

Pupil premium strategy statement – Witham Oaks 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	286
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	43%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year)	2025-2026 2026-2027 2027-2028
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2026
Statement authorised by	Dan Sheehan and Maxine Harrington
Pupil premium lead	Dan Sheehan and Maxine Harrington
Governor / Trustee lead	Bhavika Gorasia

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£171,195
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
Total budget for this academic year <i>If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year</i>	£171,195

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At Witham Oaks Academy, we have high aspirations and ambitions for all our children. We are determined to ensure that the children at our school have every chance to realise their full potential. We understand that challenging socio-economic circumstances can create additional barriers to success for children. However, we are clear that these challenges can be overcome, taking a tiered approach which includes ensuring all children have access to excellent classroom teaching; targeted academic support to help children make progress; and wider strategies tackling the non-academic barriers to success, such as social and emotional support or behavioural support. Our identification of need is based on assessments and not assumptions. Our staff team are experts in our pupils, not their labels. We believe that every interaction matters and that all children should feel a sense of belonging and ownership. We will utilise the Pupil Premium, which is additional to main school funding, to address the current underlying inequalities between children eligible for free school meals (FSM) and their wealthier peers. We will ensure funding to tackle disadvantage reaches the pupils who need it most.

In addition to this, we will consider the challenges faced by vulnerable pupils, such as those who have a social worker and young carers. The activity we have outlined in this statement is also intended to support their needs, regardless of whether they are disadvantaged or not, as we believe for these children to make progress; it is not just about supporting them academically, but their wider well-being too.

High-quality teaching is at the heart of our approach, with a focus on areas in which disadvantaged pupils require the most support. This is proven to have the greatest impact on closing the disadvantage attainment gap and at the same time will benefit the non-disadvantaged pupils in our school (Education Endowment Foundation 2021). In addition, carefully planned intervention and support groups will support pupils in narrowing gaps in their learning. Implicit in the intended outcomes detailed below, is the intention that non-disadvantaged pupils' attainment will be sustained and improved alongside progress for their disadvantaged peers.

Our objectives are to:

- Remove barriers to learning created by social and economic background
- Ensure all pupils are able to read fluently and with good understanding to enable them to access the breadth of the curriculum
- Develop confidence in their ability to communicate effectively in a wide range of contexts
- Enable pupils to nurture their social and emotional wellbeing and to develop resilience
- Access a wide range of enrichment opportunities to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the world and raise aspirations.

Achieving our objectives: In order to achieve our objectives and overcome identified barriers to learning we will:

- Provide all teachers with high quality CPD to ensure that pupils access effective quality first teaching
- Provide targeted support to quickly address identified gaps in learning
- Target funding to ensure that all pupils have access to trips, residential visits and firsthand learning experiences
- Provide opportunities for all pupils to participate in enrichment activities including sport and music

- Provide nurture to support pupils in their emotional and social development

Witham Oaks Academy is part of the Inspires Multi-Academy Trust. It is a mixed junior school located on Spa Road in Witham, Essex, catering to pupils aged 7 to 11. As of September 2025, we are delighted to be returning to a three-form entry, with 12 classes—reflecting the continued growth and success of our school community over the past two years. The academy operates under the Inspires Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) and is led by Co-Headteachers, Mr. Daniel Sheehan and Mrs Maxine Harrington.

In December 2023, Ofsted rated the academy as 'Good' across all evaluated categories, including the quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, and leadership and management. The inspection highlighted the school's strong focus on delivering a stimulating and ambitious curriculum, fostering good conduct among pupils, and providing effective support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Many of our pupils come from deprived backgrounds with limited life experiences beyond the local area. On entry, children typically have lower starting points in communication, language, and vocabulary, alongside gaps in early reading and phonics. Witham Oaks Academy is situated in a deprived area of Witham. The school location deprivation indicator is in quintile 4 (more deprived) of all schools. We have a higher than the national average of pupils from disadvantaged homes and % FSM (43.43% in 2025 - the highest 20% compared to all schools). We prioritise the development of vocabulary and oracy as foundations for learning, recognising the importance of effective communication for both academic progress and future success. All pupils are baselined on entry to ensure an accurate picture of their needs, and our curriculum is adapted to address gaps, build cultural capital, and provide broad experiences. It is regularly reviewed to ensure accessibility and strong progress for all learners, including those with SEND.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<i>Attendance for disadvantaged pupils continues to be a challenge, though it has made slight improvement over a 3-year trend aligning it closer to the national average. Attendance for disadvantaged pupils for academic year 2024/25 was 91.6% compared to the national average 92.4% highlighting this as a continuing barrier to disadvantaged pupils' progress. While FSM6 attendance is now broadly in line with national expectations, it remains consistently below average and has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Recent improvement has not been sustained, with national rates rising faster than school performance in 2024/25. Given the school's high FSM context, this remains a key priority area.</i>
2	<i>On entry to KS2, 75% of disadvantaged pupils secured the KS1 Phonics Screening Check compared to 90.5% of non-disadvantaged. Our baseline assessments, observations and discussions with pupils suggest disadvantaged pupils generally have greater difficulties with phonics than their peers.</i>
3	<i>Our observations and discussions with pupils and families have identified social and emotional issues, such as Emotional School Based Avoidance (EBSA) for many pupils and their wider family. This is due to a lack of external services; lack of agency support i.e.: Social services/ EHA/ family Hubs. Parents struggle to provide basic early educa-</i>

