



Education
Endowment
Foundation

Pupil Premium Statement Research (Academic Year 2025/26)

Research report

September 2026

Dr Sarah Bowen, Dr Adam Ozer, James Gurd, Luke Taylor, Dr
James Thom, Alex Thornton, Prof Natalie Gold.



The Education Endowment Foundation is an independent charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and education achievement. We support schools, colleges and early years settings to improve teaching and learning for 2–19-year-olds through better use of evidence.

We do this by:

- **Summarising evidence.** Reviewing the best available evidence on teaching and learning and presenting in an accessible way.
- **Finding new evidence.** Funding independent evaluations of programmes and approaches that aim to raise the attainment of children and young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- **Putting evidence to use.** Supporting education practitioners, as well as policymakers and other organisations, to use evidence in ways that improve teaching and learning.

We were set-up in 2011 by the Sutton Trust partnership with Impetus with a founding £125m grant from the Department for Education. In 2022, we were reendowed with an additional £137m from government, allowing us to continue our work until at least 2032.

For more information about the EEF or this report please contact:



Education Endowment Foundation
5th Floor, Millbank Tower
21–24 Millbank
SW1P 4QP



0207 802 1653



info@eefoundation.org.uk



www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk



Department
for Education



Table of contents

About the research team	4
Executive summary.....	5
Introduction.....	6
Background	6
Research objectives and questions	7
Ethics	8
Data protection	8
Project team	8
Methods	8
Sampling and Data collection	8
Data processing	9
Analysis	11
Timeline.....	12
Methodological considerations	12
Findings.....	14
What challenges do schools identify for pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium?	17
How does school spending align with the EEF's tiered approach?	22
Which approaches are schools funding using the Pupil Premium?	26
How do schools' approaches to spending align with their identified challenges?	32
Which external programmes are schools funding with their Pupil Premium grant? How does this align with the EEF's list of Promising Programmes?	34
What types of evidence are being cited in Pupil Premium statements?	36
Limitations of findings	39
Discussion and implications.....	41

How do our findings relate to 2024/25?41

Conclusions 43

References 45

Appendix A: Pupil Premium statement template for AY25/26..... 48

Appendix B: Coding framework 52

Appendix C: Additional results 69

About the research team

This project was carried out by a team from Verian, including Sarah Bowen, Adam Ozer, James Gurd, Luke Taylor, James Thom, Alex Thornton, and Natalie Gold. Verian is one of the largest providers of social research to the UK Government. Verian's multidisciplinary team of researchers generate high quality evidence to support policy makers, regulators, delivery teams, and the public to inform decision-making and improve outcomes.

The Principal Investigator was Natalie Gold (Email: natalie.gold@veriangroup.com, Address: Verian, 4 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA)

Executive summary

The Pupil Premium grant is additional government funding provided to publicly funded schools serving Reception to Year 11 in England to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. In the 2025/26 financial year, the total value of the Pupil Premium was £3.05 billion, up from over £2.9 billion the previous year (Education and Skills Funding Agency and Department for Education, 2025).

Schools in receipt of the funding must publish a new or updated Pupil Premium strategy statement every year outlining how they plan to use their funding. Schools are encouraged to use funding to support high-quality teaching, targeted academic support, and wider strategies, in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance and the Education Endowment Foundation’s (EEF) tiered approach to spending (Department for Education, 2025; Education Endowment Foundation, 2025b). Schools are expected to use the DfE’s **template** when creating their strategy statement.

The annually updated strategy statements offer valuable insight into how schools allocate resources and address challenges facing their disadvantaged pupils, but the statements are not collected centrally. The EEF commissioned Verian to conduct a two-year research project to better understand how schools report spending their Pupil Premium in academic years 2024/25 and 2025/26. This report outlines the research findings for the 2025/26 academic year. The results for the 2024/25 academic year are available on the EEF’s website [here](#).

The research covering the 2025/26 academic year addressed seven research questions:

1. What challenges do schools identify for pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium? How does this vary by school characteristic?
2. How does school spending align with the EEF’s tiered approach? How does this vary by school characteristic?
3. Which approaches are schools funding using the Pupil Premium? How does this vary by school characteristic?
4. How do schools’ approaches to spending align with their identified challenges?
5. Which external programmes are schools funding with their Pupil Premium grant? How does this align with the EEF’s list of Promising Programmes? How does this vary by school characteristic?
6. What types of evidence are being cited in Pupil Premium statements? How does this vary by school characteristic?
7. How have the challenges schools identify for pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium, approaches to spend and citation of evidence changed between 2024/25 and 2025/26?

To answer these questions, Verian drew a stratified random sample of 1,395 schools from the population of schools in England who received the Pupil Premium for the 2025/26 academic year. Between 30th March and 10th June 2026, Verian downloaded 1,217 available Pupil Premium statements covering 2025/26 from school websites. Data was extracted from statements into a coding framework with a structured set of variables.¹ An AI model was used to extract the data from school statements. This year the research ran from February to August 2026. Table 1 summarises the key findings of the research.

Table 1: Key findings

Key Findings
Headline finding 1: The most frequently cited challenges facing disadvantaged pupils were English/literacy attainment, attendance, and social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) and wellbeing. The prevalence of challenges differed by school phase and proportion of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium. These results were consistent with findings from the 2024/25 academic year.
Headline finding 2: Schools allocated more budget to targeted academic support and high-quality teaching, and less to wider strategies. Primary schools, schools with fewer pupils enrolled, local authority-maintained schools, and schools with fewer disadvantaged pupils allocated more to targeted support. These results were consistent with findings from the 2024/25 academic year.
Headline finding 3: Tuition, English/literacy interventions, and staff training were the most cited approaches to address challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils. These were also the top three approaches in 2024/25.

¹ We were not able to extract data from 16 of these statements. Therefore, we analysed 1,201 statements.

Key Findings

Headline finding 4: Schools' spending decisions generally aligned with their reported challenges. Commonly cited approaches like tuition and staff training likely addressed multiple or broader challenges. Some targeted interventions, such as SEMH and wellbeing, maths/numeracy, and access to enrichment or cultural capital, were reported by more schools than those who indicated these areas as key challenges.

Headline finding 5: 70% of schools cited an external programme. This was a slight increase from 67% in 2024/25.

Headline finding 6: Schools most frequently cited evidence to support their statements from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) (93%), followed by their own data (83%), and the Department for Education (DfE) (63%). This was the case in both 2025/26 and 2024/25.

Introduction

Background

The Pupil Premium grant is additional government funding provided to publicly funded schools serving Reception to Year 11 in England to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. In the 2025/26 financial year, the total value of the Pupil Premium was £3.05 billion, up from over £2.9 billion the previous year (Education and Skills Funding Agency and Department for Education, 2025), and was allocated to eligible schools.² Funding is allocated to each school based on the number of:

- pupils who are recorded as eligible for free school meals, or have been recorded as eligible in the past 6 years (referred to as Ever 6 FSM)
- children previously looked after by a local authority or other state care, including children adopted from state care or equivalent from outside England and Wales.³

Schools view the Pupil Premium as an important source of funding (Carpenter *et al.*, 2013; Verian, 2025). Around four in five schools (82%) reported that they would have to cut some forms of support they currently offered to disadvantaged pupils if they did not have Pupil Premium funding (Verian, 2025).

To ensure that the Pupil Premium is spent on effective approaches to raise the educational attainment of disadvantaged pupils, schools must spend their Pupil Premium grant on evidence-informed activities. These activities should be in line with the '**menu of approaches**' set by the Department for Education (DfE) and the EEF's 3-tiered approach, which helps schools allocate spending across the following areas:

1. Developing high-quality teaching, for example through professional development and recruitment and retention
2. Providing targeted academic support, such as one-to-one or small group tuition
3. Tackling non-academic barriers to academic success, such as difficulties with attendance, behaviour and social and emotional wellbeing

The EEF has also developed a range of resources to support schools in using Pupil Premium effectively, including the **EEF Guide to the Pupil Premium**, an **evidence brief**, **discussion prompts** for governors and trustees, and the **School's Guide to Implementation**.

Each year, schools are required to publish a new or updated Pupil Premium strategy statement on their website setting out how they plan to spend the funding. Statements are expected to follow the **DfE's template** (See **Appendix A: Pupil**

² Schools eligible for the Pupil Premium include local authority-maintained schools and academies, free schools and non-maintained Special Schools (including alternative provision academies) serving reception to Year 11 (Department for Education, 2025a, sect. Eligible schools)

³ DfE also provides funding through a Service Pupil Premium (SPP). SPP is extra funding for schools to support children and young people with parents in the armed forces, and is out of scope for this research.

Premium statement template). These statements provide valuable insights into how schools are reporting spending their Pupil Premium funding.

Where Pupil Premium statements are not collected centrally there is an incomplete picture of how schools allocate Pupil Premium funding across England each year.⁴ However, there is an emerging evidence base on how the Pupil Premium is being spent. Last year, our analysis of 1,255 Pupil Premium statements covering the 2024/25 academic year found that the most frequently cited challenges facing disadvantaged pupils were English/literacy attainment, attendance and social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) and wellbeing. The North East Combined Authority also reviewed and analysed a sample of 552 Pupil Premium statements published by primary schools in their region for the 2024/25 academic year (Harrison et al., 2026). Their research similarly found that the top three challenges were literacy and reading, attendance, and social, emotional and mental health needs.

Other sources of evidence on the Pupil Premium include The Sutton Trust's annual survey of teachers and school leaders. The survey provides insights into how the Pupil Premium is used as a funding stream, including how it is used to make up shortfalls elsewhere in school budgets (The Sutton Trust, 2026). Additionally, in 2024, a mixed-methods evaluation of the Pupil Premium found that schools tend to spend the Pupil Premium on items within the DfE's menu of approaches and distribute funding evenly between the EEF's three tiers (Verian, 2025).

This year, our analysis further builds on the existing evidence base by collating and analysing a national, large-scale sample of Pupil Premium statements covering the 2025/26 academic year, and also seeks to understand changes in planned spending over time.

Research objectives and questions

The findings of this research are intended to inform the EEF's activities, including its guidance to schools on how to use their Pupil Premium effectively, and support policy makers to better understand how the Pupil Premium is spent. These findings should not be interpreted as an endorsement by Verian or the EEF of any specific approaches to Pupil Premium spending, nor do they assess the impact of any of the approaches. This research focused on Pupil Premium statements covering the 2024/25 academic year and addressed seven research questions:

1. What challenges do schools identify for pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium? How does this vary by school characteristic?
2. How does school spending align with the EEF's tiered approach? How does this vary by school characteristic?
3. Which approaches are schools funding using the Pupil Premium? How does this vary by school characteristic?
4. How do schools' approaches to spending align with their identified challenges?
5. Which external programmes are schools funding with their Pupil Premium grant? How does this align with the EEF's list of Promising Programmes? How does this vary by school characteristic?
6. What types of evidence are being cited in Pupil Premium statements? How does this vary by school characteristic?
7. How have the challenges schools identify for pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium, approaches to spend and citation of evidence changed between 2024/25 and 2025/26?

In addition to these, we also explored the proportion of schools that published statements, the distribution of academic years covered, and statements' similarity with the **DfE's template** (see **Appendix A: Pupil Premium statement template**) and exemplar statements (for **primary**, **secondary** and **special** schools).

⁴ It is also not currently known how actual spend aligns with planned spend in the Pupil Premium statements. However, addressing this knowledge gap is out of scope for this project.

The study plan for this project was published in April 2026 and is available on the EEF's website (<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/pupil-premium-statement-research-2025-26-academic-year>).

Ethics

The current project did not require us to work directly with children and all data used in the analysis was publicly available. Therefore, no formal ethics review or approval processes were needed for this project.

Data protection

No data protection was required for this project as all data used in the analysis was publicly available. Verian holds ISO27001 and Cyber Essentials Plus. We abide by the Data Protection Act 2018 and embed Data Protection by Design in all our work. Project data is held securely on Verian's servers for one year after the project ends, after which project data is deleted. Verian was the data controller during the project. At the end of the research cycle, Verian shared the data with the EEF, at which point the EEF became the data controller.

Project team

The project team at Verian was headed by Natalie Gold who oversaw the design, delivery and reporting of the whole project. Sarah Bowen was the day-to-day lead and was responsible for the delivery of the project. Luke Taylor designed the sample frame. Adam Ozer was the AI and data expert who led on the AI-powered text data processing. Alex Thornton advised on the coding frame and interpretation of results. James Thom oversaw the quantitative analysis. James Gurd, Yasmine Yared, and Abhiraj Banerjee supported on data collection and intercoder reliability checks. James Gurd provided additional support throughout analysis and reporting.

Methods

Sampling and Data collection

Sample population

We followed the same sampling approach as for the 2024/25 academic year. We began by compiling a population database of schools who received Pupil Premium funding for the 2025/26 academic year by using the published Department for Education (DfE) Pupil Premium allocation files. This year the database included 22,029 schools. For each school in the population database, we included variables from the DfE Get Information About Schools (GIAS) database to structure the sample design.

Next, we excluded schools that were not in scope for the study, leaving us with a population of 20,295 schools. We excluded schools in the following sequence:

- 349 schools that had been converted into academies and were in the dataset twice (we excluded their old URNs and left in their new URNs).
- 24 schools that had closed.
- 496 schools that could not be classified as either primary or secondary and were too few for their own subgroup analysis (158 all-through schools and 338 Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and other Alternative Provision (AP)).

- 865 schools whose allocations are based on 5 pupils or fewer eligible for the Pupil Premium (as they are exempt from publishing Pupil Premium statements).⁵

Sample design

From this population database, we drew a new stratified random sample of 1,395 schools by constructing 27 strata based on region (nine - ITL1 regions) and phase (three - primary, secondary, and not applicable – Special Schools).^{6, 7} Within each stratum we sorted the population database by a range of relevant variables: school size (bands based on number of pupils), FSM eligibility (banded), school type, local authority. We then drew a systematic random sample of schools (varying the sampling probability in each stratum based on the agreed design). The implicit stratification helped ensure that the selected sample was representative of the population with respect to the factors included in the sorting (see Table 3 and Table 4). We sampled 155 schools from each region: 50 secondary schools, 90 primary schools and 15 Special Schools.⁸ This design and sample size allowed us to calculate robust estimates nationally and for key sub-groups. See the study plan for more detail (<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/pupil-premium-statement-research-2025-26-academic-year>).

There was some overlap between the sample of schools for the 2025/26 and 2024/25 academic years: 123 schools were in both analysis samples. Among these schools, 92 had a published Pupil Premium statement included in the analysis for both academic years (7.7% of the analysed 2025/26 statements). This was a relatively small proportion of the total sample and so we would not expect this overlap to have had a large impact on our results.

Data collection

We used a combination of automated tools and manual searching to collect Pupil Premium statements from school websites. First, we used an automated Google API tool to look for Pupil Premium statements published on school websites as PDF and Microsoft Word files. All files downloaded as part of this automated process were then manually reviewed by the project team to ensure that the correct file had been downloaded. Then, we conducted manual searches for 820 schools where API did not find a correct Pupil Premium statement. Through this process, we collected Pupil Premium statements for 1,217 schools. The data was collected between 30th March and 10th June 2026 following this process.

Data processing

Coding framework

To address the research questions, we developed a coding framework with a structured set of variables that we used to organise and interpret the information extracted from the Pupil Premium statements. The final coding framework included administrative data,⁹ challenges identified, approaches, evidence for the approaches cited, and external programmes. The coding framework was almost identical to the one used in our analysis of the 2024/25 academic year. We used DfE's

⁵ Note that the published school-level Pupil Premium allocations only include pupils that are eligible based on their FSM6 eligibility and not for other reasons due to data protection guidelines (for more please see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2025-to-2026>). This means that the number of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium in the data did not include those eligible on the basis that they were looked-after children (LAC), including previously looked-after children (PLAC), pupils recorded on the alternative provision (AP) census as receiving free school meals, service children, or general hospital school pupils.

⁶ 'Not applicable' refers to Special Schools which are not allocated to a distinct phase on GIAS. For the purposes of stratification, they are included as a separate phase category to ensure representation, but they are otherwise categorised as a school type for the purposes of the analysis, similarly to mainstream academies and free schools and local authority-maintained schools.

⁷ This sample size of 1,395 schools was agreed with EEF to allow for robust estimates nationally and for key sub-groups.

⁸ We used a disproportionate design to boost low-incidence population sub-groups of analytical interest. In particular, we sampled an equal number of schools from each region to boost the low incidence of in-scope schools in certain regions and boosted the representation of secondary and Special Schools to correct the disproportionate skew towards primary schools.

⁹ Administrative data refers to information reported in the first section of the Pupil Premium statement, such as the number of pupils in the school, proportion of Pupil Premium eligible pupils and the academic years covered by the statement.

Using Pupil Premium: Guidance for School Leaders and the EEF's **Guide to the Pupil Premium** as a starting point for the framework and worked closely with the EEF to further develop and refine it. This year, we added seven new codes to the framework. This included six new challenges codes for disciplinary literacy, SEMH, social and emotional needs, mental health, wellbeing, and belonging, and one new approaches code for disciplinary literacy interventions. We added these codes to fill gaps identified in the 2024/25 analysis. We also made some improvements to the definitions of 29 codes. We made these refinements to improve the performance of the AI (e.g., to more accurately read numbers written in shorthand). For more information, see the full coding framework in **Appendix B: Coding framework**.

Following the initial development of the framework, as part of the quality assurance process, Verian and the EEF manually extracted data from a subset of Pupil Premium statements into the framework which were compared to AI coding (see **Data extraction** below for more details about the AI-to-human comparisons). For the 2024/25 academic year analysis, we compared the AI and human coding of 20 statements. However, this year we increased the sample to improve the reliability of our AI and human coder comparisons. This year, we randomly selected a subsample of 40 schools from our sample of 1395 schools.¹⁰ The subsample was drawn using quotas on region, school phase, and school type to ensure a spread of schools (including a reserve of 40 schools with the same profile in case schools where no Pupil Premium statement was found needed to be replaced). However, for two statements, the AI could not extract data due to how they were formatted. Therefore, we compared the AI and human coding of 38 statements to calibrate the reliability of the AI coder. The results of this exercise informed refinements to the coding framework and the AI instructions for data extraction, such as adding examples or keywords to the coding instructions.

Data extraction

We used an AI model to extract data about challenges, approaches, funding, and evidence cited. To do this, we first created instructions for the AI model (a GPT-5.1 model deployed from Verian's Microsoft Azure data platform) based on the coding framework. Notably, for the 2024/25 academic year we used a less advanced AI model (GPT-4o) for data extraction. However, within a year the GPT-4o had been retired and was no longer available. We instructed AI to extract information from specific sections of the statement to populate the codes in the corresponding sections in the framework (e.g., to look in the 'Challenges' section of the statements to code the challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils). These instructions allowed the model to identify whether the information relevant for each coding variable was present in a Pupil Premium statement. There were two versions of each variable: a binary 'present' or 'not present' variable, and another variable that extracted the text matching the given variable, allowing researchers to review the AI's output.

To extract references to named programmes, we instead used a fuzzy matching machine learning algorithm rather than generative AI as it was better suited for this task. We used the same procedure to extract named programmes from statements covering the 2024/25 academic year.

To ensure the reliability of AI text extraction and coding, the AI extracted data from the same 38 schools as researchers at Verian and the EEF. We then compared the human data extraction results (one human agreed coding, based on at least three Verian and/or EEF researchers per school) to the AI data extraction results to calculate a human-AI agreement score. The agreement scores were calculated for each variable in the coding framework, as the proportion of schools where both coders assigned the same binary coding (1 if the code was present, and 0 if it was not). In cases where human-AI agreement was less than 70%, improvements were made to the AI instructions, human coding, and/or the coding framework.¹¹ There is no universally accepted threshold for what indicates acceptable reliability for percentage agreement as a measure of intercoder reliability. The threshold of 70% agreement was agreed with the EEF for the analysis of statements covering 2024/25 as sufficient agreement for the purposes of this project. We selected the threshold of 70% as within the range of moderate agreement (McHugh, 2012), to assess agreement scores between the AI and human coders.

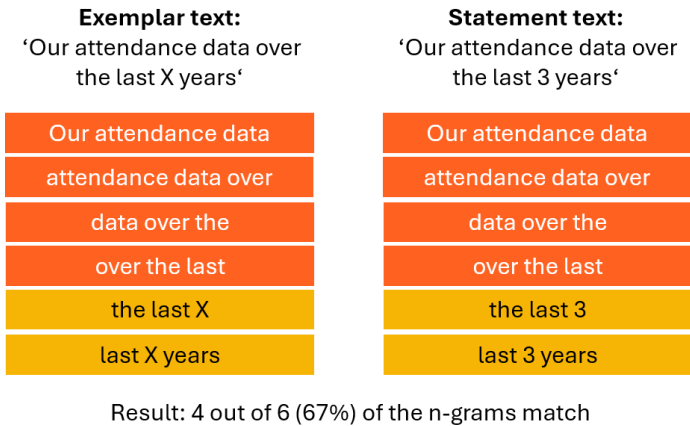
¹⁰ We increased the sample to 40 as this was the maximum number of statements we could review within the agreed budget.

¹¹ Please note that as this was an iterative process, EEF participated only in the first round of coding. Where the data needed re-coding on subsequent rounds, this was only done by Verian coders; thus, the final agreement ratios represent the agreement between AI and Verian extractions.

When changes were made to the coding framework, the human and AI coding was repeated and compared again to ensure the changes improved agreement scores.¹²

To assess alignment of schools’ statements with DfE’s Pupil Premium statement template, we analysed the headings in each statement and compared them to the template. This served as a proxy for structural similarity, with statements that included at least 10 out of the 14 template headings (i.e., a threshold of 70% similarity) being considered sufficiently similar.¹³ This year we also measured the similarity of schools’ challenges and activity in this academic year sections to DfE’s exemplar statements. The exemplar text is based on DfE guidance and demonstrates how to complete the Pupil Premium statement.¹⁴ This allowed us to identify the originality of statements. We used an n-gram approach to analysing the similarity of the texts. This involved splitting a section of text into consecutive word sequences ("chunks") and comparing those chunks across sources to identify duplicates. We then calculated a score between 0% (no overlap between the texts) and 100% (the texts are identical) for each statement’s entire challenges and approaches section (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. An illustration of the n-gram approach at sentence level



Analysis

Design weighting

We drew a disproportionate sample of schools to enable robust analysis by region and phase/type. That meant that schools in smaller regions, secondary schools and Special Schools were over-represented in the full sample. To compensate, we calculated a design weight for each school – the inverse of its sampling probability – and report the results using weighted estimates.

¹² For four challenges and three approaches codes, it was not possible to revise the AI instructions and/or the coding framework within the time constraints of this project to reach a human-AI agreement of at least 70%. In all but one of these cases (the ‘School factors’ challenges code), we find the AI potentially underestimated the proportion of schools reporting the challenge or approach. Analysis of the text extracts used by AI to code statements suggests that the AI overestimated the incidence of ‘School factor’ challenges in statements because non-school factors were incorrectly coded as school factors by the AI. As a result, we do not report on the proportion of schools citing ‘School factors’ challenges in the findings section. However, the ‘School factors’ subcodes ‘human resourcing’ (any human/staff factors that are explicitly referenced, e.g. teaching expertise, recruitment, professional development) and ‘physical resourcing’ (any physical resourcing factors explicitly referenced e.g. lack of outside space, classroom size) are summarised instead. They had a human-AI agreement of at least 70%. See Appendix B: Coding Framework for the codes and coding instructions.

¹³ The threshold of 70% was considered sufficient to indicate whether schools had broadly followed the template structure.

¹⁴ There are three exemplar statements available on Gov.uk: **primary school exemplar**, **secondary school exemplar**, and **special school exemplar**. We compared each statement with their relevant exemplar.

Analysis

We produced weighted descriptive statistics for key outcomes with 95% confidence intervals, adjusted to take the sample weighting design into account. This included the frequency and proportion of schools in our sample who published a Pupil Premium statement for the academic year. We do not report the 95% confidence intervals in text to preserve the report’s readability. However, we do report confidence intervals in charts showing subgroup estimates as the base sizes are smaller and so there is more imprecision around the estimate compared to the full sample analysis. Additionally, we present the frequency and proportion of schools in our sample whose statements had a high level of similarity to the template and exemplar statements.

To answer each of the seven research questions we calculated the frequency and proportion of schools for a range of statistics. We present each of these statistics overall and broken down by school characteristics, including region, percentage of cohort eligible for the Pupil Premium, number of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium, phase (primary or secondary), school size, school type, and attainment of disadvantaged pupils. As subgroup estimates are based on smaller sample sizes, we present them with 95% confidence intervals in the charts to indicate the level of precision and uncertainty around each estimate.

For continuous school characteristics (percentage of cohort eligible for the Pupil Premium, number of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium, school size, and attainment of disadvantaged pupils) we show comparisons between the top and bottom quartiles of our sample. We calculated the top and bottom quartiles separately for primary schools and secondary schools. For attainment of disadvantaged pupils, we used separate measures for KS2 and KS4 attainment. For our measure of KS2 attainment, we used the average proportion of disadvantaged pupils in KS2 reaching the expected standard in reading, writing, maths over the last three years. For KS4 attainment, we used the average Attainment 8 score per disadvantaged pupil over the last three years.¹⁵

Timeline

This year the research ran from March to August 2026. See Table 2 for an overview of the project timeline.

Table 2: Overview of project timeline

Dates	Activity	Staff responsible / leading
March 2026	Sample drawn	Verian
April–May 2026	Data collection	Verian
	Coding frame and AI development	Verian and EEF
June 2026	Analysis	Verian
July–August 2026	Reporting	Verian

Methodological considerations

There are several key considerations to keep in mind when interpreting the findings. The considerations relate to the use of AI (rather than humans) to extract and code data, as well as to broader design and methodological aspects of this research.

AI

One of the main strengths of using AI is its ability to process large volumes of data quickly. Similarly, iterative testing of the AI model to refine AI prompts and the coding framework can also be done faster than with human coders. Our conservative estimates suggest that AI saved the research team roughly 630 hours of manual work per year. In addition to

¹⁵ The Attainment 8 score is a measure used in England that tracks the average academic achievement of pupils across eight specific GCSE subjects at the end of Key Stage 4.

this, AI was more consistent than our human coders. It is not prone to human error due to boredom or shifts in bias over time. The coding process and the results obtained with AI are easily reproducible, so the method is transparent.

Nevertheless, there are some limitations of using AI for text analysis. For example, when working with AI there is a risk that it will interpret the data incorrectly, leading to false positives. To account for this, the AI model was calibrated to be relatively conservative. This meant that the AI erred on the side of caution and did not assign a code where it was not clear whether the criteria for a code had been met or not. We also designed the AI instructions to include as much detail as possible to minimise the amount of interpretation that the AI would have to do when coding statements. Taken together, these mitigations reduced the chances that the AI coder made incorrect inferences, but this may also have meant that AI occasionally failed to identify relevant information that a human coder would have picked up on (i.e., false negatives). Lower human-AI agreement scores indicate codes where there was more disagreement between the human and the AI coder. The human-AI agreement scores are summarised in **Appendix B: Coding framework**.

More generally, AI is not as good at interpreting spelling or typing errors in statements as humans are; while it was able to understand the intent sometimes, this was not always the case. For example, in some cases schools made typographical errors when inputting the amount of funding allocated to each category of spend and the total budget (e.g., adding or missing a 0). This year, we made improvements to the AI instructions to mitigate known errors (e.g., extracting 43k as £43,000, instead of £43). However, we still had to exclude 202 out of the 1,013 statements to analyse spend across tiers, where the AI extracted budget and funding information and schools had likely made typographical errors. This was a slight improvement over the 248 exclusions for the 2024/25 academic year.

Similarly, when schools deviated from the standard Pupil Premium template (by using different headings, omitting headings, or inputting irrelevant information under the headings), the AI may not have been able to read and code the text for that section. Additionally, keywords, terminology, shorthand and abbreviations used by school staff in Pupil Premium statements may not have been accounted for sufficiently in the AI instructions, and so they may have been missed or misread. To mitigate against this risk, we worked closely with the EEF to develop the coding framework instructions and made improvements to the clarity and completeness of instructions as a result of the manual coding exercise.

