



Westhoughton High School

Pupil Premium Strategy

Review Date	September 2025
Next Review Due	September 2026
Governor Approval	3rd December 2025
Responsible Staff Member	J Benigno/L Welsh

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School Context

At Westhoughton High School, we define disadvantage as the barriers and challenges that prevent pupils from fully accessing education, achieving academically, and engaging with all aspects of school life. These barriers often arise from socioeconomic factors but can also be linked to attendance, behaviour, and wellbeing needs. While our disadvantaged cohort is not a single homogenous group, recurring themes highlight the challenges they face and the targeted support they require.

In 2024–25, 25% of our pupils are identified as disadvantaged, slightly below the national average of 27%. Rates of disadvantage vary across year groups, peaking in Year 8 (31%), followed by Year 11 (26%), Year 10 (25%), Year 9 (23%), and Year 7 (19%). Geographically, disadvantage is most concentrated in the south of our catchment area, particularly among pupils from Washacre Primary (50%), Hindley Green (50%), and Eatock Primary (26%).

The cohort is predominantly White British (85%), with a small proportion (5.5%) identified as having English as an Additional Language. In terms of gender, the disadvantaged cohort mirrors the wider school population, which is 53.8% male and 46.2% female.

Prior attainment within the disadvantaged cohort is varied. Only 10.1% of disadvantaged pupils are classified as High Prior Attainers (HPA), compared with 23% of their non-disadvantaged peers. Many disadvantaged pupils fall within the Middle (41.7%) and Low Prior Attainment (23.4%) bands. In contrast, non-disadvantaged pupils have a higher proportion of High and Middle Prior Attainers (23% and 44%) and a much smaller proportion of Low Prior Attainers (10.2%). This highlights that disadvantaged pupils tend to start with lower prior attainment overall, which can influence their progress and access to the full curriculum.

Disadvantaged pupils also face specific challenges in attendance, engagement, and behaviour. Attendance rates remain below both national averages and our school targets. In 2023–24, 39% of disadvantaged learners recorded less than 90% attendance, and 38% of persistent absentees came from this group. Punctuality issues further reduce learning time, while engagement in home learning and classroom participation is often limited. Behaviour concerns are disproportionately high: disadvantaged pupils account for 50% of suspensions, 83% of permanent exclusions and 39% of detentions. Over the last academic year, this group missed more than 824 days of learning, widening attainment gaps.

Additional vulnerabilities compound these barriers, with 24.7% of disadvantaged pupils also having identified SEND needs.

In terms of progress and attainment, disadvantaged pupils continue to perform below national comparators. Progress 8 for this group stands at -0.94 (compared with -0.57 nationally), while the Attainment 8 gap is close to the national figure of 15.4. Subject-specific outcomes show that performance is weakest in literacy-dependent subjects, whereas Maths outcomes are relatively stronger, with a progress gap of -0.73 and an Attainment 8 gap of -2.62.

Summary:

- Disadvantaged pupils face multiple, compounding barriers to learning, including lower prior attainment, attendance issues, limited engagement, and higher behavioural needs.
- Their progress and attainment remain below national averages, particularly in literacy-based subjects.
- A targeted, evidence-based approach is required to close gaps, improve engagement, and ensure all pupils can access the full curriculum and achieve their potential.

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	Westhoughton High school
Number of pupils on roll	1348
Proportion % of pupil's pupil premium eligible	25%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 years recommended)	2025/26- 2029/200
Date this statement will be published	September 2025
Date on which this will be reviewed	September 2026
Pupil Premium Lead	L Welsh
Governor/Trustee lead	J Murphy

Funding Overview

Detail	Data
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£355,405 (this is for 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026, our financial year)
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£0
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter 0 if applicable)	We don't carry forward ringfenced balances.
Total budget for this academic year	£355,405 (this is for 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026, our financial year)

Statement of Intent

Our intent is to address these barriers through a whole-school approach grounded in **quality-first teaching**, which we know has the greatest impact on closing the attainment gap while benefitting all learners. This is underpinned by diagnostic assessment and responsive interventions that meet the specific needs of individuals. We are committed to fostering a culture shaped by our **LEARN values**, ensuring that every learner feels a sense of belonging, is supported to progress, and achieves outcomes in line with their peers.