	<i>tion standards for their children. The majority of families do not engage in and therefore children lack enrichment opportunities. These challenges particularly affect disadvantaged pupils, including their attainment. Teacher referrals for support remain relatively high and school % CIN is well above national average at 6.93%. Children need to self-regulate and manage their emotions in an age-appropriate way. There has been an increase in referrals to our Family Liaison Officer from both staff and families who feel that the extra support is necessary. The impact of the pandemic and subsequent cost of living crisis on our students is evident through the increase in the physical and personal resources needed to support mental health, wellbeing and academic needs.</i>
4	<i>Although disadvantaged pupils' mathematics outcomes have improved and are broadly in line with national disadvantaged pupils, a significant attainment gap remains compared to national non-disadvantaged peers (58% vs 80%, a 22-percentage point difference). To narrow this gap, the school needs to strengthen a maths mastery approach that secures pupils' number sense on entry to Year 3, builds on prior learning, and develops fluency and confidence across all cohorts, ensuring consistent progress and sustained improvement for disadvantaged pupils.</i>
5	<i>Whilst we have been working hard to improve Oracy skills across the school, our assessments, observations, and discussions with pupils indicate further support is needed to address underdeveloped oral language skills and vocabulary gaps among many disadvantaged pupils. These difficulties are apparent from the moment pupils join Key Stage 2 and are more prevalent among disadvantaged pupils compared to their peers, potentially limiting their access to the full curriculum and progress across subjects.</i>
6	<i>Securing strong foundational writing skills, including handwriting, letter formation, and spelling, remains a key focus. End of KS2 2024/25 GPS outcomes for expected standard dipped slightly from 76% to 72%, marginally below the national figure of 73%. Targeted support is needed to ensure disadvantaged pupils develop these essential mechanics, enabling them to write fluently and access the wider curriculum effectively.</i>

Intended outcomes

This explains the outcomes we are aiming for **by the end of our current strategy plan (2028)**, and how we will measure whether they have been achieved.

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Attendance for disadvantaged pupils, including those eligible for FSM6, improves and is sustained over time so that it is at least in line with national averages. Improved attendance results in increased access to high-quality teaching and learning, leading to stronger engagement, improved progress and reduced persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils across all year groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall disadvantaged pupil attendance increases from 91.6% (2024/25) to at least 93% by the end of the academic year, meet or exceed the latest national average by the end of the strategy. • FSM6 attendance improves year-on-year and remains consistently in line with or above national FSM averages by the end of the academic year. • The attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils is reduced to less than 1%. • The proportion of disadvantaged pupils classed as persistently absent is reduced by at least 20% compared to the previous academic year.

<p>Disadvantaged pupils entering Key Stage 2 rapidly close gaps in phonics knowledge and application so that they can decode accurately and fluently, access age-appropriate texts with confidence, and fully engage with the KS2 reading curriculum. Improved phonics outcomes lead to stronger reading fluency, comprehension and overall attainment for disadvantaged pupils.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gap in phonics attainment on entry to KS2 between disadvantaged pupils (75%) and non-disadvantaged pupils (90.5%) is reduced by at least 10 percentage points within one academic year. • At least 85% of disadvantaged pupils who did not meet the KS1 Phonics Screening Check standard demonstrate secure or improving phonics knowledge by the end of Year 3, evidenced through standardised phonics assessments and decoding checks. • Targeted phonics intervention pupils make accelerated progress, with at least 80% meeting age-related expectations for decoding accuracy and fluency by the end of the intervention cycle.
<p>Disadvantaged pupils develop the emotional regulation, resilience and self-management skills needed to engage positively with school, attend regularly and access learning successfully. Improved wellbeing and strengthened family support reduce barriers caused by social and emotional needs, leading to improved attendance, behaviour and academic engagement for disadvantaged pupils.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The attendance rate of disadvantaged pupils identified as persistent absentees improves by at least 3 percentage points over the academic year. • Referrals to the Family Liaison Officer for repeat or escalating concerns reduce by at least 15%, indicating earlier resolution and improved family resilience. • Teacher referrals for emotional and behavioural support reduce across the year, demonstrating improved pupil self-regulation and classroom engagement. • Behaviour logs and pastoral records show a reduction in dysregulated behaviours, emotional incidents and time out of class for disadvantaged pupils. • Pupil voice and wellbeing surveys indicate that disadvantaged pupils can identify and apply age-appropriate self-regulation strategies to manage emotions and anxiety. • Parental engagement increases, evidenced by improved attendance at meetings, workshops or targeted support sessions led by the Family Liaison Officer. • Disadvantaged pupils' academic engagement improves, demonstrated through improved work completion, sustained focus in lessons and progress data in core subjects.
<p>Disadvantaged pupils develop secure number sense, fluency and mathematical confidence through a consistent whole-school mastery approach. Strengthened foundations on entry to Year 3 and coherent progression across Key Stage 2 lead to accelerated progress for disadvantaged pupils, narrowing the attainment gap with non-disadvantaged pupils and securing sustained improvement in mathematics outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The attainment gap in mathematics between disadvantaged pupils and national non-disadvantaged pupils reduces from 22 percentage points (58% vs 80%) to no more than 15 percentage points by the end of the academic year. • At least 70% of disadvantaged pupils achieve age-related expectations in mathematics by the end of KS2, demonstrating improved alignment with national outcomes by the end of the strategy. • On entry to Year 3, at least 85% of disadvantaged pupils demonstrate secure number sense in place value, number bonds and times tables, as evidenced through baseline assessments. • Disadvantaged pupils make at least expected progress, with a significant proportion making better-

