

What is Pupil Premium?

Pupil premium is extra funding granted to schools in England by the government to help them improve the attainment of their disadvantaged pupils (improving their progress and the exam results they receive). The scheme was introduced in 2011. Evidence shows that children from disadvantaged backgrounds generally face extra challenges achieving their potential in school and often do not perform as well as their peers.

Pupil premium is not based on ability, as research shows that the most academically able pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are most at-risk of underperforming.

What is the eligibility criteria for Pupil Premium?

Local authority-maintained schools, academies and free schools, voluntary-aided schools and non-maintained special schools in England are all eligible to receive pupil premium.

This includes mainstream schools, schools for pupils with special educational needs, Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Provision academies.

In 2019/20 around a quarter of pupils in these schools were eligible for Pupil Premium.

The amount of pupil premium funding a school receives is calculated based on the number of pupils at the school from each of the following groups:

- Pupils who claim free school meals or have claimed free school meals at any point in the last six years.
- Looked after and previously looked after children. For children who have left local authority care through adoption, a special guardianship order or child arrangements order, the school receives the funding. For children in local authority care, the funding is allocated to the Local Authority, who then work with the school to decide how it should be used to support the child's personal education plan

A separate premium, the Services Pupil Premium, involves the school receiving £310 per pupil with a parent who is serving in HM Forces or has retired on a pension from the Ministry of Defence. This funding is to help with pastoral support.

	Amount received by school per child	
	Primary	Secondary
Free school meals (current or in last 6 years)	£1345	£955
Previously looked after children	£2345	£2345

Looked after children	£2345 allocated to Local Authority for personal education plan.	£2345 allocated to Local Authority for personal education plan.
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How is Pupil Premium used?

Schools must be transparent about how their Pupil Premium funding is spent to enable parents and guardians to understand the school’s pupil premium strategy. School governing bodies should be able to see evidence-based practice that allows them to consider the rationale behind Pupil Premium spending decisions.

Schools are not limited to using the funding only for pupils who meet the Pupil Premium criteria. For example, they may choose to use the funding to support pupils who are not in receipt of free schools meals but have had social worker involvement or have acted as a carer.

Whole-school initiatives that focus on improving teaching quality and pupils’ readiness to learn can also be funded. As well as supporting improved attainment for eligible pupils, these initiatives will inevitably help non-eligible pupils as well.

The Education Endowment Fund has made recommendations about how schools can best use their Pupil Premium to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. This included focusing on teaching through professional development and training, as well as targeted support for struggling pupils. They also recommend strategies that relate to non-academic factors, including attendance, behaviours and social and emotional support.

Case study: Jarrow School

Jarrow School is a secondary school in South Tyneside. 49.8% of pupils were eligible for Pupil Premium in 2020.

As part of narrowing the variation in attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils, Jarrow School used Pupil Premium to fully fund a residential. For most pupils who attended, this was the first time they had been away from home. This trip considerably improved pupils’ leadership skills and several of them have become school prefects following the experience.

The school also uses Pupils Premium to build strong relationships with pupils’ families. They have hosted basic skills events, such as cookery lessons for children and their families and sessions on budgeting for affordable, healthy meals. These events were successful in increasing families’ confidence in engaging in school, as well as creating opportunities for quality family time.

As well as using Pupil Premium funding to provide hundreds of pupils with uniform items, Jarrow School were able to use the funding to support a family who were experiencing homelessness. In addition to providing food parcels and toiletries, they school paid for a member of staff's time to accompany the parent at meetings with Citizen's Advice and Social Services to access housing for the family.

Case Study: St Theresa's Catholic Primary School, Newcastle

St Theresa's Catholic Primary School use their Pupil Premium money to ensure that all their children have the same opportunities and experiences at school, regardless of their family circumstances. They see the targeted interventions and support they are able to provide with the funding as essential to ensuring those children who are eligible for Pupil Premium keep up academically with their peers and have the best possible start in life.

Staff are aware that, outside of school, many of their children who are in receipt of Pupil Premium won't get the same opportunities as their classmates. They use Pupil Premium funding to cover these pupils' costs for paid-for sports clubs that extra-curricular sports and drama clubs to ensure they have access to the same learning and development experiences as their peers. This extends to providing funding for their Pupil Premium cohort to go on overnight residential trips with other pupils – ranging from local outdoor activity centres to Rome and Ypres - places they may never get the opportunity to visit without the school's support.

Headteacher Mr Turner says, "As a school, it is one of our greatest highlights to be able to offer these experiences, and see these children flourish because of them."

Pupil Premium during the Pandemic

During the Covid-19 pandemic, schools have continued to use their Pupil Premium funding to support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. In many cases, this has involved providing families with essentials, so that pupils are able to focus on their learning.

Case study: Kenton School

Kenton School is an 11-19 Academy in Newcastle. It is one of the country's largest secondary schools, with 2010 places. In 2019/20, 54.9% of its pupils were eligible for Pupil Premium.

With families staying at home during lockdown, many families have felt the pressure of increased bills. Kenton School have been delivering weekly food parcels and supporting families with utility bills so they could heat their homes over the winter. They have also provided Internet access to ensure pupils can engage in home learning, and funded transport to enable vulnerable pupils to attend school during the closure.

Now that school has re-opened, families can access an in-school welfare centre stocked with essentials like food, toiletries, cleaning supplies and school uniform.

The school is also looking to the future, and using Pupil Premium funding to provide ongoing support for pupils. Sarah Rice, Assistant Principal said: "We have prioritised mental health training for our welfare team, so that they are fully prepared to support any pupils and their families who are struggling."

Case study: Wingate Primary School

Wingate Primary have appointed one of their Higher Level Teaching Assistants as Poverty Proofing Lead. Sonia has developed strong home-school relationships with families she knows may be struggling, by speaking to them discretely when come into school or over the phone, and finding out what they need. She is now seen as the "go-to person for families," and has helped reduce the embarrassment families may feel about asking for help.

Throughout the COVID 19 pandemic, the school have provided additional food for families, along with clothing and fuel vouchers. They have organised pencil cases and stationery for all pupils to have at home in case they need to go into self-isolation or their class bubble is closed.

Staff have learned from welfare calls during school closure and speaking to children on their return to school that "simple things can make home learning possible, but without them learning is impossible!"

One family with five children did not have a pencil sharpener. The school had provided pencils and workbooks, but without a pencil sharpener, it was difficult for them to maintain working from home. The school used Pupil Premium money towards a home pencil case (including a pencil sharpener) for all pupils. As Headteacher Mrs Binks says, "Because everyone receives this, there is no stigma attached."