We will achieve this by:

- Raising attendance and reducing persistent absence
- Improving punctuality and readiness to learn
- Reducing behaviour incidents and lost learning
- Strengthening aspiration, building confidence, resilience, and ownership of learning
- Addressing overlap with SEND and mental health needs through targeted support

Through high-quality teaching, structured interventions, and collective responsibility across our school community, we will narrow the disadvantage gap and secure equity of opportunity for all learners.

Challenges

Challenge Number	Detail of challenge
1: Key stage 3 and 4 Outcomes	<p>Current performance data highlights a significant challenge in closing the attainment and progress gaps for disadvantaged learners. The Progress 8 score for this group is -0.94, compared with the national disadvantaged average of -0.57, while the Attainment 8 gap is -14.94, close to the national figure of 15.4.</p> <p>Performance is weakest in English, EBacc, and literacy-dependent open subjects, with scores of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English: -1.10 • Other subjects: -1.05 • EBacc: -0.94 • Maths: -0.73 (relatively stronger) <p>Disadvantaged learners are particularly struggling in English, with diagnostic assessments identifying difficulties in reading, comprehension, and writing. These literacy challenges limit access to the curriculum and negatively impact performance across EBacc and open bucket subjects, which rely heavily on strong literacy skills.</p> <p>Data from NGRT reading assessments and KS2 scaled scores show that disadvantaged pupils begin secondary school at a lower starting point in literacy compared to their peers. This lower baseline, combined with weaker home learning engagement and limited classroom participation (as shown in QA data), restricts ownership of learning and prevents pupils from reaching their full potential.</p>
2: A proportion of disadvantaged learners demonstrate limited aspiration, resilience, confidence and ownership of their own learning.	<p>Evidence from pupil, parent, and staff perception surveys, career audits, internal truancy data, engagement QA, learning walks, and work scrutiny shows that for some disadvantaged learners often display lower aspiration, underdeveloped resilience, and limited ownership of their learning. Typically, they lack metacognitive and self-regulation strategies, which impacts the quality of their work. This is evident across the curriculum, particularly in activities that rely heavily on secure literacy skills and impacts their ability to access high quality home learning.</p>

<p>3: Attendance and engagement of disadvantaged learners.</p>	<p>Overall attendance is below both the national average (92.8%) and the school target (97%). Current figures show Year 7 at 95.9%, Year 8 at 86.1%, Year 9 at 83.8%, and Years 10 and 11 at 87%. Nearly 40% of disadvantaged pupils (126 learners) have attendance below 90%, accounting for 38% of persistent absences, compared with the national average of 18.7%. Punctuality is also a concern, with 10% of late arrivals (U codes) recorded among disadvantaged learners.</p> <p>Our observations indicate that low attendance and inconsistent engagement are negatively affecting progress.</p>
<p>4: Behaviour incidents and minimise lost learning because of suspension and permanent exclusions.</p>	<p>Behaviour data shows that disadvantaged learners are disproportionately affected by sanctions, leading to significant lost learning. In 2024–25, they accounted for 50% of suspensions, 83% of permanent exclusions, and 39% of detentions. The scale of lost learning is considerable, with disadvantaged pupils missing between 824.5 and 1,110.5 days in 2023–24, depending on classification. This consistently higher rate of lost learning, when compared with their peers, is a key driver of attainment gaps and restricts opportunities for sustained progress.</p>
<p>5: Mental health and well-being of disadvantaged learners</p>	<p>Well-being surveys, parental engagement meetings, external support referrals, and SEMH data highlight that disadvantaged learners are typically affected by mental health and well-being difficulties. Issues such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem are having a negative impact on their attendance, engagement, behaviour, and overall progress.</p>