	<p>than-expected progress from their starting points across all KS2 cohorts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson observations and work scrutiny show consistent implementation of a maths mastery approach, including the effective use of representations, mathematical language, structured practice and variation. • Pupil voice indicates increased confidence and independence in problem-solving, with disadvantaged pupils able to explain their mathematical thinking using precise vocabulary. • Gaps identified through formative assessment are addressed swiftly, with targeted interventions resulting in measurable progress for disadvantaged pupils within each term.
<p>Disadvantaged pupils develop age-appropriate oral language skills, including vocabulary, sentence structure, and confident communication. Improved oracy enables pupils to access the full curriculum, engage effectively in classroom discussions, and enhance their reading comprehension and writing outcomes, narrowing the attainment gap with non-disadvantaged peers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of the strategy, at least 80% of disadvantaged pupils demonstrate age-appropriate oracy skills, as measured by teacher assessments, vocabulary checklists, and structured speaking tasks. • Disadvantaged pupils show measurable progress in expressive and receptive vocabulary, closing the gap with non-disadvantaged peers by at least 50% from baseline assessments on entry to KS2. • Lesson observations and learning walks evidence that disadvantaged pupils contribute confidently to class discussions at least once per lesson across subjects. • Pupils demonstrate improved application of spoken language in writing, reflected in increased sentence complexity, accurate vocabulary use, and oral rehearsal of ideas before recording. • Targeted interventions (e.g., structured talk programs, vocabulary-rich sessions) result in accelerated progress for at least 75% of disadvantaged pupils identified with the greatest oral language needs. • Pupil voice demonstrates increased confidence in speaking, participation in group work, and ability to explain ideas and reasoning clearly.
<p>Disadvantaged pupils develop strong foundational writing skills, including handwriting, letter formation, spelling, and punctuation. Secure mechanics enable pupils to write fluently and independently, supporting their access to the wider curriculum and improving attainment in GPS and writing across Key Stage 2.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in GPS increases from 72% (2024/25) to at least 76%, narrowing the gap with national outcomes. • Disadvantaged pupils demonstrate improved handwriting and letter formation, with at least 80% producing legible, fluent writing in daily classwork by the end of the academic year. • Spelling accuracy for key words and age-appropriate spelling patterns improves term-on-term, with at least 75% of disadvantaged pupils showing measurable progress from baseline assessments. • Work scrutiny and teacher assessments evidence that disadvantaged pupils apply foundational mechanics consistently in independent writing across subjects.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted interventions (e.g., handwriting programs, spelling strategies, small-group tuition) result in accelerated progress for pupils with the greatest gaps, with at least 70% achieving age-related expectations by year-end. • Pupil voice indicates increased confidence and independence in writing, including the ability to self-correct and use taught strategies effectively.
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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: £40,626

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Introduction of Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised Phonics Scheme</p> <p>This academic year, Witham Oaks Academy has implemented the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised phonics programme across Key Stage 2. This comprehensive scheme includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full continuous professional development (CPD) for all teaching and support staff to ensure high-quality phonics instruction. • Provision of high-quality resources to support systematic synthetic phonics teaching. • Intensive support and monitoring from the Myland English Hub to ensure fidelity of implementation and provide expert guidance. • The programme is designed to provide a structured, systematic approach to phonics, enabling children, particularly disadvantaged pupils, to develop strong foundational 	<p>The adoption of the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised phonics scheme aligns closely with the Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) guidance on improving literacy through systematic synthetic phonics (SSP). According to the EEF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic phonics approaches have a strong evidence base, showing an average of +5 months' additional progress in early reading compared to non-phonics approaches. • High-quality phonics teaching is particularly beneficial for disadvantaged pupils, helping to close the attainment gap in reading. <p>The EEF's 'Improving Literacy in Key Stage 1' guidance highlights the importance of consistent, well-structured phonics programmes combined with ongoing teacher training and support.</p> <p>Collaboration with English Hubs, such as the Myland Hub, is recommended by the Department for Education to support schools in implementing phonics programmes effectively and sustainably.</p> <p>Additionally, the Little Wandle programme is recognised for its comprehensive approach, including assessment and intervention strategies,</p>	2, 5

