every PP-eligible pupil;
- When a pupil's progress slows, interventions are put in place rapidly;
- Every effort is made to engage parents and carers in the education and progress of their child;
- If poor attendance is an issue, this is addressed as a priority;

- Evidence (especially the Education Endowment Foundation Toolkit) is used to decide on which strategies are likely to be most effective in overcoming the barriers to learning;
- Staff (teachers and support staff) are trained in depth on the chosen strategies;
- Complete buy-in from all staff to the importance of the PP agenda is essential, with all staff conveying positive and aspirational messages to PP-eligible pupils. Performance management is used to reinforce the importance of PP effectiveness;
- Effectiveness of teaching assistants is evaluated and, if necessary, increased through training and improved deployment;
- Governors are trained in PP.

How does Riverside School monitor the impact of PPF on pupil progress?

- The school has robust measures in place to track the progress of FSM pupils and CLA and compares this to the rest of the cohort. Evidence of underachievement is rigorously challenged and interventions put in place to accelerate progress.
- The school monitors absence closely and has a robust and systematic approach to contacting families where there are concerns about attendance.
- The school monitors attendance of families of FSM pupils and CLA at annual reviews and parents' evenings.
- Assistant Headteachers and Phase Leaders have responsibility for monitoring pupils' progress across their phases and for ensuring FSM pupils and CLA are not underachieving compared with the non-FSM population.
- A named governor meets with DHT / AHTs to ensure FSM pupils and CLA are not underachieving compared with the non-FSM population and report back to the Governing Board.