Intended outcomes

Challenge Number	Success criteria
<p>1: Improve KS3 and KS4 outcomes for disadvantaged learners to close attainment gaps and enhance their future education, employment, and life opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disadvantaged learners achieve Progress 8 and Attainment 8 KS4 gaps narrow. • Disadvantaged learners to achieve a grade 5 or above in GCSE English and Maths in line with national average. • Attainment gaps between disadvantaged learners and their peers are reduced. Engagement, motivation, and participation in lessons increase, supporting improved outcomes and post-16 progression. • The proportion of disadvantaged learners who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) at 16 is in line with national average. • Improved robustness of the match up strategy to improve outcomes at KS4. • Improve the literacy skills of disadvantaged learners by developing their reading fluency and comprehension, strengthening accuracy and structure in writing, increasing confidence in speaking and use of subject-specific vocabulary, and ensuring equitable access to digital tools to support independent learning and engagement across the curriculum. • Disadvantaged learners demonstrate improved reading fluency and comprehension, enabling access to complex texts and subject-specific vocabulary. • Writing skills improve, with greater accuracy, structure, and quality in extended writing tasks. • Learners show increased confidence in speaking, using subject-specific terminology accurately in discussions and presentations. • Participation in collaborative learning activities and pre-teaching of vocabulary is consistent, supporting understanding and engagement. • Evidence shows that staff effectively use EFA strategies to accurately assess learners, adapt teaching, and ensure all learners are set up for success and not left behind.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers strategically use bus routes to organize the map room, drawing on their knowledge of learners to provide tailored support and meet individual needs effectively • Targeted interventions, including small-group or one-to-one support, have a measurable impact on literacy and academic progress. • Equitable access to digital tools is ensured, allowing disadvantaged pupils to complete independent learning tasks and engage fully across the curriculum. • Evidence from assessments, learning walks, work scrutiny, and intervention tracking shows measurable improvement in literacy skills, home learning, and classroom participation.
<p>2: Improve the aspiration, resilience, confidence and ownership of learning among some disadvantaged learners, enabling them to develop higher ambitions, persevere through challenges, and take greater responsibility for their progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in disadvantaged learners taking ownership of their own learning and setting ambitious personal and academic goals. • Learners effectively use self-regulation and metacognitive strategies to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning, reducing reliance on external support. • QA highlights that staff skilfully apply EFA strategies from CPD to enable learners to take greater ownership of their learning. • Knowledge organisers are used to strengthen learners' recall of key information and support effective assessment preparation. • Most disadvantaged learners have full access to the curriculum, with evidence from pupil, parent, and staff surveys, careers audits, and engagement QA showing measurable improvements in confidence, motivation, and resilience.

<p>3: Improve the attendance and engagement of disadvantaged learners, ensuring they are present, participating, and actively involved in all aspects of school life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the overall attendance of disadvantaged learners from 84% toward the national average of 92.8%, reducing the proportion of those below 90% to align more closely with national figures. • Persistent absence among disadvantaged learners is reduced to, at or below the national average of 18.7%. • Punctuality improves, with a reduction in U-code late arrivals among disadvantaged pupils. • Implementation of a wave system to track learner progress, identify underperformance early, and deliver timely academic and pastoral interventions. • Engagement in learning increases, as demonstrated by improved attendance to lesson, high quality work evidenced in the books, home learning completion, classroom participation, and active ownership of learning.
<p>4: Reduce behaviour incidents and minimise lost learning by lowering suspension and permanent exclusion rates among disadvantaged learners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proportion of disadvantaged learners receiving suspensions and permanent exclusions is reduced year-on-year. • Lost learning for disadvantaged pupils decreases, with days missed brought in line with or below peer averages. • 100% of disadvantaged learners identified as requiring support have timely access to high-quality home tuition, the Horizons curriculum, the Bridge offer, and targeted academic and pastoral interventions delivered by teachers to address missed learning. • Leaders and Teachers are aware of the processes to follow to identify and support behavioural concerns. • Gaps in curriculum understanding and lost learning are reduced, with more disadvantaged pupils achieving in line with peers in termly assessments. • Disadvantaged learners show measurable improvement in assessment scores following targeted support and teacher-led strategies that are designed to overcome barriers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with learning increases, demonstrated by improved home learning completion rates, active participation in lessons, and full involvement in support sessions. • Evidence from behaviour logs, learning walks, and work scrutiny shows measurable improvements in classroom conduct, self-regulation, and participation, contributing to reduced disruption and improved outcomes. • Academic progress is reviewed during reintegration meetings to reinforce the priority of learning.
<p>5: Enhance the mental health and wellbeing of disadvantaged learners by providing timely support, promoting positive coping strategies, and creating a school culture that prioritises emotional resilience and personal development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers consistently apply trauma-informed practices, both within and outside the classroom, addressing learners’ needs through Maslow’s hierarchy and providing targeted support for disadvantaged learners. • Information about each learner’s specific barriers, such as cultural, political, economic, social, emotional, and academic, is shared and accessible to teachers. Staff receive targeted strategies to help learners overcome these barriers, encouraging collaboration and idea-sharing to meet individual needs and support their educational journey. The information also identifies a personal “hook” and a trusted adult to strengthen relationships and ensure every disadvantaged learner has an advocate. • Everybody understands how they can support disadvantage and overcome barriers. • Learners experience unconditional positive regard in all interactions, fostering trust and emotional wellbeing, while reinforcing the progress made in improving relationships. • Teachers have developed their ability to use warm/strict in their interactions with learners and have created positive relationships. • A strong reward and celebration culture is embedded, recognising achievements and positive behaviours, motivating engagement and participation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disadvantaged pupils actively engage in initiatives such as <i>Westhoughton Gets Healthy</i>, promoting physical and mental wellbeing. • Evidence from lesson observations, learning walks, and engagement QA shows increased participation, reduced behavioural incidents, improved resilience, and enhanced self-regulation and confidence, contributing to better progress and attainment outcomes. • External behaviour support is available for learners who need it.
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Teaching (For example CPD, recruitment and retention)