<p>skills in decoding and early reading.</p>	<p>which are crucial for identifying pupils who need additional support and ensuring timely, targeted interventions.</p> <p>By investing in high-quality phonics teaching through this evidence-informed programme, Witham Oaks Academy aims to accelerate reading attainment for all pupils, with a particular focus on disadvantaged learners, thereby addressing one of the key barriers to educational success.</p>	
<p>Elklan Speech and Language Training for all staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training teachers and support staff to deliver universal and targeted SLC strategies • Embedding structured talk, sentence stems, and vocabulary rehearsal in lessons • Small-group language interventions for pupils with identified needs • Consistent classroom strategies to support pupils with EBSA and communication difficulties • Monitoring progress through observation, pupil voice, and language assessments 	<p>The EEF highlights oral language interventions as having a high impact (+6 months) for disadvantaged pupils. Elklan training equips staff with strategies to develop speech, language, communication, and listening skills, improving pupils' vocabulary, sentence structure, and confidence in spoken language. Improved oracy underpins progress in reading comprehension, writing, and across the wider curriculum.</p>	<p>3, 5</p>
<p>Mathematics Teaching for Mastery: Specialist Training and Classroom Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing specialist CPD for teachers delivered through the Venn Maths Hub, ensuring consistent implementation of teaching for mastery across the school. • Release time for staff to participate in Teacher Research Groups (TrGs), enabling collaborative lesson design, rehearsal, reflection, and refinement of mastery teaching approaches. • Purchase and systematic use of concrete manipulatives (e.g. counters, place value equipment, fraction resources) to support conceptual understanding and secure number sense, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. • Consistent application of the concrete–pictorial–abstract (CPA) approach across all year groups to strengthen 	<p>The NCETM and EEF identify mastery approaches in mathematics as effective in improving outcomes for all pupils, particularly disadvantaged learners, by strengthening conceptual understanding, number sense, and fluency. Consistent mastery teaching reduces gaps by ensuring pupils secure foundational knowledge before moving on and builds confidence and resilience in mathematics.</p> <p>The DfE non-statutory guidance has been produced in conjunction with the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics, drawing on evidence-based approaches: Maths_guidance_KS_1_and_2.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)</p> <p>The EEF guidance is based on a range of the best available evidence: Improving Mathematics in Key Stages 2 and 3</p>	<p>4</p>

<p>understanding and reduce cognitive load.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum mapping and progression planning to ensure pupils enter Year 3 with secure number sense, building effectively on prior learning. • Embedding structured variation, mathematical talk, and reasoning tasks within daily lessons to deepen understanding and promote fluency and confidence. • Ongoing coaching, lesson study, and monitoring to ensure mastery principles are embedded consistently and have measurable impact on disadvantaged pupils' outcomes. 		
<p>Witham Oaks Academy is committed to delivering a broad and balanced curriculum that provides consistency in approach, high-quality delivery, and clear progression across all subjects. To achieve this, we are implementing a new wider curriculum designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure coherence and consistency in curriculum intent, implementation, and impact across all year groups and subjects. • Provide clear progression pathways and well-sequenced learning objectives that build knowledge and skills systematically. • Embed high expectations for all pupils, including disadvantaged learners and those with SEND, ensuring access to a rich and challenging curriculum. • Promote cross-curricular links and opportunities for deepening understanding and application of knowledge. • Incorporate regular assessment and review to monitor curriculum coverage, teaching quality, and pupil outcomes. 	<p>To support the effective implementation and ongoing development of the wider curriculum, Witham Oaks Academy is developing new subject leaders. These leaders will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take responsibility for the vision, intent, and implementation of their subject areas, ensuring alignment with the school's overall curriculum strategy. • Lead subject-specific professional development and support for staff to enhance subject knowledge and pedagogical expertise. • Monitor teaching and learning within their subjects through lesson visits, work scrutiny, and pupil voice to ensure consistency and quality. • Analyse assessment data to identify strengths and areas for improvement, informing targeted actions to raise standards. • Foster a collaborative culture of curriculum innovation, sharing best practice and resources across the school and MAT. • Engage with external networks and training opportunities to keep abreast of curriculum developments and best practice 	2, 4, 5, 6
<p>Introducing and Purchasing TestBase Standardised Assessments in English and Maths</p> <p>This academic year, Witham Oaks Academy has invested in TestBase standardised assessments to enhance the accuracy and consistency of pupil</p>	<p>The adoption of standardised assessments such as TestBase is supported by OFSTED's guidance on effective curriculum and assessment practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OFSTED emphasises the importance of using accurate, reliable assessment data to understand pupils' current capabilities and to plan teaching that 	2, 4, 5, 6

<p>assessment in English and maths. TestBase provides reliable, norm-referenced assessments that allow us to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark pupil attainment and progress against national standards. • Identify specific strengths and areas for development in key domains such as reading fluency, comprehension, writing skills, and mathematical reasoning. • Diagnose learning gaps promptly to inform targeted teaching and intervention strategies. • Track the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND to ensure timely and appropriate support. • Support teacher assessment judgements with robust data to improve curriculum planning and personalised learning. • The use of TestBase assessments will be embedded within our assessment cycle, complementing ongoing formative assessments, to provide a comprehensive picture of pupil achievement and support evidence-based decision-making. 	<p>meets their needs, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardised assessments provide norm-referenced data that help schools identify pupils who are falling behind and require additional support, enabling early and targeted intervention, a key factor in closing attainment gaps. • OFSTED’s English deep dive guidance highlights the need for precise assessment of transcription skills (handwriting and spelling) and composition abilities to inform teaching and prevent persistent errors. • In maths, standardised assessments support diagnosis of conceptual and procedural understanding, helping teachers to tailor instruction effectively. <p>The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) recommends using high-quality assessment information to target teaching and support, ensuring that effort is focused on pupils’ best next steps rather than rehearsing known skills.</p> <p>TestBase assessments align well with the national curriculum and provide actionable insights that support curriculum sequencing and progression.</p>	
<p>All staff, including support staff will benefit from a regular schedule of evidence-based research to drive professional development, and ensure that there are opportunities for teachers to share best practice and engage in professional discussion to improve their pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). Purchase Teaching WalkThrus from John Catt Education Ltd to deliver programme of coaching based on principles of cognitive science and best practice.</p>	<p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/effective-professional-development</p> <p>EEF-teacher professional development Supporting high quality teaching is pivotal in improving children’s outcomes. Indeed, research tells us that high quality teaching can narrow the disadvantage gap. See EEF Toolkit : High Quality Teaching</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/support-for-schools/school-improvement-planning/1-high-quality-teaching</p> <p>‘The best available evidence indicates that great teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve pupil attainment. Ensuring every teacher is supported in delivering high-quality teaching is essential to achieving the best outcomes for all pupils, particularly the most disadvantaged among them.’ The Great Teaching Toolkit (2020) identifies that teachers who understand the content they are teaching and how it is learnt, in what Shulman (1986) defined as ‘pedagogical content knowledge’ (PCK), is one of four dimensions that improve pupil outcomes.</p>	<p>2, 4, 6</p>

