

Pupil premium strategy statement

This statement details North Cambridge Academy's use of pupil premium funding for the 2024 to 2025 academic year 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 effect that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	North Cambridge Academy
Number of pupils in school	694
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	50%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3-year plans are recommended)	2024-27
Date this statement was published	September 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2026
Statement authorised by	Jane Driver
Pupil premium lead	Joanna Tate
Governor / Trustee lead	Louisa Meynell

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£ 374,547
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£ 0
Total budget for this academic year	£ 374,547

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our objectives for pupils who are in receipt of Pupil Premium funding are threefold:

1. To support all Pupil Premium students to make progress in line with their peers, in all subjects
2. To ensure a childhood set of experiences for Pupil Premium students in line with their peers
3. To ensure all students receive additional, specialised interventions so they can make informed choices about the next stage of their learning

To achieve the objectives above the school will focus on the following key principles:

1. All Pupil Premium pupils will make academic progress in line with their peers

Exceptional teaching is at the heart of ensuring Pupil Premium students make progress in line with their peers. At North Cambridge Academy we will ensure all Pupil Premium students receive the very best teaching in every subject. The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic has left many Pupil Premium pupils further behind in their academic development. We will support students to progress in their learning in line with their peers through: dedicated and personalised intervention strategies, extending the school day with intervention classes, employing teachers and Graduates to lead a vibrant Saturday school as well as provide holiday learning.

2. All Pupil Premium pupil's attendance will be above or in line with national average attendance

Attendance will be assured through a rigorous attendance strategy partnered with supportive home school dialogue. Every effort will be made at all levels including tutor, House team, Attendance Officer and other agencies, to ensure sustained attendance is achieved.

3. All pupils will be supported to foster independent learning, greater autonomy and self-directed learning through teaching strategies, extra-curricular activities and supportive personalised pastoral care.

All Pupil Premium students will have access to a tutor who will ensure the conditions for learning in school and at home do not hinder academic progress or attainment. Teaching strategies and whole school initiatives will strive for Pupil Premium pupils gaining greater autonomy, resilience and being able to self-direct their learning. In September 2024 the school launched the Future Aspirations Programme to promote aspirations and academic progress with Pupil Premium students with a Lead Teacher designated to manage it.

4. All Pupil Premium pupils will take part in a childhood set of activities which broaden pupil outlook and perspectives.

There is much evidence to suggest that those in receipt of pupil premium funding do not always experience a rich set of activities and opportunities which broaden their outlook and perspective. This lack of cultural capital was compounded by the pandemic. North Cambridge Academy will ensure a memorable set of experiences which support engagement and independent growth.

5. All Pupil Premium pupils will take part in CEIAG. (Careers Information Advice and Guidance) activities which broaden knowledge of careers and ensure informed choices as to the next steps of their learning from year 7 - 11.

The school will ensure an enhanced CEIAG package of activities, this will include dedicated careers interviews, work experience and careers carousels. We have endeavoured to ensure students have the opportunity to partake in meaningful discussions on career opportunities and next steps in their learning, career development and progression routes.

This strategic approach is summarised in our Pupil Premium Charter which is our core expectation for all PP students. The Meridian PP charter was updated in 2023 to expand overnight residential opportunities. We will work towards ensuring that every child participates in a residential opportunity during their time at the Academy. The Meridian pupil premium charter:

<https://northcambridgeacademy.org/pupil-premium-finance/>

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	In the summer of 2025, the FFT Progress 8 score for the Maths element in Year 11 was +0.2 for all students and -0.3 for Pupil Premium students, although this shows an increase of +0.2 from 2024, it still shows a significant gap. The attainment 8 score of the Maths element in Year 11 was 8.05 compared to 8.8 for English. Maths attainment 8 score was 6.46 for Pupil Premium students and 7.37 for English for these students. Assessments on entry also suggest the attainment of disadvantaged students in Maths is below national average and students need to make accelerated progress to close the gaps to their peers. This is shown by the average standard age score of students who are Free School Meals, in September 2024, in the GL Progress test in Maths, which was 93.5 compared to 98.7 for students who are not FSM. Therefore, raising progress and attainment in Maths remains a priority for disadvantaged students at North Cambridge Academy in 2025-2026.

