



Pupil Premium Funding Policy

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1. Vision

- 1.1. The Astrea mission, 'Inspiring beyond Measure', reflects the belief that an exceptional education for all is rich and empowering beyond the narrow confines of formal examination success.
- 1.2. As reflected in the Astrea Inclusion Policy¹, the vision and model for disadvantaged pupils across the Trust reiterates the Astrea mission, acknowledging that an exceptional education will provide a rich and empowering experience which produces success through wider and academic outcomes and where 'success' is defined in terms of the individual learner.

2. Introduction to the Pupil Premium Funding

- 2.1. This document sets out our approach to promoting the effective use of the pupil premium funding to support both the academic and wider outcomes of disadvantaged pupils.
- 2.2. The pupil premium is additional funding for publicly funded schools in England. It's designed to help disadvantaged pupils of all abilities perform better, and close the gap between them and their peers.
- 2.3. Schools receive funding for each pupil registered as eligible for free school meals (FSM) at any point in the last 6 years for pupils from reception to year 11. The amounts for each year are published on the Department for Education website.²
- 2.4. Schools also receive additional funding (for the purpose of this document, we will refer to this as Pupil Premium Plus) for any pupil:
 - identified in the January 2020 school census or the alternative provision census as having left local authority care as a result of:
 - adoption
 - a special guardianship order
 - a child arrangements order (previously known as a residence order)
 - who has been in local authority care for 1 day or more
 - recorded as both eligible for FSM in the last 6 years and as being looked after (or as having left local authority care)
- 2.5. In 2020-21, these pupils attracted £2,345.³ The virtual school head of the local authority that looks after the pupil will manage the Pupil Premium Plus funding and distribute this according to their own models. It is therefore important that schools ensure they have accessed the full amount of funding available from their virtual school.
- 2.6. During the Covid-19 pandemic which commenced in the spring term 2020, additional government funds to support disadvantaged pupils / those eligible for free school meals were also allocated. For example, in relation to technology and summer food funding.⁴

¹ <https://astreaacademytrust.org/about-us/statutory-documents/>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2020-to-2021>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2020-to-2021>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare>



3. Eligibility for the Pupil Premium and Recording of Eligibility

3.1. Impact of Universal Credit⁵

One eligibility criterion for pupil premium funding is a pupil's eligibility for FSMs. In April 2018, the criteria used to determine which pupils are eligible for FSMs were updated to reflect the introduction of Universal Credit and the phasing out of other income-based benefits.

- 3.2. From 1 April 2018, all existing FSMs claimants will continue to receive FSMs whilst Universal Credit is rolled out. This will apply even if their earnings rise above the new threshold during that time. In addition, any child gaining eligibility for FSMs after 1 April 2018 will be protected against losing FSMs during the Universal Credit rollout period.
- 3.3. Once Universal Credit is fully rolled out, any existing claimants that no longer meet the eligibility criteria at that point (because they are earning above the threshold or are no longer a recipient of Universal Credit) will continue to receive FSMs until the end of their current phase of education (i.e. primary or secondary). The Universal Credit rollout is currently expected to complete in March 2022.
- 3.4. This effectively means any pupil currently eligible for FSMs and any pupil who becomes eligible for FSMs between now and the end of the Universal Credit roll-out (22nd March 2022), could potentially remain eligible for pupil premium funding over the same period and longer e.g. for the remainder of their education up until year 11 (unless the current conditions of grant change). Schools will not be required to enter an End Date for FSMs eligibility into their Management Information System (MIS) between now and March 22nd 2022.