<p>Implement and monitor effectiveness of new spelling programme- Jane Considine approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole-school spelling approach based on patterns, etymology, and morphology • Explicit modelling and daily practice opportunities • Targeted support for disadvantaged pupils with persistent spelling difficulties • Consistent expectations across subjects • Monitoring through writing outcomes and GPS assessments 	<p>Explicit teaching of spelling and transcription skills improves writing fluency and accuracy (EEF – Writing). Structured spelling instruction reduces cognitive load, allowing pupils to focus on composition and meaning.</p>	<p>6</p>
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support, structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £ 57,512

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Implementing 'Keep-up, Catch-up' Phonics Interventions</p> <p>At Witham Oaks Academy, we recognise that some pupils, particularly disadvantaged learners, require additional, timely support to keep pace with their peers in phonics and early reading skills. To address this, we have established a robust 'Keep-up, Catch-up' phonics intervention programme that operates alongside our high-quality daily phonics teaching.</p> <p>Key features of this targeted support include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular formative assessment and phonics screening checks identify pupils who are falling behind or at risk of doing so, enabling prompt intervention. • Interventions are closely aligned with the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised phonics programme to ensure consistency and progression. Pupils receive daily, small-group or one-to-one sessions focused on consolidating pho- 	<p>Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base indicating a positive impact on pupils (+5 months progress), particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds. Targeted phonics interventions have been shown to be more effective when delivered as regular sessions over a period up to 12 weeks:</p> <p>Phonics Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF</p> <p>The Little Wandle programme is rigorous and in place. All staff have been fully trained through effective CPD, which supports the school in providing an effective approach. Timetabled intervention and tracking are in place to ensure at least good progress and to ensure progress for those children receiving intervention.</p>	<p>2, 5</p>

<p>neme-grapheme correspondences, blending, and segmenting skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions are delivered by staff trained in systematic synthetic phonics and intervention strategies, ensuring fidelity to the programme and effective teaching. • Sessions include explicit teaching, modelling, guided practice, and opportunities for pupils to apply phonics skills in reading and writing. • Pupils are supported to develop metacognitive awareness of their learning, helping them to monitor and regulate their phonics skills independently over time. • Where appropriate, parents are engaged and supported to reinforce phonics learning at home, enhancing the intervention's impact. • Progress is closely tracked to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and inform further teaching or referral to specialist support if needed. 		
<p>Analyse assessments and use the subsequent data to establish high quality booster sessions for targeted disadvantaged pupils falling behind national expectations delivered through a small group approach. Teachers will deliver these booster sessions outside of school hours to avoid affecting disadvantaged pupils' access to the wider curriculum.</p> <p>Review the whole school approach to assessment to ensure clarity and consistency amongst teaching staff.</p>	<p>The EEF 'Teaching & Learning Toolkit' supports the use of small group interventions and suggest they can have up to four-month impact on progress.</p> <p>A clear and consistent whole school approach to assessment allows us to be confident with the process to identify target pupils. 'Small group tuition is most likely to be effective if it is targeted at pupils' specific needs.'</p>	2, 4, 6
<p>Speech and Language therapist employed by the MAT to work on a SALT caseload.</p>	<p>Speech therapist works with individual pupils. The caseload is evaluated regularly by the Co-Heads and 1:1 plans are put in place and delivered. They are reinforced by the class teachers, specifically in year 4. The EEF research shows 'that language interventions with frequent sessions over a sustained period may have a larger impact, overall. Approaches that are delivered one-to-one also have larger impacts.'</p>	2, 5, 6

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

Budgeted cost: £73,057

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Whole school implementation of the myHappymind programme</p>	<p>The myHappymind programme is an evidence-informed, whole-school mental health and wellbeing curriculum aligned with the DfE's statutory Relationships Education, Health Education and PSHE guidance. Research indicates that explicit teaching of emotional regulation, resilience, and self-awareness improves pupils' ability to manage anxiety, regulate behaviour, and engage positively with learning (EEF, Social and Emotional Learning +4 months).</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>Witham Oaks Academy is committed to enhancing pupils' learning experiences and wellbeing by implementing a Forest School and Outdoor Learning programme. This approach provides regular, structured opportunities for children to engage with the natural environment, developing a wide range of skills beyond the classroom.</p> <p>Key features include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly scheduled Forest School sessions for all year groups, delivered by trained practitioners, ensuring consistent access to outdoor learning. • Activities designed to promote physical development, social skills, communication, problem-solving, resilience, and self-confidence. • Outdoor learning opportunities are linked to the wider curriculum, supporting subjects such as science, geography, and personal development. • Forest School is accessible to all pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, offering alternative ways to engage and succeed. • Emphasis on mental health benefits, including stress reduction, mindfulness, and fostering a connection with nature. • Opportunities for families and community groups to participate in outdoor learning events, strengthening school- community links. • Encouraging stewardship of the environment and understanding of sustainability issues. 	<p>Research and guidance support the benefits of Forest School and Outdoor Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) identifies outdoor learning as a promising approach that can improve engagement, motivation, and social and emotional skills, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. • OFSTED reports highlight how Forest School approaches contribute to pupils' personal development, behaviour, and attitudes to learning. • Outdoor learning supports experiential and active learning, reinforcing curriculum content in memorable and meaningful ways. <p>Engagement with nature has well-documented positive effects on mental health and wellbeing, supporting pupils' readiness to learn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest School's inclusive and childcentred ethos helps build confidence and independence, especially for pupils who may struggle in traditional classroom settings. <p>By embedding Forest School and Outdoor Learning, Witham Oaks Academy aims to enrich the curriculum, support holistic development, and promote equity in learning opportunities.</p>	<p>1, 3</p>