2	In 2025 assessments and observations of pupils indicate that disadvantaged pupils generally have lower levels of reading comprehension and writing than peers. This impacts their progress in all subjects. Student engagement is also impacted by lower levels of literacy and comprehension. Furthermore, students are less likely to read for enjoyment from families that are more disadvantaged. This can lead to a vocabulary gap. This is demonstrated by the average standard age score of students who were Free School Meals in the GL Progress test on entry in English which was 92.4 (in 2024) compared to 99 for students who were not FSM. In addition, in Year 11, 63.2% of students achieved a grade 4 in English GCSE compared to 45.7% of Pupil Premium pupils. This demonstrates a gap, therefore, literacy in both Key Stage 3 and 4 is a priority area to be addressed by this plan.
3	During Pandemic, staff at North Cambridge Academy worked very hard to ensure any students who were educationally vulnerable were either able to access online learning by providing appropriate technology or if this did not work, ensuring students attended school. Therefore, the FFT Attendance tracker showed attendance at the school was between 15 to 20% above national each week during the periods of lockdown. Despite this, our assessments, observations and discussions with pupils and families suggest that the education and wellbeing of many of our disadvantaged pupils was impacted by partial school closures to a greater extent than for other pupils. These findings are backed up by several national studies. This has resulted in significant knowledge gaps resulting in pupils falling further behind age-related expectations, shown in below average standard age scores in English and Maths as demonstrated above.
4	Some families / young people have aspirations that are restricted as a result of lack of experience of educational success and or different career pathways. This can lead to low motivation and lack of clarity about the purpose of education.
5	Our assessments, observations and discussions with pupils and families have identified social and emotional issues for many pupils, such as anxiety, depression (diagnosed by medical professionals) and low self-esteem. This is partly driven by concern about catching up lost learning and exams/future prospects, and the lack of enrichment and communicative opportunities during the pandemic and the legacy of this thereafter. These challenges particularly affect disadvantaged pupils, including their attainment. Since the pandemic, teacher referrals for support have increased significantly.
6	In 2024-25 attendance for Pupil Premium students was 85.7%, whilst this was broadly in line with national averages for Pupil Premium students, it still presents a gap of 7.4% compared to non-Pupil Premium students, whose attendance was 93.1% (1% above national average). Supporting students to return to full and normal patterns of attendance is key in re- storing attainment and wellbeing. This attendance concern and priority at North Cambridge Academy, as well as nationally, stems from the Pandemic; Prior to the school closures overall attendance at the school had improved year on year for three years and was in line with national average attendance. A gap between Pupil Premium and non-Pupil Premium students did exist but it was between 1 and 2%. Therefore, the significant gap above is a concern to be addressed by this plan.

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
Put strategies in place to help all Pupil Premium pupils will make academic progress in line with their peers	• Positive Progress 8 score for PP students • Reduce Gap from 2019 levels for PP students at 4+ Eng and Ma (<16%) and 5+ Eng and Ma (<10%)
Put strategies in place to help all Pupil Premium pupils to have attendance above or in line with national average attendance. Follow best practice and implement evidence-based strategies to reduce percentages of students who are persistently absent and are Pupil Premium.	• Attendance data gap for Pupil Premium pupils compared to Non PP will reduce significantly from current 7% gap back to >2%. Attendance for all students will be on or above National Avg. • Clear attendance processes and procedures followed for all students with attendance below 95% resulting in improved attendance for Pupil premium students • Clear process of rewards for students with 100% attendance and improved attendance to encourage culture of high attendance
All Pupil Premium pupils will take part in a childhood set of activities which broaden pupil outlook and perspectives.	• All Pupil Premium pupils have the opportunity to attend at least three off site visits during Key Stage 3. • Full access and encouragement, including financial, to attend residentials, trips and access all extra-curricular opportunities. • All Pupil Premium pupils to achieve the Meridian Bronze PLEDGE

All Pupil Premium pupils will take part in CEIAG. (Careers Information Advice and Guidance) activities which broaden knowledge of careers and ensure informed choices as to the next steps of their learning from year 11.	• Delivery of comprehensive Key Stage 3 careers programme with a vibrant range of opportunities provided for all students. • Having at least three independent careers interviews at Key Stage 4. • Completing an aspirational work experience placement during Key Stage 4.
To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.	• Qualitative data from student voice including the PASS survey, parent / carer surveys and teacher observations showing positive attitudes to self and school. • Continued good participation in Saturday school with 50%+ PP students engaging. • Instrumental lessons provided for all students but targeted at PP students. Increased interventions and extra-curricular in place targeting wellbeing.
Improved reading comprehension among disadvantaged pupils across KS3.	Reading comprehension tests demonstrate improved comprehension skills amongst disadvantaged pupils and a smaller disparity between the scores of disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers. Teachers recognise this improvement through engagement in lessons and book scrutiny. A range of literacy and reading intervention programmes set up and running including: • Reading Plus • Faster Read Programme • Powerful Words in tutor time • Lexonic • Bespoke English tutoring • Accelerated Learning Group for English