3.5. Pupil Premium Data and Schools Management Information System

- 3.6. The pupil premium funding allocation for the current financial year is determined by the school census return for the previous year's January census return. For example, the pupil premium funding allocation for the academic year 2018/19 includes pupils recorded in the January 2018 school census who are known to have been eligible for FSMs since May 2012.
- 3.7. For new schools that open in the current financial year, the Education and Skills Funding Agency will use the October school census. If a school opens after the October census, they will use data from the January school census. In each case the allocation will be prorated to the proportion of the financial year that the school is open.
- 3.8. It is important to note that any pupil premium data (Pupil Premium Indicator box) held in SIMS is for school use only and is not collected by census. It is the pupil's eligibility for FSM which is collected by census and therefore used by the Department for Education to determine entitlement.
- 3.9. A data download relating to pupil premium allocations for the current financial year is available on the Department for Education's Key to Success website. This download is usually released in July.
- 3.10. This data download should be imported into SIMS to populate the Pupil Premium Indicator ticks in the Additional Information panel of the Pupil Record. There will be pupils who your school receives money for but then leave, such as the whole of your Year 6/Year 11, you will receive the money for these pupils but cannot spend it on them after they leave so you can spend that money on your new starters, who are eligible for the pupil premium funding.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools-and-local-authorities>



- 3.11. In addition to the pupils you are receiving funding for you will have pupils in school who are eligible for pupil premium funding who you are not yet receiving pupil premium funding for e.g. new starters. It is best practice to add ticks manually to the individual pupil record so you can track pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding but for whom the school is not currently receiving funding - this includes any new starters and also any other pupils who become eligible for FSMs. A note should be added in the Notes area, see screenshot below, to distinguish these pupils from the official funding list. These children will be eligible for funding in the following academic year.

Year	Indicator	Notes
2018/2019	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2017/2018	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not on Official List - FSM Ever 6 - started 04/09/2017
2016/2017	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2015/2016	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2014/2015	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2013/2014	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2012/2013	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2011/2012	<input type="checkbox"/>	

- 3.12. For schools where there is a significant variance in expected Pupil Premium funding, use of the Online Free School Meals (OSFM) service from CAPITA may be suggested and/or should be considered. OSFM simplifies the process by removing the paperwork. Parents can either complete free school meals online application themselves or give the school consent to fill it in on their behalf. The OSFM form complies with the DfE Eligibility Checking Service connection requirements, removing the responsibility to make a decision regarding free school meals from the school. Schools are immediately alerted on receipt of new applications regarding eligibility and also, when a student is no longer eligible.
- 3.13. **New Starters**
Schools can check the pupil premium eligibility of new starters to the school on the Key to Success website. All you need is a pupil's Unique Pupil Number (UPN).
- 3.14. Eligibility for pupil premium funding is linked to a pupil's UPN so it is important, where possible, that schools access a pupil's UPN from their previous school as soon as possible and especially by the key points in the academic year i.e. January census.
- 3.15. Although eligibility is identified through school census returns, it is important for tracking purposes, and for projecting pupil premium funding, that schools have an accurate picture of pupils currently on roll who will be eligible for pupil premium funding in the next financial year.

4. Using the Pupil Premium Effectively

- 4.1. The Department for Education⁶ promotes the effective use of the pupil premium funding through sharing information about the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) which has produced a Pupil Premium Guide (including detailed information about a tiered approach to spending, including strategies, research and case studies), the Big Picture resource and a teaching and learning toolkit to help teachers and schools use the pupil premium effectively.
- 4.2. The EEF's 'families of schools' database also provides schools with information about good practice from similar schools.

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-effective-use-and-accountability>



5. Public Accountability ⁷

- 5.1. Ofsted's inspections report on the provision for disadvantaged pupils who attract the pupil premium.
- 5.2. School and college performance tables report on the performance of disadvantaged pupils compared with their peers.
- 5.3. Astrea academies should publish details of their pupil premium strategy on the school website. For the current academic year schools must publish:
 - how much pupil premium funding was allocated
 - the rationale for your spending decisions, including the barriers the school is looking to overcome
 - how they intend to spend the pupil premium funding and the intended impact
 - how they will measure the effect of the pupil premium
 - the date of the next pupil premium strategy review
- 5.4. For the previous academic year schools must publish:
 - how they spent the pupil premium funding
 - the effect that the pupil premium had on pupils
- 5.5. The Department for Education (October 2019) encouraged schools to consider the use of a longer term, 3-year strategy (including annual updates in the Autumn term), stating that these may make it easier to plan spending, recruitment, changes to teaching practice and staff development. The Dfe have shared templates ⁸ to support schools in presenting longer term pupil premium strategies, although the use of these shared formats is not statutory.