Comparability of findings for the academic years 2025/26 and 2024/25

This research was designed to be run over two years so that we could compare how challenges, approaches, and evidence cited changed from the 2024/25 to 2025/26 academic year. Differences in our findings between academic years may reflect genuine changes in schools' statements, a difference in the sample of schools drawn each year, or improvements to our methodology that increased the accuracy of our results. This year we made the following improvements:

1. We used an updated version of the GPT model (version 5.1) to analyse statements covering the 2025/26 academic year. In comparison, we used GPT 4-o to analyse statements covering 2024/25. We did not have the option to continue using GPT 4-o this year as the model had been retired. The new model is a sizable advancement over the older one and was likely better able to pick up on subtle context that the old model likely struggled with.
2. We also made some slight changes to the data extraction code to help it run more efficiently. These slight adjustments are partially born from the lessons we learned from the analysis of the 2024/25 academic year and from the fact that the newer model required slightly different syntax anyway. Those improvements to efficiency made the task slightly easier for the AI, making it less likely to get overwhelmed and potentially miss a reference that was subtle but relevant to the code.

This impacted the comparability of our results between academic years, in that changes in incidence between years may have been the result of AI model and instruction improvements rather than changes to strategy statements. The exception to this is our analysis of named programmes, for which we used a fuzzy matching machine learning algorithm rather than generative AI to identify references. We made no changes to the method for extracting named programme information between years. Therefore, we can be relatively more confident that any change in the incidence of named programmes

between years, within the activity in this academic year section, is the result of changes to Pupil Premium spending strategies.¹⁶

As mentioned in the methods section, we also added seven new codes to the framework this year. This included two new challenges codes for disciplinary literacy and belonging, four new subcodes for SEMH, social and emotional needs, mental health, wellbeing, and belonging, and one new approaches code for disciplinary literacy interventions. These new codes and subcodes have no counterpart for comparison from the 2024/25 research. We also made some improvements to the definitions of 29 codes which may have impacted comparability between years. For more information, see the full coding framework in **Appendix B: Coding framework**.

Coding framework

Another consideration relates to the coding framework set-up where some of the information was assigned to more than one code. The framework was designed to be informative, capturing not only the individual activities, but also their broader domains and functions. For this reason, we avoided creating a wide range of narrowly defined and mutually exclusive codes that could capture any given unique activity. Instead, we designed the framework to capture the meaningful dimensions of an activity – for instance, some of our codes were domain specific (e.g., relating to attendance or English/literacy interventions) and others more functional (e.g., tuition or staff training/CPD). This meant that some approaches and challenges could be multi-coded. For example, using funding to hire an attendance officer to send out regular communications about attendance and provide support to pupils and their families would have been coded as an ‘Attendance’, ‘Staff recruitment and retention costs’ and ‘Parental engagement with schools’ approach (see **Appendix B: Coding framework** for the full coding framework).

Pupil Premium data

There are several other broader design and methodological considerations, beyond the use of AI. The Pupil Premium statements represent how schools intended to spend the funding, but we do not have data on the actual spending by the end of that academic year, or outcomes. Also, statements are self-reported by schools and so could include inaccuracies and biases. Additionally, some statements covered multiple years (e.g., 2022/23 to 2025/26) and may not have been updated by schools for the 2025/26 academic year, meaning that statements may reflect intended approaches at the time of writing, rather than actual approaches at the time of analysis. Relatedly, we could only include statements in our analysis that were made available by schools on their websites; it is unknown whether schools that did not publish their Pupil Premium statements differed meaningfully from the schools that did and therefore how this may have affected the representativeness of our findings.

Finally, the data used in our analyses cannot be used to provide evidence of any causal relationships, and therefore any results presented should not be interpreted as such. Our analyses are primarily descriptive and intended to summarise patterns in the information schools include in their Pupil Premium statements.

With all these limitations in mind, our results should be considered indicative of how schools allocated their Pupil Premium funding over the 2025/26 academic year and should be interpreted with caution.

Findings

At the time of data collection, 87% (N = 1,217) of schools in our sample had a Pupil Premium statement covering 2025/26 on the school website (see Figure 2). Data could not be extracted for 16 of these by the AI model. As a result, our analysis sample included 1,201 schools. Among the 194 schools without a statement covering 2025/26, most had statements

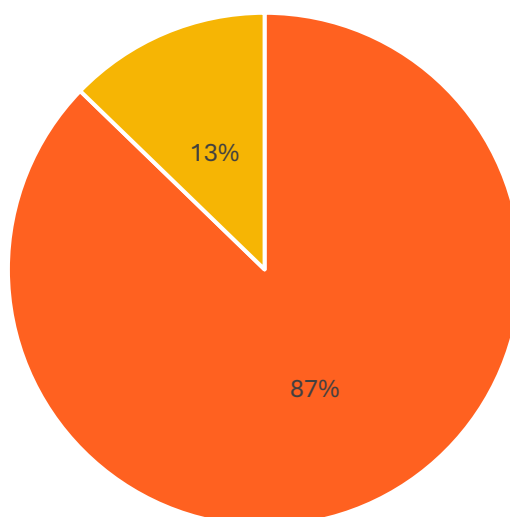
¹⁶ It is also possible that some amount of the differences between years arose by chance between the respective samples of schools. This is always a possibility when comparing random samples, although the sample sizes involved make large differences in Pupil Premium spending unlikely to appear by chance. In addition, our weighting scheme adjusted for differences in key known characteristics of the sampled schools.

uploaded to their websites, however they covered other academic years and so were out of scope. For the 2024/25 academic year, we found relevant statements for 89% (N = 1,255) of the sample, which was slightly higher than this year. This could in part due to data collection happening a few months earlier in the calendar year; this year we collected data between April and May, compared to June and July for the analysis of the 2024/25 academic year.

There was some overlap between the sample of schools for the 2025/26 and 2024/25 academic years: 123 schools were in both analysis samples. Among these schools, 92 had a published Pupil Premium statement included in the analysis for both academic years (7.7% of the analysed 2025/26 statements). We would expect a degree of continuity in these schools' challenges, spending and approaches. However, this was a small proportion of the total sample we would not expect this overlap to have had a large impact on our results.

Figure 2. The proportion of schools with and without a published Pupil Premium statement covering 2025/26

- Published Pupil Premium statement covering AY 2025/26
- No published Pupil Premium statement covering AY 2025/26



Note. Unweighted base N = 1,395. Unweighted counts: Pupil Premium statement – 1,217; No Pupil Premium statement – 194. Weighted data was used to calculate the proportions.

Excluding schools without a published Pupil Premium statement had minimal impact on our sample characteristics. Table 3 and Table 4 provide a breakdown of characteristics for all schools sampled and analysed. Based on these results there was no indication that excluding schools without a published Pupil Premium statement introduced bias to our sample, which would limit the generalisability of our findings. Among analysed schools the average number of Pupil Premium-eligible pupils was slightly higher compared to the sample average (by a mean difference of three pupils) and the average number of pupils in total was slightly higher compared to the sample average (by a mean difference of 13 pupils). However, the proportion of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium was 27% in both the sampled and analysed populations.

Table 3. Breakdown of school characteristics for sampled and analysed schools

Categorical variables		Total (N = 1,395)		With a PP statement (N = 1,201)	
		%	Unweighted N (missing)	%	Unweighted N (missing)
Region	South East	16%	155 (0)	14%	126 (0)
	North West	14%	155 (0)	13%	123 (0)
	East of England	12%	155 (0)	13%	145 (0)
	London	12%	155 (0)	11%	126 (0)
	West Midlands	11%	155 (0)	12%	139 (0)
	South West	11%	155 (0)	11%	136 (0)
	Yorkshire and the Humber	10%	155 (0)	11%	134 (0)
	East Midlands	10%	155 (0)	10%	138 (0)
	North East	5%	155 (0)	5%	134 (0)
	NA (Special Schools)	5%	135 (0)	5%	106 (0)
Phase	Primary	78%	810 (0)	78%	687 (0)
	Secondary	16%	450 (0)	17%	408 (0)
	NA (Special Schools)	5%	135 (0)	5%	106 (0)
School type	Mainstream academies & free schools	52%	790 (0)	53%	699 (0)
	Local authority-maintained schools	43%	470 (0)	42%	396 (0)
	Special Schools	5%	135 (0)	5%	106 (0)

Table 4: Breakdown of pupil characteristics in sampled and analysed schools

Continuous variables	Total (N = 1,395)			With a PP statement (N = 1,201)		
	Mean (SD)	Median (Interquartile range)	Unweighted N (missing)	Mean (SD)	Median (Interquartile range)	Unweighted N (missing)
Percentage of cohort eligible for the Pupil Premium	27% (16%)	24% (14%–38%)	1,395 (0)	27% (16%)	24% (14%–37%)	1,201 (0)
Number of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium	97 (106)	63 (28–121)	1,395 (0)	100 (107)	64 (30–123)	1,201 (0)
Number of pupils (school size)	365 (312)	248 (174–418)	1,395 (0)	377 (319)	257 (176–420)	1,201 (0)
Average disadvantaged attainment (KS2) over the last 3 years*	45% (17%)	45% (34%–57%)	606 (789)	46% (17%)	45% (35%–57%)	526 (675)
Average disadvantaged attainment (KS4) over the last 3 years**	38 (9)	36 (32–41)	427 (968)	38 (9)	36 (32–41)	385 (816)

Note. *Proportion of disadvantaged pupils in KS2 reaching the expected standard in reading, writing, maths. ** Average Attainment 8 score per disadvantaged pupil.

In 95% (N = 1,146) of cases, schools included at least 10 of the 14 suggested template headings. This is similar to the academic year 2024/25 (96%, N = 1,203). The least-used headings were ‘Externally provided programmes’ (70%) and ‘Pupil premium strategy outcomes’ (47%) (which may be due the fact the most recent version of the template used an alternative heading that we did not check for, ‘outcomes for disadvantaged pupils’).

Most schools used the DfE Pupil Premium statement template to structure their Pupil Premium statements. We detected the four main template headings in 93% (N = 1,113) of schools (‘School overview’, ‘Funding overview’, ‘Challenges’, and ‘Activity in this academic year’). Additionally, we found 94% (N = 1,128) of schools used the three tiers to structure their approaches (‘Teaching’, ‘Targeted academic support’, and ‘Wider strategies’).

Overall, similarity to the exemplar statements was low (see Appendix Figure 4 and 5 for more detail). The median similarity score for the challenges section was 6.7%, with an interquartile range of 6.7–10.0%. For the approaches section, the median similarity score was 7.5% with an interquartile range of 6.8–13.1%. Some schools with higher similarity scores

used text from the exemplar statement to describe their own challenges, but edited it to add their own data or context. Higher similarity scores in the approaches section were sometimes the result of using the same description of an approach as in the exemplar (e.g., the description of one-to-one and small group tuition) and/or citing the same evidence as in the exemplar. No statements had 100% similarity with the exemplar statement. We did not exclude any statements from analysis on the basis of similarity to the exemplar statements.

From this point onwards, we structure the findings by research question. In the following sections, we discuss our findings from the full sample, as well as by school characteristics where relevant. It should be noted that our findings are descriptive, so can indicate patterns of difference between schools but cannot tell us which factors, including other school characteristics, are driving these differences and why. Further work would be needed to understand the factors driving observed differences, how they relate to each other, and the reasons behind this.

All descriptive statistics are weighted to account for our sample design, unless stated otherwise. In analysis of the full sample, the point estimates can be interpreted with greater certainty due to the larger base sizes and narrower confidence intervals, while in subgroup analyses smaller bases sizes reduced precision. Therefore, where results are presented by school characteristics, 95% confidence intervals are included in the charts as the weighted estimates are less precise.

What challenges do schools identify for pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium?

The three challenges for disadvantaged pupils that were most frequently identified by schools were English/literacy attainment (91%), attendance (83%), and SEMH and wellbeing (79%). Compared to secondary schools, primary schools were more likely to cite attainment in English/literacy as a key challenge (92% vs 88%) and SEMH and wellbeing (82% vs 63%). However, secondary schools were more likely to cite attendance as a challenge than primary schools (92% vs 83%).

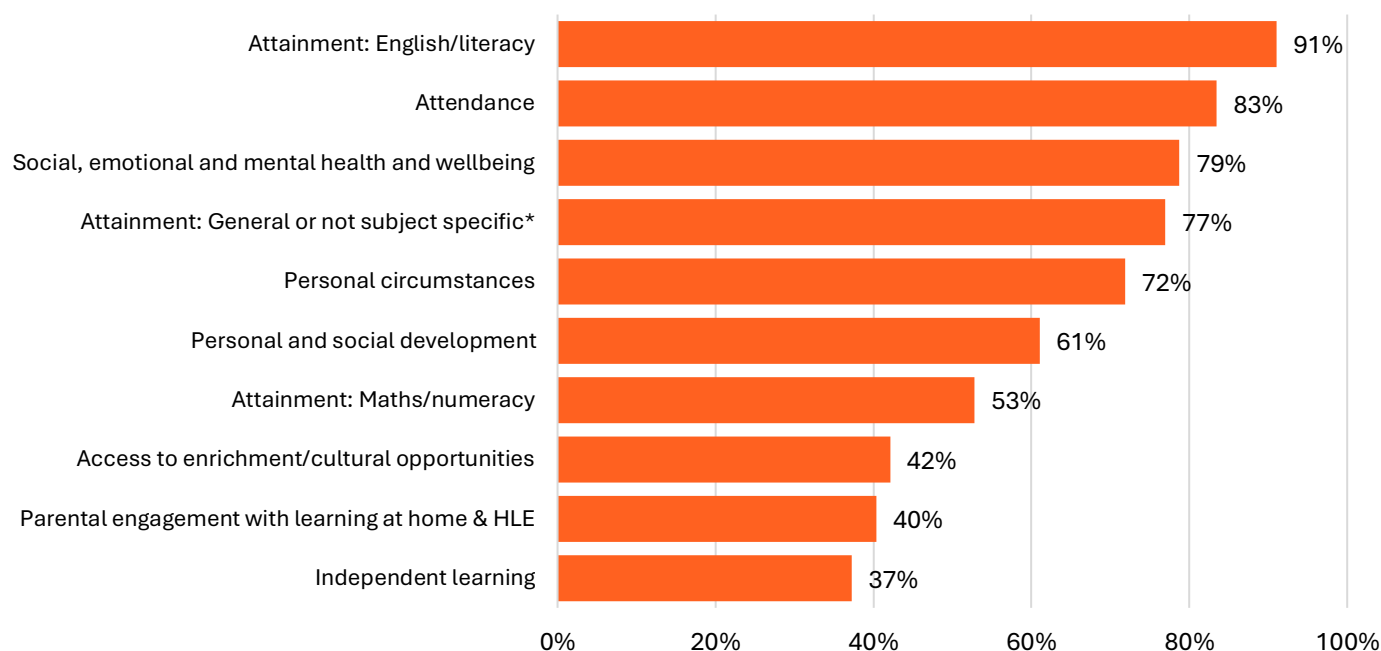
The prevalence of challenges also differed by the proportion of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium. Schools with higher proportions of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium were more likely to cite attendance as a key challenge than schools with lower proportions of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium (89% vs 74%). Additionally, the most common challenges in Special Schools differed slightly from those in mainstream schools, with the top five being personal and social development (86%), SEMH and wellbeing (81%), English/literacy attainment (80%) personal circumstances (74%), and attendance (63%).

At the beginning of a Pupil Premium statement, schools are instructed to ‘set out the key challenges to achievement identified among their disadvantaged pupils’ (Department for Education, 2024). The challenges for disadvantaged pupils that were most frequently identified by schools were English/literacy attainment (91%),¹⁷ attendance (83%), SEMH and wellbeing (79%),¹⁸ General/non-subject specific attainment (77%), and personal circumstances (72%) (see Figure 3).

¹⁷ The instructions for this code in the framework were as follows: ‘Code ‘Y’ for any reference to prior attainment or current performance related to ‘English’ or ‘Literacy’. This can include ‘speech’ ‘language’ ‘vocabulary’ ‘grammar’ ‘oracy’ ‘learning to talk’ ‘learning through talk’ ‘spoken language’ ‘speaking and listening’ ‘reading’ ‘phonics’ ‘reading level’ ‘reading age’ ‘reading attainment’ ‘writing’ ‘handwriting’, ‘transcription’, ‘spelling’, ‘composition’. References to needs rather than attainment should not be flagged under 3.4’.

¹⁸ The instructions for this code in the framework were as follows: ‘Code ‘Y’ for challenges related to pupil mental/social/emotional health or pupil mental/social/emotional wellbeing, ‘anxiety’ and ‘emotional resilience’. Use this code both for challenges which likely require clinical support and those which may not require clinical support. Absence due to mental ill health should be coded ADDITIONALLY under ‘Attendance’. For parent/guardian health wellbeing, code INSTEAD 3.15.2 Parental health/wellbeing’.

Figure 3. The 10 most frequently cited challenges to achievement among disadvantaged pupils



Note. Unweighted base N = 1,155 (only includes schools where the AI could read and code the “Challenges” section of the Pupil Premium statement). Weighted data was used to calculate the proportions. Unweighted counts: Attainment: English/literacy – 1,043; Attendance – 978; Social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing – 873; Attainment: general or non-subject specific – 904; Personal circumstances – 811; Personal and social development – 697; Attainment: Maths/numeracy – 588; Access to enrichment/cultural opportunities – 512; Parental engagement with learning at home & HLE (home learning environment) – 447; Independent learning – 445. *This code had a human-AI agreement score of less than 70% and should be interpreted with caution. The code in the top 10 with an agreement score of less than 70% was Attainment – general or non-subject specific (66%). See Appendix D for more detail on all codes with an agreement score below 70%.

Variation by school characteristic

Primary and secondary schools

Overall, primary schools were slightly more likely to cite attainment in English/literacy as a key challenge (92%) compared to secondary schools (88%) (see Figure 4). However, the types of English/literacy challenges differed between primary- and secondary-aged pupils. When averaged over both phases, speech and language and oracy were the most common (58%), followed by writing and reading (50%), and then phonics (28%).¹⁹ When broken down by school phase:

- secondary schools were more likely to cite reading as a challenge compared to primary schools (60% vs 50%)
- primary schools were more to cite speech and language difficulties (68% vs 21%), oracy (66% vs 19%), writing (61% vs 13%), and phonics (35% vs 4%) compared to secondary schools.

Poor attendance was more often cited by secondaries (92%) compared to primaries (83%). This is likely to reflect the difference in absence rates across primaries and secondaries: across the 2025/26 academic year to date, the persistent absence rate (defined as missing 10% or more school sessions) was 24.2% in state-funded secondary schools and 13.9% in state-funded primary schools (Department for Education, 2026a).

SEMH and wellbeing was more frequently cited as a challenge for primary-aged children. SEMH and wellbeing was cited as a key challenge by 82% of primary schools, and 63% of secondary schools. This year, we included subcodes to identify

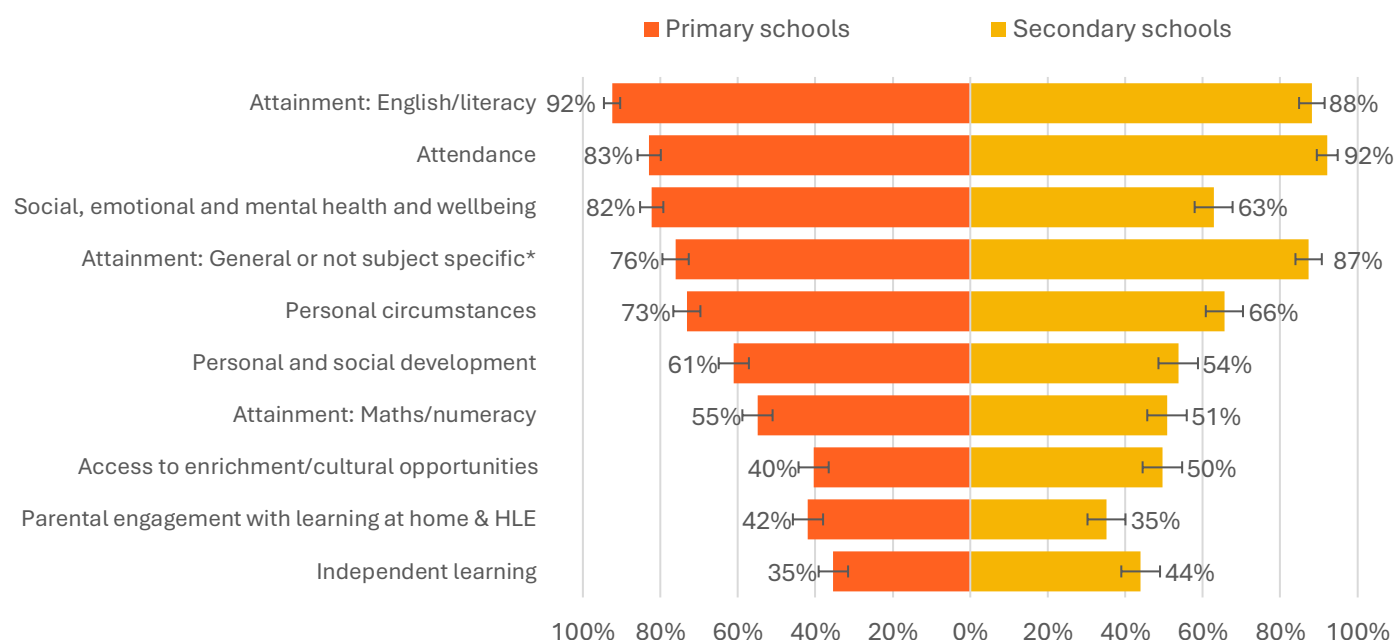
¹⁹ Disciplinary literacy was explicitly mentioned as a challenge in <1% of schools.

the frequency of the different dimensions of this challenge: social and emotional needs was the most commonly cited dimension (62%), followed by wellbeing (33%), and mental health (11%). Interestingly, when broken down by school phase:

- primary schools were more likely to cite social and emotional needs challenges (66%) compared to secondaries (43%)
- wellbeing was cited by a similar proportion of primaries (32%) and secondaries (34%), and
- secondaries were more likely to cite mental health (19%) compared to primaries (9%)

Although not in the top five challenges overall, behaviour was cited as a challenge more often by secondary schools (57%; sixth most common) than primary schools (27%; 13th most common). Additionally, more primary schools cited SEND challenges (37%; tenth most common) than secondaries (20%; 14th most common).

Figure 4. The 10 most frequently cited challenges to achievement among disadvantaged pupils by school phase



Note. Unweighted base: Primary schools N = 653; Secondary schools N = 399 (only includes schools where the AI could read and code the “Challenges” section of the Pupil Premium statement). Weighted data was used to calculate the proportions. Unweighted counts (Primary schools/Secondary schools): Attainment: English/literacy – 605/356; Attendance – 542/371; Social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing – 537/254; Attainment: General or non-subject specific – 497/349; Personal circumstances – 476/257; Personal and social development – 397/212; Attainment: Maths/numeracy: 355/205; Access to enrichment/cultural opportunities – 264/204; Parental engagement with learning at home & HLE (home learning environment) – 276/135; Independent learning – 228/171. *This code had a human-AI agreement score of less than 70% and should be interpreted with caution. The code in the top 10 with an agreement score of less than 70% was Attainment – general or non-subject specific (66%). See Appendix D for more detail on all codes with an agreement score below 70%.

Proportion of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium

The proportion of a school’s pupils who are eligible for the Pupil Premium provides an indication of how disadvantaged its pupil population is. We defined quartiles on proportion eligible and compared the top quartile (‘Higher proportion’) to the bottom quartile (‘Lower proportion’).

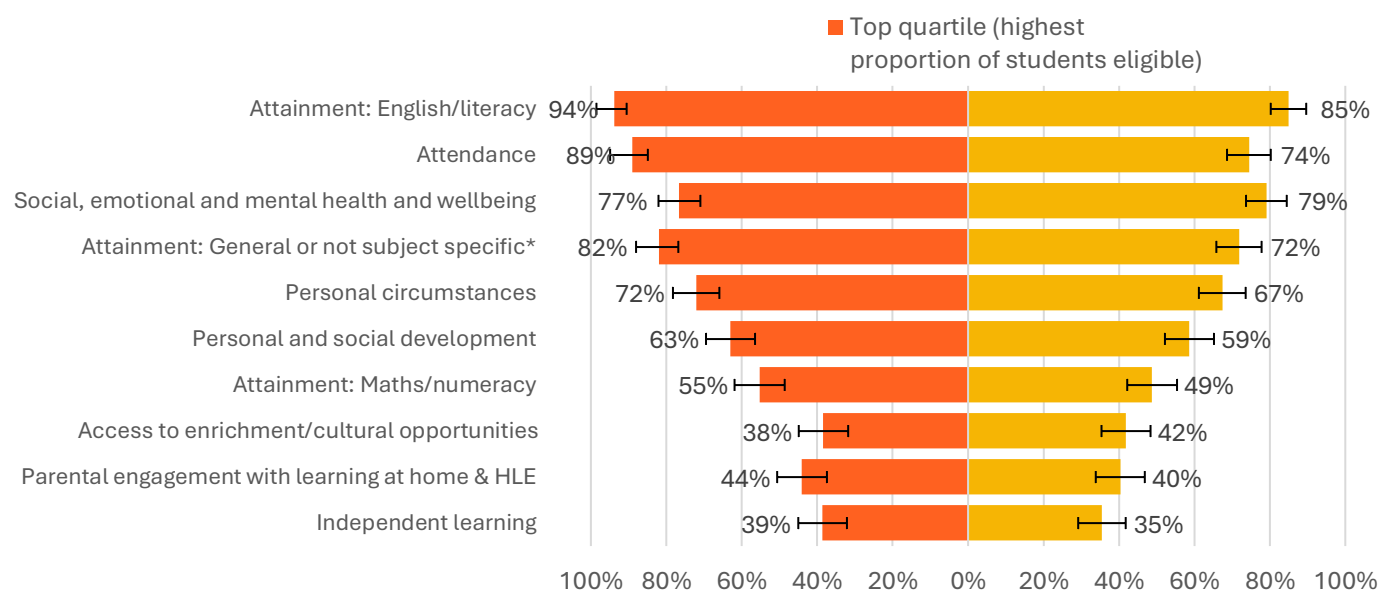
Some challenges appeared similarly prevalent in higher and lower Pupil Premium-eligible proportion schools. For example, similar numbers cited SEMH and wellbeing (Top quartile–Bottom quartile: 77–79%),²⁰ personal circumstances (72–67%), personal and social development (63–59%), attainment in maths/numeracy (55–49%), and access to enrichment/cultural opportunities (38–42%) as challenges (see Figure 5).

Other challenges, however, were more often cited by schools with higher proportions of Pupil Premium-eligible pupils than those with a lower proportion: English/literacy attainment (94% vs 85%), of which particularly speech and language (65% vs 47%), oracy (65% vs 47%), reading (57% vs 43%).

Local factor challenges (e.g., housing, enrichment outside of school, specialist support services, transport) were cited more often by schools with higher proportions of Pupil-Premium-eligible pupils, compared to those with lower proportions (30% vs 12%). This suggests that schools with higher proportions of Pupil Premium-eligible pupils are located in areas with higher socio-economic deprivation and/or that families with lower socio-economic status face more barriers to accessing resources outside of school.

Attendance was also more likely to be cited as a challenge by schools with higher proportions of Pupil Premium-eligible pupils (89%), compared to those with lower proportions (74%). There is good evidence that absence rates are higher among FSM-eligible pupils; in the 2025/26 academic year, the absence rates were 10.9% for pupils who were eligible for free school meals, and 5.3% for pupils who were not (Department for Education, 2026e).

Figure 5. The 10 most frequently cited challenges to achievement among disadvantaged pupils by schools in the top and bottom quartiles for proportions of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium



Note. Unweighted base: Top quartile N = 260; Bottom quartile N = 267 (only includes schools with data on pupils eligible for PP and schools where the AI could read and code the “Challenges” section of the Pupil Premium statement). Weighted data was used to calculate the proportions. Unweighted counts (Top quartile/Bottom quartile): Attainment: English/literacy – 244/224; Attendance – 235/207; Social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing – 192/201; Attainment: General or non-subject specific – 220/198; Personal circumstances – 181/180; Personal and social development – 160/147; Attainment: Maths/numeracy: 147/129; Access to enrichment/cultural opportunities – 109/115; Parental engagement with learning at home & HLE (home learning environment) – 114/101; Independent learning – 105/95. *This code had a human-AI agreement score of less than 70% and should be interpreted with caution. The code in the top 10 with an agreement score of less than 70% was Attainment – general or non-subject specific (66%). See Appendix D for more detail on all codes with an agreement score below 70%.

²⁰ Throughout this report, figures which are presented as ‘X vs X’ show statistically significant differences at a 5% level; figures presented as ‘X–X’ have not.

Number of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium

The more pupils in a school eligible for the Pupil Premium the more Pupil Premium funding the school has access to. Schools with higher numbers of Pupil Premium eligible pupils may also be larger schools in general. We defined quartiles on the numbers eligible and compared the top quartile ('Higher numbers') to the bottom quartile ('Lower numbers').

