

WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL, HEDGEHOGS NURSERY AND SUNBEAMS CLUB



PUPIL PREMIUM AND DISADVANTAGE POLICY

**High expectations Inclusive practice Evidence-
informed action**

Reviewed: October 2026
Review due: October 2027

Purpose and principles

Pupil premium is additional funding intended to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. At Woodlands, the grant is one part of a wider whole-school commitment to equity and inclusion. Our strategy starts with the needs of pupils rather than with a list of interventions or an assumption that all disadvantaged pupils face the same barriers.

- Maintain high expectations for disadvantaged pupils, including high-attaining pupils, while recognising that barriers and strengths differ between individuals.
- Use evidence, assessment, pupil and parent voice and professional knowledge to diagnose barriers before selecting approaches.
- Prioritise high-quality teaching, then targeted academic support and wider strategies where these are needed.
- Evaluate impact and adapt provision when an approach is not improving the intended outcomes.
- Consider disadvantage, SEND, EAL, attendance, safeguarding, health and family circumstances together where they overlap, without treating one as a proxy for another.

Statutory and national framework

This policy should be read alongside the current Department for Education (DfE) pupil premium conditions of grant and Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders. The grant is paid under sections 14 and 16 of the Education Act 2002. For 2026-27, schools must use pupil premium (other than Service Pupil Premium) on evidence-informed activities in line with the DfE menu of approaches.

- DfE Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2026 to 2027 (updated September 2026).
- DfE Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders (current 2026-27 guidance).
- DfE Pupil premium: overview and current technical note.
- Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) evidence and Guide to the Pupil Premium.
- Equality Act 2010, Children and Families Act 2014, current SEND Code of Practice and current statutory attendance and safeguarding guidance, where relevant.

Who the funding is intended to support

Eligibility and allocation are determined nationally. For 2026-27 this includes pupils attracting deprivation pupil premium through the targeted FSM6 measure, previously looked-after children (PLAC), looked-after children (LAC) through local authority arrangements, and eligible service children through the separate Service Pupil Premium (SPP). Current rates are published annually by DfE and are not reproduced here so that the policy does not become inaccurate if/when rates change.

From 2026-27, expanded free school meal eligibility and pupil premium eligibility are not identical. A pupil becoming eligible for free meals solely through the expanded Universal Credit entitlement does not automatically attract pupil premium; DfE continues to use the targeted FSM/FSM6 criteria for the deprivation element of pupil premium.

Pupil premium is not a personal budget for an individual pupil. Woodlands may use it for eligible pupils, other pupils with identified needs, or whole-class approaches where this is consistent with the conditions of grant and improves outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

Understanding disadvantage at Woodlands

We will not assume that eligibility tells us what a pupil needs. Leaders and teachers will use a range of information to identify barriers and protective factors at individual, cohort and whole-school level. These may include:

- prior attainment, curriculum access and gaps in knowledge;
- language, communication and vocabulary;
- attendance, punctuality and persistent or severe absence;
- SEND, disability, sensory, regulation or executive-function needs;
- social, emotional and mental health needs, relationships and belonging;
- family circumstances, housing, caring responsibilities or financial pressures;
- access to books, technology, enrichment and wider experiences;
- mobility, transition, service-family circumstances, care experience or involvement with social care;
- high attainment where disadvantage may still create a risk of later underachievement.

Identification of a barrier does not automatically mean that pupil premium is the appropriate funding source. Leaders will consider statutory duties, SEND/high-needs funding, other grants and ordinarily available provision so that pupil premium supplements rather than replaces provision that should be funded elsewhere.

Evidence-informed strategy: the DfE menu of approaches

Woodlands will select activities from the current DfE menu of approaches, informed by diagnosis of need and evidence of likely effectiveness. The strategy will normally be organised through the EEF three-tier model below.

1. High-quality teaching	2. Targeted academic support	3. Wider strategies
Our first priority. May include professional development, curriculum and pedagogy, assessment, feedback, literacy, language and inclusive classroom practice.	May include structured interventions, tutoring, one-to-one or small-group support linked closely to classroom learning.	May address attendance, behaviour, wellbeing, family engagement, readiness to learn, enrichment and other non-academic barriers to educational success.