6. Expectations of all Schools

- 6.1. At the heart of educational inclusion is provision which meets the needs of all learners, including those that are disadvantaged.
- 6.2. All schools are *committed* to providing:
 - Effective systems that encourage eligible families to register for free school meals and pupil premium funding ensuring a whole school approach is taken so all staff recognise their role in identifying all eligible pupils. Where advised, this may include the use of OFSM
 - Effective systems to ensure they have accessed the full amount of pupil premium funding available from their virtual school
 - Effective systems that ensure census returns are accurate
 - Information to Finance Managers regarding census changes which may affect future funding, and monitored on an on-going basis

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-academies-free-schools-and-colleges-should-publish-online>

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-strategy-statements>



- Effective systems to ensure accurate information on pupil premium eligibility is held in all relevant MIS and Data Tracking Systems. Schools check for issues of data quality using the Athena System. Any anomalies in FSM, FSM Ever6 and PP% are routinely spotted and rectified in the MIS system
- Effective systems to ensure access to other additional funding streams that can support disadvantaged pupils and their families (e.g. breakfast club funding, hardship grant funding, universal FSM take-up)
- Quality First Teaching which meets the needs of all learners and which is appropriately differentiated
- Effective systems for tracking and monitoring progress, so that early intervention can address gaps in learning; this includes, but is not exclusive to, monitoring and evaluation through learning walks and work scrutiny, across all pupil groups
- Opportunities to extend and challenge all learners, so that all can achieve their potential
- Effective lines of communication between home and school, so that through collaboration, a shared understanding of 'what success looks like' is achieved for each learner and their family

6.3. All schools are *required* to have the following by the 1st October:

- Pupil Premium Evidence of Impact for the previous academic year
- Pupil Premium Allocation and Intent to Spend Strategy for at least the current academic year (can be extended up to 3 years)

6.4. It is also the Astrea expectation, for all schools to have the following:

- Actions and strategies planned to develop any areas of focus for disadvantaged pupils. These could be linked to school based areas of focus or external areas of focus (including contextual influences like the Covid-19 pandemic)
- Impact tracking linked to specific pupil premium funding spending decisions
- Reference to actions to support improving outcomes for disadvantaged and more-able learners, in the whole-school Improvement Plan and/or Self Evaluation.
- Evidence that the Pupil Premium Strategy has been presented to the Transition Management Board / Local Education and Consultative Committee meetings for scrutiny and monitoring

As best practice, the Trust also encourages schools to have a parent friendly poster explaining the school approach to spending decisions on the school website (e.g. Building Blocks poster – See Appendix 1 for example)

7. Responsibilities of the Trust

- 7.1. Through a collaborative approach across the Astrea central team, School Business Managers can access training and support sessions, alongside a Finance Handbook for School Business Managers.
- 7.2. Where appropriate, an academy's Rapid Improvement Plan will detail any actions and support required in relation to their pupil premium funding from a cross-function perspective.
- 7.3. Website compliance checks are completed to ensure that schools have published the required Pupil Premium strategic information.



7.4. Education / Inclusion Team

To ensure the expectations of all schools are upheld, the Trust undertakes a variety of Quality Assurance (QA) activities, from which strengths and areas of development are identified to inform best practice and priorities for improvement:

- Pupil Premium Reviews and monitoring checks which include a focus on pupil premium eligibility, the Pupil Premium Strategy and website compliance. These also support and develop Pupil Premium leadership and practice
- Support and challenge from central inclusion staff and/or a Deputy Director in relation to the use of additional funding to promote improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

7.5. In addition, support regarding pupil premium eligibility may be provided to all schools through a variety of means:

- Cluster meetings to inform and share best practice regarding eligibility checks
- Staff training, research projects and conferences
- External review preparation and guidance
- Signposting to relevant changes in legislation and contextual developments

