

Thornden School: Pupil Premium Strategy Statement

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	1451
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	6.13%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3-year plans are recommended)	2023 – 2026
Date this statement was published	17/12/2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	Caroline Lowing
Pupil premium lead	Adam Thomas
Governor / Trustee lead	Baljinda Aujla

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£144,600
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	0
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	0
Total budget	£144,600

Part A: Pupil Premium Strategy Plan Statement of Intent

At Thornden School, we firmly believe that what is essential for some, benefits all. Our approach to supporting disadvantaged students is woven into the fabric of our school's development plan, aiming to ensure that every student thrives, regardless of barriers to their learning. With only 6.13% of our students eligible for Pupil Premium funding, we are in a unique position to provide highly individualised support that directly addresses their individual needs, fostering a sense of belonging, care, aspiration, and achievement.

Our core values drive this strategy:

- **Belong** – Every student, particularly those facing disadvantage, must feel known, valued, and included in our school community. Through the Thornden Champions Programme, our mentoring initiative, we establish personal connections with these students, ensuring they feel heard, supported, and empowered.
- **Care** – We recognise that disadvantage is not solely a financial matter but an educational and social one. Whether through enhanced pastoral care, targeted wellbeing interventions, or adaptive teaching, we create an environment where students receive the support they need to flourish academically and personally.
- **Aspire** – Disadvantaged students should have the same access to high-quality teaching, ambitious goals, and enrichment opportunities as their peers. We actively break down barriers to participation, ensuring that student's access
- extracurricular activities, trips, leadership roles, and personal development opportunities that build cultural capital and self-belief.
- **Achieve** – The success of our Pupil Premium strategy is measured not just by outcomes, but by growth in confidence, engagement, and opportunities. Our approach is rooted in high-quality teaching, tailored interventions, and holistic support, ensuring that disadvantage does not define destiny.

Our overarching aim is to know each student individually, responding to their needs with precision and care, while implementing whole-school strategies that improve education for all. By ensuring disadvantaged students thrive, all students benefit, reinforcing our commitment to equity, inclusion, and excellence.

Challenges

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

Challenge Number	Details of Challenge
1	Although our disadvantaged outcomes and progress is significantly positive when compared to local and similar schools, there is a gap between them and their peers.
2	Although our disadvantaged students' attendance is significantly higher than the national average, and those with SEND and PP have the lowest rates of persistent absenteeism in our local authority, a gap remains between them and their peers. Our goal is to close this gap further.
3	Whilst participation in enrichment activities are high there are some areas where we would like to support our disadvantaged students further.
4	Whilst the likelihood of our students being involved in incidents where behaviour sanctions and exclusions are required, there is a small percentage of disadvantaged students where this is happening more regularly than their peers.

Intended Outcomes

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Improved Outcomes for Students	<p>KS4: Disadvantaged pupils demonstrate improved GCSE attainment and progress, with the progress gap between PP and non-PP narrowing.</p> <p>KS3: In-year progress data shows sustained improvement, with an increased proportion of PP pupils on or above expected pathways.</p>
Improved Attendance	The gap between the attendance of those in receipt of PPG and their peers is reduced by 1% for both overall attendance and persistent absenteeism.
Reduction in the participation gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils across key enrichment areas (sports, leadership, trips and clubs).	Overall PP enrichment participation increases, moving closer to the school PP rate of 6.13% across all recorded activities.

Activity in this academic year

This details how we intend to spend our pupil premium (and recovery premium) funding **this academic year** to address the challenges listed above.

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £58,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>High-quality teaching and curriculum implementation</p> <p>Our strategy is built on the principle that <i>“all pupils do better when disadvantaged pupils are thriving”</i> and that high-quality teaching has the greatest impact on closing attainment gaps. This aligns with the EEF’s “Tiered Model” and underpins our whole-school approach.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Further embed the Thornden DNA To ensure all pupils—particularly the disadvantaged—experience structured, high-quality lessons, we will deliver whole-school CPD on the Thornden DNA as our shared model of excellent teaching. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Thornden DNA focuses on: 	<p>EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit</p> <p>EEF Effective Professional Development guidance report</p> <p>EEF Cognitive Science in the Classroom</p> <p>EEF reading comprehension strategies; “Improving</p>	1, 2, 4