The exact balance will reflect Woodlands' assessed needs. We will not fund an activity simply because it is familiar or has previously been labelled a "pupil premium intervention". Implementation quality, staff expertise, workload and sustainability will be considered alongside evidence of impact.

High-quality teaching and inclusive practice

High-quality teaching is the most important school-controlled lever for improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and will be a top priority. At Woodlands this includes responsive, inclusive teaching that enables pupils to access an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum.

- strong curriculum sequencing and subject knowledge;
- accurate formative and diagnostic assessment;
- explicit teaching, modelling, scaffolding and appropriate adaptations;
- early language, communication, reading, writing and mathematics;
- effective feedback and deliberate practice;
- professional development, coaching and collaboration that improve classroom practice;
- deployment of teaching assistants in ways that supplement rather than replace teacher responsibility.

Targeted academic support

Where assessment identifies specific gaps or barriers, targeted support may be used in addition to high-quality classroom teaching. Support will have a clear purpose, entry point, intended outcome, timescale and review point, and will connect to the curriculum wherever possible.

Interventions will not become a permanent parallel curriculum. Pupils should not routinely miss the same foundation subjects, enrichment or wider opportunities to receive support. Leaders will consider the cumulative effect of intervention timetables on participation and belonging.

Wider strategies and removing barriers

Pupil premium may support wider strategies where non-academic barriers are preventing pupils from benefiting fully from education. Depending on identified need, this may include evidence-informed work on attendance and punctuality, pastoral and social-emotional support, family engagement, transition, enrichment and access to resources or experiences.

Financial disadvantage must not unnecessarily restrict access to the wider life of the school. Decisions about subsidising visits, residentials, clubs, resources or experiences will be made through the pupil premium strategy and relevant school policies, taking account of need, equity and the conditions of grant.

Attendance, safeguarding, SEND and Inclusion

Disadvantage may intersect with attendance, safeguarding, SEND, disability, health, EAL or care experience, but these are distinct considerations. Staff will avoid deficit assumptions and respond to the actual barrier.

Attendance: use the Attendance and Punctuality Policy, listen to barriers, provide support early and evaluate whether funded approaches improve attendance and engagement.

SEND/disability: make reasonable adjustments and provide SEND support in accordance with the SEND and Inclusive Education Policy. Pupil premium does not replace statutory SEND duties or EHCP provision.

Safeguarding: concerns are acted on through safeguarding procedures; pupil premium processes must never delay a safeguarding response.

Medical, allergy and intimate-care needs: pupils should not be disadvantaged because safe arrangements or reasonable adjustments have not been planned.

Inclusion: participation, belonging and access to the wider curriculum matter alongside attainment and progress.

Looked-after and previously looked-after children

For looked-after children, pupil premium plus is managed through the relevant local authority/Virtual School Head arrangements. Use of funding should be evidence-informed, linked to the pupil's Personal Education Plan (PEP), and agreed through appropriate consultation with those who know the child's educational needs.

For previously looked-after children, Woodlands is responsible for ensuring pupil premium plus is used on evidence-informed approaches that support their specific educational needs. The grant is not a personal budget and may be directed where need is greatest, in line with the conditions of grant. The Designated Teacher will work with relevant staff, parents/carers and external partners.

Service Pupil Premium

Service Pupil Premium has a distinct purpose and is not subject to the DfE pupil premium menu-of-approaches requirement. It is primarily intended to provide pastoral support and mitigate the effects of mobility or parental deployment, although it may support academic progress where this is a priority. Woodlands will identify the actual needs of service children rather than assume that all service pupils require the same support.

Planning, implementation and evaluation

Woodlands will use a disciplined cycle of diagnose, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate. The strategy is a school improvement strategy, not simply a spending plan.

Stage	Woodlands approach
Diagnose	Use attainment, progress, attendance, behaviour, safeguarding context, pupil/parent voice, work scrutiny and professional assessment to understand barriers.
Plan	Select evidence-informed approaches from the DfE menu, define intended outcomes, identify responsible leaders and allocate resources.
Implement	Prepare staff, communicate expectations, provide appropriate training and protect implementation quality.
Monitor	Check delivery and leading indicators without waiting until the end of the year.