<p>Family Liaison Worker and Safeguarding Lead</p> <p>Witham Oaks Academy recognises that addressing barriers to learning extends beyond the classroom. To support our disadvantaged pupils and their families effectively, we have established dedicated roles for a Family Liaison Worker and a Safeguarding Lead. These roles are integral to our wider strategy to promote pupils' wellbeing, attendance, and engagement with learning.</p> <p>Key responsibilities and impact include:</p> <p>Family Liaison Worker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts as a vital link between school and families, building trusting relationships to support pupils' attendance, behaviour, and emotional wellbeing. • Provides targeted support and guidance to families facing challenges such as housing instability, financial hardship, or health issues. • Facilitates access to external services and community resources, ensuring families receive holistic support. • Organises workshops and parent engagement activities to empower families in supporting their children's learning and development. <p>Works proactively to identify and address barriers to attendance, collaborating with the school attendance team and external agencies.</p> <p>Safeguarding Lead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversees all aspects of child protection and safeguarding, ensuring a safe and secure learning environment for all pupils. • Leads on safeguarding training and awareness for all staff, maintaining up-to-date knowledge of statutory guidance and best practice. • Coordinates multi-agency working to support vulnerable pupils and families, ensuring timely intervention and support. • Monitors and reviews safeguarding policies and procedures to maintain rigorous standards. 	<p>Research and guidance from OFSTED and the Department for Education highlight the importance of wider strategies in closing attainment gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OFSTED emphasises that effective family engagement and safeguarding arrangements are essential for improving attendance, behaviour, and personal development, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. <p>The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) identifies parental engagement as a high-impact approach to improving pupil outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Family Liaison Worker can help build trust and remove barriers to learning by supporting families holistically. • Strong safeguarding leadership ensures a safe learning environment, enabling pupils to focus on learning and thrive. • Integrating pastoral support with academic interventions creates a whole-school approach that addresses the broader needs of disadvantaged pupils. <p>By investing in these roles, Witham Oaks Academy aims to provide comprehensive support that addresses both academic and non-academic barriers, promoting equity and success for all pupils.</p>	<p>1, 3</p>
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<p>Provides direct support and advocacy for pupils at risk, promoting their welfare and wellbeing</p>		
<p>Dedicated Attendance Officer to Monitor, Track, and Respond to Attendance</p> <p>Witham Oaks Academy recognises the critical importance of high attendance in supporting pupil achievement, wellbeing, and access to the full curriculum. To strengthen our attendance, management, we have designated a member of the office team as a dedicated Attendance Officer. This role is central to our strategy to improve attendance, reduce persistent absence, and address barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>Key responsibilities include:</p> <p>Regularly track and analyse attendance data for all pupils, with a focus on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Quickly identify emerging attendance issues and patterns of persistent absence or lateness.</p> <p>Liaise promptly with families to understand and address barriers to attendance, providing support or referrals as needed.</p> <p>Work closely with pastoral staff, safeguarding leads, and local authority attendance teams to coordinate support and interventions.</p> <p>Provide timely attendance reports to school leadership and governing bodies to inform strategic planning.</p> <p>Support whole-school initiatives to encourage positive attendance habits among pupils and families.</p> <p>Ensure attendance records meet statutory requirements and support safeguarding protocols.</p>	<p>Research and guidance from the Department for Education and OFSTED emphasise the effectiveness of dedicated attendance roles:</p> <p>The DfE's Working Together to Improve Attendance guidance highlights the importance of schools having a designated attendance lead to ensure rigorous tracking and timely intervention.</p> <p>OFSTED recognises that schools with clear attendance accountability and proactive family engagement are more successful in improving attendance and reducing persistent absence.</p> <p>Early identification and responsive communication with families help remove barriers to attendance before they escalate.</p> <p>Collaboration with local authorities and multi-agency teams enhances support for pupils facing complex challenges impacting attendance.</p> <p>A strong attendance culture promoted by dedicated staff contributes to improved pupil engagement and achievement.</p> <p>By appointing a dedicated Attendance Officer, Templars Academy strengthens its capacity to monitor attendance effectively, intervene promptly, and support disadvantaged pupils to attend school regularly and thrive.</p>	<p>1</p>

Total budgeted cost: £ 171,195

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Last academic year marked the end of a previous pupil premium strategy plan, and the analysis below sets out our assessment of how successfully the intended outcomes of that plan were met.