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge numbers addressed
CPD for teaching staff to focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding Formative assessment (Year 2) • Feedback • Metacognition and self-regulated learning • Effective scaffolding • Improving learners' literacy skills -Lead practitioner appointed to develop reading. Lead practitioner appointed to develop literacy. • Improving behaviour in schools • Parental engagement • Inclusive Classroom culture • Adapting the curriculum planning • Upskilling middle leaders to lead the PP strategy to improve the outcomes at KS4. • Upskilling middle leaders in developing their curriculum and teaching to overcome barriers to learning. 	EEF embedding formative assessment EEF Teacher feedback to improve pupil learning EEF Metacognition and self-regulation strategies EEF improving learners' literacy skills EEF improving behaviour in schools EEF parental engagement EEF Building a culture and community of belonging Building positive behaviour EEF Guidance on effective professional development	1,2,3,4,5

<p>Use of coaching model driven by middle leaders and EFA interdisciplinary peer support to facilitate teacher reflection and feedback/improve performance/inform CPD.</p> <p>Additional CPD for ECT and new staff who haven't developed prior Knowledge on reading, relationships, routines, Assessment, Adapt and Attend.</p>	<p>How to build quality assurance in scaling up</p> <p>Instructional coaching ambition institute</p>	<p>1,2,3</p>
<p>Curriculum development – Help students make connections between different subjects and apply their learning across domains. Strengthen career links and integrate real-world examples into their learning through the appointment of a curriculum career lead.</p> <p>Audit curriculum planning so LOLS have considered how to adapt their curriculum planning to support the needs of disadvantaged learners.</p>	<p>Gatsby benchmark 4</p> <p>Prioritises for Assessment and Curriculum review –Sutton Trust</p>	<p>1,2,3,5</p>

Targeted Academic support (For example, tutoring, one to one support structure interventions)

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number
<p>Reading -developing learners reading skills through embedding interventions.</p> <p>Lexonik leap Lexonik advanced Sparx reader</p>	<p>EEF improving whole class reading</p> <p>EEF reading and comprehension strategies</p>	1,2,
<p>Literacy intervention -</p> <p>Oracy interventions- Communication and language skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handwriting • Spelling zone • Small group tuition • Digital literacy –increasing the availability of digital technology available to use in lessons. 	<p>Voice 21 framework</p> <p>EEF oral language interventions</p> <p>Effective strategies to develop handwriting in a secondary school - teachit</p> <p>EEF phonics</p> <p>Using digital technology to improve learning</p>	1,2,
<p>Numeracy intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetable rock stars • Sparx Maths • Small group tuition 	<p>EEF use of manipulatives across the key stages.</p> <p>EEF improving mathematics in Key stage 2 and 3</p>	1,2,3
<p>After school coaches and holiday clubs designed to intensively support learners with gaps in their learning.</p>	<p>EEF extending the school day</p>	1,2,3,4
<p>Small group tuition in maths, English and Science.</p>	<p>EEF small group tuition</p>	1,2,3,4,
<p>Tailored Revision Materials for KS4 Revision guides for Year 11 - £5,752 To ensure students study effectively in preparation for examinations</p>	<p>EEF supporting revision and the 7-step model</p>	1,2,3,4,