Some challenges appeared similarly prevalent in schools with higher and lower numbers of Pupil Premium-eligible pupils. For example, similar numbers cited social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing (Top quartile–Bottom quartile: 77–78%), personal and social development (60–59%), access to enrichment/cultural opportunities (40–42%) and independent learning (40–36%) challenges.

Many challenges were more often cited by schools with higher numbers of eligible pupils than by those with lower numbers. For example, English/literacy attainment (94% vs 85%), attendance (93% vs 71%), general/non-subject-specific attainment (84% vs 73%), math/numeracy attainment (56% vs 49%) and parental engagement with learning at home & home learning environment (46% vs 37%).

Lack of financial means, equipment, or resources, was the only challenge cited more often by more schools with lower numbers of eligible pupils (38%) than those with higher numbers of these pupils (31%).

Attainment of disadvantaged pupils at KS2 and KS4

We also looked descriptively at how schools with different attainment results for their disadvantaged pupils allocated funding, and how the profile of their challenges differed.

Schools with lower levels of KS2 attainment for disadvantaged pupils more often cited challenges related to social and emotional mental health and wellbeing challenges (84% vs 74%). However, surprisingly, attainment challenges were cited by a similar proportion of schools regardless of their disadvantaged KS2 attainment. For example, primary schools tended to report English/literacy as a key challenge at a similar rate regardless of average levels of KS2 attainment (Top quartile–Bottom quartile: 92–91%).

However, we see a different pattern of results for secondary schools. Those with lower levels of KS4 attainment for disadvantaged pupils more often cited challenges related to learning and attainment in school, compared to those with higher levels of attainment for these pupils. For instance, those who achieved lower attainment outcomes for disadvantaged KS4 cohorts were more likely to cite English/literacy attainment as a key challenge (97%) compared to those with higher average attainment for the KS4 cohorts (79%). This was particularly the case for reading attainment: 75% of those with lower average KS4 attainment cited reading as a challenge, compared to 45% with higher average KS4 attainments. In secondary schools, behaviour as a key challenge was also more often reported by schools with lower average levels of attainment for disadvantaged pupils (KS4: 72%), compared to those with higher levels (KS4: 45%).

School size

We also looked at how identified challenges differed based on school size. For most challenges in the coding framework, a similar proportion of schools, regardless of size, reported facing them. However, the only significant difference was that larger schools were more likely than smaller schools to cite attendance as a key challenge (90% vs 77%). The reasons for pupils being absent from school are complex and numerous, including issues of inequality and deprivation, marginalisation, Special Educational Needs, mental health challenges, tooth decay, and family and parental factors (Child of the North and Centre for Young Lives, 2024). One possible explanation why attendance challenges are more often cited by larger schools is that it might harder for them to provide one-to-one support for pupils and their families to address these underlying factors.

School type

Due to the relatively small numbers of Special Schools in England compared to mainstream schools, our weighted results are largely representative of the challenges faced, approaches taken, and evidence cited by mainstream providers. The

profile of challenges and approaches cited by mainstream local authority maintained, and academies and free schools was broadly similar.

Looking at most common challenges for Special Schools, some were different and some were the same as those reported by mainstream schools. In Special Schools, the top five challenges were personal and social development (86%), SEMH and wellbeing (81%), English/literacy attainment (80%), personal circumstances²¹ (74%), and attendance (63%), suggesting that disadvantaged pupils in Special Schools faced different but overlapping challenges compared to those in mainstream schools.

Region

There were some differences in the challenges outlined by region. For instance, schools in London were the most likely to cite lack of financial means, equipment or resources as a challenge for their disadvantaged pupils (43%), compared to Yorkshire and the Humber (23%). Additionally, in some regions, local factors were more often cited as challenges (e.g., housing, enrichment outside of school, specialist support services, transport). For example, fewer schools in the East of England (14%) and the South East (16%) cited local factors, compared to the North East (35%). This aligns with data showing that the North East has a lower housing affordability ratio and higher rates of children in relative poverty than the East of England and the South East (Office for National Statistics, 2026). Additionally, 33% of residents in the North East Combined Authority live in neighbourhoods at high risk of transport-related social exclusion (compared to 2.7% in Greater London) (Transport for the North, 2026).

How does school spending align with the EEF's tiered approach?

Schools are required to report how their Pupil Premium funding is allocated across three areas: high-quality teaching, targeted academic support, and wider strategies. On average, schools allocated 38% to high-quality teaching, 35% to targeted academic support, and 28% to wider strategies. Primary schools balanced high-quality teaching and targeted support (37%), while secondary schools invested more in teaching (42%) and wider strategies (31%). Schools with higher proportions of disadvantaged pupils allocated more to teaching (41%) than those with lower proportions (37%). Special schools spent more on wider strategies (35%), local authority-maintained schools on targeted academic support (39%), and mainstream academies and free schools on teaching (40%).

Schools are required to report their planned Pupil Premium spending and how this is split across three areas: high-quality teaching, targeted academic support, and wider strategies. Across these areas, schools are advised to prioritise Pupil Premium spending on high-quality teaching (see Figure 6).

On average, schools allocated more budget to high-quality teaching (38%) and targeted academic support (35%) than to wider strategies (28%). (See Figure 7. Note that the base size is smaller for this research question due to missing data and excluded cases. We excluded cases where the amount budgeted was implausibly low (i.e. less than £100), the amount allocated to each tier was higher than the total budget or budgeted cost, or the total budgeted cost was higher than the total budget for this academic year by 5% or more.)

²¹ The instructions for the 'personal circumstances' challenge code were as follows: Code 'Y' for factors relating to the pupil's personal circumstances - e.g., parental/carer/guardian wellbeing, school mobility, child protection requirements, 'Adverse Childhood Experiences', 'ACEs'. Code 'Y' where keywords from subcodes are mentioned: 'parental engagement with the school', challenges with parents/carers/guardians engaging around attendance, behaviour; issues with parents'/carers'/guardians' physical or mental health or wellbeing; personal issues around transport/access to school; 'child protection' or 'safeguarding'; changing school for any reason.

Figure 6. The three-tiered approach to spending the Pupil Premium

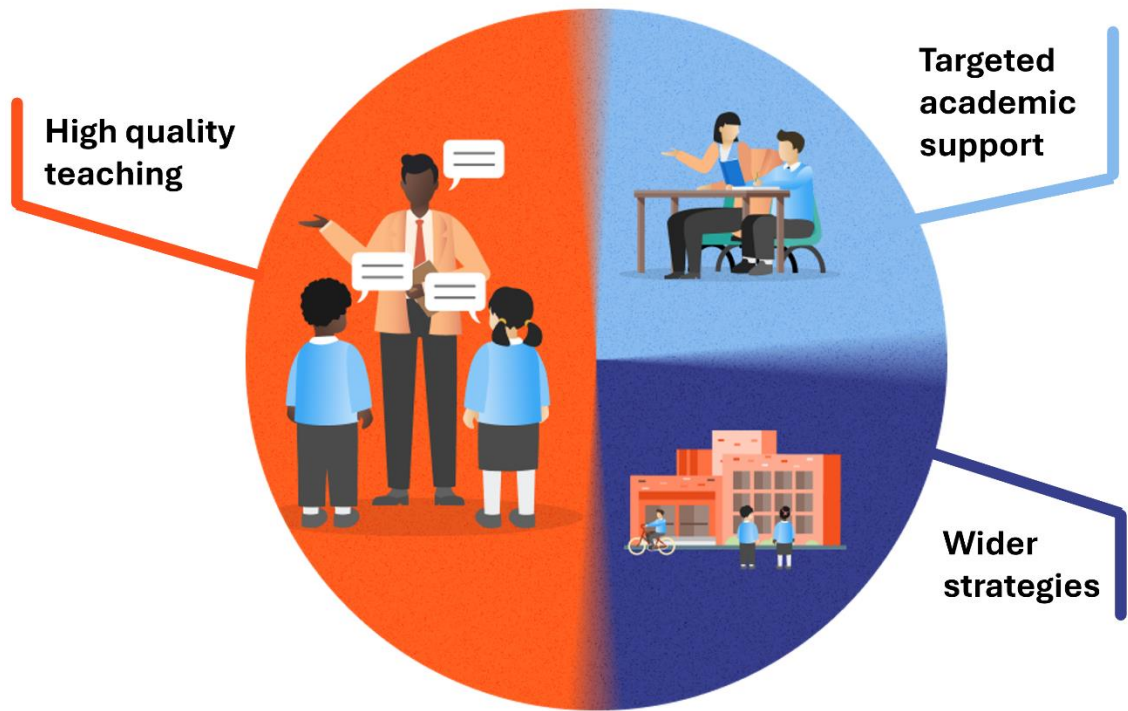
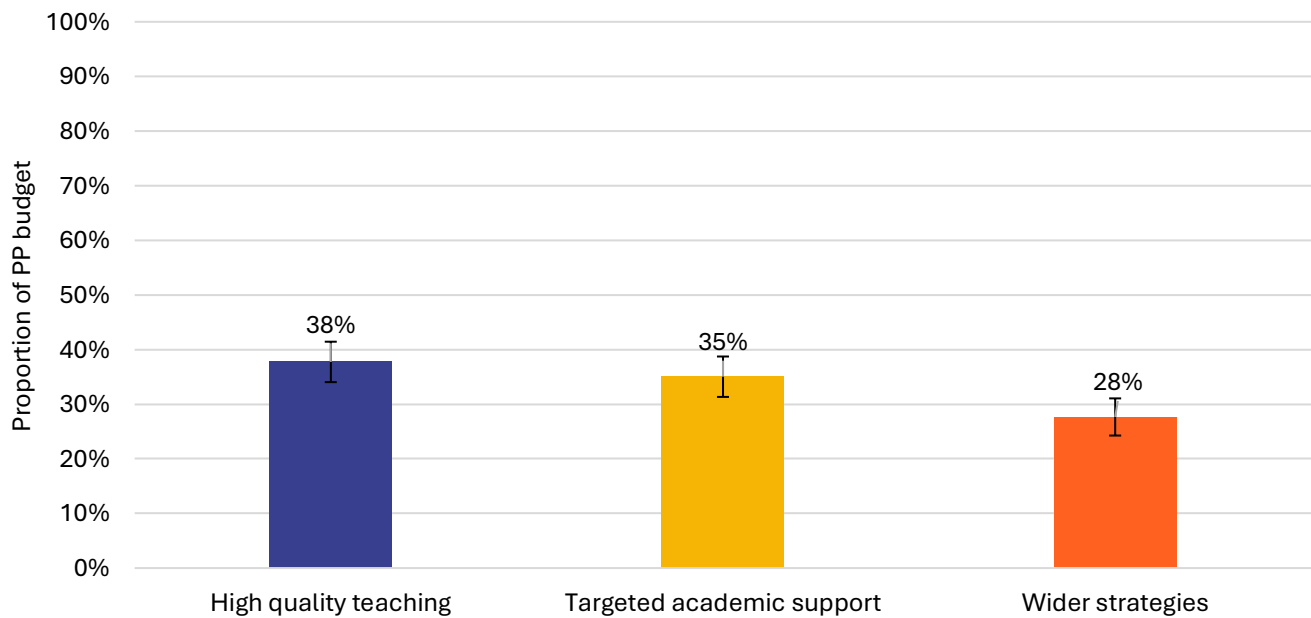


Figure 7. Percentage of Pupil Premium budget allocated to high-quality teaching, academic support and wider strategies



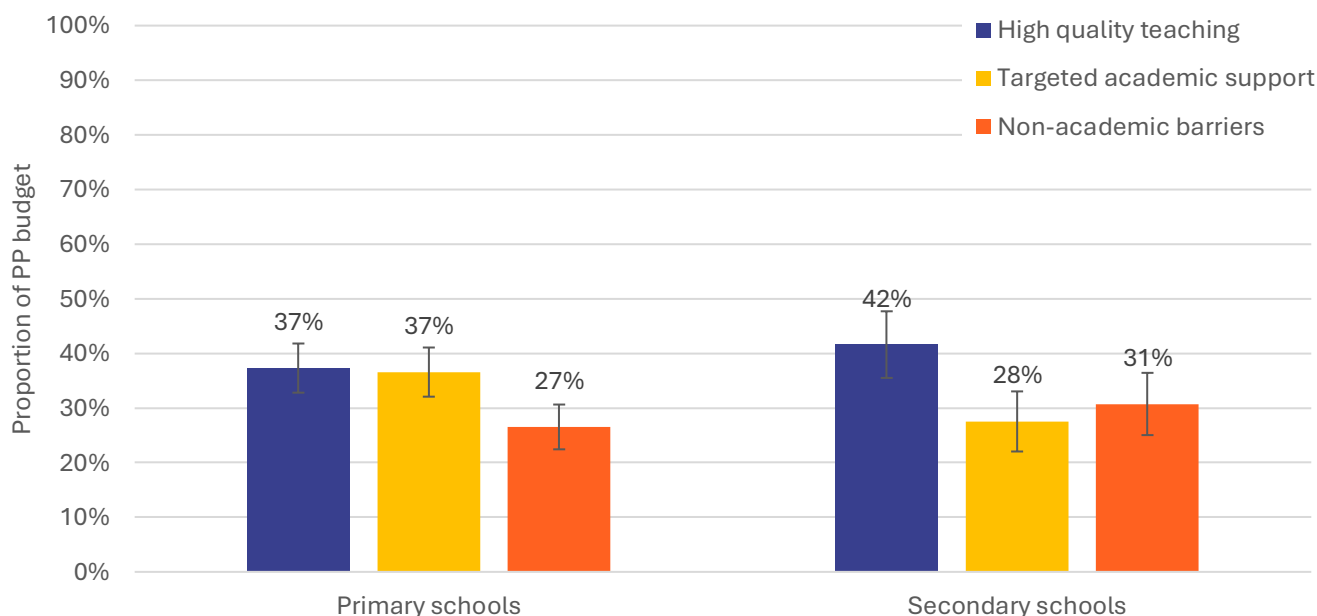
Note. Unweighted base N = 811 (only includes schools where the AI could read and code the “Activity in this academic year” section of the Pupil Premium statement). Excludes cases where the AI made an error or misread the information, and cases where the total allocation of funding was implausible, classified as greater than the total amount of funding by 5% or more. Weighted data was used to calculate the proportions.

Variation by school characteristic

Primary and secondary schools

Primary and secondary schools tended to allocate the Pupil Premium funding differently (see Figure 8). In primary schools, 37% of funding was allocated to both targeted academic support and high-quality teaching on average, with 27% left for wider strategies. In comparison, secondary schools allocated less to targeted academic support (28%), and more to high-quality teaching (42%) and wider strategies (31%).

Figure 8. Percentage of Pupil Premium budget allocated to high-quality teaching, academic support and wider strategies by school phase

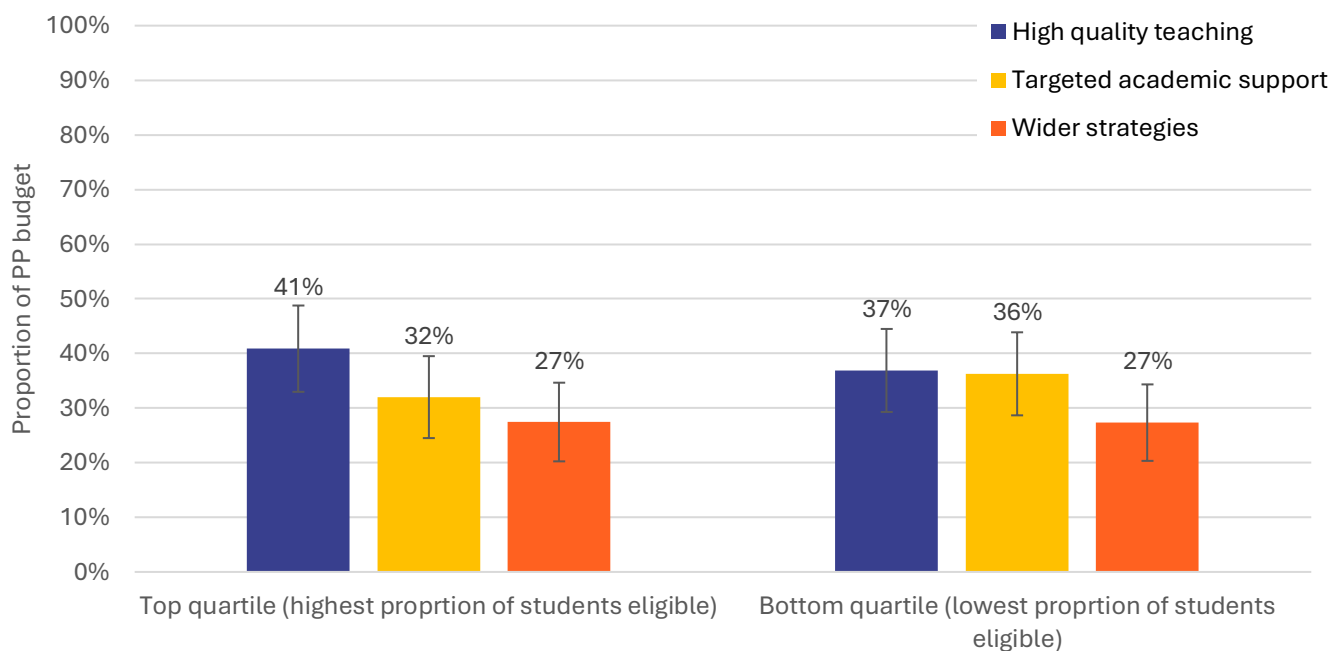


Note. Unweighted base: Primary schools – 469; Secondary schools – 272 (only includes schools where the AI could read and code the “Activity in this academic year” section of the Pupil Premium statement). Excludes cases where the AI made an error or misread the information, and cases where the total allocation of funding was implausible, classified as greater than the total amount of funding by 5% or more. Weighted data was used to calculate the proportions.

Proportion of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium

Schools with higher proportions of Pupil Premium-eligible pupils prioritised spending on high-quality teaching (41% high-quality teaching, 32% targeted academic support, 27% wider strategies; see Figure 9). In comparison those with lower proportions of Pupil Premium-eligible pupils balanced planned spending more equally between high-quality teaching and targeted academic support (37% high-quality teaching, 36% targeted academic support, 27% wider strategies).

Figure 9. Percentage of Pupil Premium budget allocated to high-quality teaching, academic support and wider strategies by schools in the top and bottom quartiles for proportions of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium



Note. Unweighted base Top quartile – 182; Bottom quartile – 189 (only includes schools where the AI could read and code the “Activity in this academic year” section of the Pupil Premium statement). Excludes cases where the AI made an error or misread the information, and cases where the total allocation of funding was implausible, classified as greater than the total amount of funding by 5% or more. Weighted data was used to calculate the proportions.

School Size

Compared to larger schools, smaller schools allocated more to targeted academic support (37% vs 34%) and less to wider strategies (24% vs 28%). Larger and smaller schools both allocated just over a third of funding to high-quality teaching, 38% and 39% respectively.

School type

On average, allocation of funds varied also by school type:

- Mainstream academies and free schools spent more on high-quality teaching (40% high-quality teaching, 32% targeted academic support, 28% wider strategies)
- Compared to mainstream providers, Special Schools allocated more budget to wider strategies (35% vs 26–28%), and less on high-quality teaching (31% vs 35–40%).
- Local authority-maintained schools spent more on targeted academic support (35% high-quality teaching, 39% targeted academic support, 26% wider strategies)

Which approaches are schools funding using the Pupil Premium?

Schools most commonly used Pupil Premium funding for tuition (98%) targeted English/literacy interventions (97%), and staff training or continuing professional development (CPD) (92%). Small-group tuition (79%) was the most common form of tuition, followed by one-to-one support (60%). Reading interventions were the most frequently funded literacy approach (88%), with primary schools more likely than secondary schools to fund phonics, writing, and oracy interventions.

Schools with higher proportions of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium were more likely to fund a range of interventions including attendance interventions, staff costs, use of teaching assistants, SEND specific support, and breakfast clubs.

Compared to primaries, secondaries were more likely to fund a range of approaches including attendance interventions, behaviour interventions, targeted metacognitive/self-regulation interventions, extended school time, staff mentoring and coaching, and staff career support. On the other hand, primaries were more likely to fund teaching assistants and family support. The top approaches for Special Schools were the same as in mainstream providers with the exception of SEND specific interventions which were cited by 89% of Special Schools (compared to 63-65% of mainstream providers).

Pupil Premium statements require schools to outline how they intend to spend their funding to address the challenges faced by their disadvantaged pupils. The approaches most frequently funded by schools were tuition (98%) targeted English/literacy interventions (97%), staff training or continuing professional development (CPD) (92%), targeted SEMH and wellbeing interventions (92%), and pastoral support (86%) (see Figure 10).

The approach cited by the most - almost all - schools was tuition (98%). Tuition to support pupil learning, whether it is one-to-one, as part of a small group, or peer-to-peer, comes under targeted academic support. Small group tuition was the most commonly cited form of tuition (79%), followed by one-to-one tuition (60%). Peer-to-peer tuition was only cited by 13% of schools. It should be noted that this year, the tuition code also captured references to 'individualised instruction'. It is therefore likely that this code had some overlap with targeted intervention approaches.

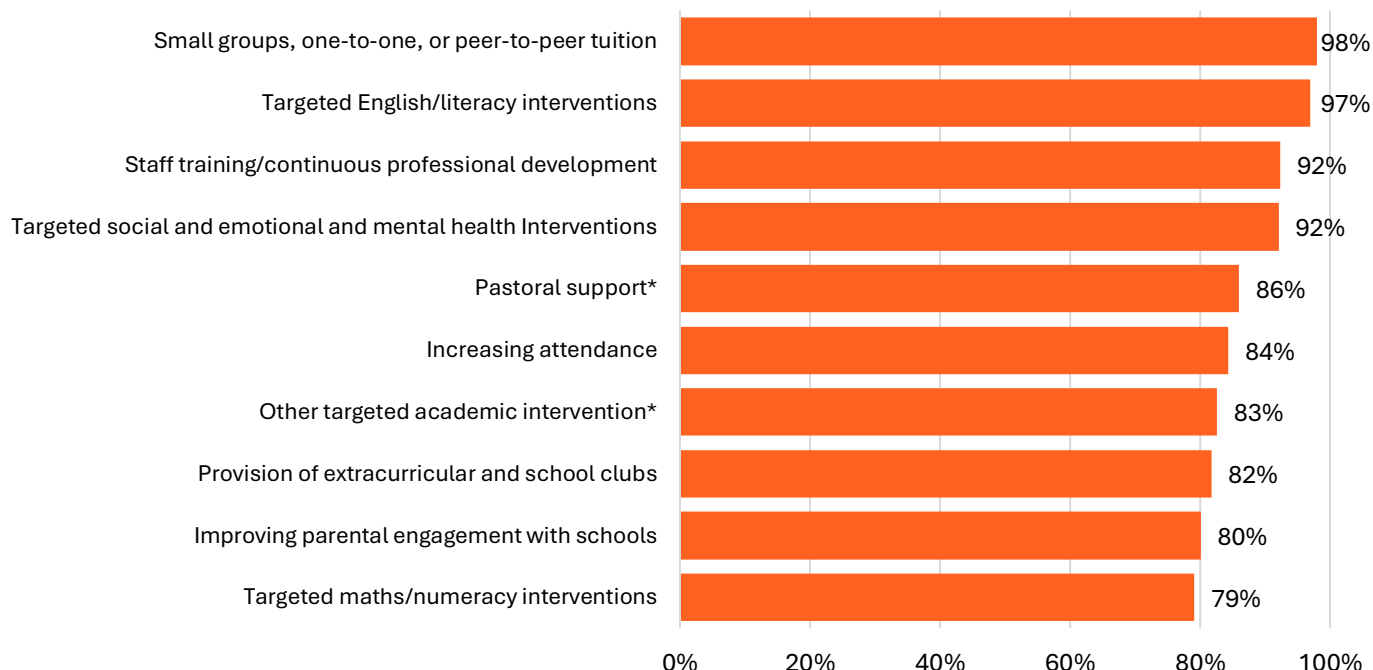
Among the specific English/literacy interventions reported, reading interventions were the most common (88%), followed by speech and language (82%), phonics (74%), writing (58%), oracy (46%), and disciplinary literacy (12%).

Staff training and CPD was the third-most reported use of funding (92%), and was relatively consistent across school characteristics, including schools with lower and higher proportions of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium (Top quartile–Bottom quartile: 93–94%), smaller and larger schools (Top quartile–Bottom quartile: 92–91%), and primary and secondary schools (Primary–Secondary: 92–95%).

Pastoral support for pupils was the fifth-most cited approach (86%). However, in practice many of the approaches captured by this code were also captured by the SEMH interventions code (92%). Pastoral support was also one of the codes with a human-AI agreement score of less than 70% (61%), and so should be treated with caution.

Behaviour (79%) and staff costs (e.g., recruitment, release time, etc.) (79%) were the 11th and 12th most cited approaches.

Figure 10. The 10 most frequently cited approaches to address challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils



Note. Unweighted base N = 1,175 (only includes schools where the AI could read and code the “Activity in this academic year” section of the Pupil Premium statement). Weighted data was used to calculate the proportions. Unweighted counts: Small groups, one-to-one, or peer-to-peer tuition – 1,152; Targeted English/literacy interventions – 1,136; Staff training/continuous professional development – 1,091; Targeted social and emotional and mental health interventions – 1,075; Pastoral support – 1,016; Increasing attendance – 1,008; Other targeted academic intervention – 1,000; Provision of extracurricular and school clubs – 959; Improving parental engagement with schools – 937; Targeted maths/numeracy interventions – 927. *This code had a human-AI agreement score of less than 70% and should be interpreted with caution. Codes in the top 10 with agreement scores less than 70% were Pastoral support (61%) and Other targeted academic intervention (29%). See Appendix D for more detail on all codes with an agreement score below 70%.

Variation by school characteristic

Primary and secondary schools

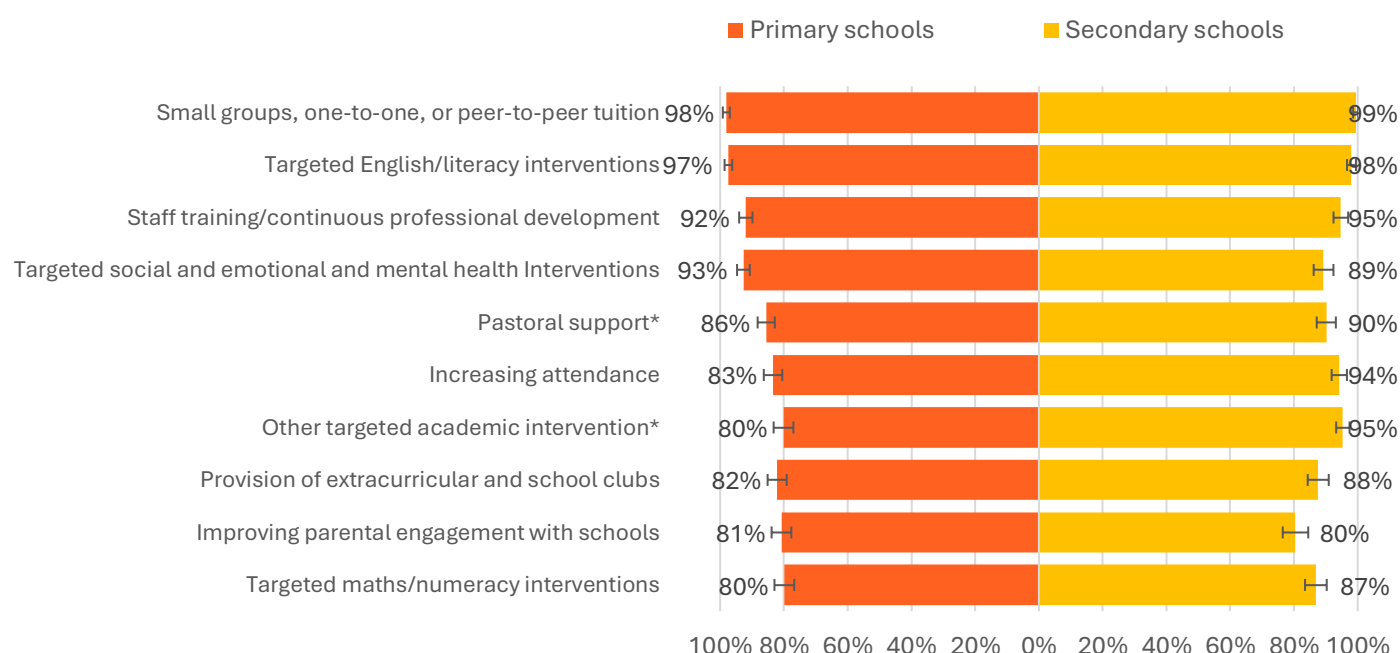
The three most frequently cited approaches overall were the same for primary and secondary schools: tuition (98-99%), targeted English/literacy interventions (97-98%), and staff training (92-95%) (see Figure 11). However, there were some differences in how primaries and secondaries allocated funding, for example:

- English/literacy interventions:** in secondaries there was a narrower focus on targeted reading and speech and language interventions, while in primaries there was a broader focus on reading, speech and language, phonics, and writing interventions. Interestingly, disciplinary literacy interventions appeared almost exclusively in secondary schools (54% vs 4% in primary schools). Additionally, almost no schools cited disciplinary literacy as a challenge, which could suggest disciplinary literacy interventions were deployed to address attainment gaps more broadly. Alternatively, it could be the case that schools referred to disciplinary literacy challenges in a way that was missed by the AI coder (e.g. schools didn’t use the term disciplinary literacy challenges, but instead wrote about ‘challenges writing in history’ or ‘challenges reading humanities texts’)
- Staff training:** While staff training and continuous professional development was cited by similar proportions of primaries and secondaries, there were differences in other types of staff development. Compared to primaries, secondaries were more likely to allocate funds to staff mentoring and coaching (51% vs 39%) and early career support (16% vs 9%).