All pupils - Attendance

Year	Cohort	School	National	National distribution banding	Sch trend vs Nat trend	School context
2024/25 (2 term)	287	95.0%	94.8%	Close to average	Relative improvement	High - FSM
2023/24 (3 term)	289	94.2%	94.5%	Close to average	Relative improvement	-
2022/23 (3 term)	287	93.3%	94.1%	Below	Relative decline	-

2018/19 (3 term)	313	95.8%	96.0%	Close to average	Not available	-
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▶ [Chart](#)

FSM6 - Attendance

Year	Cohort	School	National	National distribution banding	Sch trend vs Nat trend	School context
2024/25 (2 term)	124	91.6%	92.4%	Close to average	Relative decline	High - FSM
2023/24 (3 term)	117	91.4%	92.0%	Close to average	Relative improvement	-
2022/23 (3 term)	118	89.2%	91.6%	Below	Relative decline	-

2018/19 (3 term)	109	94.7%	94.4%	Close to average	Not available	-
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FSM6 Attendance – Headline Analysis

- FSM6 attendance remains consistently below the national average, with the current year (2024/25, two terms) at 91.6% compared to 92.4% nationally, continuing a persistent national gap despite remaining within the “close to average” distribution band.
- There has been a modest improvement since 2022/23, when FSM6 attendance was 89.2% (below national); however, progress has stalled, and the gap has not been securely closed.
- The school’s FSM6 attendance trend shows variability, with:
 - Relative improvement in 2023/24, narrowing the gap to national (91.4% vs 92.0%)
 - Relative decline in 2024/25, where national improvement has outpaced the school despite a small absolute increase
- The historical comparison highlights a marked long-term decline, with FSM6 attendance significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels (94.7% in 2018/19), indicating that attendance has not yet recovered for disadvantaged pupils.
- High FSM context in 2024/25 provides important contextual explanation, suggesting that attendance challenges are concentrated within disadvantage rather than reflective of declining attendance culture across the school.

- Cohort stability across years strengthens confidence in the trend, as changes are not driven by cohort size fluctuations but by attendance behaviour over time

Disadvantaged pupils - Reading, writing and mathematics expected standard

Year	Cohort	School disadvantaged compared to national disadvantaged			School disadvantaged compared to national non-disadvantaged			Year group context
		School	National	National distribution banding	National (non dis)	Gap	Gap Trend	
3-year	80	45%	46%	Close to average (non-sig)	68%	-23	Not applicable	Not applicable
2025	26	54%	47%	Close to average (non-sig)	69%	-15	Widening	-
2024	20	65%	46%	Above (non-sig)	67%	-2	Narrowing	-
2023	34	26%	44%	Below (sig-)	66%	-40	Not available	-

Disadvantaged Pupils – RWM Expected Standard

Headline Analysis

- Over the three-year period, disadvantaged pupils' attainment at the expected standard is broadly in line with national disadvantaged outcomes, at 45% compared to 46% nationally, placing the school close to average and not statistically significant, indicating improving overall effectiveness.
- Despite this, a substantial gap remains when disadvantaged pupils are compared to national non-disadvantaged pupils, with a 23-percentage point gap (45% vs 68%), highlighting the ongoing impact of disadvantage on attainment.
- There has been marked year-on-year volatility, reflecting small cohort sizes and contextual factors:
- 2023 outcomes were significantly below national disadvantaged (-18pp) and well below national non-disadvantaged (-40pp), representing a low baseline.
- Strong improvement in 2024 saw outcomes rise to 65%, moving above national disadvantaged (non-significant) and dramatically narrowing the gap to national non-disadvantaged to just 2pp.
- In 2025, attainment declined to 54%, falling below 2024 levels and widening the gap again to national non-disadvantaged pupils (-15pp), despite remaining close to national disadvantaged averages.
- The gap trend shows inconsistency rather than sustained improvement, with significant narrowing in 2024 not yet embedded, and a partial widening in 2025, indicating that improvements have not been securely sustained.
- Cohort size and context are significant factors, particularly in 2023 and 2024, where small cohorts magnified variation; nevertheless, the pattern suggests that strategies are beginning to have impact but require greater consistency and fidelity.

Disadvantaged pupils - Reading expected standard

Year	Cohort	School disadvantaged compared to national disadvantaged			School disadvantaged compared to national non-disadvantaged			Year group context
		School	National	National distribution banding	National (non dis)	Gap	Gap Trend	
3-year	80	63%	62%	Close to average (non-sig)	80%	-17	Not applicable	Not applicable
2025	26	73%	63%	Close to average (non-sig)	81%	-8	Widening	-
2024	20	75%	62%	Above (non-sig)	80%	-5	Narrowing	-
2023	34	47%	60%	Below (non-sig)	78%	-31	Not available	-

Disadvantaged Pupils – Reading Expected Standard

Headline Analysis

- Over the three-year period, disadvantaged pupils' reading outcomes are in line with national disadvantaged pupils, at 63% compared to 62% nationally, placing the school close to average and not statistically significant.
- Despite this overall alignment, a persistent attainment gap remains when compared to national non-disadvantaged pupils, with a 17-percentage point gap over three years (63% vs 80%), indicating that disadvantage continues to impact reading outcomes.
- There has been strong improvement since 2023, when disadvantaged pupils' reading was below national disadvantaged outcomes (47% vs 60%) and substantially below national non-disadvantaged pupils (-31pp).
- The strongest performance was seen in 2024, where disadvantaged pupils achieved 75%, moving above national disadvantaged (non-significant) and narrowing the gap to national non-disadvantaged pupils to just 5pp, demonstrating the potential impact of targeted reading strategies.
- In 2025, outcomes remained broadly secure but dipped slightly to 73%, resulting in a widening of the gap to national non-disadvantaged pupils (-8pp), although attainment remains in line with national disadvantaged averages.
- Year-on-year variability reflects cohort size and contextual factors, but the overall trajectory shows improvement that now needs to be embedded consistently across cohorts.