7.6. Data Intelligence

The Education Data Intelligence team will:

- Provide support to schools on Admission Processes to ensure all relevant data for pupil premium applications is captured
- Conduct Data Quality Checks around census completion dates and assessment data deadlines to ensure schools are managing pupil premium data appropriately
- Provide training and support to schools with regards to school census returns, pupil premium data collections and the use of Management Information Systems (via SIMS support contracts)
- Provide support for schools with regards to targeted parent communications (via Astrea Parent App). This will include communication around eligibility for funding and any additional support that may become available (e.g. funds available during the Covid-19 pandemic).

7.7. Finance

Finance Managers will periodically complete the following:

- At each census date, the finance manager will review the data submitted, and subsequently use this data to re-evaluate the financial impact in the Term 1 and Term 2 financial forecasts for each school.
- Every half term when schools gain additional pupils, the Finance Manager will check that new families have completed the pupil premium questionnaire to ensure that every effort is being made to gain all possible pupil premium funding.
- In collaboration with Finance Managers, the School Business Managers at each school will also review the Ever 6 data for pupils still currently eligible for pupil premium funding. This will be monitored by Finance Managers through the completion of a tracking table, with any changes noted being used to consider the financial impact.



- During the Spring term, when forecasting budgets for the subsequent financial year, the Education Data and Intelligence team will provide a figure for each school of pupils eligible for FSMs (based on the January census return). This will enable Finance Managers to forecast the amount of pupil premium funding each school should expect for the next financial year. This forecast will then be reviewed against the data released by the Dfe in June (through Key to Success). Forecasted pupil premium funding will form part of initial school discussions regarding any fluctuations in funding levels over time.
- To enable all schools to receive the maximum number of applications possible for pupil premium funding, incentives should be provided to parents/carers of all pupils who return a pupil premium eligibility checking form (regardless of eligibility). This is recommended to take place during November, allowing time to process all eligibility checks before the January census return. The cost for each academy will be borne by central overhead.
- Census advice and training session to be delivered through the Hub Finance days (supported cross-functionally).



Appendix 1⁹



Department
for Education

What are the most effective ways to support disadvantaged pupils' achievement?



Evidence for
Excellence in
Education

Research undertaken by NFER has identified seven building blocks that are common in schools which are more successful in raising disadvantaged pupils' attainment.

1. Whole-school ethos of attainment for all:
Schools have an ethos of high attainment for all pupils and avoid stereotyping disadvantaged pupils as all facing similar barriers or having less potential to succeed.



2. Addressing behaviour and attendance: Schools ensure effective behaviour strategies are in place, respond quickly to poor attendance and provide strong social and emotional support, including through working with families.



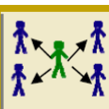
3. High quality teaching for all:
Schools emphasise 'quality teaching first' and provide consistently high standards by setting expectations, monitoring performance and sharing best practice.



4. Meeting individual learning needs:
Staff identify each pupil's challenges and interests. They seek the best strategies to help each pupil make the next step in his or her learning. Schools provide individual support for specific learning needs and group support for pupils with similar needs.



5. Deploying staff effectively:
Schools devolve responsibility to frontline staff, use their best teachers to work with pupils who need the most support and train teaching assistants to support pupils' learning.



6. Data driven and responding to evidence: Teachers use data to identify pupils' learning needs, review progress every few weeks and address underperformance quickly. They have manageable Assessment for Learning systems, which provide clear feedback for pupils. Schools use evidence to make decisions about their support strategies.



7. Clear, responsive leadership:
Senior leaders set ever higher aspirations and lead by example. They hold all staff accountable for raising attainment, rather than accepting low aspirations and variable performance. They share their thinking and invest in staff training.



This briefing, by Caroline Sharp, Shona MacLeod, Amy Skipp and Steve Higgins, is based on national research with primary, secondary and special schools across England. A full research report and a summary for school leaders are also available from the Department for Education and NFER websites:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/research> and www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/PUPP01

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-the-attainment-of-disadvantaged-pupils>



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