- **Attendance:** Secondaries were more likely to cite attendance as a challenge and allocate funds to attendance interventions (94% vs 83%). As set out above, this aligns with national data showing absence rates are higher in secondary schools compared with primary schools (Department for Education, 2026a).
- **Behaviour:** Secondaries were more likely to allocate funds to behaviour interventions (85% vs 78%) and targeted metacognitive/self-regulation interventions (86% vs 77%). Metacognition and self-regulation strategies can be applied to address various challenges such as attainment, behaviour, and independent learning (Education Endowment Foundation, 2025a). This aligns with the finding that, compared to primary schools, secondaries were more likely to cite behaviour (57% vs 27%) and independent learning (44% vs 35%) as challenges.
- **Teaching assistants:** Compared to secondaries, primaries were more likely to use funds to cover teaching assistant costs (76% vs 52%). This result is not surprising, given 63% of teaching assistants work in primary schools and 18% in secondaries (Department for Education, 2026d).

Where the research suggests primary- and secondary-aged children face slightly different challenges, it is unsurprising that schools prioritise funding differently. Additionally, secondary schools tend to have more pupils eligible for funding, and therefore larger Pupil Premium budgets. As a result, they may have greater capacity to fund a wider range of approaches, which could explain why a greater number of approaches were more likely to be funded by secondary schools than by primary schools. It is also possible that the relative cost-effectiveness and feasibility of approaches differs between settings (e.g. some targeted academic support interventions might be more difficult and costly to implement in secondaries compared to primaries due to there being more pupils, fewer teaching assistants, and more complex timetabling).

Figure 11. The 10 most frequently cited approaches to address challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils by school phase



*Note. Unweighted base: Primary schools N = 668; Secondary schools N = 403 (only includes schools where the AI could read and code the "Activity in this academic year" section of the Pupil Premium statement). Weighted data was used to calculate the proportions. Unweighted counts (Primary schools/Secondary schools): Small groups, one-to-one, or peer-to-peer tuition – 656/401; Targeted English/literacy interventions – 651/396; Staff training/continuous professional development – 615/383; Targeted social and emotional and mental health interventions – 617/360; Pastoral support – 571/364; Increasing attendance – 557/381; Other targeted academic intervention – 535/386; Provision of extracurricular and school clubs – 545/356; Improving parental engagement with schools – 537/327; Targeted maths/numeracy interventions – 532/352. *This code had a human-AI agreement score of less than 70% and should be interpreted with caution. Codes in the top 10 with agreement scores less than 70% were Pastoral support (61%) and Other targeted academic intervention (29%). See Appendix D for more detail on all codes with an agreement score below 70%.*

Proportion of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium

Some approaches were more often cited by schools with higher proportions of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium than those with lower proportions. For example, maths/numeracy interventions (85% vs 74%), SEND (72% vs 55%), and English as an additional language support (16% vs 6%). This was true despite schools citing these challenges (attainment in maths, SEND specific challenges, and English as an additional language specific challenges) at a similar rate regardless of the proportion of eligible pupils.

Schools with higher proportions of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium were also more likely to cite approaches to reading (96% vs 84%), speech and language (89% vs 71%), phonics interventions (83% vs 69%), and attendance interventions (90% vs 78%). In these cases, schools with higher proportions of eligible pupils were also more likely to cite English literacy attainment and poor attendance as challenges.

Some approaches that did not align to any specific challenge were also cited more often by schools with a higher proportion of eligible pupils than those with lower proportions: staff costs (85% vs 73%), use of teaching assistants (78% vs 63%), engagement with wider services (79% vs 60%), family support (75% vs 63%), formative and diagnostic assessment (71% vs 63%), breakfast clubs (55% vs 26%), and reducing class sizes (20% vs 9%).

There are many possible interpretations for why schools with higher proportions of eligible pupils more often cited approaches than those with lower proportions of these pupils. One possibility is that schools with higher proportions of eligible pupils have more knowledge of how to identify needs and support disadvantaged pupils and so are better at tailoring interventions to meet their needs. There is some supporting evidence for this at primary level. For example, previous research has found that schools with larger proportions of disadvantaged pupils tended to see those pupils make more progress and have higher attainment at both KS2, where disadvantaged pupils continue to do better in schools where there are more of them, even after accounting for the additional funding they receive, suggesting primary schools with more disadvantaged pupils are better equipped to support them (Dellar, 2025).

Number of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium

Schools with more disadvantaged pupils have more funding for interventions targeted at such pupils. Across the sample, the average total budget for this academic year was £1,016,507 for schools with the highest numbers of Pupil Premium-eligible pupils and £155,081 for those with the lowest numbers of these pupils.²² Therefore, we might expect to see differences in how schools allocate their available funds depending on the number eligible.

Schools with higher numbers of eligible pupils cited a median of 24 approaches, compared to a median of 20 approaches cited by schools with lower numbers of eligible pupils. Compared to those with low numbers of eligible pupils, schools with higher numbers of eligible pupils were more likely to cite the following approaches: attendance interventions (93% vs 78%), maths/numeracy interventions (85% vs 74%), staff recruitment and retention costs (86% vs 73%), teaching assistants (78% vs 64%), engagement with wider services (80% vs 61%), formative and diagnostic assessments (73% vs 60%), SEND-specific approaches (76% vs 53%), breakfast clubs (56% vs 25%), reducing class sizes (21% vs 10%) and English as an additional language specific interventions (19% vs 6%)(see Figure 12). We also see these approaches cited

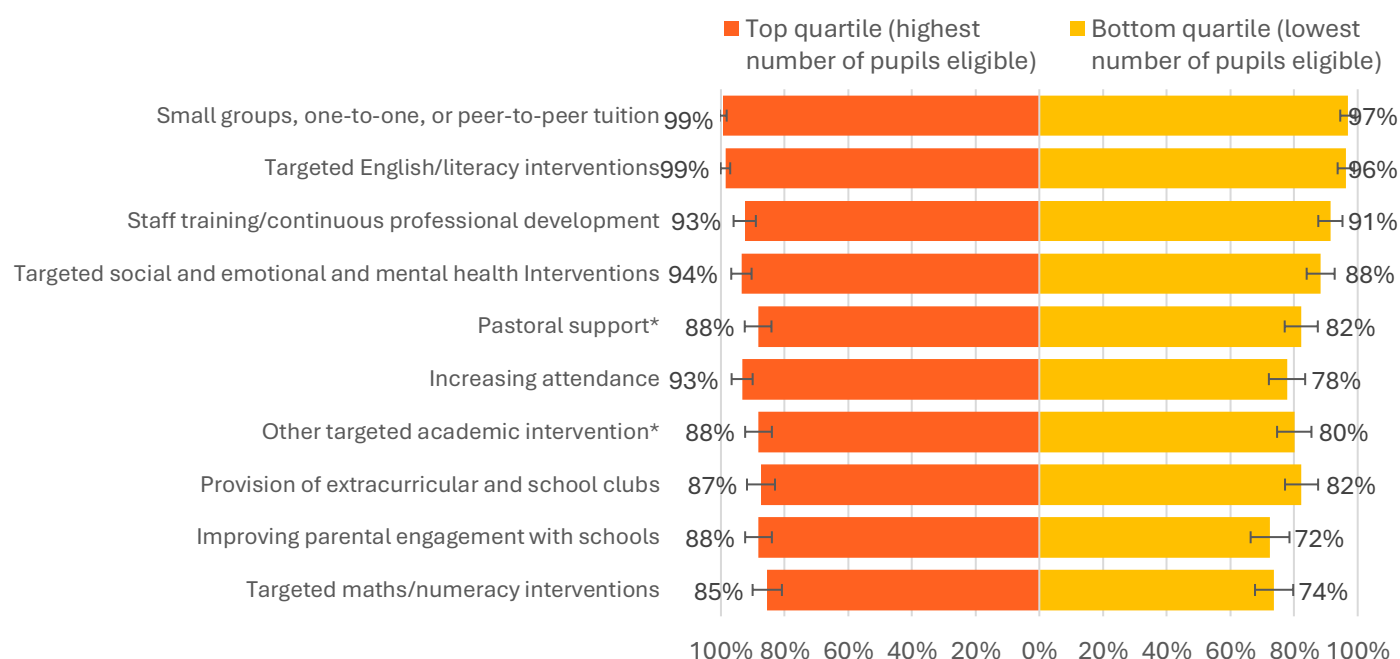
²² We calculated these averages using unweighted data.

more often by schools with higher proportions of eligible pupils, compared to those with lower proportions of these pupils. This is not surprising considering those schools with higher numbers of eligible pupils, are also likely to have higher proportions of these pupils.

Additionally, compared to schools with lower numbers of eligible pupils, schools with higher numbers of eligible pupils were more likely to cite: parental engagement with schools (88% vs 72%), behavioural interventions (84% vs 70%), targeted metacognitive interventions (86% vs 72%), family support (79% vs 56%), extended school time (61% vs 47%), staff mentoring and coaching (53% vs 31%), and pupil mentoring (47% vs 28%). These approaches were also more often cited by larger schools compared to smaller ones. This suggests the higher incidence of these approaches may be related to school size and high numbers of Pupil Premium eligible pupils.

Curriculum updates was the only approach in which this pattern did not hold. Schools with higher *numbers of eligible pupils* more often cited curriculum updates than those with lower numbers (83% vs. 68%), but the same was not true when splitting the sample by the *proportion of pupils who are eligible* for Pupil Premium, or by *overall school size* (the differences were not statistically significant at the 5% level). One possible explanation is that curriculum updates may be costly to implement and/or only worth doing if there are enough disadvantaged pupils who could benefit from it.

Figure 12. The 10 most frequently cited approaches to address challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils by schools in the top and bottom quartiles for the number of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium



Note. Unweighted base: Top quartile N = 222; Bottom quartile N = 206 (only includes schools with data on pupils eligible for PP and schools where the AI could read and code the “Activity in this academic year” section of the Pupil Premium statement). Weighted data was used to calculate the proportions. Unweighted counts (Top quartile/Bottom quartile): Small groups, one-to-one, or peer-to-peer tuition – 271/249; Targeted English/literacy interventions – 268/246; Staff training/continuous professional development – 256/234; Targeted social and emotional and mental health interventions – 253/224; Pastoral support – 243/213; Increasing attendance – 255/210; Other targeted academic intervention – 246/213; Provision of extracurricular and school clubs – 239/209; Improving parental engagement with schools – 237/184; Targeted maths/numeracy interventions – 234/192. *This code had a human-AI agreement score of less than 70% and should be interpreted with caution. Codes in the top 10 with agreement scores less than 70% were Pastoral support (61%) and Other targeted academic intervention (29%). See Appendix D for more detail on all codes with an agreement score below 70%.

Attainment of disadvantaged pupils in KS2 and KS4

There was no evidence that KS2 attainment was linked to different approaches to spending the Pupil Premium. There were some differences in approaches taken based on the levels of KS4 attainment aligned with the behavioural and attainment challenges outline above. Schools with lower KS4 attainment for disadvantaged pupils were more likely to implement staff

training/CPD (99% vs 89%), reading interventions (99% vs 81%), speech and language interventions (89% vs 69%), parental engagement with schools (87% vs 70%), phonics interventions (41% vs 29%), disciplinary literacy interventions (66% vs 45%), and alternative provision approaches (within school) (52% vs 22%).

With the exception of writing and oracy interventions, secondary schools with lower KS4 attainment cited targeted English literacy approaches more often than those with higher KS4 attainment. Schools with lower KS4 attainment were more likely to fund reading interventions (99% vs 81%), speech and language interventions (89% vs 69%), phonics interventions (41% vs 29%), and disciplinary literacy interventions (66% vs 45%). There were no such differences for primary schools with higher or lower levels of KS2 attainment.

School size

There were some differences in approaches by school size. Larger schools were more likely than smaller schools to allocate funds to targeted SEMH and wellbeing interventions (96% vs 87%), pastoral support (91% vs 78%), extracurricular clubs (89% vs 78%), parental engagement with schools (89% vs 74%), interventions to improve behaviour (87% vs 74%), small group tuition (86% vs 74%), staff recruitment and retention costs (85% vs 74%), targeted metacognitive/self-regulation interventions (86% vs 71%), family support (79% vs 60%), SEND-specific approaches (71% vs 57%), staff mentoring/coaching (49% vs 30%), pupil mentoring (47% vs 26%), and EAL support (18% vs 9%). The fact that larger schools were more likely to cite these approaches—and more approaches in general—than smaller ones is not surprising given larger schools tended to have more disadvantaged pupils and therefore more funding available. This is supported in our sample, among the largest schools the average total planned allocation was £313,512, and among the smallest schools the average was £112,509.²³

Of note, we found a similar proportion of smaller and larger schools allocated funding to attendance interventions, despite larger schools being more likely to report attendance challenges. We found 89% of larger schools allocated funding to attendance interventions, compared to 81% of smaller schools. However, the 95% confidence intervals of these two estimates overlap and so we cannot be confident that this constitutes a real difference between these groups.

School type

For Special Schools, the top five approaches were the same as mainstream providers, with the exception of SEND specific interventions. The approaches most frequently funded by Special Schools were targeted SEMH and wellbeing interventions (93%), tuition (92%), staff training and CPD (90%), SEND specific interventions (89%), and targeted English/literacy interventions (86%).

There were also some approaches less likely to be cited by special schools compared to mainstream providers. For example, small group tuition (44% vs 80-81%).

While this research provides insight into the types of approaches most commonly taken by Special Schools, there may be nuance within this data that we did not capture. For example, we might expect that the SEND-specific interventions used by Special Schools would differ from the approaches taken by mainstream schools.

Region

Most approaches were cited by a similar proportion of schools in each of the nine regions of England. However, there was some regional variation. For example, schools in Yorkshire and the Humber (87%) were more likely to allocate funds to cover staff costs compared to those in the South West (71%). This could be related to issues with recruitment and retention in more rural and isolated communities (Ovenden-Hope, Passy and Iglehart, 2022). Other approaches were more often cited by schools in London. For example, mentoring (47% vs 25% in the North East) and targeted English as an Additional Language (EAL) interventions (21% vs 6% in the East of England). This difference in interventions targeted to EAL students is reflective of the proportion of EAL students by region (Department for Education, 2026b). Some approaches

²³ We calculated these averages using unweighted data.

were more often taken by schools in the West Midlands: SEND specific interventions (74% vs 57% in the South West and in the East Midlands), staff mentoring or coaching (52% vs 31% in the East of England) and encouraging parental engagement with home learning (51% vs 28% in the North West and in the South West).

How do schools' approaches to spending align with their identified challenges?

Schools' spending decisions generally aligned with their reported challenges. For SEMH and wellbeing, maths/numeracy, and access to enrichment or cultural capital more schools reported investing in targeted approaches than reported these as key challenges. Common approaches like tuition, staff training and staff costs were widely used to improve the quality of teaching and implementation of targeted approaches.

Broadly, school approaches to spending aligned with their challenges (see Table 5). However, in some cases more schools reported investing in interventions than reported what the intervention targeted as a key challenge. For example:

- SEMH and wellbeing: 79% of schools cited this as a challenge, but 92% funded targeted SEMH and wellbeing interventions.
- maths/numeracy: 53% of schools cited this as a specific challenge and 79% invested in a targeted intervention.
- access to enrichment/cultural activity: 42% cited this as a specific challenge, however 82% funded extracurricular activities and school clubs and 71% funded school trips.

One interpretation is that these approaches are deployed to address broader, related challenges (i.e., improving parental engagement with schools may be intended to improve pupil attendance and behaviour). Alternatively, it could be that schools are funding approaches that benefit the student body more broadly, rather than addressing only the challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils specified in their strategy statement.

Approaches such as tuition (98%), staff training (92%), and staff costs (79%) were all common approaches that did not directly correspond to a specific challenge. However, they are all approaches that support improving the quality of teaching and implementation of targeted approaches.

Table 5: The challenges facing disadvantaged pupils and approaches to spending the Pupil Premium

Challenges identified			Approaches cited		
1	Attainment: English/literacy	91%	1	Small groups or one-on-one tuition delivery	98%
2	Attendance	83%	2	Targeted English/literacy interventions	97%
3	Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) and wellbeing	79%	3	Staff training/continuous professional development	92%
4	Attainment: general or non-subject specific	77%*	4	Targeted social and emotional and mental health interventions	92%
5	Personal circumstances	72%	5	Pastoral support	86%*
6	Personal and social development	61%	6	Increasing attendance	84%
7	Attainment: Maths/numeracy	53%	7	Other Targeted Academic intervention	83%*
8	Access to enrichment/cultural opportunities	42%	8	Provision of extracurricular and school clubs	82%
9	Parental Engagement with learning at home & home learning environment (HLE)	40%	9	Parental engagement with schools	80%
10	Independent learning	37%	10	Targeted maths/numeracy interventions	79%
11	SEND	35%	11	Behaviour	79%*
12	Lack of financial means, equipment or resources	34%	12	Staff recruitment and retention costs	79%
13	Behaviour	33%	13	Targeted metacognitive/self-regulation intervention	78%*
14	Local factors	23%	14	Using data	74%
15	Human resourcing	22%	15	Hardship funding	74%
16	Aspiration	18%	16	Curriculum updates	73%
17	Physical health	14%	17	School trips	71%
18	English as an Additional Language (EAL)	10%	18	Use of teaching assistants	70%
19	Physical resourcing	7%	19	Engagement with wider services	70%
20	Attainment: Other subject	6%	20	Family support	70%
21	Belonging	6%	21	Formative / diagnostic assessment	67%
22	None of these	-	22	SEND	65%
			23	EdTech	57%
			24	Learning resources	52%
			25	Extended school time	52%
			26	Staff mentoring or coaching	41%
			27	Breakfast clubs	38%
			28	Parental engagement with home learning	38%
			29	Mentoring	36%
			30	Career support	19%
			31	Class size	14%
			32	Alternative Provision (AP) within school	12%
			33	English as an Additional Language (EAL)	11%
			34	Early career support	10%
			35	School facilities / wider resources	4%
			36	None of these	<1%

*Note. * Indicates codes with a human-AI agreement score of less than 70%. The ‘school factors’ (any factors specific to the school rather than the wider environment) challenge code is not shown in this table. This is because the human-AI agreement was less than 70% and analysis of the text extracts coded by the AI suggested that non-school factors were incorrectly coded as school factors by the AI. The subcodes ‘human resourcing’ (any human/staff factors that are explicitly referenced, e.g. teaching expertise, recruitment, professional development) and ‘physical resourcing’ (any physical resourcing factors explicitly referenced e.g. lack of outside space, classroom size) are summarised instead. They had a human-AI agreement of at least 70%. See Appendix B: Coding Framework for the codes and coding instructions.*

Which external programmes are schools funding with their Pupil Premium grant? How does this align with the EEF’s list of Promising Programmes?

Over two-thirds of schools (70%) reported using funding to implement specific programmes. The most commonly cited programmes were Emotional Learning Support Assistant (ELSA) (30%), Little Wandle (14%), Lexia (10%), White Rose Maths (9%), and the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (9%), which was also the most frequently mentioned on the EEF’s list of Promising Programmes. Primary schools were more likely than secondaries to invest in programmes like ELSA, Little Wandle, White Rose Maths and Nuffield. In contrast, secondary schools more often funded Lexia and The New Group Reading Test (NGRT).

Some schools reported using funding to buy external programmes. By programmes here we mean any programme, tool, or resource that schools can buy to support their activities.²⁴ Most schools (70%) mentioned at least one programme included in the coding framework in the ‘Activity in this academic year’ section of their pupil premium statement.²⁵ The most frequently cited programmes were Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) (30%),²⁶ Little Wandle (14%),²⁷ Lexia (10 %),^{28 29} White Rose Maths (9%),³⁰ and the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (9%) (see Figure 13).³¹

The EEF’s list of **Promising Programmes** highlights programmes that have demonstrated meaningful, cost-effective improvements in outcomes through independent evaluation, particularly for socio-economically disadvantaged pupils. The Nuffield Early Language Intervention was the most commonly cited programme that featured on the EEF’s list of promising programmes (9%), followed by Mathematics Mastery (7%). Fewer than 2% of schools cited each of the remaining programmes on the list (see Appendix Figure 3 in **Appendix C: Additional results**).

Lexia and White Rose Maths were among the most frequently cited programmes overall; for each of these, there is one version of the company’s programme that is on the EEF’s list of Promising Programmes (Lexia Reading Core5® and Reception Jigsaw respectively). We did include codes to count specific references to Lexia Reading Core5® and Reception Jigsaw. However, fewer than 1% of schools referenced Lexia Reading Core5® and no schools referenced Reception Jigsaw.

²⁴ Note that this definition is broader than how the EEF defines programmes for the purpose of its work. The EEF typically conceptualises programmes as defined packages of support for schools to make specific changes in teaching practice, usually consisting of professional development, resources and ongoing implementation support.

²⁵ This 70% includes schools who mentioned at least one of the 125 additional programmes coded as “Other”. Our results showed that 22% of schools cited at least one of these “Other” programmes in their Pupil Premium statements. The AI model was instructed not to code external named programmes mentioned in the ‘Part B: Review of the previous academic year’ section. This ensures that the named programmes captured by the model relate to the statement’s academic year, but does mean that there could have been other named programmes referenced in Part B that we not captured.

²⁶ ELSA programme is an educational psychology led intervention for promoting the emotional wellbeing of children and young people (<https://www.elsanetwork.org/>)

²⁷ Little Wandle programme is used to teach essential reading skills, support word reading, and assess progress (<https://www.littlewandle.org.uk/>)

²⁸ Lexia provides personalised literacy programs for schools (<https://www.lexiauk.co.uk/>)

²⁹ This proportion represents the mention of any of the following Lexia programmes: Lexia learning, Lexia power up, Lexia (phonics), Lexia® Core5® Reading

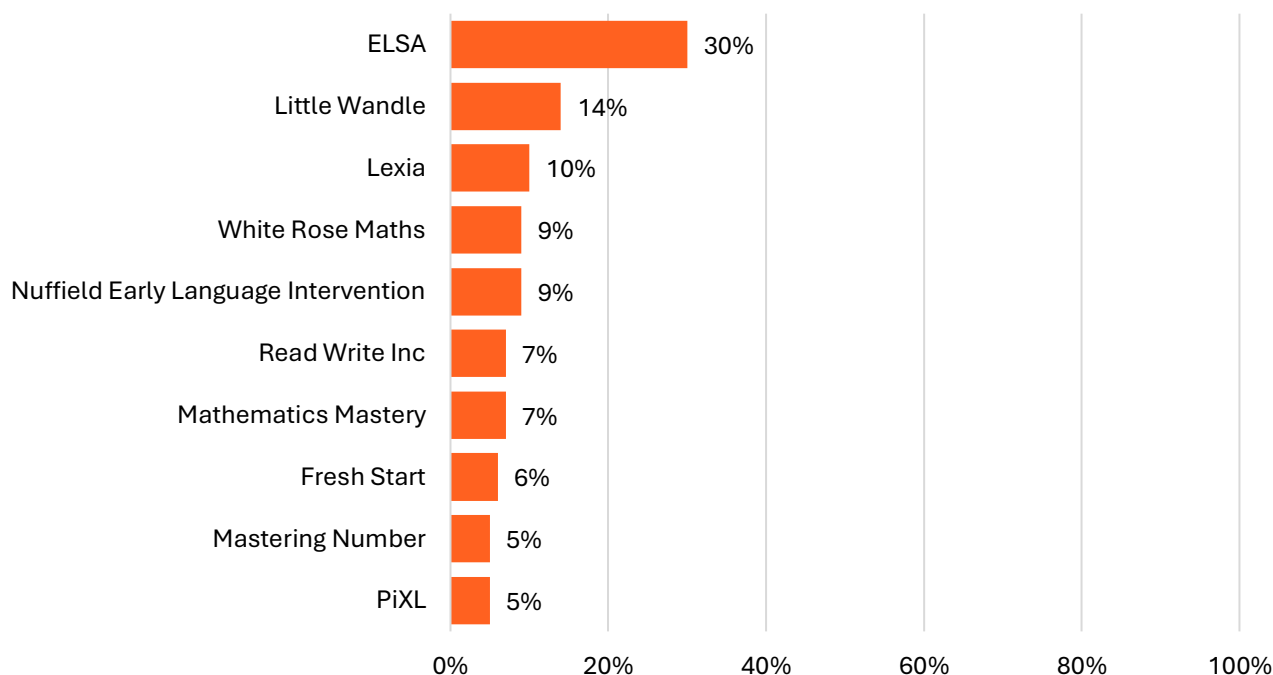
³⁰ White Rose Maths is a mastery-based scheme of learning for mathematics (<https://whiteroseeducation.com/>)

³¹ Nuffield Early Language Intervention is an integrated programme for 4-5 year-year-olds aimed at improving language and behaviour (<https://www.teachneli.org/>)

That said, it is possible that schools who mentioned ‘Lexia’ or ‘White Rose Maths’ could have been referring to the Promising Programme version of the programmes. However, we cannot know this for certain.

Several other frequently cited programmes have also either previously been evaluated by, or are currently being evaluated by, the EEF (Read Write Inc, Fresh Start and Mastering Number).

Figure 13. The 10 most frequently cited external programmes

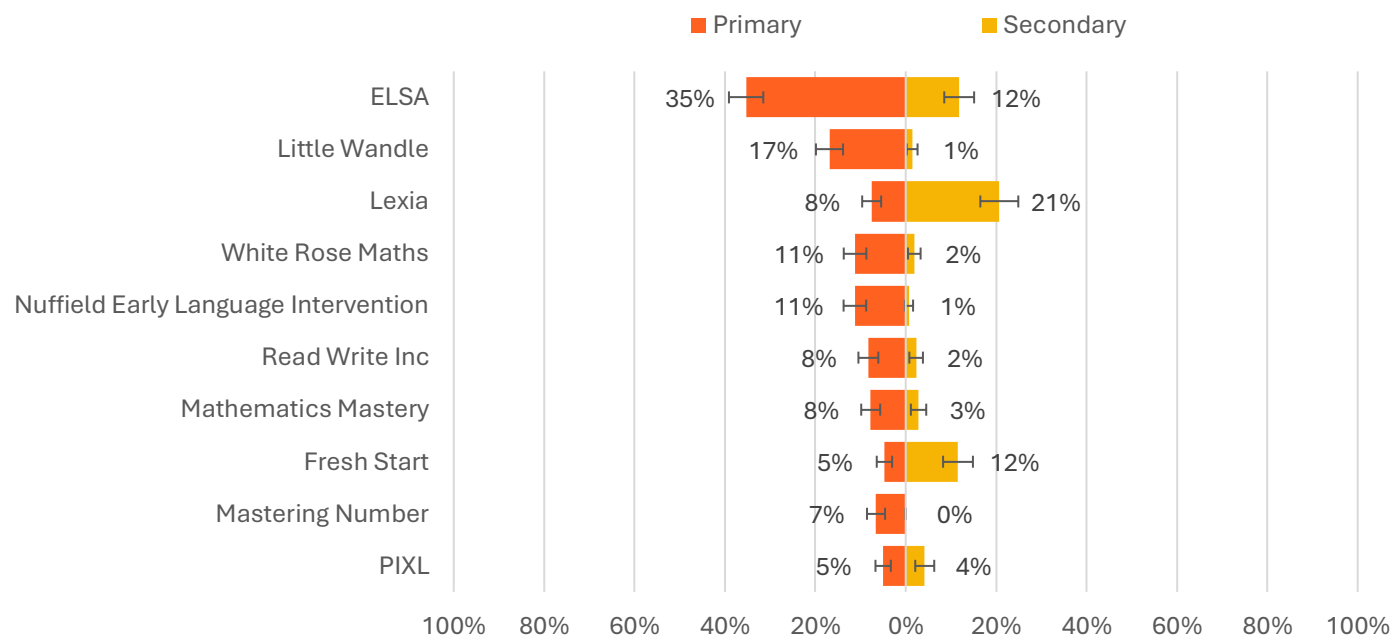


Note. Unweighted base N = 1,135 (only includes schools where the AI could read and code the “Activity in this academic year” section of the Pupil Premium statement). Weighted data was used to calculate the proportions. Unweighted counts: ELSA – 281; Little Wandle – 119; Lexia – 136; White Rose Maths – 84; Nuffield Early Language Intervention – 77; Read Write Inc – 72; Mathematics Mastery – 62; Fresh Start – 82; Mastering Number – 43; PiXL – 47.