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: £35,298.18

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Strand 1 of the CPD focus for the year for all teachers on effective 'Marking, Feedback and Assessment'	CPD Lead assigned to work on this area of T&L with whole school. Meridian Learning IOLs and PBBLS to be used to support this focus. Support from Subject Directors from the Trust to improve feedback in specific areas including in Maths in liason with the Maths Hub, English, History, Geography, Science, MFL and Careers. EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Feedback	1,2,3
Strand 2 of the CPD focus for the year for all teachers is: Setting effective Homework	Progress Leader assigned to work on this area of Teaching & Learning in 2024-2025. EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Homework	1,2,3
Strand 3 of the CPD focus for the year for all teachers is whole school literacy and reading Improving literacy in all subject areas in line with recommendations in the EEF Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools guidance.	Literacy Lead assigned to work on this area of in 2024-2025 Meridian Learning IOLs and PBBLS. EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) Reading comprehension, vocabulary and other literacy skills are heavily linked with attainment in maths and English: word-gap.pdf (oup.com.cn)	2
Strand 4 of the CPD focus for the year for all teachers is effective adaptive teaching, including positive behaviour management.	North Cambridge Academy became a part of the Trauma Informed schools research pilot starting in 2023-24, including whole school training, senior staff training and nine selected staff completing the Diploma. Implementation of this programme continues in 2024-25 including pathways meetings and three staff completing training to provide supervision for their peers. There are monthly whole staff briefing related to this strand. In addition, whole school training delivered by SENCo, Teaching and Learning lead, Assistant SENDCOs and	

	School Educational Psychologist to support effective adaptive teaching. Trust lead for Inclusion also providing training and feedback on effective use of a second adult in classrooms relevant to Teaching Assistants and model of teaching in Accelerated Learning Groups.	
Monitoring, support and intervention to ensure quality first teaching so that each student will be supported to make at least National average progress in English, Maths and Science in years 7 and 8. Each student will be supported to make accelerated progress during years 9, 10 and 11.	Curriculum Leads quality assure their subject areas, compiling evidence of learning walks/ evidence of book reviews and moderation of assessments which is supported by Trust colleagues too. Extra teaching groups in some years in English, Maths and Science to ensure smaller class sizes for disadvantaged learners and more targeted intervention. Extra teaching group (Accelerated Learning Group) in every year 7-11 for English, Maths, Science providing intervention in classes smaller than 15. EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Reducing class size EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) Small group tuition	1, 2
We will fund leadership development for middle leaders to support leadership capacity in raising attainment for all students including those who are Pupil Premium	School leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions. https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/11329/1/DCSF-RR108.pdf Trust support for Subject and Curriculum Leaders in History, Geography, Maths, Languages, Careers and Science to keep motivation and collaboration high. Assistant Principal responsible for Teaching and Learning also leads and guides Curriculum Leaders as a group to ensure consistency and development of middle leadership. Assistant Principal responsible for Pastoral care similarly leads Senior Tutors to develop leadership capacity and consistency of practice with this group of staff.	1

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

Budgeted cost: £269,265.27

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
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Use of tutoring to raise attainment in English / Maths, languages and other subjects. A significant proportion of the pupils who receive tutoring will be disadvantaged including those who are high attainers.	Tuition targeted at specific needs and knowledge gaps can be an effective method to support low attaining pupils or those falling behind, both one-to-one: One to one tuition EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) And in small groups: Small group tuition Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF	1
Future Aspirations Programme to help provide enhanced opportunities and scaffold aspirations of more able PP students.	EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Aspiration Interventions EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Mentoring	1,2,3,4
Ensure each Pupil Premium pupil receives <i>at least</i> three one to one targeted tutor interviews each year.	EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Aspiration Interventions EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Behaviour interventions EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Mentoring	3,4,5,6
Every student in Years 8 and 10 to complete a PASS survey each year to ensure targeted interventions/attitudes to learning and trends in attitudes can be monitored and addressed where necessary	EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: behaviour interventions EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Peer tutoring EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: social and emotional learning	3,4,5
Ensure every Pupil Premium student has access to relevant online revision and learning platforms for Key Stage 3 and GCSE study and their use is monitored. Examples below: • Lexonic • Unifrog • Tassomai • Sparx Maths • Reading Plus • Active Hub	EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Digital technology Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF	1,2