Disadvantaged pupils - Writing expected standard

Year	Cohort	School disadvantaged compared to national disadvantaged			School disadvantaged compared to national non-disadvantaged			Year group context
		School	National	National distribution banding	National (non dis)	Gap	Gap Trend	
3-year	80	69%	59%	Above (non-sig)	78%	-9	Not applicable	Not applicable
2025	26	65%	59%	Close to average (non-sig)	78%	-13	Widening	-
2024	20	75%	58%	Above (non-sig)	78%	-3	Narrowing	-
2023	34	68%	58%	Close to average (non-sig)	77%	-10	Not available	-

Disadvantaged Pupils – Writing Expected Standard

Headline Analysis

- Across the three-year period, disadvantaged pupils' writing outcomes are stronger than national disadvantaged pupils, at 69% compared to 59% nationally, placing the school above average (non-significant) and indicating a relative strength in writing.
- The attainment gap to national non-disadvantaged pupils is smaller in writing than in reading and combined RWM, with a 9-percentage point gap over three years (69% vs 78%), suggesting that writing is the strongest area for disadvantaged pupils.
- Performance peaked in 2024, where disadvantaged pupils achieved 75%, remaining above national disadvantaged (non-significant) and narrowing the gap to national non-disadvantaged pupils to just 3pp, demonstrating the impact of focused writing instruction.
- In 2025, outcomes declined to 65%, resulting in a widening of the gap (-13pp) compared to national non-disadvantaged pupils, although performance remains broadly in line with national disadvantaged pupils.
- Outcomes in 2023 were already secure, with disadvantaged pupils close to national disadvantaged levels and a moderate gap (-10pp) to non-disadvantaged pupils, indicating that writing outcomes have been more stable over time than reading or combined RWM.
- Year-on-year variation reflects cohort size and context, but the overall pattern indicates consistently stronger outcomes in writing relative to other subjects, with the priority now being greater consistency and sustained improvement.

Disadvantaged pupils - Mathematics expected standard

Year	Cohort	School disadvantaged compared to national disadvantaged			School disadvantaged compared to national non-disadvantaged			Year group context
		School	National	National distribution banding	National (non dis)	Gap	Gap Trend	
3-year	80	58%	60%	Close to average (non-sig)	80%	-22	Not applicable	Not applicable
2025	26	65%	61%	Close to average (non-sig)	81%	-15	Widening	-
2024	20	65%	59%	Close to average (non-sig)	79%	-14	Narrowing	-
2023	34	47%	59%	Close to average (non-sig)	79%	-32	Not available	-

Disadvantaged Pupils – Mathematics Expected Standard

Headline Analysis

- Across the three-year period, disadvantaged pupils' mathematics outcomes are broadly in line with national disadvantaged pupils, at 58% compared to 60% nationally, placing the school close to average and not statistically significant.
- A substantial gap remains when compared to national non-disadvantaged pupils, with a 22-percentage point difference (58% vs 80%), showing that disadvantage continues to impact mathematics attainment.
- Outcomes have improved since 2023, when disadvantaged pupils achieved 47%, well below national disadvantaged (59%) and substantially below national non-disadvantaged pupils (-32pp).
- 2024 and 2025 cohorts show stronger performance, with disadvantaged pupils achieving 65%, narrowing the gap to national non-disadvantaged pupils to 14–15pp, although 2025 shows a slight widening compared to 2024.
- Mathematics outcomes display a similar pattern to reading, with strong recovery from low baseline years, but year-on-year variability indicates that improvements are not yet fully embedded.

- Cohort context and small cohort sizes contribute to variation, but the overall trend demonstrates that targeted intervention and teaching strategies are beginning to have positive impact.

GPS (Grammar, Punctuation, Spelling)

- PPG pupils reached 65%, 12pp below non-PPG pupils (77%) and above national disadvantaged (65%).
- Year-on-year improvement (44% → 65%) highlights effective literacy interventions, though the gap to non-disadvantaged pupils persists.

Overall Commentary

1. Disadvantaged pupils have made strong progress across all subjects in 2024/25, particularly in Reading and GPS, recovering from low baselines in 2023/24.
2. Gains are most pronounced in Reading (33pp increase) and GPS (21pp increase), indicating successful targeted interventions.
3. Writing and Mathematics remain areas where the gap to non-disadvantaged pupils is largest, despite year-on-year improvements.
4. Combined RWM outcomes show clear improvement, but the gap to non-PPG pupils remains around 30pp, highlighting the need for continued focus on closing the disadvantage gap.
5. Interventions are working, but consistency and sustainability across cohorts are key priorities moving forward.

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
Accelerated Reader	Renaissance Reading
Little Wandle	Little Wandle Trust
Widgit, Communicate: in print	Widgit Software
Teaching WalkThrus	John Catt Educational Ltd
Times Table Rockstars	Maths Circle Ltd