Variation by school characteristic

Primary schools were more likely to fund ELSA (35% vs 12%), Little Wandle (17% vs 1%), White Rose Maths (11% vs 2%) and Nuffield Early Language Intervention (11% vs 1%; see Figure 14). Secondaries were more likely to fund Lexia (21% vs 8%), and The New Group Reading Test (NGRT) (19% vs 1%). For some of these programmes, this will be reflective of the age groups targeted by the interventions.

Figure 14. The 10 most frequently cited external programmes by phase



Note. Unweighted base: Primary N = 641; Secondary N = 393 (only includes schools with data on pupils eligible for PP and schools where the AI could read and code the “Activity in this academic year” section of the Pupil Premium statement). Weighted data was used to calculate the proportions. Unweighted counts (Primary/Secondary): ELSA – 218/48; Little Wandle – 107/6; Lexia – 52/80; White Rose Maths – 72/9; Nuffield Early Language Intervention – 72/3; Read Write Inc – 54/12; Mathematics Mastery – 49/10; Fresh Start – 30/49; Mastering Number – 41/0; PIXL – 30/15.

What types of evidence are being cited in Pupil Premium statements?

Schools most commonly cited the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) as their evidence source (93%), followed by their own data (83%), the Department for Education (63%) and academic papers (44%). Special schools were less likely than mainstream schools to cite EEF and DfE evidence sources. Among EEF resources, the Toolkit was most frequently used (81%), with guidance reports on professional development, literacy, teaching assistants and metacognition also widely cited.

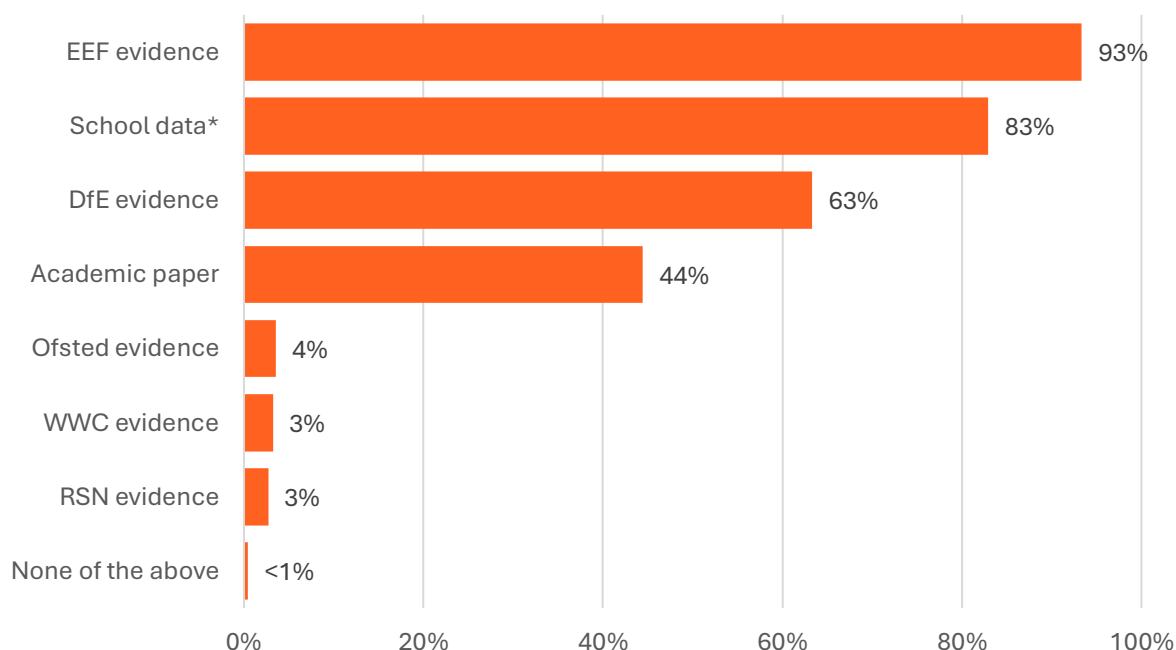
Schools are required by the Department for Education to provide evidence to support their approaches. The most frequently cited evidence sources were the EEF (93%), schools’ own data (83%)³², DfE (63%), and academic papers (44%) (see Figure 15). Schools also cited evidence from other sources, including from programme publishers, foundations, charities, and trusts, and local authorities. This does not necessarily align with data on resources school leaders use to develop their Pupil Premium strategies (Department for Education, 2026c). For example, compared to this research, the DfE school and college voice survey found that fewer senior leaders reported using EEF resources (78% vs 93%), and more schools reported using DfE Pupil Premium guidance (75% vs 20%) to develop their strategies. One interpretation of this is that certain resources may inform the strategy development process but are less useful for directly evidencing approaches. Additionally, compared to the proportion of schools who used the EEF toolkit to evidence their statements, The Sutton Trust survey found fewer senior leaders used the EEF toolkit to decide which approaches and programmes to

³² The proportion of schools using school data to support their spending plans should be interpreted with caution as it likely overestimates how many schools did this. While this code did pick up instances correctly where schools quoted “their experience” as evidence and their “internal data” such as pupil voice where it backed up their approach, it also picked up some examples that better sit under approaches (e.g., formative assessments and using data to monitor and track progress).

adopt to improve pupil learning (68% vs 81%) (The Sutton Trust, 2026). However, this could be explained by the differences in our research methodology and scope.

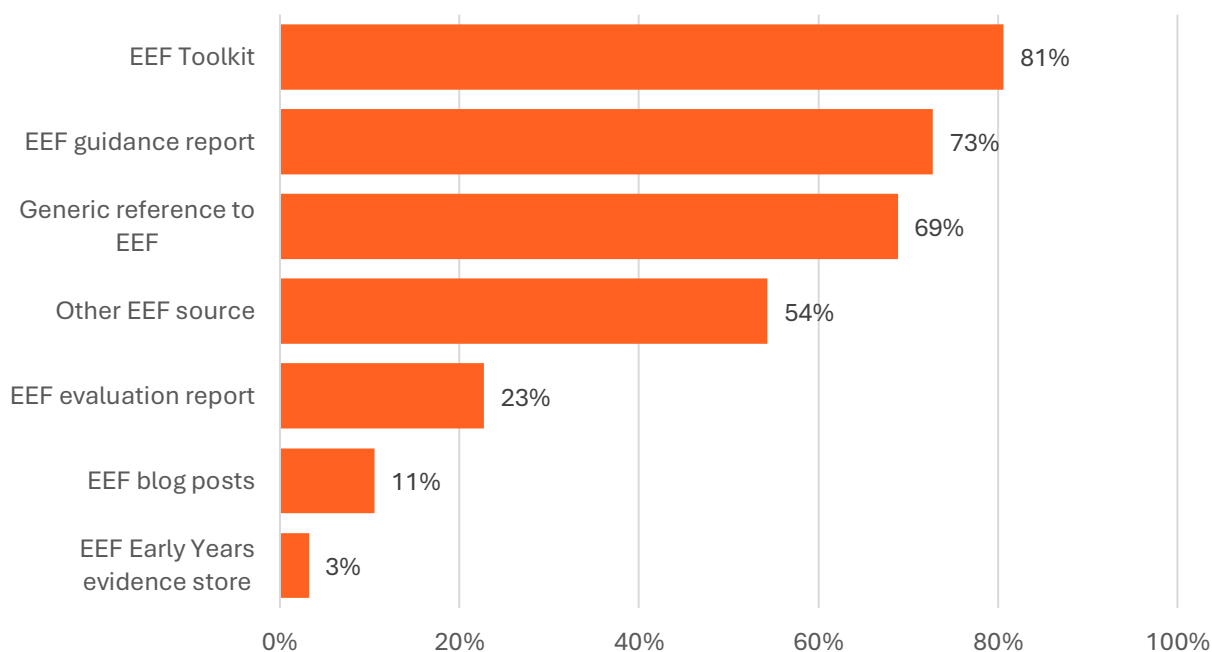
The most frequently cited EEF evidence sources were the EEF Toolkit (81%), followed by EEF guidance reports (73%), and EEF evaluation reports (23%) (see Figure 16). Across the full sample, 46% of schools cited Guidance on Effective Professional Development, 25% on Improving Literacy in KS2, 25% on Improving Literacy in KS1, 24% on Deployment of Teaching Assistants, and 20% on Metacognition and Self-regulated Learning.

Figure 15. Proportion of schools citing each evidence source



Unweighted base N = 1,188 (only includes schools where the AI could read and code the “Evidence” section of the Pupil Premium statement). Weighted data was used to calculate the proportions. Unweighted counts: EEF evidence – 1,099; Other evidence type – 1,038; School data – 992; DfE evidence – 731; Academic paper – 568; Ofsted evidence – 42; WWC evidence – 52; RSN evidence – 46; None of the above – 5. *This code had a human-AI agreement score of less than 70% and should be interpreted with caution. The code with an agreement scores of less than 70% was School data (61%). See Appendix D for more detail on all codes with an agreement score below 70%.

Figure 16. Proportion of schools citing each type of EEF evidence



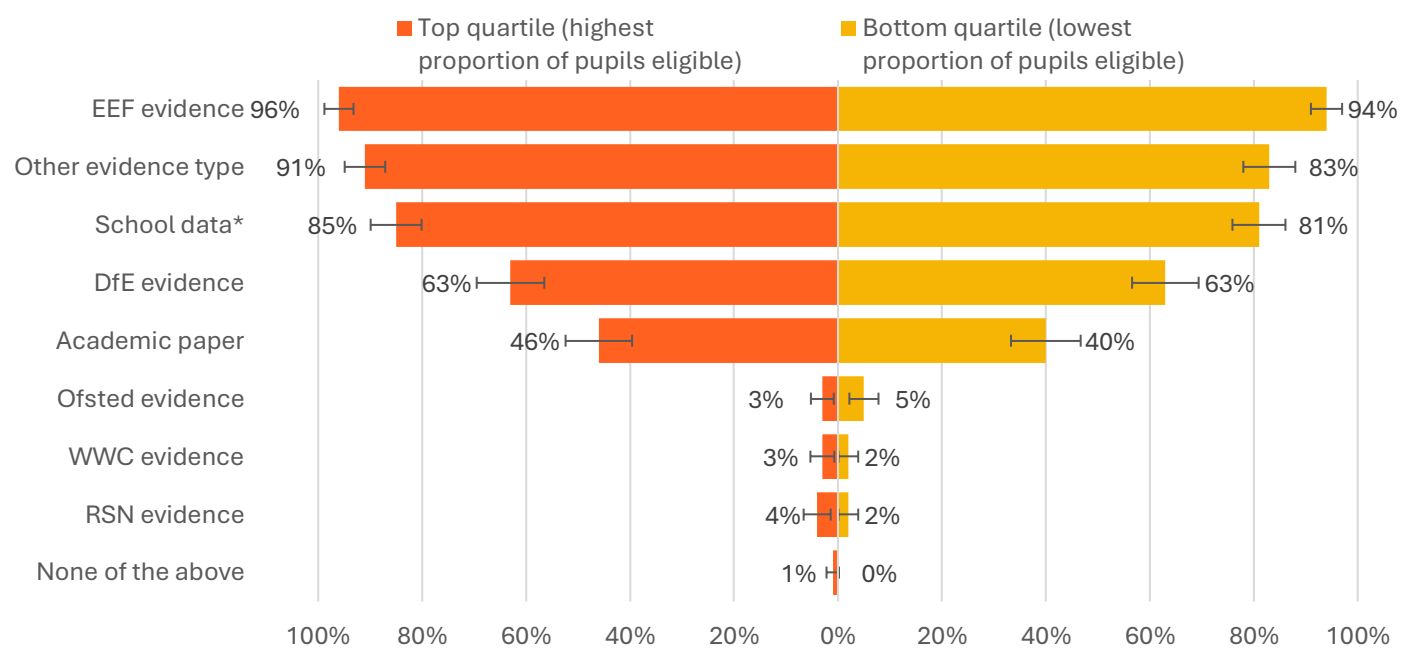
Note. Unweighted base N = 1,175 (only includes schools where the AI could read and code the “Activity in this academic year” section of the Pupil Premium statement). Weighted data was used to calculate the proportions. Unweighted counts: EEF Toolkit – 942; EEF guidance report – 865; Generic reference to EEF – 809; Other EEF source – 647; EEF evaluation report – 272; EEF blog posts – 120; EEF Early Years evidence store – 31.

Variation by school characteristic

Schools with higher proportions of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium cited evidence sources at similar rates to those with lower proportions of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium (see Figure 17).³³

Compared with mainstream schools, Special Schools were less likely to cite EEF and DfE evidence including the EEF toolkit (54% vs 79-84%), EEF guidance reports (42% vs 69-79%), and DfE guidance (37% vs 62-65%). There is some evidence that Special Schools can find it difficult to evidence their statements. For example, among teachers and leaders in Special Schools, more than one in five (22%) said using evidence was the most challenge of the 5 steps to effective use of the Pupil Premium (Department for Education, 2026c).

Figure 17. Proportion of schools citing each evidence source by schools in the top and bottom quartiles for the proportion of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium



Note. Unweighted base: Top quartile N = 263; Bottom quartile N = 271 (only includes schools with data on pupil enrolment and schools where the AI could read and code the “Evidence” section of the Pupil Premium statement). Weighted data was used to calculate the proportions. Unweighted counts (Top quartile/Bottom quartile): EEF evidence – 254/256; School data – 226/226; DfE evidence – 167/167; WWC evidence – 11/8; Academic paper – 136/117; Other evidence type – 242/227; RSN evidence – 12/11; Ofsted evidence – 8/13; None of the above – 2/0. *This code had a human-AI agreement score of less than 70% and should be interpreted with caution. The code with an agreement scores of less than 70% was School data (61%). See Appendix D for more detail on all codes with an agreement score below 70%.

³³ We also included a coding variable to assess how many schools cited evidence from other What Works Centres (not including the EEF). The results showed that 36% of school cited evidence from these sources. However, we do not report this result in the main text due to concerns about reliability of the AI-coder.

Limitations of findings

When interpreting the results, it is important to consider the limitations of the research, which include the following:

Assessing template and exemplar similarity

Our methodology for assessing the similarity of statements to the DfE template involved looking at whether schools used the template's headings to structure their statements. While this approach provides an indication of the structural similarity of statements with the template, there are some limitations. Firstly, the approach was limited in what it could tell us about whether schools included the required and relevant information as per the template instructions under each of the section headings. For example, 1,164 schools used the 'Challenges' heading, but key challenges were only extracted for 1,155 schools.

In terms of our methodology for assessing exemplar similarity, the n-gram approach provided a measure of the degree of overlap between the exemplars and schools' statements. However, the approach relies on exact matching of sequences of five words and so is vulnerable to paraphrasing and semantics; a slight rewrite, use of a synonym, or minor insertion will reduce the similarity score. Therefore, it can be difficult to interpret the scores directly. Also, we generated similarity scores at the section level and did not adjust them for section length. Therefore, two schools could have copied the same amount of text from the exemplar, but if one had a longer section of authentic text, its similarity score would be lower.

Interpretation of codes with high co-occurrence

The structure of our coding framework meant that it was not possible to know how schools combined different approaches to address challenges. Across all schools, the co-occurrence of some approaches was high as measured using the Pearson correlation coefficient. In some cases, schools may have used combined approaches to address their challenges. For example:

- **Disciplinary literacy interventions** and **targeted teaching assistant support** (Pearson correlation coefficient: 0.639)
- **School trips** and **hardship funding** (Pearson correlation coefficient: 0.599)
- **Extracurricular clubs** and **hardship funding** (Pearson correlation coefficient: 0.407)
- **Extracurricular clubs** and **school trips** (Pearson correlation coefficient: 0.378)
- **Formative diagnostics** and **using school data** (Pearson correlation coefficient: 0.365)

In other cases, co-occurrence may be a result of categorising the same approach in multiple ways or double coding. For example:

- **Family support** and **parental engagement with schools** (Pearson correlation coefficient: 0.564)
- **Targeted SEMH and mental health interventions** and **pastoral support** (Pearson correlation coefficient: 0.557)

Future research could address this limitation by expanding the coding framework to reduce instances of cataloguing one approach into many codes. This could be done by adding new codes for commonly combined approaches (e.g. pedagogical software and apps used by pupils as learning resources) or by adding new subcodes to reduce assigning the same approach to multiple codes (e.g. adding subcodes to hardship funding to indicate types of activities and resources the funding is intended for).

Another reason co-occurrence was difficult to interpret was that we could not directly connect approaches to the challenges they addressed (see **Linking challenges to approaches** section). Therefore, we do not know which approaches schools used to address specific challenges (e.g. attendance) and how these specific approaches differed

between schools. Schools are required to provide this information in the statements by numbering their challenges and referring to the challenge number when outlining their approaches to support disadvantaged pupils.

Linking challenges to approaches

How schools' approaches to spending align with their identified challenges was one of the research questions for this project. However, we did not link the approaches taken by schools to the challenges they were used to address at an individual school level. As a result, we were limited to the extent we could answer this question about alignment.

To provide richer insights into which approaches schools are – or are not – using to address their challenges at a school level, we would need to know which approaches schools used to address each of their challenges. This information is captured by the Pupil Premium statements in the 'Activity in the academic year' section, where schools can refer to the challenge numbers (defined in the 'Challenges' section) that each approach addresses. However, we did not have enough time and resource to develop a method for using this information. This could be addressed in future research.

Interpretation of named programme and evidence codes

While the AI often outperformed human coders when screening statements for the presence of keywords, the AI coder was limited in its ability to interpret how the keywords were used and in which contexts. For example, to estimate how many schools used Pupil Premium funds to buy specific named programmes, we instructed the machine learning algorithm to screen the 'Activity in this academic year' section for the programme name. This means that, while our results can tell us how many schools referred to a named programme or evidence source in the 'Activity in this academic year' section, we have limited understanding of how schools engaged with the programme (i.e. are schools engaging with the full programme or are they just using some of the resources that that company provides?) and the quality of implementation. It is also possible that schools used the names of some programmes to refer to other broader concepts. For example, a school could refer to 'maths mastery' and be referring to the teaching approach more broadly, rather than the specific Ark mathematics mastery programme itself (or even other programmes that support mastery of maths, like the Maths Hubs' 'Teaching for Mastery' programme).

Similarly to evidence cited, the AI performed well at screening statements for the mention of specific guidance or reports where the AI could look for a specific name. However, for other codes (such as 'School data'), where the way schools articulated this as an evidence source was more ambiguous and less consistent between schools, we could not be as specific with instructions for the AI coder, and so the AI may have identified this as an evidence source less accurately.

Reliability of information in the Pupil Premium statements

There are also some general limitations of using Pupil Premium statements as a source of data for understanding how schools spent the Pupil Premium. Previous research found that around seven in ten (69%) schools use multiple funding sources to provide support to disadvantaged pupils (Verian, 2025). Therefore, some schools may have used the statements to outline their general approaches to supporting disadvantaged pupils, rather than the way they spent the Pupil Premium specifically. For instance, some of the programmes mentioned in schools' statements can be funded by other sources (for example, schools can often get funding for DfE-validated Systematic Synthetic Phonics programmes through their local English hub). In these cases, it was not possible to distinguish the approaches funded by the Pupil Premium from those that were not.

Additionally, Pupil Premium statements are plans for how the funds will be spent; in reality schools could have spent the money differently by the end of the academic year. Pupil Premium statements are also self-reported by the schools and published on school websites for anyone to read. Therefore, it is possible that this influences what schools choose to report in statements.

Discussion and implications

How do our findings relate to 2024/25?

Many of the findings in this report replicate those from our research covering the academic year 2024/25: there are more similarities in the results than differences. The top challenges, approaches, named programmes and evidence cited were the same between years, and we found similar patterns each year for different types of school. This is unsurprising, since Pupil Premium statements are often written to cover three-year periods, and 56% of the statements in our sample included the year 2024/25 or earlier. Moreover, as mentioned, there was some overlap in the schools included in the samples. However, this was a small proportion of the total sample (7%) and so we would not expect this overlap to have had a large impact on our results.

When comparing the incidence of challenges, approaches, and evidence across academic years, we considered both the code's relative ranking and the proportion of schools citing it. Relative ranking highlights which codes were most cited in each year and is useful for assessing how the relative popularity of codes changed between years. However, it is also useful to consider this alongside the incidence of each code, as some codes moved in the rankings but were identified in a similar frequency of schools in each year.

Challenges

The three most common challenges this year were the same as those in 2024/25, and in the same order: English/literacy attainment, attendance, and social emotional and mental health and wellbeing. For these three challenges, we also found a similar pattern to the 2024/25 academic year when comparing schools by phase and by the proportion of students eligible for Pupil Premium funding. A review of Pupil Premium spending across the North East Combined authority region in 2024/25, also found the same top three challenges in their research (Harrison *et al.*, 2026).

This aligns with wider research. For example:

- **English/literacy attainment:** The literacy attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is well documented in both primary and secondary schools (Thomson, 2024).
- **Attendance:** recent data on absence rates showed that overall absence and persistent absence have slightly increased since the previous academic year, and both remain higher for pupils eligible for free school meals (Department for Education, 2026e). An emerging evidence base posits many key drivers of absence, some of which are reflected in other highly-cited challenges in this research, including mental health, behaviour, local factors and parental engagement with schools (Arnot, 2025; Cattán *et al.*, 2023; Carr *et al.*, 2026; Cary and Webb, 2025; Centre for Mental Health and CYPMHC, 2024; Jerim, 2025).
- **Social emotional and mental health and wellbeing:** Evidence suggests SEMH and wellbeing challenges are a rising challenge across England. Analysis released by education charity NutureUK suggests that the number of pupils with high level of needs has increased by 60% since 2018 (Wyer, 2025).

Compared to the 2024/25 academic year, a number of challenges increased substantially this year, notably: general or non-subject-specific attainment (+53pp); personal and social development (+37pp); personal circumstances (+30pp); and parental engagement with learning at home & home learning environment (+19pp). In the case of general or non-subject specific attainment, the human-AI reliability score was less than 70%, so the incidence of these challenges should be interpreted with caution. For the others, as discussed in **Methodological considerations**, this jump in incidence could be for one or several of three reasons: it may reflect genuine changes in schools' statements, a difference in the sample of schools drawn each year, or our use of an updated AI model for this year's data collection, which captured codes more efficiently and intelligently. Given that no challenges decreased to the same extent, it is likely that these codes were undercounted in 2024/25 because the previous AI model had difficulty discerning these challenges in statements. Therefore, we should interpret the difference in incidence of these codes between academic years with caution.

Although some of the top ten challenges were the same this year as in 2024/25, there were some changes in the rankings. Some challenges moved up in the top ten. For example, both years, personal circumstances was more likely to be cited by schools with a higher proportion of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium.

Three related challenges have ranked more highly this year, compared to 2024/25:

- Personal and social development (2025/26: 6th most common, cited by 61%, 2024/25: 9th most common, cited by 24%),
- Independent learning (2025/26: 10th most common, cited by 37%, 2024/25: 14th most common, cited by 18%) and
- Parental engagement with learning at home (2025/26: 9th most common, cited by 40%, 2024/25: 12th most common, cited by 21%).

There was some evidence that these challenges became more prevalent for schools with a larger number of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium.

Others moved down in the rankings, despite being cited by a similar proportion of schools across years. For example, SEND was the 11th most common challenge in 2025/26, cited by 35%, compared to the 8th most common in 2024/25, cited by 32%. It remains a challenge more commonly cited by primary schools than by secondaries. Also, this year access to enrichment was the 8th most common challenge, cited by 42%, compared to the 6th most common in 2024/25, cited by 45%.

Approaches

The three most frequently cited approaches were the same across academic years. These were tuition, targeted English/literacy interventions, and staff training/continuous professional development. The order within these three, however, was not the same: tuition was the most frequently cited approach this year, but only the 3rd most cited in 2024/25. As in 2024/25, the top three most cited approaches were the same in both primaries and secondaries, and in schools with higher and lower numbers of students eligible for the Pupil Premium.

Outside of the top three, the incidence of some approaches increased this year compared to 2024/25: this year 25 approaches were detected in more than half of schools, and in the 2024/25 academic year, 12 approaches were cited by more than half of schools. The following approaches saw a particularly notable increase in their incidence: other targeted academic intervention (+72pp)³⁴; pastoral support (+54pp)³⁵; parental engagement with schools (+36pp); extracurricular and school clubs (+24pp); targeted social and emotional & mental health intervention (+23pp). Two of these codes, other targeted academic intervention and pastoral support, had a human-AI agreement score of less than 70%, and so should be interpreted with caution. As noted above, it is most likely that the increased incidence is largely due to the AI's improvements, rather than to substantial increases in schools funding these approaches.

This year, fewer schools cited using the Pupil Premium to fund teaching assistants (2024/25: 4th most common, cited by 75% of schools; 2025/26: 18th most common, cited by 70%). This decrease was driven by primary schools. In the 2024/25 academic year, 81% of primaries planned to fund teaching assistants, however for 2025/26 it was 76%. For secondary schools, a similar proportion planned to fund teaching assistants in 2025/26 (52%) and 2024/25 (53%). This is consistent with the Sutton Trust's finding that most primary school leaders reported making cuts to teaching assistants (The Sutton Trust, 2026).

Two approaches dropped out of the top ten this year, but were cited by a higher proportion of schools compared to 2024/25. These were targeted metacognitive/self-regulation interventions (2024/25: 9th most common, cited by 55% of schools; 2025/26: 13th most common, cited by 78%) and staff recruitment and retention costs (2024/25: 10th most common, cited by 53%; 2025/26: 12th most common, cited by 79%).

³⁴ The human-AI agreement score was 29%.

³⁵ The human-AI agreement score was 61%.

Named programmes

The most-cited external programmes in general and the most-cited external programmes on the EEF's promising programmes list stayed the same in 2024/5 and 2025/6. The overall top three cited programmes were ELSA, Little Wandle and Lexia (of which Lexia Reading Core5 is a 'promising programme' but this data refers to the full suite of Lexia programmes). Of the 'promising programmes', the most popular was NELI, followed by Mathematics Mastery. There was no substantive increase in the proportion of schools citing each promising programme in 2025/6 compared to 2024/5.

Evidence cited

Research from 2018 suggests some schools favour internal data and the opinions of staff over external data sources and academic research when deciding 'what works' (Fellows and Barton, 2018). However, more recent evidence suggests a similar proportion of schools use internal and external data sources to evidence their spending plans. According to the Sutton Trust survey of schools' use of Pupil Premium funding, the two most common way schools decide which approaches and programmes to adopt to improve pupil learning were 'using past experience of what works' (56%) and 'considering research evidence on the impact of different approaches and programmes' (55%) (The Sutton Trust, 2026).

Our research found that in both years, almost all schools cited evidence to support their spending plans, with <1% of schools in both years citing none of the evidence sources in our coding framework. Most schools cited external evidence. For example, more than 90% of schools cited evidence from the EEF in both 2024/25 and 2025/26. In both years the EEF toolkit and guidance reports (specifically, the reports on leadership and literacy) were the most cited EEF sources. This year, 83% of schools used their own data to evidence their spending plans, up from 54% in 2024/25 (although the proportion of schools citing their own data is likely an overestimate based on a review of the examples selected by the AI coder).

Conclusions

Schools can determine how to spend the Pupil Premium based on the needs of their disadvantaged pupils. However, the Department for Education has no systematic way of understanding how the Pupil Premium is spent, and therefore whether funding effectively supports the attainment of disadvantaged pupils (Committee of Public Accounts, 2025). Therefore, the aim of this research was to investigate how schools report spending the Pupil Premium in 2025/26, and how this compared to the previous year.

We analysed a sample of 1,201 statements covering 2025/26 (previously we analysed 1,255 Pupil Premium statements covering 2024/25). Our findings revealed some broad trends relating to the approach to spend across all schools in the sample. For example, English/literacy attainment, attendance and SEMH and wellbeing were the most commonly cited challenges for disadvantaged pupils.