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-ratio participation, ensuring disadvantaged pupils contribute and are routinely checked for understanding. • Cold calling and targeted questioning, increasing engagement and accountability for learning. • Explicit modelling and worked examples, reducing cognitive load and making thinking visible for pupils with weaker prior knowledge. • Purposeful scaffolding, ensuring all pupils can access demanding content. • Retrieval practice, strengthening long-term retention and supporting pupils who may not revisit learning at home. • Adaptive teaching, informed by reading ages, SEND profiles, and assessment data. • Implementation in 2025–26: • Whole-school INSET on the Thornden DNA, followed by department-level training to apply principles within subject contexts. • Consistent monitoring through learning walks, book looks, line management, and Disadvantaged Monitoring Days. • Guidance for staff on using pupil profiles and diagnostic reading data to support effective scaffolding and adaptive teaching. <p>Rationale: EEF evidence highlights explicit instruction, modelling, scaffolding and adaptive practice as high-impact strategies for improving disadvantaged attainment.</p> <p>2. Whole-School Reading Strategy and Literacy Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To address gaps in vocabulary, comprehension and reading fluency—key barriers for disadvantaged pupils—we will implement a strengthened literacy approach built on the Reading & Oracy INSET delivered in 2025–2026. <p>a) Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use whole-cohort standardised reading tests to identify weaker readers and direct targeted intervention. • Share reading age information with all staff to support adaptive teaching and curriculum access. <p>b) Tutor Reading Programme (Three Times Weekly)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a structured reading curriculum in tutor time using high-quality, inclusive texts that build background knowledge and cultural capital. • Ensure disadvantaged pupils experience fluent reading modelling, vocabulary explanation and structured discussion around texts. • Train staff in reading-aloud techniques, choral reading and comprehension questioning. <p>c) Disciplinary Literacy Across Subjects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed the Thornden Three routines and department-specific vocabulary instruction. 	<p>Literacy” guidance; research shows strong effect for disadvantaged pupils</p> <p>EEF “Five-a-day” guidance for SEND / disadvantaged pupils; general evidence for quality teaching → supports all, helps disadvantage</p>	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicitly teach academic language, key terminology and sentence structures. • Use reading rulers, choral reading and structured question stems to support comprehension. <p>Rationale: EEF research shows that improving reading fluency, vocabulary and oracy is one of the highest-impact ways to improve attainment, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with lower prior attainment.</p> <p>3. Oracy Development to Strengthen Expression, Vocabulary and Reasoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on the Reading & Oracy INSET, we will continue to embed whole-school oracy routines to improve pupils' confidence and communication. • Actions include: • Training staff to scaffold oral responses and model disciplinary language. • Using think–pair–share, sentence starters and structured partner talk to enable disadvantaged pupils to rehearse and articulate ideas. • Embedding academic talk routines in all lessons to support reasoning, explanation and comprehension. • Rationale: EEF guidance indicates that oral language development directly improves reading comprehension, vocabulary and overall academic attainment. 		
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support, structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £32,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p><i>One-to-one support of all students in receipt of PPG with specific focus and intervention (e.g. tutoring) with those who are currently underachieving</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2025–2026, the Thornden Champions Mentoring programme will be refined to focus on a broader range of pupils who fall into educationally disadvantaged categories, including those affected by SEND, EBSA, social vulnerability or fluctuating engagement. The 	<p>Evidence Base for Targeted Academic & Mentoring Support</p> <p>Research from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) indicates that one-to-one tuition can yield, on average, an additional five months' progress for pupils who receive it. EEF+1 The EEF identifies tutoring as one of the most effective and evidence-backed interventions for supporting disadvantaged pupils' attainment — particularly when it is closely aligned with classroom teaching, tailored to individual needs, and delivered over a sustained period. EEF+1</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4</p>