Small groups of students (below 10) in Year 7,8 and 9 with additional needs including SEND and SEMH taught by specialist staff in fewer classrooms for approximately 9-10 hours per week. This model includes the Accelerated Learning Groups in English, Maths and Science, with classes no more than 15 which are double staffed with a subject specialist and a SEND specialist.	EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Small group tuition	1,2
The Pod, a half-termly tailored intervention, for students with SEMH and SEND, with high staff to student ratios delivering micro-group teaching and therapy.	EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Small group tuition	1,2
Literacy intervention groups running in Years 7,8 and 9 using Lexonic. One to one reading taking place regularly for specific students in Years 9 and 10. intervention in place for identified Pupil Premium learners.	EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Small group tuition Reading comprehension strategies can have a positive impact on pupils' ability to understand a text, and this is particularly the case when interventions are delivered over a shorter timespan Reading comprehension strategies Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF	2

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

Budgeted cost: £69,984.46

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
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To ensure that every Pupil Premium student's parent/s attend at least one face to face parents' evening each year	EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Parental Engagement	1,4
Each student to complete the Meridian Bronze PLEDGE between year 7 and 9 and strive for their silver PLEDGES at Key Stage 4.	EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Arts Participation EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Outdoor Adventure Learning EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Physical activity EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	3,5
All Pupil Premium students able to take part in at least a 1 week extending the boundaries Activity programme in the summer term annually. In addition, we have added Flatpack days throughout the year to provide extra opportunities to apply learning outside of the classroom.	EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Arts Participation EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Outdoor Adventure Learning EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Physical activity EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	3,5
All Pupil Premium students are invited and actively encouraged to attend Saturday School for Sport and or Revision.	EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Physical activity EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	3,5

Each student will be supported to achieve at least 94.6% attendance each academic year. Monitoring and intervention by SSA, Attendance Officer and Family Liaison Officer Continue to embed principles of good practice set out in DfE's Improving School Attendance advice under Attendance Officer. Staff will get training. Two new SSA's were appointed for academic year 2024/25.	EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Social and emotional learning EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced persistent absence levels. North Cambridge Academy have previously implemented an effective system of attendance rewards and interventions which improved attendance and reduced persistent absence for all students including those who are disadvantaged. This system involves the proactive use of the SOL tracker and early intervention from all stake holders including form tutors, Student Support Assistants and the Attendance Officer.	6
Each student will attend a minimum of two interviews with an independent careers advisor at Key Stage 4. (Supported by Form the Future)	Gatsby Benchmark 8 EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Aspiration interventions EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	4
Each Pupil Premium student will complete an aspirational work experience placement in year 10.	Gatsby 8 Benchmark	4
All students are invited to receive a free breakfast daily	EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Extending school time EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	3,5
All students' positive engagement and hard work is acknowledged through a rewards programme to encourage high aspirations	EEF Teaching and Learning tool kit: Aspiration interventions EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	1,2,3
Contingency fund for acute issues.	Based on our experiences and those of similar schools to ours, we have identified a need to set a small amount of funding aside to respond quickly to needs that have not yet been identified.	All

Total budgeted cost:

Targetted academic support	£ 269,265.27
Wider Strategies	£ 69,984.46
Teaching	£ 35,298.18
Total	£ 374,547.91

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the 2024 to 2025 academic year.

Year 11 progress and attainment headline figures for North Cambridge Academy in 2024-25

In 2024-25, the Year 11 cohort at North Cambridge Academy was 55%.

With regard to examination results, in 2018, 2019, 2022 and 2023 Pupil Premium students at North Cambridge Academy had a positive progress 8 score overall. This took a dip in 24 to -0.21. However, nationally disadvantaged students averaged a progress 8 score of -0.57 in the same academic year. In 2024-25, due to the Pandemic, there were no official Progress 8 scores, however FFT reports a Progress score of -0.06 for Pupil Premium students (Based on GL Assessment). Therefore, staff at North Cambridge Academy continue to work hard to close the progress and attainment gap for disadvantaged students.