However, we also found that the challenges and approaches to spending the Pupil Premium differed by school phase, type, and the proportion and number of pupils eligible for funding. This suggests that schools adapted their Pupil Premium spend to their different contexts. For example, there were some differences in the challenges faced by primary schools compared to secondary schools, Special Schools compared to mainstream provision, and in schools with different proportions of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium.

Compared to the 2024/25 academic year, some challenges moved up to ranking of the most commonly cited. These included: personal circumstances (72% vs 42%), personal and social development (61% vs 24%), parental engagement with home learning (40% vs 21%), and independent learning (37% vs 18%). Although, we do not know how much of these changes were a result of improvements to the AI this year, and how much these reflect changes in challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils.

Most schools allocated funds to all three tiers of the 'menu of approaches' set out by the EEF. However, on average there was a slight skew towards academic support and high-quality teaching compared to wider strategies. This was also the case in the 2024/25 academic year. In most cases, school approaches to spending the Pupil Premium aligned with the

challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils. However, there were some cases where targeted interventions were cited more often than the challenges, they directly target (e.g. SEMH and wellbeing interventions, maths and numeracy interventions, and extracurricular activities and clubs). In general, approaches varied depending on school phase, size, and proportion of pupils eligible for funding.

We found 70% of schools cited at least one external programme from our coding framework as a part of their approaches. However, only 9% of schools cited the Nuffield Early Language Intervention, which was the most popular programme of the EEF's list of promising programmes. We found no strong evidence that the proportion of schools citing promising programmes increased from the 2024/25 academic year.

Schools used a variety of evidence sources to support their choice of approaches, with EEF being the most popular. This was followed by the use of the schools' own data and DfE evidence. In some cases, the use of evidence also varied by school. For example, Special Schools were less likely than mainstream schools to cite the EEF and DfE as evidence sources. It is possible that Special Schools found EEF resources less helpful when planning how to spend the Pupil Premium, as EEF guidance focuses on SEND in mainstream schools. Schools with a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils cited the EEF at similar rates to those with lower proportions of disadvantaged pupils.

In conclusion, this report investigated how schools planned to spend the Pupil Premium in the 2025/26 academic year. This report is not an endorsement by Verian or the EEF of any specific approaches to Pupil Premium spending, nor an assessment of their impact. Instead, our findings provided insights into the challenges, approaches, the balance of spend across categories, and the evidence sources cited by schools in their 2025/26 Pupil Premium statements, and how these differed across school contexts. This project also demonstrated the value of using an AI-coder to extract data from Pupil Premium statements into a structured coding framework at scale, pace, and across multiple years to enable comparison.

Table 6. Key findings

Key Findings
Headline finding 1: The most frequently cited challenges facing disadvantaged pupils were English/literacy attainment, attendance, and social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) and wellbeing. The prevalence of challenges differed by school phase and proportion of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium. These results were consistent with findings from the 2024/25 academic year.
Headline finding 2: Schools allocated more budget to targeted academic support and high-quality teaching, and less to wider strategies. Primary schools, schools with fewer pupils enrolled, local authority-maintained schools, and schools with fewer disadvantaged pupils allocated more to targeted support. These results were consistent with findings from the 2024/25 academic year.
Headline finding 3: Tuition, English/literacy interventions, and staff training were the most cited approaches to address challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils. These were also the top three approaches in 2024/25.
Headline finding 4: Schools' spending decisions generally aligned with their reported challenges. Commonly cited approaches like tuition and staff training likely addressed multiple or broader challenges. Some targeted interventions, such as SEMH and wellbeing, maths/numeracy, and access to enrichment or cultural capital, were reported by more schools than those who indicated these areas as key challenges.
Headline finding 5: 70% of schools cited an external programme. This was a slight increase from 67% in 2024/25.
Headline finding 6: Schools most frequently cited evidence to support their statements from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) (93%), followed by their own data (83%), and the Department for Education (DfE) (63%). This was the case in both 2025/26 and 2024/25.

References

- Annot, M. (2025) *The relationship between mental ill health and absence in students aged 13 to 16: Results from the longitudinal study of young people – cohort 2*. Department for Education. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationship-between-mental-ill-health-and-absence-in-students-aged-13-to-16>.
- Carpenter, H. et al. (2013) *Evaluation of Pupil Premium*. Department for Education. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7c8811ed915d48c2410633/DFE-RR282.pdf>.
- Carr, K. et al. (2026) *The independent inquiry into white working class educational outcomes*. Available at: <https://educationaloutcomes.org.uk/>.
- Cary, E. and Webb, L. (2025) *Children’s wellbeing in schools*. POSTnote 739. UK Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.58248/PN739> (Accessed: 19 August 2026).
- Cattan, S. et al. (2023) ‘The impact of area level mental health interventions on outcomes for secondary school pupils: Evidence from the HeadStart programme in England’, *Economics of Education Review*, 96. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2023.102425> (Accessed: 19 August 2026).
- Centre for Mental Health and Children & Young People’s Mental Health Coalition (2024) *Not in school: The mental health barriers to school attendance*. Parliamentary Briefing. Available at: https://cypmhc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Attendance-and-Mental-Health_April24.pdf (Accessed: 19 August 2026).
- Child of the North and Centre for Young Lives (2024) *A country that works for all children and young people: An evidence-based plan for improving school attendance*. Available at: <https://www.centreforyounglives.org.uk/news-centre/call-for-new-era-of-school-inclusion-and-belonging-as-attendance-crisis-report-warns-children-in-the-north-and-children-with-sen-are-more-likely-to-be-persistently-missing-school> (Accessed: 26 September 2025).
- Committee of Public Accounts (2025) *Improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged children*. House of Commons committee report Thirteenth Report of Session 2024–25. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmpubacc/365/report.html> (Accessed: 30 July 2026).
- Dellar, A. (2025) *Educational outcomes across England*. Institute For Government. Available at: <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publication/performance-tracker-local/educational-outcomes> (Accessed: 26 September 2025).
- Department for Education (2024) ‘Pupil premium strategy statement blank template’. GOV.UK. Available at: https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F66f66e4630536cb927482873%2FPupil_premium_strategy_statement_blank_template.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK (Accessed: 23 September 2025).
- Department for Education (2025b) *Using pupil premium guidance for school leaders*. Department for Education. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67f6537790615dd92bc90da9/Using_pupil_premium_guidance.pdf.
- Department for Education (2026a) *Pupil attendance in schools, Week 29 2026*. Available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-attendance-in-schools/2026-week-29-end-of-25-26-ay#section-academic-year-2025-26> (Accessed: 26 August 2026).
- Department for Education (2026b) ‘*Pupil characteristics - number of pupils by ethnicity and language*’ from ‘*Schools, pupils and their characteristics*’. GOV.UK. Available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/1de3ef72-16ea-45ed-72f6-08def14588fa> (Accessed: 18 August 2026).
- Department for Education (2026c) *School and college voice: January 2026*, GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-and-college-voice-omnibus-surveys-for-2025-to-2026/school-and-college-voice-january-2026> (Accessed: 19 August 2026).

Department for Education (2026d) *School workforce in England, Annual statistics on teachers and support staff (TAs) in England. Age, sex, ethnicity, pupil teacher ratio (PTR), retention, pay, subject taught and absence*. Available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england/2025> (Accessed: 20 July 2026).

Department for Education (2026e) 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics: Academic year 2025/26'. Available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics/2025-26> (Accessed: 29 July 2026).

Education and Skills Funding Agency and Department for Education (2025) *Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2025 to 2026*, GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2025-to-2026> (Accessed: 3 July 2026).

Education Endowment Foundation (2025a) *Metacognition and self-regulation*. Available at: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/metacognition-and-self-regulation> (Accessed: 26 September 2025).

Education Endowment Foundation (2025b) *The EEF Guide to the Pupil Premium*. Available at: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/using-pupil-premium> (Accessed: 23 September 2025).

Fellows, T. and Barton, M. (2018) *Spotlight on Disadvantage: The role and impact of governing boards in spending, monitoring and evaluating the pupil premium*. Available at: <https://www.nga.org.uk/knowledge-centre/spotlight-disadvantage-pupil-premium-research/> (Accessed: 30 July 2026).

Harrison, D.W. et al. (2026) *Pupil Premium Strategy Report: North East Combined Authority Pupil Premium Strategies Primary Schools 2024-2025*.

Jerrim, J. (2025) *Mind the Engagement Gap: A National Study of Pupil Engagement in England's Schools*. ImpactEd Group. Available at: <https://www.impactgroup.uk/research-campaigns-and-resources/mind-the-engagement-gap-a-national-study-of-pupil-engagement-in-englands-schools> (Accessed: 19 August 2026).

McHugh, M.L. (2012) 'Interrater reliability: the kappa statistic', *Biochemia Medica*, 22(3), pp. 276–282.

Office for National Statistics (2026) *Explore local statistics*. Explore Subnational Statistics (ESS). Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/explore-local-statistics/> (Accessed: 18 August 2026).

Ovenden-Hope, T., Passy, R. and Iglehart, P. (2022) 'Educational Isolation and the challenge of "place" for securing and sustaining a quality teacher supply', in I. Mentor (ed.). Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1–22. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-59533-3_7-1 (Accessed: 18 August 2026).

The Sutton Trust (2026) *School Funding and Pupil Premium 2026*. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/school-funding-and-pupil-premium-2026/> (Accessed: 3 July 2026).

Thomson, D. (2024) 'How attainment gaps in literacy change over time', *FFT Education Datalab*, 19 September. Available at: <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2024/09/how-attainment-gaps-in-literacy-change-over-time/> (Accessed: 30 July 2026).

Transport for the North (2026) *TRSE In England Visualiser*. Available at: <https://trse.transportforthenorth.com/> (Accessed: 18 August 2026).

UNICEF UK (no date) *Resources for Rights Respecting Schools - UNICEF UK, UNICEF UK*. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/resources/> (Accessed: 25 September 2025).

Verian (2025) *Pupil premium and recovery premium evaluation*. Department for Education.

Wyer, C. (2025) 'Over 3 million children in England need support with social and emotional development', *nurtureuk*, 18 November. Available at: <https://www.nurtureuk.org/more-than-three-million-school-children-in-england-estimated-to-need-support-with-social-and-emotional-development/> (Accessed: 30 July 2026).

Appendix A: Pupil Premium statement template for AY25/26

Before completing this template, read the Education Endowment Foundation's guide to the pupil premium and DfE's pupil premium guidance for school leaders, which includes the 'menu of approaches'. It is for school leaders to decide what activity to spend their pupil premium on, within the framework set out by the menu.

All schools that receive pupil premium are required to use this template to complete and publish a pupil premium statement on their school website by 31 December every academic year.

If you are starting a new pupil premium strategy plan, use this blank template. If you are continuing a strategy plan from last academic year, you may prefer to edit your existing statement, if that version was published using the template.

Before publishing your completed statement, delete the instructions (text in italics) in this template, and this text box.

Pupil premium strategy statement – [insert school name]

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	
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	
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)	
Date this statement was published	
Date on which it will be reviewed	
Statement authorised by	
Pupil premium lead	
Governor / Trustee lead	

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (<i>enter £0 if not applicable</i>)	£
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>	£

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

You may want to include information on:

- What are your ultimate objectives for your disadvantaged pupils?
- How does your current pupil premium strategy plan work towards achieving those objectives?
- What are the key principles of your strategy plan?

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Add or delete rows as needed
2	
3	
4	
5	

Intended outcomes

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

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Add or delete rows as needed	

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: £ [insert amount]

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
----------	--------------------------------------	-------------------------------

Add or delete rows as needed.		

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

Budgeted cost: £ [insert amount]

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Add or delete rows as needed.		

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

Budgeted cost: £ [insert amount]

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Add or delete rows as needed.		

Total budgeted cost: £ [insert sum of 3 amounts stated above]

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Outline the performance of your disadvantaged pupils in the previous academic year and explain how it has been assessed. You should draw on:

- Data from the previous academic year's national assessments and qualifications, once published.
- Comparison to local and national averages and outcomes achieved by your school's non-disadvantaged pupils (a note of caution can be added to signal that pupils included in the performance data will have experienced some disruption due to Covid-19 earlier in their schooling, which will have affected individual pupils and schools differently).
- Information from summative and formative assessments the school has undertaken.
- School data and observations used to assess wider issues impacting disadvantaged pupils' performance, including attendance, behaviour and wellbeing.

You should state whether you are on target to achieve the outcomes of your strategy (as outlined in the Intended Outcomes section above) and outline your analysis of what aspects of your strategy are/are not working well.

If last year marked the end of a previous pupil premium strategy plan, you should set out your assessment of how successfully the intended outcomes of that plan were met.

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

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

<i>For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information: How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year</i>
The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils

Further information (optional)

<i>Use this space to provide any further information about your pupil premium strategy. For example, about your strategy planning, implementation and evaluation, or other activity that you are delivering to support disadvantaged pupils that is not dependent on pupil premium funding.</i>

Appendix B: Coding framework

Appendix Tables 1 to 6 summarise the coding frame instructions, the changes to the instructions compared to the academic year 2024/25, and the human-AI agreement score resulting from the calibration process set out in *Data processing*. These instructions were used by the human coders and adapted for the AI coder instructions.

Appendix Table 1: Coding framework for administrative data taken from GIAS and DfE's Pupil Premium Allocation files

Code	Description/Coding instructions	Changes since 2024/25
URN	DfE Unique Reference Number	
LA	Local Authority	
School Name	School name from the GIAS data base	
Phase Of Education	Primary / Middle deemed secondary / Middle deemed primary / Secondary / Not applicable from the GIAS data base	
Establishment Type Group	Academy / Local authority-maintained schools / Special schools / Free schools from the GIAS data base	
Number Of Pupils	Number of pupils in whole school taken from the DfE allocation files (the median value for allocations across 25/26)	Updated year
Percentage Eligible	Proportion of pupils eligible for PP taken from the DfE allocation files (the median value for allocations across 25/26)	Updated year
Number Eligible	Number of pupils eligible for PP taken from the DfE allocation files (the median value for allocations across 25/26)	Updated year
GOR (Government Office Region)	London / South East / Yorkshire and the Humber / North West / East of England / West Midlands / North East / South West / East Midlands from the GIAS database	
Attainment KS2	Attainment KS2 measure: PTRWM_EXP_FSM6CLA1A (for each school we use the average over 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25)	Updated to 3-year average
Attainment KS4	Attainment KS4 measure: ATT8SCR_FSM6CLA1A (for each school we use the average over 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25)	Updated years

Appendix Table 2: Coding framework for the overall spend profile in the Pupil Premium statement

Code	Description/Coding instructions	Human-AI agreement score
Template similarity - headings matched	Number of template headings present in statement	
Template similarity - % headings matched	% of headings in template matched	
Similarity with the DfE template	If 70% of headings match code 'Y' (e.g., 70% or more of the headings in the template were used in the PP statement).	
Template similarity - matched heading names	Template headings used in the statement	

Code	Description/Coding instructions	Human-AI agreement score
Template similarity - missing heading names	Template headings missing in the statement	
Tier model used - matched tiered subheadings	The tiered headings used in the statement	
Tier model used	Code 'Y' if spend/approaches broken down into categories: High Quality Teaching, Targeted Academic Support, Wider Strategies (N.B. wording variations permitted)	97%
First AY covered	E.g., a 22/23 - Stated in 'School Overview' section 'Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers'	87%
Last AY covered	E.g., a 22/23 - Stated in 'School Overview' section 'Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers'. If the statement only covers 1 year, the First AY = Last AY	90%
% Pupil Premium	Stated in 'School Overview' section 'Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils'	77%
Total PP budget (£)	In the template, this figure is specified in the 'Funding Overview' section ('Total budget for this academic year'). Please use that figure and not the figure specified after the breakdown of activities / costs ('Total budgeted cost: £ [insert sum of 3 amounts stated above]').	97%
High quality teaching budgeted cost	In the 'Activity in this academic year' section, under the 'Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)' subheading in the template. This amount is indicated as 'Budgeted cost'	100%
High quality teaching percentage	High quality teaching budgeted cost / Total PP cost	-
Targeted academic support budgeted cost	In the 'Activity in this academic year' section, under the 'Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support, structured interventions)' subheading in the template. This amount is indicated as 'Budgeted cost'	97%
Targeted academic support percentage	Targeted academic support budgeted cost / Total PP cost	-
Wider strategies budgeted cost	In the 'Activity in this academic year' section, under the 'Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)' subheading in the template. This amount is indicated as 'Budgeted cost'	97%
Wider strategies percentage	Wider strategies budgeted cost / Total PP cost	-
Total PP cost (£) ('Total budgeted cost')	In the template, this figure is specified AFTER breakdown of activities/costs using tiered model. ('Total budgeted cost: £ [insert sum of 3 amounts stated above]'). Please use that figure and NOT the allocation data in the earlier 'Funding Overview' section.	95%
Allocation spent percentage	Total PP cost / Total PP budget	-

Appendix Table 3: Coding framework for challenges identified in the Pupil Premium statement

Code	Description/Coding instructions	Changes since 2024/25	Human-AI agreement score
3.1 Access to enrichment/cultural opportunities	Code 'Y' for access to opportunities that build 'cultural capital', cultural resources and aid social mobility. This can include 'opportunities' and 'extra-curricular opportunities' to participate and experience art, music, literature, science, theatre, outdoor learning experiences, and learn about career pathways and further education.		82%
3.1.1 Cultural capital	Code 'Y' where 3.1 is coded 'Y' and 'cultural capital' is explicitly referenced. If 'Y', check that 3.1 is also coded 'Y'.		95%
3.2 Aspiration	Only code 'Y' if 'Aspiration' or another term related to child/family attitudes to future opportunity is stated. (Do not infer that 'aspiration' is an issue if it is not explicitly stated).		92%
3.3 Attendance	Code 'Y' if poor (or poorer) attendance or absence from school for any reason is explicitly stated		97%
3.3.1 Persistent absence	Code 'Y' if 3.3 is coded 'Y' and 'persistent absence' is explicitly referenced. If 'Y', check that 3.3 is also coded 'Y'.		84%
3.3.2 Severe absence	Code 'Y' if 3.3 is coded 'Y' and 'severe absence' is explicitly referenced. If 'Y', check that 3.3 is also coded 'Y'.		100%
3.4 Attainment: English/Literacy	Code 'Y' for any reference to prior attainment or current performance related to 'English' or 'Literacy'. This can include 'speech' 'language' 'vocabulary' 'grammar' 'oracy' 'learning to talk' 'learning through talk' 'spoken language' 'speaking and listening' 'reading' 'phonics' 'reading level' 'reading age' 'reading attainment' 'writing' 'handwriting', 'transcription', 'spelling', 'composition'. References to needs rather than attainment should not be flagged under 3.4		97%
3.4.1 Speech/Language	Code 'Y' if 3.4 is coded and statement refers to prior attainment/current performance in 'speech' 'language' 'vocabulary' 'grammar' 'language processing'. If 'Y', check that 3.4 is also coded 'Y'. 'Speech, Language or Communication needs' or 'Speech, Language and Communication needs' should not be coded 'Y'.		82%
3.4.2 Oracy	Code 'Y' if 3.4 is coded and statement refers to prior attainment/current performance in 'oracy' 'learning to talk' 'learning through talk' 'spoken language' and 'speaking and listening'. If 'Y', check that 3.4 is also coded 'Y'.		76%
3.4.3 Reading	Code 'Y' if 3.4 is coded and statement refers to prior attainment/current performance in 'reading' 'reading level' 'reading age' 'reading attainment'. If 'Y', check that 3.4 is also coded 'Y'.		87%
3.4.4 Writing	Code 'Y' if 3.4 is coded and statement refers to prior attainment/current performance in 'writing' 'handwriting', 'transcription', 'spelling', 'composition'. If 'Y', check that 3.4 is also coded 'Y'.		97%
3.4.5 Phonics	Code 'Y' if 3.4 is coded and statement refers to prior attainment/current performance in 'phonics'. If 'Y', check that 3.4 is also coded 'Y'.		100%
3.4.6 Disciplinary literacy	Code 'Y' if 3.4 is coded and statement refers to "disciplinary literacy". If 'Y', check that 3.4 is also coded 'Y'.	New code	97%
3.5 Attainment: Maths/numeracy	Code 'Y' for prior attainment/current performance in 'Maths', 'Numeracy', 'place value', 'number', 'confidence in maths', 'mathematical talk' or related topics (e.g. 'geometry', 'algebra', or 'statistics')		97%
3.6 Attainment: Other subject	Code 'Y' for prior attainment/current performance in any specific subject other than English/literacy and Maths/numeracy (e.g., history, science)		92%

Code	Description/Coding instructions	Changes since 2024/25	Human-AI agreement score
3.7 Attainment: General or non-subject specific	Code 'Y' for prior attainment/current performance that is not specific subject is mentioned, or 'all subjects', 'all areas', 'overall progress' are mentioned, or 'attainment gap', 'learning loss', 'gaps in learning', 'variation in performance', 'achievement gap', 'low starting point', 'need for academic recovery', 'behind (age-related) expectations', 'subject knowledge', 'across the curriculum', 'progress' are mentioned without explicit reference to a subject. Do not code 'Y' for mention of 'gap' only	Added keywords ('subject knowledge', 'across the curriculum', 'progress') and instruction not to code for mentions of 'gap'	66%
3.8 Behaviour	Code 'Y' for any reference to behavioural issues (e.g. 'disruption', 'defiance', 'aggression', 'disengagement'). Code ADDITIONALLY to Attendance, Independent learning or Personal and social development where appropriate.		84%
3.9 English as an Additional Language (EAL)	Code 'Y' only where challenges are specific to pupils being 'English as an Additional Language' or 'EAL', referenced as distinct from Attainment. Attainment-related challenges for EAL pupils specifically should be coded ADDITIONALLY under Attainment codes.		92%
3.10 Independent learning	Code 'Y' only where 'independent learning', 'motivation', 'self-regulation', 'metacognition', 'attention', 'ability to problem-solve', 'ability to reason', 'learning behaviours', 'readiness to learn', 'attitudes to learning', 'attitudes to education', 'behaviour for learning' or equivalent terms are specifically referenced. Poor behaviour should INSTEAD be coded under 'Behaviour'. If factors at home are referenced (e.g., lack of parental support, lack of suitable home learning environment), code INSTEAD to 'Parental engagement and home learning environment' and its subcode.		76%
3.11 Lack of financial means, equipment or resources	Code 'Y' where there is a lack of financial means, equipment or resources (e.g., laptops, books) to be used in school. Look for challenges noting 'expensive' or 'high cost' as the barrier, or references to 'poverty proofing'. Lack of financial means for equipment and resources to be used at home should be coded under 'Parental engagement & HLE'. Resources to be used at home or in the classroom, e.g., revision guides, should be coded under BOTH this code and 'Parental engagement & HLE'		95%
3.11.1 Need for uniform	Code 'Y' if 3.11 is coded and the statement describes a lack of uniform, or lack of financial means with regard to uniform. If 'Y', check that 3.11 is also coded 'Y'.		100%
3.11.2 Need for equipment	Code 'Y' if 3.11 is coded and the statement describes a lack of equipment or resources (e.g., laptops, textbooks, stationery), or lack of financial means with regard to equipment or resources. If 'Y', check that 3.11 is also coded 'Y'.		89%
3.11.3 Need for travel	Code 'Y' if 3.11 is coded and the statement describes a lack of financial means with regard to travel/transport. If 'Y', check that 3.11 is also coded 'Y'.		95%
3.11.4 Need for food	Code 'Y' if 3.11 is coded and the statement describes a lack of financial means for food or 'hungry'. If 'Y', check that 3.11 is also coded 'Y'.		100%
3.12 Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH) and wellbeing	Code 'Y' for challenges related to pupil mental/social/emotional health or pupil mental/social/emotional wellbeing, 'anxiety' and 'emotional resilience'. Use this code both for challenges which likely require clinical support and those which may not require clinical support. Absence due to mental ill health should be coded ADDITIONALLY under 'Attendance'. For parent/guardian health wellbeing, code INSTEAD 3.15.2 Parental health/wellbeing		92%
3.12.1 SEMH reference	Code 'Y' if 3.12 is coded 'Y' and references to the acronym and term "SEMH" or "social emotional and mental health". If 'Y' check that 3.12 is also coded 'Y'.	New subcode	97%
3.12.2 Social and emotional needs	Code 'Y' if 3.12 is coded 'Y' and references to 'social and emotional needs' 'self/emotional regulation' 'self/emotional dysregulation'. If 'Y' check that 3.12 is also coded 'Y'.	New subcode	82%

Code	Description/Coding instructions	Changes since 2024/25	Human-AI agreement score
3.12.3 Mental health	Code 'Y' if 3.12 is coded 'Y' and references to poor mental health, anxiety, depression (diagnosed by medical professionals). If 'Y' check that 3.12 is also coded 'Y'.	New subcode	92%
3.12.4 Wellbeing	Code 'Y' if 3.12 is coded 'Y' and references to poor wellbeing, wellbeing or well-being, including a lack of confidence, and low self-esteem. If 'Y' check that 3.12 is also coded 'Y'.	New subcode	87%
3.13 Parental Engagement with learning at home & home learning environment (HLE)	Code 'Y' for references to 'home learning' or parental/carer/guardian engagement with home learning activities 'outside school' or 'outside school hours', e.g. through supporting with reading and homework. HLE or the 'home learning environment' might include lack of suitable study/homework spaces, structured routines, and make-believe play. Parental engagement with schools about their child's attendance and behaviour should INSTEAD be coded under '3.15.1 Parental engagement with school'. Where referenced in context of wider independent learning challenges, ADDITIONALLY code 'Independent learning'. Code 'Y' where keywords from subcodes are mentioned: equipment or resources (e.g., workbooks, revision guides) to be used at home; space for suitable home learning (e.g., quiet space for homework, a desk); lack of parent/carer/guardian engagement or involvement with home learning activities including reading, play, homework, study and structure/routine; intense support for families 'in crisis' or 'in distress'		82%
3.13.1 Lack of financial means for home resources	Code 'Y' if 3.13 is coded and the statement describes a lack of financial means, equipment or resources (e.g., workbooks, revision guides) to be used at home (resources to be used at home or in the classroom, e.g., revision guides, should ADDITIONALLY be coded under 3.11 and its subcodes). Code 'Y' for 'Financial constraints' for families, lack of access to or need for access to resources, equipment, travel or food. If 'Y', check that 3.13 is also coded 'Y'.		84%
3.13.2 Lack of suitable space for home learning	Code 'Y' if 3.13 is coded and the statement describes a lack of space for suitable home learning (e.g., quiet space for homework, a desk). If 'Y', check that 3.13 is also coded 'Y'.		97%
3.13.3 Lack of parental engagement with home learning activities	Code 'Y' if 3.13 is coded and the statement describes a lack of parent/carer/guardian engagement or involvement with home learning activities including reading, play, homework, study and structure/routine. Parental engagement with schools should INSTEAD be coded under 'Personal circumstances'. If 'Y', check that 3.13 is also coded 'Y'.		87%
3.13.4 Need for intensive support for families 'in crisis'	Code 'Y' if 3.13 is coded and the statement describes the need for more intense support for families 'in crisis' or 'in distress'. If 'Y', check that 3.13 is also coded 'Y'.		100%
3.14 Personal and social development	Code 'Y' for references to 'self-care', 'self-esteem', 'confidence', 'resilience', 'social skills', 'emotional intelligence', 'social communication', 'relationship skills', 'PSED', 'personal social emotional development', 'expressing needs', 'communicating needs', 'speech needs', 'language needs', 'play skills', 'interacting with others' or equivalent terms. Code 'Y' for 'social development', 'nurture support', 'self-help', 'independence'. Social or Emotional health or wellbeing should INSTEAD be coded to 3.12 Social, Emotional & Mental Health and wellbeing (SEMH). Explicit reference to SEMH should be coded under 3.12 only.	Added keywords ('social development', 'nurture support', 'self-help', 'independence') and instruction not to code for reference to 'SEMH'	76%
3.15 Personal circumstances	Code 'Y' for factors relating to the pupil's personal circumstances - e.g., parental/carer/guardian wellbeing, school mobility, child protection requirements, 'Adverse Childhood Experiences', 'ACEs'. Code 'Y' where keywords from subcodes are mentioned: 'parental engagement', challenges with		76%