<p>revised model will continue to prioritise strong, consistent adult relationships, while aligning more closely with attendance, behaviour and progress priorities identified through the Thornden Hub and whole-school data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement high-quality adaptive teaching and personalised support for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, ensuring teachers use Thornden DNA routines, student profiles, and targeted scaffolding to remove barriers to learning and enable full curriculum access. 	<p>Evaluations of targeted programmes such as the Tutor Trust have demonstrated measurable improvements for disadvantaged pupils, providing empirical support for structured, school-based tutoring. EEF+1 In addition to academic benefits, one-to-one and small-group tuition have been shown to enhance pupil confidence, engagement, and motivation — crucial outcomes for pupils facing disadvantage, SEND or disrupted educational trajectories. EEF+1</p> <p>The evidence also supports the use of tailored, sustained support structures, especially for pupils with complex or overlapping needs (SEND, EBSA, social vulnerability). Reliable monitoring, mentoring, and links to pastoral care — as envisaged through our Thornden Hub and broadened Champions programme — are key to ensuring that targeted academic intervention translates into improved long-term progress and gap reduction. GOV.UK+1</p> <p>On this basis, we are confident that our 2025–2026 approach — extending one-to-one support to a wider range of educationally disadvantaged pupils and combining academic tutoring with mentoring, pastoral support, and data-driven identification of need — is firmly grounded in the best available evidence.</p> <p>Evidence Base for Targeted Inclusion and Disadvantaged Academic & Mentoring Support</p> <p>The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) strongly endorses adaptive, responsive teaching as a core component of effective classroom practice.</p> <p>The EEF’s Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools guidance states that high-quality teaching, informed by knowledge of individual pupils and their needs, is the most important factor in improving attainment for pupils with SEND. The report stresses the importance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scaffolding and modelling, • explicit instruction, • flexible grouping, • use of pupil information/profiles 	
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	<p>to inform planning, and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• teachers making precise, purposeful adaptations without lowering challenge. <p>These strategies form the basis of Thornden DNA and the use of personalised student profiles.</p> <p>The EEF's Improving Teaching and Learning Through Structured Pedagogy highlights that approaches which structure explanation, modelling, and guided practice — all central features of Thornden DNA — improve learning, especially for disadvantaged pupils who benefit from greater clarity and explicitness.</p> <p>The EEF Toolkit also reports that metacognition and self-regulated learning (average impact +7 months) is most effective when teachers model thinking, break learning into small steps, and provide structured scaffolding before gradually removing support — again aligning with Thornden DNA and adaptive teaching.</p> <p>In addition, the EEF's Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants guidance emphasises that individualised support is most effective when it is deliberately planned by teachers, linked closely to classroom learning, and based on high-quality teacher-led instruction — reinforcing the importance of well-designed personalised adjustments within lessons.</p> <p>Finally, EEF research on disadvantage and the attainment gap highlights that disadvantaged pupils benefit disproportionately from high-quality teaching, explicit vocabulary instruction, and well-structured scaffolding — all of which are embedded within Thornden's adaptive teaching model.</p> <p>Together, this evidence base supports our approach of using Thornden DNA routines, personalised student profiles, and adaptive teaching to ensure that disadvantaged and SEND pupils receive effective, targeted classroom support that improves access to the full curriculum and drives stronger long-term progress.</p>	
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Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £54,600

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Implement a strengthened whole-school attendance strategy focused on early intervention, personalised support, and high-quality pastoral oversight, to reduce the attendance gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils by 1% and reduce the disadvantaged PA rate by 1%. This will be done through early identification through new Personalised Attendance Support Plan routes.</p> <p>Implement a whole-school enrichment participation strategy to increase involvement of disadvantaged pupils in leadership, sports, clubs, trips, and wider personal development opportunities. This will include an enrichment tracker system, targeted encouragement and support, and the removal of barriers to participation</p> <p>Implement a whole-school mental health and wellbeing strategy, with targeted support for disadvantaged pupils, to improve early identification, reduce escalation, and strengthen students' ability to manage their emotional wellbeing. This will be done by implement the strengthened Safeguarding & PSHE Curriculum, early Identification Through Pastoral Triage and</p>	<p>Evidence Base for Attendance Strategy</p> <p>The EEF's <i>2022 Attendance interventions: Rapid Evidence Assessment</i> demonstrates that tailored, responsive approaches — including mentoring, family engagement, and personalised support — show promise in improving school attendance. EEF+1</p> <p>The EEF's <i>Supporting School Attendance</i> guidance (2024) recommends a holistic, school-wide approach, combining universal provision with targeted intervention and close monitoring — exactly the model underpinning our Personalised Attendance Support Plan (PASP), SEND/non-SEND pathways, and Hub safeguarding referral routes. EEF+1</p> <p>Furthermore, recent research from the EEF-funded BITUP project demonstrates that personalised communication with parents (e.g., meaningful text messages about days missed rather than percentages) can lead to measurable gains in attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. EEF+1</p> <p>Finally, thought leadership from the EEF emphasises that “what works” for improving attendance is not a one-size-fits-all solution, but rather a tailored approach that diagnoses individual barriers, responds proactively, and enables early intervention — reinforcing the rationale for our split-pathway, Hub-centred model. EEF+1</p> <p>On the basis of this evidence, our 2025–2026 attendance strategy is firmly grounded in the best available research and designed to meet the complex needs of disadvantaged and at-risk pupils.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4,</p>