Wider Strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour and well-being)

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number
Implement academic and behavioural mentoring through a structured system involving form tutors, SPLs, SSLs, and SLT. This will be supported by report cards and tracking systems across the waves, enabling learners to regulate both their behaviour and academic progress.	EEF mentoring through use of report cards and tracking and waves of interventions.	1,2,3,4,5
Many students experience mental health challenges, and poor behaviour choices are often linked to abuse or trauma they have suffered. These students receive 1-to-1 and small-group support to build confidence and develop self-management skills. In addition, they are provided with targeted behaviour interventions, access to support from external agencies and an alternative provision.	EEF research on the impact on life chances of permanent exclusions PP students are four times more likely to be excluded (Peter Humphries Senior HMI Sec Ed Pupil Premium Conference:23/3/2018) Keeping them in alternate provision and shaping the curriculum to meet their needs will avoid this and so improve life chances	1,2,3,4,5
Improve PP attendance through targeted support. - LA Service agreement - Attendance Administration Officer - Attendance Family Support Officer - Rewards - Additional Attendance officer - Additional time for Pastoral Leaders to complete meetings, calls -Daisy Hill / The Bridge to support reintegration back into mainstream	Department for Education- Working together to improve attendance	1,2,3,4,5
Strengthen parental engagement by offering more parental sessions and enhancing the school website to provide support for home learning, revision strategies, and the effective use of knowledge organisers and how to support mental health.	EEF working with parents to support children's learning	1,2,3,4,5
Learners develop their ability to self-regulate and monitor their progress, while promoting physical activity, encouraging	EEF Self-regulation and executive functioning	1,2,3,4,5,

dialogue about learning, and fostering a collaborative community		
PPG wallet to support PP students to attend trips and educational visits enhancing their cultural capital. Peripatetic music lessons Cost of lessons for the students who have piano/drum lessons etc. PPG wallet to also support with uniform, laptops, revision resources and equipment so that learners are ready to learn.	EEF arts participation EEF teaching and learning tool lit	1,2,3,4,5,
Breakfast club Encourage pupils to eat a healthy breakfast before school and are ready to start the day.	EEF breakfast club and provisions in schools	2,3,4,5

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Disadvantaged pupils - Overall A8

Year	Cohort	School disadvantaged compared to national disadvantaged			School disadvantaged compared to national non-disadvantaged			Year group context
		School	National	National distribution banding	National (non dis)	Gap	Gap Trend	
2025	55	33.3	34.9	Close to average (non-sig)	50.3	-16.9	Narrowing	-
2024	62	31.7	34.6	Close to average (non-sig)	50.0	-18.4	Widening	-
2023	62	32.6	35.0	Close to average (non-sig)	50.3	-17.7	Not available	-

Disadvantaged pupils - English and mathematics grade 4 plus

Year	Cohort	School disadvantaged compared to national disadvantaged			School disadvantaged compared to national non-disadvantaged			Year group context
		School	National	National distribution banding	National (non dis)	Gap	Gap Trend	
2025	55	43.6%	43.5%	Close to average (non-sig)	72.7%	-29.1	Narrowing	-
2024	62	37.1%	43.4%	Close to average (non-sig)	72.8%	-35.7	No change	-
2023	62	37.1%	43.4%	Close to average (non-sig)	72.8%	-35.7	Not available	-

Disadvantaged pupils - English and mathematics grade 5 plus

Year	Cohort	School disadvantaged compared to national disadvantaged			School disadvantaged compared to national non-disadvantaged			Year group context
		School	National	National distribution banding	National (non dis)	Gap	Gap Trend	
2025	55	21.8%	25.6%	Close to average (non-sig)	52.8%	-31.0	Narrowing	-
2024	62	17.7%	25.8%	Close to average (non-sig)	53.1%	-35.4	Widening	-
2023	62	21.0%	25.2%	Close to average (non-sig)	52.4%	-31.5	Not available	-

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25	21.8%	52.8%	-31.0 pp
2023/24	17.7%	53.1%	-35.4 pp
2022/23	21.0%	52.4%	-31.5 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25	33.3	50.3	-16.9
2023/24	31.7	50.0	-18.4
2022/23	32.6	50.3	-17.7

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24	-1.31	0.16	-1.48
2022/23	-1.21	0.17	-1.37
2021/22	-1.16	0.15	-1.31

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Analysis of the performance of our school's disadvantaged learners across the previous academic year, using national assessment data alongside internal summative and formative assessments.