Code	Description/Coding instructions	Changes since 2024/25	Human-AI agreement score
	parents/carers/guardians engaging around attendance, behaviour; issues with parents'/carers'/guardians' physical or mental health or wellbeing; personal issues around transport/access to school; 'child protection' or 'safeguarding'; changing school for any reason		
3.15.1 Parental engagement with school	Code 'Y' if 3.15 is coded and the statement describes 'parental engagement', challenges with parents/carers/guardians engaging around attendance, behaviour etc. If 'parental engagement with home learning or home learning environment (HLE)' then code INSTEAD 'Parental engagement with learning at home & home learning environment (HLE)'. If 'Y', check that 3.15 is also coded 'Y'.		92%
3.15.2 Parental health/wellbeing	Code 'Y' if 3.15 is coded and the statement describes issues with parents'/carers'/guardians' physical or mental health or wellbeing. If 'Y', check that 3.15 is also coded 'Y'.		87%
3.15.3 Access to school/ transport	Code 'Y' if 3.15 is coded and the statement describes personal issues around transport/access to school. Availability of local transport should INSTEAD be coded under 'Local factors'. Lack of financial means for travel should INSTEAD be coded under 3.11.3 'Need for travel'. If 'Y', check that 3.15 is also coded 'Y'.		92%
3.15.4 Child protection/safeguarding	Code 'Y' if 3.15 is coded and the statement mentions 'child protection' or 'safeguarding'. If 'Y', check that 3.15 is also coded 'Y'.		97%
3.15.5 Child mobility	Code 'Y' if 3.15 is coded and the statement refers to changing school for any reason. If 'Y', check that 3.15 is also coded 'Y'.		97%
3.16 Physical health	Code 'Y' for pupil physical fitness, physical illness, and physical development (e.g., motor skills). Absence due to physical illness should be coded ADDITIONALLY under 'Attendance'. This code is for pupil health ONLY, parent health should be coded 'Parent health/wellbeing'		95%
3.17 School factors	Code 'Y' for any factors specific to the school rather than wider environment - e.g., teaching expertise; facilities and resources.		8%
3.17.1 Human resourcing	Code 'Y' if 3.17 is coded and human/staff factors are explicitly referenced, e.g., teaching expertise, recruitment, 'specialists', 'subject leaders', 'professional development', 'staff development'. If 'Y', check that 3.17 is also coded 'Y'.		82%
3.17.2 Physical resourcing	Code 'Y' if 3.17 is coded and physical factors, e.g., lack of outside space, classroom size are explicitly referenced. If 'Y', check that 3.17 is also coded 'Y'.		89%
3.18 SEND	Code 'Y' where statement specifies SEND (special education needs and disabilities) or an aspect of SEND, including 'Education, Health and Care Plans', 'EHC', 'EHCP', 'EHCPs', 'complex needs', 'sensory processing', 'sensory difficulty'. A child or young person has Special Educational Needs and Disabilities if they have a learning difficulty and/or a disability that means they need special health and education support. Use this code ADDITIONALLY to others (e.g., Behaviour, Attainment). NOTE special schools should not be treated differently from other school when coding for SEND challenges.		95%
3.19 Local factors	Code 'Y' for any factors specific to the neighbourhood/local environment rather than the school - e.g., access to local services, lack of available local public transport, 'catchment area', references to increasing demand		92%
3.20 Other	For text on Challenges not yet coded: Please quote verbatim from statement		-

Appendix Table 4: Coding framework for approaches set out in the Pupil Premium statement

Code	Description/Coding instructions	Changes since 2024/25	Human-AI agreement score
4.1 Alternative Provision (AP) within school	Code 'Y' for in-school AP, which include 'behaviour unit', 'inclusion room', 'internal exclusion room', 'delivery of parallel curriculum' or similar. 'Personalised curriculum' should be coded 'Y' where there is also reference to delivery in small groups / 1:1. Schools are not expected to spend PP funds on out-of-school AP. If out-of-school AP is cited, please state in 'Other'. 'nurture groups' should be coded under 'Tuition (small group)'.		71%
4.2 Attendance	Code 'Y' for approaches aimed at increasing attendance or reducing absence, e.g., employing an attendance officer, personalised messages to parents about attendance.		87%
4.3 Behaviour	Code 'Y' for approaches aimed at improving specific behaviours or behaviour in general, e.g. 'disruption', 'defiance', 'aggression', 'disengagement'		68%
4.4 Breakfast clubs	Code 'Y' where there is specific mention of 'Breakfast Club' or 'breakfast'. More general references to provision of food should be coded under 'Hardship Funding'		97%
4.5 Career support	Code 'Y' for career support for pupils ONLY. Career support may include providing information about career options, career pathways, work experience, engagement with employers, coaching or career planning, 'IAG', 'Information, Advice and Guidance', 'CEIAG', 'Careers Education, Information, Advice, and Guidance'		95%
4.6 Class size	Code 'Y' for any change to class size, that is not due to another intervention – e.g., 'reduced class size' without elaboration, 'changing/reducing staff to pupil ratio' or equivalent. Small group (2–5 pupils) tuition and 'nurture groups' should be coded INSTEAD under 'Tuition (small group)'.		92%
4.7 Curriculum updates	Code 'Y' for any review of the school curriculum, as a whole or for specific subjects, or changes to the current curriculum: e.g., 'develop the curriculum', 'introduce to the curriculum', 'embedding into the curriculum', 'adjustments to the curriculum'. This can include making the curriculum broader, more balanced, or knowledge-based to improve support for disadvantaged pupils, and enrichment of the curriculum, e.g. by integrating more cultural or physical activities. Can also include making the curriculum more flexible, tailored, and personalised. Where 'personalised' curriculum is to be delivered in small groups or 1:1 then code INSTEAD as 4.1 Alternative Provision (AP) within school; else code 'personalised curriculum' here.		76%
4.7.1 Enriched curriculum	Code 'Y' for any references to 'enriched curriculum', relating to changes to in-lesson activities, e.g. 'forest school', 'outdoor learning', 'hands-on learning', increasing 'cultural capital' in the classroom, 'enhanced curriculum', 'theme days', 'theme weeks'. Enrichment through extra-curricular activities or trips outside of lessons should INSTEAD be coded under Extracurricular and school clubs or School trips. If 'Y', check that 4.7 is also coded 'Y'.		79%
4.8 English as an Additional Language (EAL)	Code 'Y' for approaches aimed at overcoming challenges specifically for EAL pupils.		95%
4.9 Early career support	Code 'Y' only for support or interventions provided for Early Career Teachers (ECT) – who are in the first two years of their teaching career. ECTs were previously called Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT). ECT support may include coaching and mentoring provided for staff. Code ADDITIONALLY to Staff mentoring or coaching or Staff training/CPD		97%
4.10 EdTech	Code 'Y' for any reference to the purchase, upgrading or provision of IT/electronic devices, infrastructure, software/apps (e.g., laptops, smartboards, tablets, remote learning platforms, etc.) or 'online', 'digital', 'platform', 'ICT programs'		84%
4.10.1 Hardware	Code 'Y' if 4.10 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to 'Y' for the purchase, upgrading or provision of IT devices, infrastructure, electronic devices (laptops, smartboards, tablets) or similar. If 'Y', check that 4.10 is also coded 'Y'.		87%

Code	Description/Coding instructions	Changes since 2024/25	Human-AI agreement score
4.10.2 Non-pedagogical software/apps	Code 'Y' if 4.10 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to educational technology (software/apps) described without reference to academic objectives. This might include generic remote learning platforms and other remote learning support. Any technology, platforms, digital tools used to collect, monitor and analyse data should be coded here e.g., Management information systems (MIS), like SIMS, Arbor, any other data collection/ processing tools for CRM, pupil records. Do not code for hardware such as 'chromebook' or 'ipad'. Only code references to tracking and monitoring if online/technology is also mentioned. Code programmes used to monitor, evaluate, analyse school data ADDITIONALLY to Using data. If 'Y', check that 4.10 is also coded 'Y'.	Added instructions not to code for references to hardware, and references to tracking and monitoring where online/technology is not also mentioned	74%
4.10.3 Pedagogical software/apps	Code 'Y' if 4.10 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to software/apps delivering against academic objectives - either in the classroom or for pupils to use at home (If programme listed in Annex A: EdTech - Pedagogical software/apps code 'Y'). Do not code for hardware. Code ADDITIONALLY to any other approaches utilising this technology (e.g., 'Formative / diagnostic assessment'). If 'Y', check that 4.10 is also coded 'Y'.	Added instructions not to code for references to hardware	68%
4.11 Engagement with wider services	Code 'Y' where the school engages with/ partners with other organisations (e.g., School Improvement Partner, SIP, VNET, local charities, local businesses, social services, local council, police, family liaison officer). Where schools signpost parents to other services, INSTEAD code under Family Support. Code ADDITIONALLY to SEND for reference to occupational therapy, OT, physical therapy, NHS services		82%
4.12 Family support	Code 'Y' for support provided to families, which might include: (intensive) support for families in crisis, home visits, therapeutic family support, or referral or signposting to wider support services including social workers. Do not code if reference to "family engagement", "parent engagement", "family communication", "parent communication", "parental engagement", "parental communication" "liaising with families" "building relationships with families" "building opportunities for families to be involved with school life" or "working closely with families" "engaging in difficult conversations with parents" without reference to offering specific support - this should be under code Parental engagement with schools only. Do not code here if reference to "support children to extend their learning at home and provide support for parental subject knowledge" - this should be under code Parental engagement with home learning only. Do not code here "wrap-around care", this should be coded as Extended school time only.	Added instructions not to code for parental engagement without reference to specific support, 'wrap-around care' or support relating to home-learning environments	76%
4.14 Formative / diagnostic assessment	Code 'Y' for any references to: any reference to 'assessment' of children/pupils, Staff CPD on formative or diagnostic assessment [code ADDITIONALLY with 'Staff training/CPD'], resources for assessments (e.g. mini white-boards) [code ADDITIONALLY to 'Learning resources' or 'EdTech'], diagnostic software (e.g., named programmes such as GL Assessment - NGRT) and references to 'baseline testing' or 'baseline screening'		82%
4.15 Hardship funding	Code 'Y' for hardship funding provided for uniform, travel/transport or food ('funding for trips', 'funding for residential', 'funding for extra-curriculars', 'funding for enrichment'). Code ADDITIONALLY to what is being subsidised/funded/made more affordable or paid for by the school, this can include subsidising school trips, club membership, sports fees, residential, extracurriculars, enrichment (under 'Extracurricular and school clubs' and 'School trips'). General financial support for the costs of equipment should be coded here, however if learning equipment is provided by the school for free (e.g. laptops, textbooks, stationery) code INSTEAD in 'Learning Resources'. Code 'Breakfast clubs' INSTEAD under 'Breakfast clubs'.		84%
4.16 Learning resources	Code 'Y' for providing pupils with equipment including books, revision guides, calculators, stationery etc. for use in the classroom or at home (including those for parents to use with their children). Digital resources used by staff should be coded under INSTEAD under 'EdTech'. Code for specific programmes and consider context including 'books', 'purchase', 'eligible', 'resources', 'invest', 'programme', 'reading', 'all students'. General financial support for the costs of equipment should be coded ADDITIONALLY under 'Hardship funding'	Added instructions to consider specific programmes and consider contextual keywords ('books', 'purchase', 'eligible', 'resources', 'invest', 'programme', 'reading', 'all students')	84%

Code	Description/Coding instructions	Changes since 2024/25	Human-AI agreement score
4.17 Mentoring	Code 'Y' for the mentoring of pupils by staff. Peer mentoring should be coded under 'Other'. If the mentoring for pupils explicitly involves career planning, pastoral support, attendance, behaviour, code ADDITIONALLY under 'Career support' 'Pastoral support' 'attendance' 'behaviour' codes, respectively.		92%
4.18 Extracurricular and school clubs	Code 'Y' for provision of extracurricular activities, clubs, training, sessions, and lessons: e.g. 'clubs', 'societies', 'classes' 'lessons' 'societies' 'peripatetic sessions/services/educators' Code ADDITIONALLY under Hardship funding if subsidised or provided for free. If the purpose of the club is to provide breakfast before school, code under 'Breakfast club'. 'Homework clubs' 'catch-up lessons' 'lunchtime schooling' should be coded INSTEAD under Extended school time		82%
4.18.1 Arts, culture, music activities	Code 'Y' for provision and opportunities to attend clubs, experience, participate, and build skills in art, music, literature, theatre, science, music, culture e.g. music lessons, choir, drama club, art club, chess club, singing, choir, learn instrument, musical instrument. Extra-curricular activities that build 'cultural capital'. If 'Y', check that 4.18 is also coded 'Y'.		71%
4.18.2 Sports and outdoors activities	Code 'Y' for provision of sports, physical activities, outdoors clubs, e.g., 'sports clubs' 'sports coaching' 'sports training' 'gardening clubs' 'hiking clubs' 'exercise classes' 'sports matches' 'sports competitions', 'Duke of Edinburgh award'. If 'Y', check that 4.18 is also coded 'Y'.	Added keyword ('Duke of Edinburgh award')	71%
4.19 Parental engagement with schools	Code 'Y' for activities involving engagement with/of parents/carers/guardians, which might include: general contact/communications with parents, personalised messages to parents/carers, supporting parents to develop skills in literacy/IT, meet the teacher, parents evening		74%
4.20 Parental engagement with home learning	Code 'Y' for activities involving engagement with/of parents/carers/guardians relating to learning at home, e.g., supporting parents to help with their child's homework, encouraging children to talk about their learning at home, reading/writing/learning for fun. Code if 'with families' is mentioned in relation to learning. Code general references to 'HLE' or the 'home learning environment' here. Other relevant activities to HLE might include structured routines, and make-believe play. Resources for learning at home should INSTEAD be coded under Learning resources.	Added instruction to code where 'with families' is mentioned in relation to learning	79%
4.21 Pastoral support	Code 'Y' for pastoral support for pupils only. Support might include counselling services, peer support systems and the provision of safe spaces. Code 'Y' for mentions of 'welfare' and 'ACE' (Adverse Childhood Experience). Pastoral support for families should INSTEAD be coded under 'Family support'. Mentoring or coaching should be covered under 'Mentoring'. ELSA and Therapy should INSTEAD be coded to 4.34 Targeted Social and Emotional and Mental Health Intervention	Added keywords ('welfare', 'ACE')	61%
4.22 Staff recruitment and retention costs code	Code 'Y' for any use of the pupil premium to pay for all or part of staff costs including contributing to salary, benefits, recruitment incentives, to recruit new staff members, or fund New TLRs (Teaching and Learning Responsibility). Staff can include teaching and non-teaching staff (e.g., teachers, teaching assistants (TAs), higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs), admin staff, attendance officers, ELSAs, mental health specialists). Code if "Salary+uplifts", "Release time" "cover""bonuses""TLRs""teaching+learning+responsibility" "New roles" "new" "hire". Do not code 'Y' for Family Liaison Officers employed by the school rather than the local authority.	Added instructions not to code for Family Liaison Officers employed by schools	87%
4.23 School facilities / wider resources	Code 'Y' for core building costs/ repairs, heating/utility costs, play equipment, canteen/catering costs (as distinct from 'Breakfast clubs' or 'Hardship funding') and similar		89%
4.24 School trips	Code 'Y' for provision of school trips, residentials, excursions or exchanges away from the school site. Code ADDITIONALLY under Hardship funding if subsidised or provided for free.		97%

Code	Description/Coding instructions	Changes since 2024/25	Human-AI agreement score
4.24.1 Arts, culture, music trips	Code 'Y' for trips relating to art, music, literature, theatre or science that build 'cultural capital', e.g. 'museum', 'gallery', 'concert', 'theatre'. If 'Y', check that 4.24 is also coded 'Y'		87%
4.24.2 Sports and outdoors-based trips	Code 'Y' for trips relating to physical activities or sport, e.g., 'hike', 'Duke of Edinburgh', 'DofE', 'camping', 'sports trip', 'physical activities', 'outdoor activities'. If 'Y', check that 4.24 is also coded 'Y'		84%
4.25 SEND	Code 'Y' for approaches specific to SEND pupils (special education needs and disabilities), or to an aspect of SEND, for example 'Education, Health and Care Plans' 'EHCPs', 'complex needs', 'sensory processing', 'SALT', 'SALT: Speech and Language Therapist' 'Occupational therapist' 'OT' and mention of 'NHS' resources. Code ADDITIONALLY in Engagement with wider services for references to occupational therapy, OT, physical therapy, NHS services. NOTE special schools should not be treated differently from other school when coding for SEND approaches.		76%
4.27 Staff mentoring or coaching	Code 'Y' for mentoring or coaching of staff. Code ADDITIONALLY to Early career support if Early career teachers (ECT) or Newly qualified teachers (NQT) are referenced.		71%
4.28 Staff training/CPD	Code 'Y' for any reference to staff training / continuous professional development / CPD. This might include: subject-specific training; training related to delivering interventions (e.g. Phonics, NELI), safeguarding training, NPQs (National Professional Qualifications; see list in Annex B)		100%
4.29 Extended school time	Code 'Y' for additional lessons or classes organised over the school holidays, lunchtimes, after or before school, weekends, Saturdays, Sundays, outside of term time, half term. Can include 'homework club' 'booster sessions' lessons at lunchtime' 'lunchtime lessons' 'summer school', or any equivalent terms about 'extending the school day'.		82%
4.30 Targeted English/Literacy intervention	Code 'Y' for any intervention intended to improve performance, outcomes or attainment related to 'English' or 'Literacy'. This can include 'speech' 'language' 'vocabulary' 'grammar' 'oracy' 'learning to talk' 'learning through talk' 'spoken language' 'speaking and listening' 'reading' 'phonics' 'reading level' 'reading age' 'reading attainment' 'writing' 'handwriting', 'transcription', 'spelling', 'composition'. Code ADDITIONALLY to methods of implementation, e.g. Teaching Assistants. If a Named Programme is mentioned, list in 5.Named Programmes		92%
4.30.1 Speech/Language intervention	Code 'Y' where 4.30 is coded and there is reference to 'speech' 'language' 'vocabulary' 'grammar', 'communication skills', 'comprehension'. 'Spoken language and verbal interaction' should be coded as Oracy only. If 'Y', check that 4.30 is also coded 'Y'. If a Named Programme is mentioned, list in 5. Named Programmes	Added keywords ('communication skills', 'comprehension') and instruction not to code for 'Spoken language and verbal interaction'	63%
4.30.2 Oracy intervention	Code 'Y' where 4.30 is coded and there is reference to 'oracy' 'learning to talk' 'learning through talk' 'spoken language' and 'speaking and listening'. If 'Y', check that 4.30 is also coded 'Y'. If a Named Programme is mentioned, list in 5. Named Programmes		89%
4.30.3 Reading intervention	Code 'Y' where 4.30 is coded and there is reference to 'reading' 'reading level' 'reading age' 'reading attainment'. If 'Y', check that 4.30 is also coded 'Y'. If a Named Programme is mentioned, list in 5. Named Programmes		87%
4.30.4 Writing intervention	Code 'Y' where 4.30 is coded and there is reference to 'writing' 'handwriting', 'transcription', 'spelling', 'composition'. If 'Y', check that 4.30 is also coded 'Y'. If a Named Programme is mentioned, list in 5. Named Programmes		76%
4.30.5 Phonics intervention	Code 'Y' where 4.30 is coded and there is reference to 'phonics', 'sounding out', 'phonemes', 'phonemic awareness', 'letters and sounds'. If 'Y', check that 4.30 is also coded 'Y'. If a Named Programme is mentioned, list in 5. Named Programmes		92%

Code	Description/Coding instructions	Changes since 2024/25	Human-AI agreement score
4.30.6 Disciplinary literacy intervention	Code 'Y' where 4.30 is coded and there is reference to 'disciplinary literacy', 'improving literacy in all subject areas', 'improving reading and literacy across the curriculum'. If 'Y', check that 4.30 is also coded 'Y'. If a Named Programme is mentioned, list in 5. Named Programmes	New subcode	92%
4.31 Targeted Maths/numeracy intervention	Code 'Y' for any intervention intended to improve performance, outcomes or attainment related to 'Maths', 'Numeracy' or related topics (e.g. 'geometry', 'algebra', or 'statistics'). Code ADDITIONALLY to methods of implementation, e.g. Teaching Assistants. If a Named Programme is mentioned, list in 5. Named Programmes		87%
4.32 Other Targeted Academic intervention	Code 'Y' for any intervention intended to improve performance, outcomes or attainment related to any other subject (e.g. history, science). Code ADDITIONALLY to methods of implementation, e.g. Teaching Assistants. If a Named Programme is mentioned, list in 5. Named Programmes		29%
4.33 Targeted Metacognitive/Self-regulation intervention	Code 'Y' for any intervention intended to improve metacognition, self-regulation, learning behaviours, independent learning, readiness to learn, thinking skills, attitudes to learning, 'metacognitive', engagement in learning. Code 'Y' for any reference to 'learning mentors' or 'learning support assistants' (LSAs). DO NOT code for references to 'independence' only. Do not code "mentoring" or 1:1 here	Added instruction not to code for references to 'independence', 'mentoring' or '1:1'	53%
4.34 Targeted Social and Emotional and Mental Health Intervention	Code 'Y' for any intervention intended to improve mental health, wellbeing, reduce stress/anxiety, delivered by specialists or non-specialists, including 'ELSA', 'Emotional Literacy Support Assistant' (ADDITIONALLY code ELSA under Named Programmes) psychotherapy, counselling, music therapy, animal therapy, zones of regulation, emotion management. Code ADDITIONALLY to methods of implementation, e.g., Teaching Assistants		92%
4.35 Teaching Assistants	Code 'Y' where teaching assistants are referenced. This may be in the context of in-class support, targeted interventions, or to provide release time for other teaching staff. TA: Teaching Assistant. HLTA: Higher Level Teaching Assistant.		87%
4.35.1 Teaching Assistant: In-class support	Code 'Y' for teaching assistants who provide support in classes (i.e. not targeted support or small group teaching). If 'Y', check that 4.35 is also coded 'Y'.		79%
4.35.2 Teaching Assistant: Targeted intervention	Code 'Y' for teaching assistants who provide targeted interventions – this could be for groups of any size. Only code for a reference to a TA/teaching assistant/HLTA and delivering an intervention, support, small group or 1:1 sessions. Code ADDITIONALLY to other approaches covered by the intervention (e.g., 'Extended school time', 'Tuition: 1:1'). If 'Y', check that 4.35 is also coded 'Y'.	Added instructions to code only for references to TAs delivering an intervention, support, small group or 1:1 sessions	66%
4.36 Tuition	Code 'Y' if providing tuition or delivering an intervention is described, this can be 1:1, individualised instruction, using small groups or peer-to-peer. Code ADDITIONALLY to subject-specific interventions (4.30, 4.31, 4.32) and use of TAs (4.35) where relevant	Added instruction to code additionally to subject-specific interventions and use of TAs as appropriate	84%
4.36.1 Tuition: 1:1	Code 'Y' for one-to-one tuition only; code 'Y' for any 1:1 lessons. Where 'Academic mentoring' or 'individualised instruction' is specified, code based on description of the activity: it may be 1:1 tuition; small group tuition; or a TA in-class intervention. If it does not fit neatly into those categories, code as 'Other'. If the statement does not specify whether tuition is 1:1 or small group, please code 'Y' in 4.36 Tuition only. Where TAs provide the tuition, code ADDITIONALLY under 'Teaching Assistant: Targeted intervention'. If 'Y', check that 4.36 is also coded 'Y'.		87%
4.36.2 Tuition: Small group	Code 'Y' for tuition with 'small groups' defined as 2–5 pupils (although any reference to 'small', 'target', 'focus' groups or similar should be coded 'Y'), supported by a teacher, teaching assistant (TA) or tutor. This can also include 'nurture groups'. If the statement does not specify whether tuition is 1:1 or small group, please code 'Y' in 'Tuition: Unspecified'		79%

Code	Description/Coding instructions	Changes since 2024/25	Human-AI agreement score
	only. Where TAs provide the tuition, code ADDITIONALLY under 'Teaching Assistant: Targeted intervention'. If 'Y', check that 4.36 is also coded 'Y'.		
4.36.3 Tuition: Peer-to-peer	Code 'Y' for pupils tutoring pupils or 'cooperative learning'. Peer tuition must be academic-focused. If 'peer mentoring' is cited, please detail under 'Other'. If 'Y', check that 4.36 is also coded 'Y'.		87%
4.37 Using data	Code 'Y' where schools are using include better data collection / sharing about pupil eligibility / needs / performance / progress / analysis/ monitoring / investigation /cause and effect / pupil progress meeting. This can include staff meetings. May be through digital technology (e.g., CRM, pupil records, school information management systems [SIMS], Bromcom, if so CODE additionally with Non-pedagogical software/apps) or through analogue methods (e.g., coded seating plans). This can include staff meetings. If the meeting is with parents this will also be coded ADDITIONALLY under 4.19 Parental engagement with schools, if the meeting is with the pupil then this will be coded ADDITIONALLY under 4.13 Feedback.		82%
4.38 Other	Quote verbatim from statement.		-

Appendix Table 5: Coding framework for named programmes in the Pupil Premium statement

Code	Description/Coding instructions	Human-AI agreement score
1stclass@number 1 - promising programme	1stClass@Number 1 EEF	100%
Dialogic Teaching - promising programme	Dialogic Teaching EEF	100%
Embedding Formative Assessment - promising programme	Embedding Formative Assessment EEF	100%
FFT Reciprocal Reading - promising programme	FFT Reciprocal Reading EEF	97%
Focus for Teacher Assessment in Primary Science (Focus4TAPS) - promising programme	Focus for Teacher Assessment in Primary Science (Focus4TAPS) EEF	100%
Mathematical Reasoning - promising programme	Mathematical Reasoning EEF	100%
Mathematics Mastery - promising programme	Code 'Y' if 'Mathematics Mastery', 'Maths Mastery' or 'Ark Mathematics Mastery' is mentioned. Do NOT code 'Y' if 'mastery of maths' is mentioned	92%
Maths Champions - promising programme	Maths Champions EEF	100%
Power of Pictures - promising programme	Power of Pictures EEF	100%
Nuffield Early Language Intervention - promising programme	Nuffield Early Language Intervention EEF (NELI)	100%
Reception Jigsaw - promising programme	Reception Jigsaw EEF	97%
Stop and Think - promising programme	Stop and Think EEF [Code ADDITIONALLY as 'EdTech: Pedagogical']	100%
Success for All - promising programme	Success for All EEF	100%
Tutor Trust (primary) - promising programme	Tutor Trust (primary) EEF	100%
ELSA	'ELSA' 'Emotional Literacy Support Assistant'	97%
Fresh Start	'Fresh Start phonics' 'Read Write Inc Fresh Start'	100%
Lexia	'Lexia learning' 'Lexia power up' 'lexia (phonics)' 'Lexia® Core5® Reading'	95%
Lexia Core5 Reading - promising programme	Lexia® Core5® Reading EEF [Code ADDITIONALLY as 'EdTech: Pedagogical']. Code 'Y' if Lexia Core 5 is mentioned or 'Lexia' + 'reading' are mentioned within the same	95%

Code	Description/Coding instructions	Human-AI agreement score
Lexia learning	'Lexia learning'	100%
Lexia power up	'Lexia power up'	100%
Lexia (phonics)	'Lexia (phonics)'	100%
Little Wandle	'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds' 'Little Wandle Rapid Catch-Up' 'Little Wandle Letters'	100%
Bedrock (vocab),	'Bedrock+Learning' 'Bedrock+vocabulary'	100%
National Tuition Programme;	'NTP'	97%
Read Write Inc	'RWI' 'Read write inc phonics' 'Readwriteinc' 'ReadWriteInc' 'Read Write Inc' 'ReadWriteInc'	97%
Sparx Maths	'Sparx Maths'	95%
Times Table Rock Stars	'TT Rockstars' 'Times Table Rockstars'	89%
White Rose Maths	'White Rose' 'Fluency Bee' 'Fluency Bee Maths' 'Power Maths' '1-Minute Maths'	97%
Nessy	'Nessie' (sic.) 'Nessy learning'	100%
Mastering Number	'Mastering numbers'	95%
Brilliant Club	'Brilliant+Scholars+programme' 'Brilliant+Club+scholars+programme'	97%
GCSE Pod	'GCSEpod'	100%
GL Assessment	'GL Assessments (GL)' 'GL testing' 'GL progress tests' 'GL assessment package'	100%
Lexonik	'Lexconic advanced' 'Lexonik leap' 'lexoniks' 'lexonic'	97%
NGRT	'New group reading test' 'NGRT licences' 'NGRT assessment software'	100%
PIXL	'PiXL Tests' 'PiXL Primary'	97%
My Tutor	'MyTutor'	100%
Reading Plus	'Reading plus'	100%
Other (please specify)	Code 'Y' if an 'other' named programme from the list of 125 see 'v3 - List of named programmes'	-

Appendix Table 6: Coding framework for evidence cited in the Pupil Premium statement