Evaluate Consider attainment and progress alongside attendance, participation, wellbeing, engagement and other intended outcomes; stop, adapt or scale approaches accordingly.

Monitoring disadvantage without stigma

Staff need to know which pupils may require particular attention, but eligibility information will be handled sensitively. Pupils will not be labelled publicly, separated unnecessarily or made to feel that support is a consequence of family income or care status. We will avoid language that equates disadvantage with low attainment, low aspiration or poor parenting.

Monitoring will consider individual pupils and cohorts, including differences within the disadvantaged group. Leaders will pay particular attention to pupils who are both disadvantaged and SEND, disadvantaged and persistently absent, disadvantaged high attainers, pupils with care experience, and other combinations where outcomes indicate a need for action.

Roles and accountability

Governing Body: holds leaders to account for the ambition, evidence base, use and impact of pupil premium; scrutinises the published strategy and considers disadvantaged pupils within wider school improvement and inclusion.

Headteacher: retains overall accountability for use of the grant and ensuring conditions of grant are met.

Pupil Premium/Disadvantaged Strategy Lead: coordinates diagnosis, strategy development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and the annual published strategy statement.

Teachers: remain responsible for the learning, participation and progress of disadvantaged pupils in their classes and use assessment to identify barriers and adapt teaching.

SENDCo, Attendance, Safeguarding, Pastoral and Phase/Subject Leaders: contribute relevant expertise so that support is coherent rather than fragmented.

All staff: maintain high expectations, know relevant pupils and barriers, implement agreed approaches and contribute evidence about impact.

Publication and reporting

Woodlands will publish an updated pupil premium strategy statement on the school website by 31 December each year using the current DfE template. The statement will explain the challenges identified, intended outcomes, evidence-informed activities, how spending aligns with the DfE menu of approaches, and evaluation of impact. The published strategy statement is the detailed annual account of spending; this policy sets the enduring principles and governance framework.

The strategy will be reviewed during the year rather than treated as a document produced only for publication. Governors will receive sufficient information to understand whether implementation is on track and whether approaches are improving the intended outcomes.

Links with other Woodlands policies and strategies

This policy should be read alongside the current Pupil Premium Strategy Statement and, where relevant, the SEND Policy and SEND Information Report, Inclusion Strategy, Attendance Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour for Learning Policy, Educational Visits

Policy, Administration of Medicines Policy, Allergy Safety Policy, Intimate Care Policy, Accessibility Plan and Charging and Remissions Policy.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where national conditions of grant, DfE guidance or the school's context materially changes. The annual pupil premium strategy statement will be updated separately in accordance with DfE requirements.

Appendix A - Staff quick guide: disadvantaged pupils

Start with the pupil, not the label

Pupil premium eligibility tells us that additional funding is available; it does not tell us what a child needs.

1. What is the barrier? Use evidence and listen to the pupil/family. Avoid assumptions based on eligibility.
2. What can excellent classroom teaching change now? Prioritise access to strong teaching, curriculum, language, assessment and appropriate adaptations.
3. Is targeted support needed? Make it precise, time-limited where appropriate, connected to classroom learning and reviewed for impact.
4. Is there a wider barrier? Consider attendance, wellbeing, relationships, family circumstances, enrichment, SEND, health or safeguarding.
5. How will we know it worked? Agree the intended outcome before starting. Look at implementation and impact, not just whether the intervention happened.
6. Does another duty or funding stream apply? Pupil premium should complement, not replace, statutory SEND, safeguarding, medical or other duties.

Appendix B - Principal national references (October 2026)

Department for Education, Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2026 to 2027 (updated 23 September 2026).

Department for Education, Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders (current 2026-27 guidance).

Department for Education, Pupil premium: overview (updated August 2026).

Department for Education, Pupil premium 2026 to 2027: technical note (updated September 2026).

Department for Education, Service Pupil Premium: what you need to know (updated April 2026).

Education Endowment Foundation, Guide to the Pupil Premium and associated evidence resources.