<p>the Thornden Hub and to embed Mental Health Within Thornden Champions Mentoring</p>	<p>Evidence Base for Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy</p> <p>Our whole-school mental health and wellbeing strategy is grounded in evidence from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). The EEF’s guidance on social and emotional learning (SEL) shows that explicitly teaching pupils about emotions, relationships and self-management, and embedding SEL into daily routines, can improve wellbeing, behaviour and academic outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. EEF+2EEF+2</p> <p>The EEF’s Improving Behaviour in Schools report further emphasises the importance of combining whole-school routines with targeted approaches for individual pupils, focusing on understanding pupils’ needs, teaching learning and emotional behaviours, and using preventative, relational strategies to reduce escalation. EEF+2d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net+2</p> <p>Our use of pastoral triage, the Thornden Hub and tailored intervention for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs directly reflects these recommendations.</p> <p>Finally, the EEF’s guidance on Metacognition and Self-Regulated Learning highlights that helping pupils to plan, monitor and reflect on their thinking and emotions is particularly beneficial for disadvantaged learners. EEF+2d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net+2</p> <p>By embedding mental health and wellbeing work within Thornden Champions mentoring — including structured check-ins, goal-setting, and emotional regulation strategies — we are explicitly developing these self-regulation skills for our most vulnerable pupils.</p> <p>Together, these strands mean that our strengthened Safeguarding & PSHE curriculum, early identification via pastoral triage and the Thornden Hub, and the integration of mental health within Champions mentoring are all firmly aligned with the best available EEF evidence about how schools can support pupil wellbeing and protect disadvantaged pupils from poorer outcomes.</p>	
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Total budgeted cost: £

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Challenge 1:

Good Progress Average progress Minimal progress

Academic outcomes for disadvantaged pupils improved significantly in 2024–2025. Attainment 8 increased from 48.71 (2023–24) to 51.9 (2024–25), and the average grade rose from 4.87 to 5.19. Thornden achieved the highest disadvantaged Attainment 8 score of all 152 secondary schools in the region, representing exceptional performance.

1. Thornden’s disadvantaged attainment is not only improving year-on-year, it is also performing at the top of the regional distribution.
2. The disadvantaged attainment gap has narrowed compared with the previous year.
3. Disadvantaged pupils are achieving more secure grade 5+ outcomes.
4. Curriculum access has improved, particularly for low prior attainers and struggling readers.

These improvements reflect the impact of targeted interventions (including 1:1 tutoring in English and maths), strengthened literacy provision, the Thornden DNA approach to high-quality teaching, and the mentoring and pastoral support delivered by Thornden Champions and the Thornden Hub. Disadvantaged pupils are now demonstrating more secure progress across subjects, stronger engagement, and improved academic confidence, contributing to a narrowing of the disadvantage gap.

Challenge 2:

Good Progress Average progress Minimal progress

Attendance for disadvantaged pupils continued to improve across 2024–2025, building on the school’s sustained upward trend over the last three years. Disadvantaged attendance increased again this year to 90.4%, rising steadily from 88.7% in 2022/23. Over the same period, the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers narrowed from 5 percentage points to just over 4 percentage points, reflecting the school’s strengthened attendance strategy and consistent pastoral support.

Persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils also reduced significantly, falling from approximately 30% in 2022/23 to 25.1% in 2024/25. While this remains higher than the overall school rate of 11.8%, it represents a clear three-year downward trend and demonstrates the positive impact of personalised interventions, early identification of emerging EBSA needs, and more targeted casework led by Heads of Year and the Attendance Team.

National and Local Authority comparison data shows that Thornden continues to outperform national attendance benchmarks across all pupil groups, including disadvantaged, SEND and combined vulnerability categories. This confirms that, while gaps remain within the school,

disadvantaged pupils at Thornden attend more consistently than disadvantaged pupils nationally and within the wider Hampshire context.