At North Cambridge Academy, in 2024-25. 20% of Year 11 Pupil Premium students achieved a grade 5+ in English and Maths. This compares to 27% of disadvantaged students nationally. However, on entry students at North Cambridge Academy in Year 11 were below age-related expectations compared to the national average in Reading, Writing and Maths according to GL Assessment.

Year 11 attendance headline figures for North Cambridge Academy in 2023-24 and 2024-25

The data below shows that attendance continues to be an area which requires continued focus and prioritisation since the return from Covid. The House Supervisors, Student Support Advisers, Assistant Senior Tutors and Senior Tutors and Assistant Principals within each House work hard with the Attendance Officer and Family Liaison Officer to support families to exhaust strategies to raise attendance.

	Whole cohort	PP	Non PP
Attendance 2024-25	89.7% (-1.6 NA)	85.2% (-1.0 NA)	94.2% (+0.9 NA)

PASS Survey data

The PASS survey was completed with Year 8 and Year 10 students in Spring 2025 (results below). This data provided information which allowed form tutors and House teams to support individual students who had challenges in some areas. However, the overall picture suggests students have overall positive attitudes to learning and their teaching. Response to curriculum demands and feelings about school is an area which requires review.

The PASS survey will be done with these year groups again in Spring 2026.

Year 8

Feelings about school	Perceived learning capability	Self-regard as a learner	Preparedness for learning	Attitudes to teachers	General work ethic	Confidence in learning	Attitudes to attendance	Response to curriculum demands
20.4	41.2	33.6	41.2	36.2	36.3	49.0	25.9	29.2

Year 10

Feelings about school	Perceived learning capability	Self-regard as a learner	Preparedness for learning	Attitudes to teachers	General work ethic	Confidence in learning	Attitudes to attendance	Response to curriculum demands
26.2	51.5	33.6	51.3	57.4	36.3	57.9	25.9	17.5

Post 16 - Destination Data

Destination data shows 90% of students continue with education in schools, sixth forms or colleges an increase of 7% from 2022, with significantly higher percentages of students continuing to A Levels. 4 students were supported to gain a fully paid bursary for independent P16 education (2 boarding). The Future Aspirations Programme continues to build these links over time. Building closer links between NCA and CRC to support KS4 transition is an area for review.

Notes at the bottom of the table show destinations for those students who did not sustain a

2024			
Female		Male	
#	%	#	%
9	12.00%	3	5.77%
32	42.67%	27	51.92%
29	38.67%	16	30.77%
		2	3.85%
1	1.33%	1	1.92%
4	5.33%	2	3.85%
		1	1.92%
75	100.00%	52	100.00%

placement.

Year		2024					2023					
Gender		Female		Male		Total		Female		Male		
Destination	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
School Sixth Form	9	12%	3	5.77%	12	9.45%↑	5	10.20%	2	3.51%	7	6.60%
Sixth Form College	32	42.67%	27	51.92%	59	46.46%↓	24	48.98%	27	47.37%	51	48.11%
FE College	29	38.67%	16	30.77%	45	35.43%↑	15	30.61%	22	38.60%	37	34.91%
Employment with training			2	3.85%	2	1.57%↓	2	4.08%	1	1.75%	3	2.83%
Employment without training	1	1.33%	1	1.92%	2	1.57%↑						
Other (learning/employment)												
Not in education, employment or training	4	5.33%	2	3.85%	6	4.72%↓	2	4.08%	4	7.02%	6	5.66%
Unknown			1	1.92%	1	0.79%↓	1	2.04%	1	1.75%	2	1.89%
Total	75	100.00%	52	100.00%	127	100.00%	49	100.00%	57	100.00%	106	100.00%

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1 Male moved to Brazil
 1 Female moved to Ireland
 1 Female moved to Huntingdon
 1 Male withdrew from L Road was looking to apply for CRC 2024
 1 Male withdrew from CRC course, but had different course confirmed for Sept 24
 1 Female withdrew from CRC and was apply for different course for Sept 24
 1 Male - Neet now working
 1 Male - Neet - Was seeing a young person's worker

Further information (optional)

As a member of the Meridian Trust the academy follows the Trust [Statement of Principles](#) and subscribe to the [Trust Pupil Premium Charter](#). Many of the strategies within this charter are outlined in the strategies for improvements above. The PP Charter sets of a series of minimum expectations and actions required to ensure the academic, cultural and experiences gap between pupils and their peers narrows in all its schools.