Code	Description/Coding instructions	Changes since 2024/25	Human-AI agreement score
6.1 EEF Toolkit	Code 'Y' for reference to an 'EEF Toolkit', or to a specific strand within the toolkit, or any reference to EEF including '+ X months' 'by X months', 'X+ months', 'X months progress'. Schools may also add a link to the toolkit		89%
6.1.1 EEF Early Years toolkit	Code 'Y' when 6.1 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to the 'EY toolkit' 'early years toolkit' 'EEF Early Years Toolkit' in URL. If 'Y' check that 6.1 is coded 'Y'. May also reference Toolkit strands: Communication and language approaches, Earlier starting age, Early literacy approaches, Early numeracy approaches, Extra hours, Parental engagement, Physical development approaches, Play-based learning, Self-regulation strategies, Social and emotional learning strategies		95%
6.1.2 EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit	Code 'Y' when 6.1 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to the 'Teaching and learning toolkit', 'education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit' in URL. If 'Y' check that 6.1 is coded 'Y'. May also reference Toolkit strands: Arts participation, Aspiration interventions, Behaviour interventions, Collaborative learning approaches, Extending school time, Feedback, Homework, Learning styles, Mastery learning, Mentoring, Metacognition and self-regulation, One-to-one tuition, Oral language interventions, Outdoor adventure learning, Parental engagement, Peer tutoring, Performance pay, Phonics, Physical activity, Reading comprehension strategies, Reducing class size, Repeating a year, School uniform, Setting and streaming,		84%

Code	Description/Coding instructions	Changes since 2024/25	Human-AI agreement score
	Small group tuition, Social and emotional learning, Summer schools, Teaching Assistant interventions, Within class attainment grouping		
6.2 EEF evaluation report	Code 'Y' for a published EEF evaluation of a specific 'programme' 'project' 'report' e.g.: Accelerated Reader, NELI. A full list of evaluation projects/reports is at https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects . Look for any references to: EEF trial, EEF evaluation, EEF pilot, EEF evidence, EEF study. Do not code 'Y' for extracts coded to other EEF codes (e.g. if 'toolkit' + months or 'guidance-report' is present)	Added instructions not to code for extracts coded to other EEF codes	76%
6.18 EEF Early Years evidence store	Code 'Y' for specific references to EEF Early Years Evidence Store 'early-years/evidence-store' in URL.		92%
6.3 EEF guidance report	Code 'Y' for mention of any EEF guidance report. Full list at https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports .		74%
6.3.1 EEF Putting Evidence to Work - A School's Guide to Implementation' (2021)	Code 'Y' where 6.3 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to: A School's Guide to Implementation EEF. If 'Y', check that 6.3 is also coded 'Y'. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/implementation		97%
6.3.2 EEF Pupil Premium Guidance/ Evidence Brief	Code 'Y' where 6.3 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to: The EEF Guide to the Pupil Premium EEF. If 'Y', check that 6.3 is also coded 'Y'. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/using-pupil-premium		82%
6.3.3.1 Leadership - Deployment of teaching assistants	Code 'Y' where 6.3 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to Deployment of teaching assistants. If 'Y', check that 6.3 is also coded 'Y'. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/teaching-assistants		92%
6.3.3.2 Leadership - Effective professional development	Code 'Y' where 6.3 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to Effective professional development. If 'Y', check that 6.3 is also coded 'Y'		71%
6.3.3.3 Leadership - Working with parents to support children's learning	Code 'Y' where 6.3 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to Working with parents to support children's learning. If 'Y', check that 6.3 is also coded 'Y'		89%

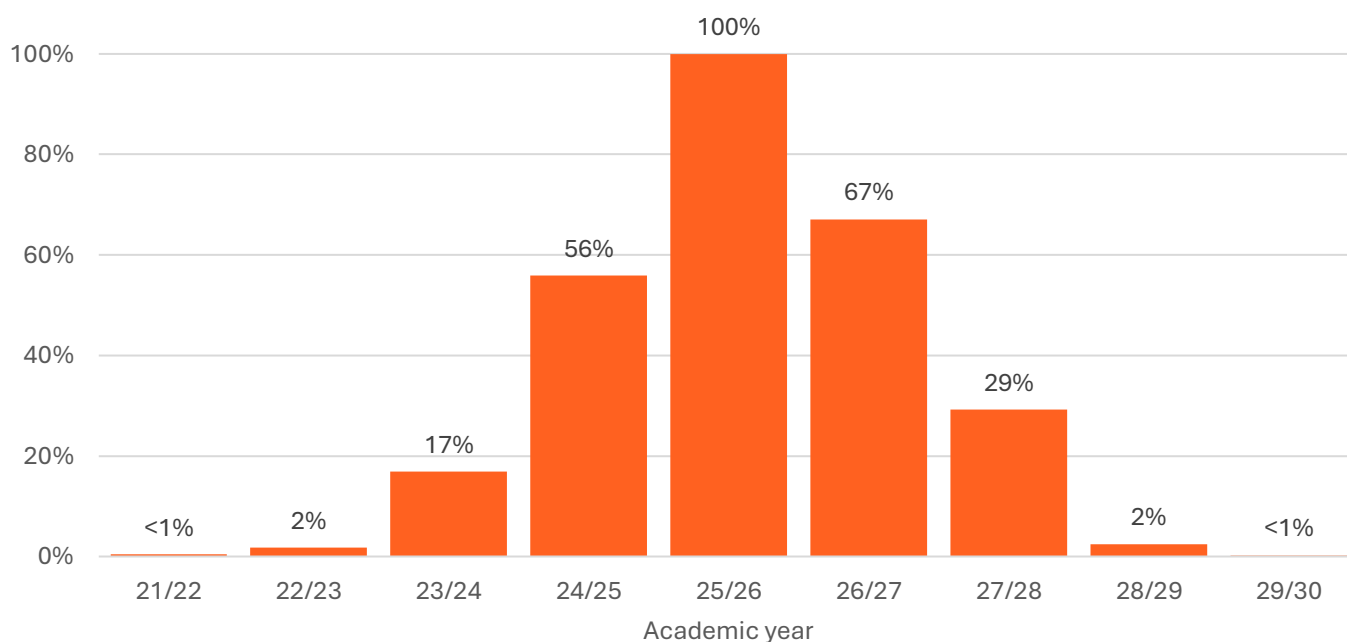
Code	Description/Coding instructions	Changes since 2024/25	Human-AI agreement score
6.3.4.1 Science - Improving primary science	Code 'Y' where 6.3 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to Improving primary science. If 'Y', check that 6.3 is also coded 'Y'		100%
6.3.4.2 Science - Improving secondary science	Code 'Y' where 6.3 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to Improving secondary science. If 'Y', check that 6.3 is also coded 'Y'		100%
6.3.5.1 Literacy - Improving literacy in key stage 2	Code 'Y' where 6.3 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to: Improving literacy in key stage 2; Improving literacy in KS2. If 'Y', check that 6.3 is also coded 'Y'		87%
6.3.5.2 Literacy - Improving literacy in key stage 1	Code 'Y' where 6.3 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to Improving literacy in key stage ; Improving literacy in KS1. If 'Y', check that 6.3 is also coded 'Y'		82%
6.3.5.3 Literacy - Improving literacy in secondary schools	Code 'Y' where 6.3 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to Improving literacy in secondary schools. If 'Y', check that 6.3 is also coded 'Y'		92%
6.3.5.4 Literacy - Preparing for literacy	Code 'Y' where 6.3 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to Preparing for literacy. If 'Y', check that 6.3 is also coded 'Y'		95%
6.3.6 Assessment and feedback	Code 'Y' where 6.3 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to this report: Teacher feedback to improve pupil learning. If 'Y', check that 6.3 is also coded 'Y'		100%
6.3.7.1 Mathematics - Improving mathematics in the early years and key stage 1	Code 'Y' where 6.3 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to: Improving mathematics in the early years and key stage 1; Improving mathematics in the EYs and KS1. If 'Y', check that 6.3 is also coded 'Y'		95%
6.3.7.2 Mathematics - Improving mathematics in key stages 2 and 3	Code 'Y' where 6.3 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to Improving mathematics in key stages 2 and 3; Improving mathematics in KS2 and KS3. If 'Y', check that 6.3 is also coded 'Y'		97%
6.3.8.1 Learning behaviours -	Code 'Y' where 6.3 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to Improving social and emotional learning in primary schools. If 'Y', check that 6.3 is also coded 'Y'		89%

Code	Description/Coding instructions	Changes since 2024/25	Human-AI agreement score
Improving social and emotional learning in primary schools			
6.3.8.2 Learning behaviours - Improving behaviour in schools	Code 'Y' where 6.3 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to Improving behaviour in schools. If 'Y', check that 6.3 is also coded 'Y'		92%
6.3.8.3 Learning behaviours - Metacognition and self-regulated learning	Code 'Y' where 6.3 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to Metacognition and self-regulated learning. If 'Y', check that 6.3 is also coded 'Y'		79%
6.3.9 SEND	Code 'Y' where 6.3 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to this report: Special educational needs in mainstream schools. If 'Y', check that 6.3 is also coded 'Y'		95%
6.3.10 Digital technology	Code 'Y' where 6.3 is coded 'Y' and there is reference this report: Using digital technology to improve learning. If 'Y', check that 6.3 is also coded 'Y'		95%
6.4 EEF blog posts	Code 'Y' for specific references to EEF blog posts (and/or URLs including ' https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/ ').		87%
6.5 Generic reference to EEF	Code 'Y' if EEF is mentioned as an evidence source, but the reference is not to the Toolkit [code as 6.1], an evaluation report [code as 6.2], a guidance report [code as 6.3] or a blog [code as 6.4]. Where '+ X months' is stated, code as 'EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit'. Specifically named reports and documents should have been coded in 6.1–4		58%
6.6 EEF other	Code 'Y' if any evidence in this list is referenced 'v3 EEF evidence other'		82%
6.7 DfE guidance (statutory/non-statutory)	Code 'Y' for any reference to guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), statutory or non-statutory. 'Guidance' should be coded under 6.7 DfE guidance ONLY	Added instruction not to code 'guidance' elsewhere	82%
6.7.1 Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders	Code 'Y' where 6.7 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to: Using pupil premium guidance for school leaders. If 'Y', check that 6.7 is also coded 'Y'		89%
6.7.2 Working together to improve school attendance	Code 'Y' where 6.7 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to: Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024). If 'Y', check that 6.7 is also coded 'Y'		87%
6.7.3 National professional qualifications frameworks	Code 'Y' where 6.7 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to: National professional qualifications frameworks - GOV.UK. If 'Y', check that 6.7 is also coded 'Y'		97%

Code	Description/Coding instructions	Changes since 2024/25	Human-AI agreement score
6.7.4 Reading framework	Code 'Y' where 6.7 is coded 'Y' and there is reference to the reading framework. If 'Y', check that 6.7 is also coded 'Y'		100%
6.8 DfE research report	Code 'Y' for research reports published by the Department for Education (DfE)		84%
6.9 DfE conditions of grants	Code 'Y' for explicit reference to 'conditions of grant': Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK		97%
6.10 DfE other (please state)	Code 'Y' for any other references to DfE. 'Guidance' should be coded under 6.7 DfE guidance ONLY. Extracts should not be coded here ADDITIONALLY to other DfE codes.	Added instruction not to code 'guidance' here, or code this code additionally to other DfE codes	74%
6.11 Ofsted evidence review	Code 'Y' for any evidence review by Ofsted: Full list of reviews at https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/curriculum-research-reviews		89%
6.12 Other WWC evidence	Code 'Y' for any reference to What Works Centres: WWCs include Youth Endowment Fund, Foundations (Early Years and Social Care), TASO (Higher Ed), What Works Wellbeing - full England/Wales list: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-works-network .		95%
6.13 Academic paper	Code 'Y' for any formally published 'academic paper', 'scholarly paper' or 'journal article'. Look for academic referencing styles used, including the use of 'et al.'. Do not code 'Y' for references to EEF.	Added instruction not to code for references to EEF	66%
6.19 Research Schools Network evidence	Code 'Y' for any reference to Research Schools Network (RSN) resources, and URL containing 'researchschool.org.uk'		95%
6.15 School data	Code 'Y' for any form of data from the school or from other schools. This can include the schools' own assessment data, feedback from parents and pupils, feedback from teachers and class observations, feedback from specialists such as speech and language therapists and counsellors, and financial evidence. Reference to 'student voice', 'pupil voice', 'teacher voice', 'parent voice' should be coded here.		61%
6.16 Other source	For any other source given as evidence, format as List of Title (Source, Date): URL;. This may or may not be a research source (e.g. blog, news article, website).		11%

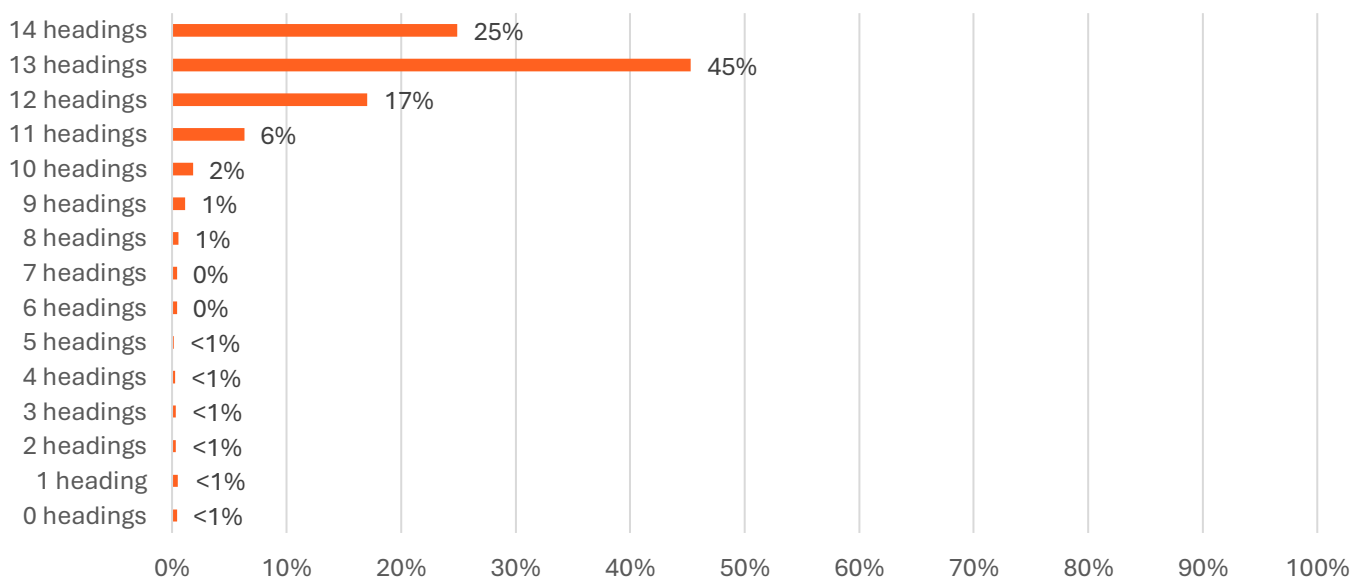
Appendix C: Additional results

Appendix Figure 1. Academic years covered by the Pupil Premium statements



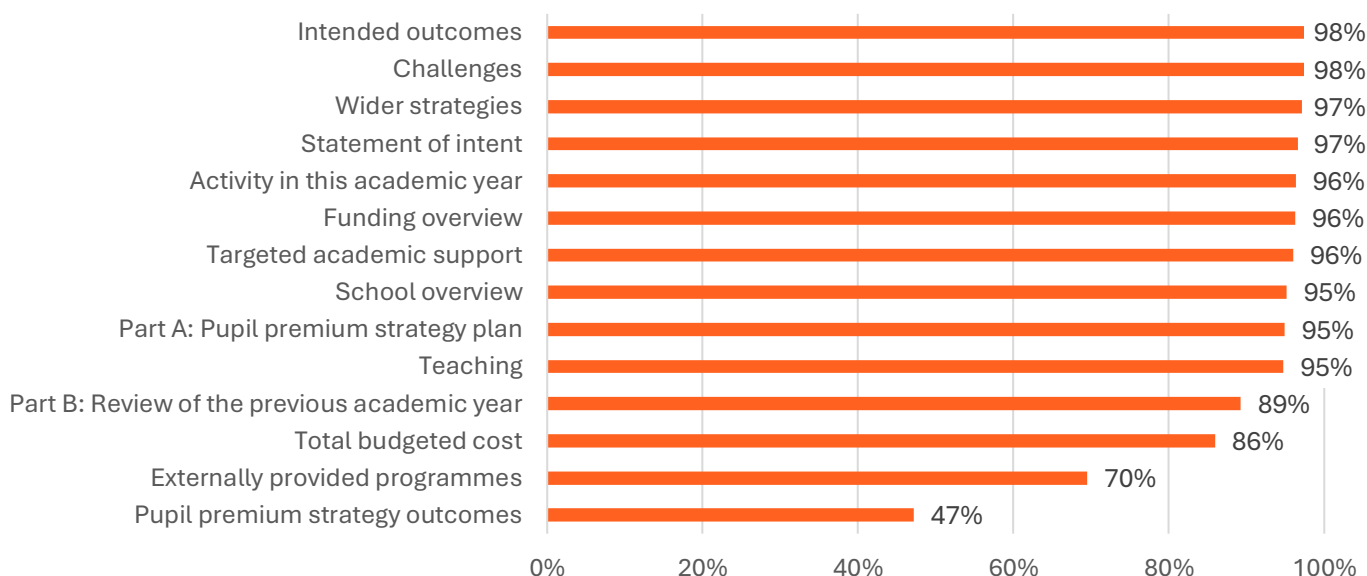
Note. Unweighted base N = 1,044. Reasons for exclusion: statements with missing first or last years covered, and statements where the AI had recorded the first year as 2026 or later or last year as 2025 or earlier. Weighted data was used to calculate the proportions. Unweighted counts: 21/22 – 5; 22/23 – 20; 23/24 – 185; 24/25 – 587; 25/26 – 1,044; 26/27 – 689; 27/28 – 302; 28/29 – 30; 29/30 – 2.

Appendix Figure 2. Proportion of schools who used the number of DfE template headings to structure their statement



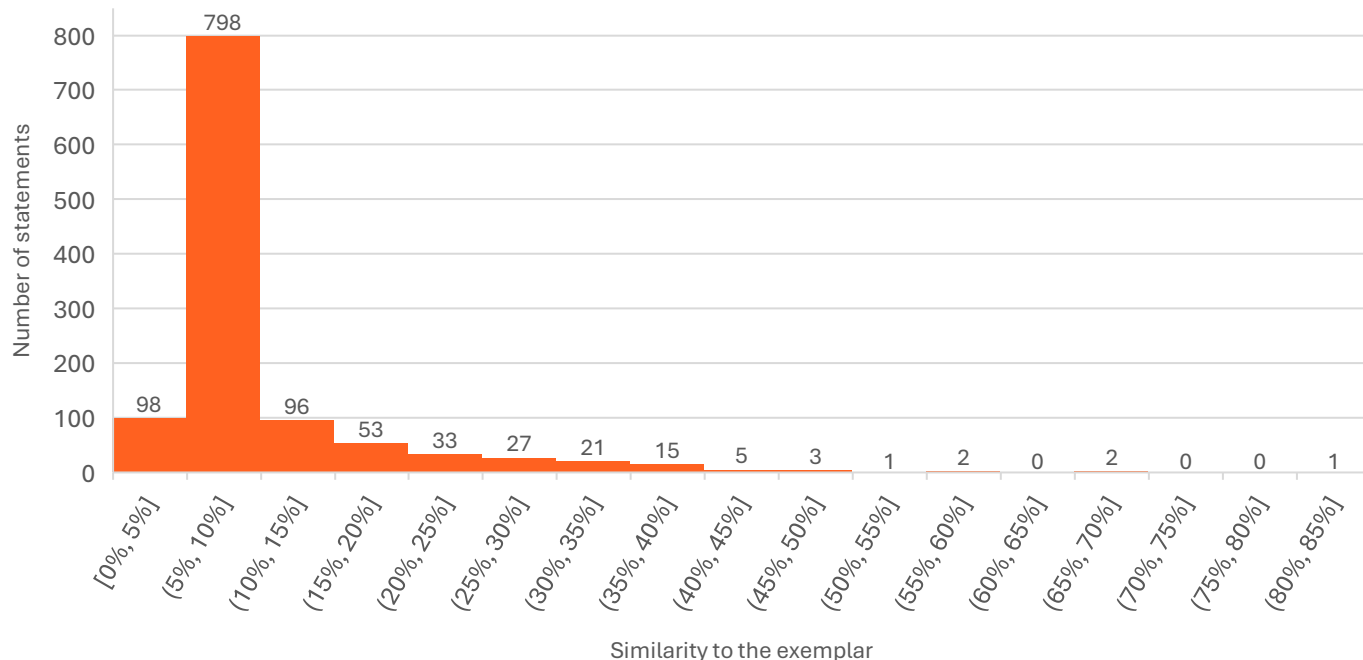
Note. Unweighted base N = 1,201 (only includes schools where the AI could read and code the headings in the Pupil Premium statement). Unweighted data was used to calculate the proportions. Unweighted counts: 0 headings – 5; 1 heading – 6; 2 headings – 4; 3 headings – 4; 4 headings – 4; 5 headings – 2; 6 headings – 5; 7 headings – 5; 8 headings – 7; 9 headings – 14; 10 headings – 22; 11 headings – 76; 12 headings – 205; 13 headings – 544; 14 headings – 299.

Appendix Figure 3. Proportion of schools who used each of DfE template headings to structure their statement



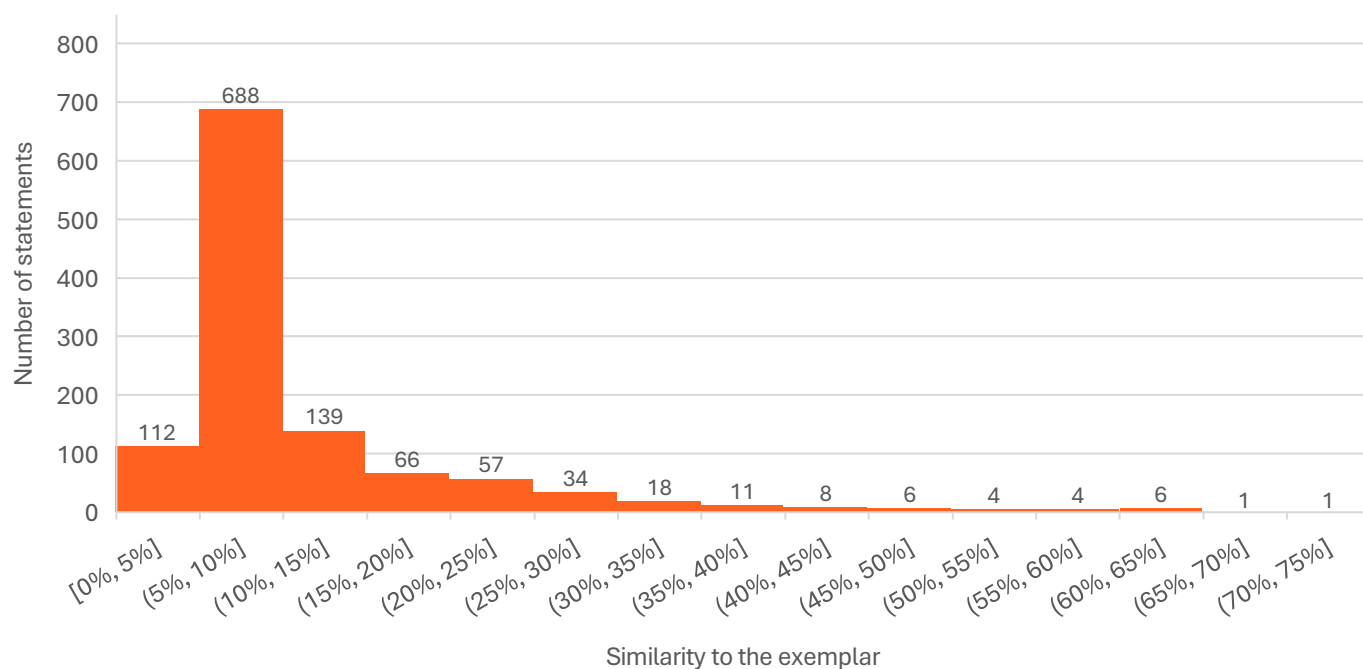
Note. Unweighted base N = 1,254 (only includes schools where the AI could read and code the headings in the Pupil Premium statement). Unweighted data was used to calculate the proportions. Unweighted counts: Intended outcomes – 1,176; Challenges – 1,174; Wider strategies – 1,166; Statement of intent – 1,160; Activity in this academic year – 1,157; Funding overview – 1,156; Targeted academic support – 1,153; School overview – 1,143; Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan – 1,140; Teaching – 1,138; Part B: Review of the previous academic year – 1,072; Total budgeted cost – 1,032; Externally provided programmes – 835; Pupil premium strategy outcomes – 567.

Appendix Figure 4. Distribution of statements by the similarity of their challenge section to the exemplar



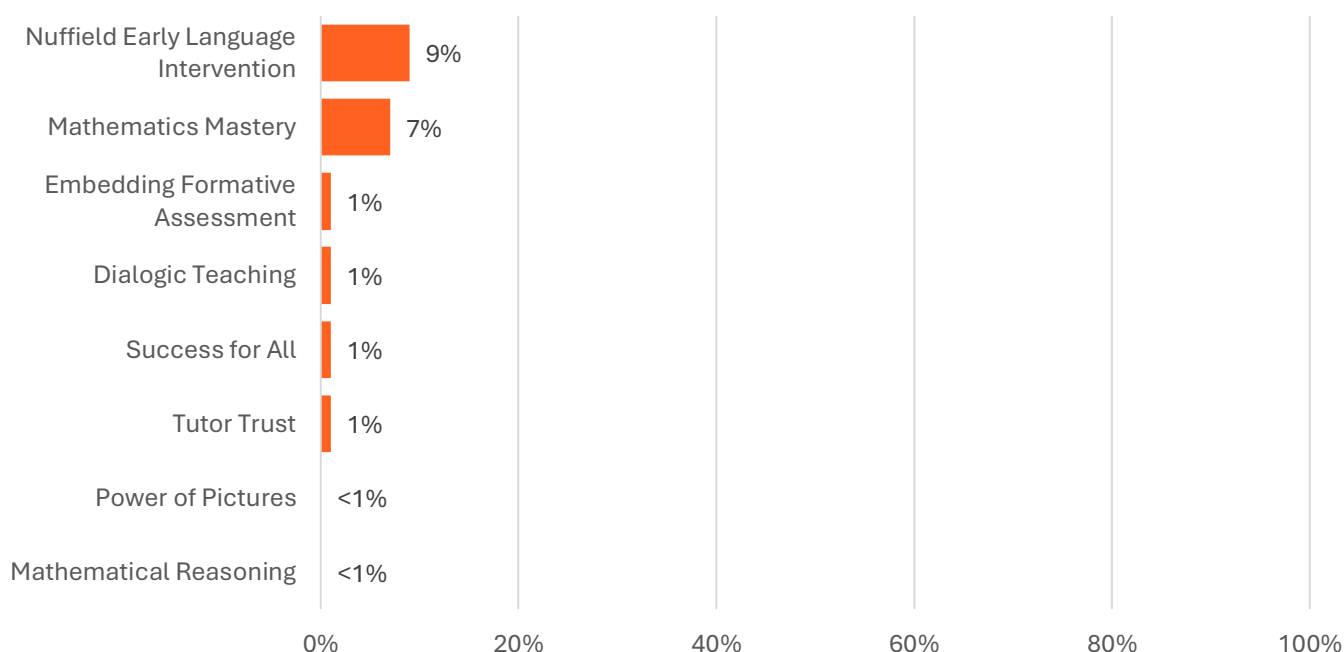
Note. Unweighted base = 1,155 (only includes schools where the AI could read and compare the text in the Challenges section)

Appendix Figure 5. Distribution of statements by the similarity of their approaches section to the exemplar



Note. Unweighted base = 1,153 (only includes schools where the AI could read and compare the text in the Activity in this academic year section).

Appendix Figure 6. Cited external programmes on the EEF's list of Promising Programmes



Note. Unweighted base N = 1,188 (only includes schools where the AI could read and code the "Activity in this academic year" section of the Pupil Premium statement). Weighted data was used to calculate the proportions. Unweighted counts: Nuffield Early Language Intervention – 77; Mathematics Mastery – 62; Embedding Formative Assessment – 19; Dialogic Teaching – 11; Success for All – 8; Tutor Trust – 6; Power of Pictures – 1; Mathematical Reasoning – 3

You may re-use this document/publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0.

To view this licence, visit <https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3> or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

Where we have identified any third-party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned. The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

This document is available for download at <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk>



**Education
Endowment
Foundation**

The Education Endowment Foundation
5th Floor, Millbank Tower
21–24 Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk>

@EducEndowFoundn



Facebook.com/EducEndowFoundn