Looking ahead, attendance will remain a key priority for disadvantaged pupils, with particular focus on pupils in Years 10 and 11 and those with SEND/EBSA profiles who are at greatest risk of persistent absence. The school will continue to refine its early intervention model, strengthen home–school engagement, and embed the use of attendance dashboards and Personalised Attendance Support Plan processes to ensure disadvantaged pupils maintain positive attendance trajectories.

Academic Year	PP Attendance	Whole School Attendance	Gap
2022/23	88.7%	93.7%	–5.0pp
2023/24	89.5%	94.3%	–4.8pp
2024/25	90.4%	94.5%	–4.1pp

Academic Year	PP PA	Whole School PA	Gap
2022/23	30%	14.3%	+15.7%
2023/24	27%	13.6%	+13.4%
2024/25	25.1%	11.8%	+13.3%

The Thornden Champions mentoring programme had a clear and positive impact on disadvantaged pupils during 2024–2025. Staff reported a noticeable reduction in absence among several of the key students supported through the programme, with improved consistency in daily attendance and fewer periods of disengagement. This is consistent with wider whole-school attendance improvements and reflects the effect of personalised, relationship-based intervention on pupils who previously struggled with school avoidance.

Student voice responses were strongly positive. Many pupils described the programme as helping them feel more supported and better understood, contributing to a stronger sense of connection to school life. One student commented that having a Champion made them feel *“more confident coming into school because someone checks in on me and knows how I’m doing.”* This theme of increased belonging and reassurance appeared repeatedly in feedback and aligned with the programme’s aims.

Academic outcomes for pupils involved in the Champions programme also showed improvement. GCSE results for the mentored group were higher than their earlier working-at grades suggested, with several students exceeding teacher predictions following sustained mentoring and academic guidance. Staff noted that the programme helped pupils to engage more consistently in lessons, feel accountable for their progress and better understand how to organise themselves and seek help when needed.

The mentoring programme also contributed positively to wider school culture. Students expressed greater trust in staff, improved self-belief and a clearer understanding of their goals.

These gains were particularly evident among pupils who had struggled with confidence, motivation or peer relationships earlier in the year.

In 2025–2026, the programme will be refined to focus on a broader range of pupils who fall into educationally disadvantaged categories, including those affected by SEND, EBSA, social vulnerability or fluctuating engagement. The revised model will continue to prioritise strong, consistent adult relationships, while aligning more closely with attendance, behaviour and progress priorities identified through the Thornden Hub and whole-school data.

Challenge 3:

Good Progress Average progress Minimal progress

Analysis of enrichment participation shows that while disadvantaged pupils access certain areas well—particularly wellbeing and medical support - they remain under-represented in leadership roles, sports participation and residential experiences. Where enrichment is inclusive, low-cost and high-profile (e.g., school production), disadvantaged participation matches expectation.

This analysis confirms the need for targeted work in 2025–2026 to increase disadvantaged involvement in leadership, sports, and trips, while continuing to strengthen pastoral support through the Hub, the Wellbeing Den, and our attendance strategy.

Challenge 4:

Good Progress Average progress Minimal progress

Decrease behaviour points/sanctions — reduction in repeat offenders due to Cross-School Alternative to Suspension and Restorative Behaviour Day (PP focus).

Area	PP Impact	Evaluation
Repeat Reflection Room use	PP increased from 12% → 23%	Mixed – system improved but residual cohort now more disadvantaged
Repeat suspensions	PP dropped from 16% → 14%	Strong positive impact
<i>Cross-School Alternative effectiveness</i>	PP 15% (not overrepresented); majority improved	Positive and protective for PP pupils
Restorative Behaviour Day outcomes	PP 29%; strong reductions in sanctions	Strong impact on repeat behaviours
Overall sanctions (Sept/Oct)	Major reductions across all behaviours; PP cohort benefits	Very strong systemic impact

Target broadly met for disadvantaged pupils

Clear evidence shows:

1. Repeat suspensions for PP pupils decreased significantly
2. Alternative-to-suspension pathways (Cross School Inclusion, Restorative Behaviour Day) reduced escalation
3. PP pupils benefited from restorative and preventative approaches
4. Whole-school sanctions fell sharply, improving outcomes for PP students
5. Pupils experiencing repeated escalation dramatically reduced

Externally provided programmes

Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you used your pupil premium (or recovery premium) to fund in the previous academic year.

Programme	Provider
N/A	