Overall Progress and Attainment

- Overall Attainment 8 for disadvantaged learners was 33.3, which is close the national average of 34.9. The attainment gap between the performance of our disadvantaged learners and non-disadvantaged learners nationally was -16.9 and narrowing.

Subject Performance

English and Maths

- In English, Attainment 8 for disadvantaged learners was 7.7, which is close the national average of 7.8. The attainment gap between the performance of our disadvantaged learners and non-disadvantaged learners nationally was -2.9 and narrowing.
- In Maths, Attainment 8 for disadvantaged learners was 6.5, which is close the national average of 6.9. The attainment gap between the performance of our disadvantaged learners and non-disadvantaged learners nationally was -3.4 and narrowing.
- **Grade 4+ (English & maths combined):** 43.6%, broadly in line with the national average of 43.5%, with the gap narrowing over the last three years.
- **Grade 5+:** 21.8% compared with the national 25.6%, again showing a narrowing trend.

Science

- **Grade 4+:** 42% for disadvantaged pupils compared with the national 47.2% – the gap is widening.
- **Grade 5+:** 18% compared with the national 29.5%, also showing a widening gap.

Languages

- **Grade 4+:** 62.5%, slightly above the national 61.6%,
- **Grade 5+:** 37.5% compared with the national 49.1%, **Humanities**
- **Grade 4+:** 33.3% compared with the national 44.7% – the gap is widening.
- **Grade 5+:** 30.6% compared with the national 32.4% – the gap is narrowing.

EBacc

- **Attainment 8:** 9.3 compared with the national 9.9, indicating a narrowing trend.
- **Progress 8:** -1.54 compared with the national -0.60, showing a widening gap.
- In Ebacc Subjects overall, Attainment 8 for disadvantaged learners was 9.3, which is close the national average of 9.9. The attainment gap between the performance of our disadvantaged learners and non-disadvantaged learners nationally was -5.5 and narrowing.

Open Bucket

- In the open group of subjects overall, Attainment 8 for disadvantaged learners was 9.9, which is close the national average of 10.3. The attainment gap between the performance of our disadvantaged learners and non-disadvantaged learners nationally was -5.1 and narrowing.

Destinations

- In 2023, **82%** of disadvantaged learners sustained education, employment or training, compared with **91%** of their peers, a 9% gap.

Wider Factors Affecting Performance

We also examined school data, including attendance, behaviour and wellbeing.

Attendance

- In 2024, attendance rose from **85.5%** to **87.4%**, compared with the national **88.2%**, showing relative improvement.
- Attendance this academic year has further increased from **87.4% to 90.3%**.
- Persistent absence among FSM6 pupils has fallen significantly to **40.5%**, though this remains above the national **34.5%**.

Behaviour

- **Suspensions:** 21.45% of disadvantaged pupils received at least one suspension, compared with the national 16.57%.
- **Two or more suspensions:** 15.18% compared with the national 9.4%.

Our analysis of disadvantaged pupils' performance shows that despite some pockets of improvement, overall progress and attainment remain below expectations and continue to lag behind national benchmarks. Attainment 8 outcomes also show a gap indicating that disadvantaged learners are not yet achieving in line with their peers.

Subject-level performance reveals mixed outcomes. English and maths show some encouraging narrowing of gaps, particularly at Grade 4+ and in maths Attainment 8. However, widening gaps in science and humanities highlight ongoing challenges, and despite modest gains in attainment. Performance in languages is more positive, with outcomes broadly in line with or slightly above national averages at Grade 4+.

Wider indicators reinforce these academic patterns. Although attendance has improved and is moving closer to national averages, persistent absence among FSM6 pupils remains high. Behaviour data indicates that disadvantaged pupils continue to be disproportionately represented in suspension figures, suggesting barriers to engagement and wellbeing that directly impact classroom learning. Destination data reflects these challenges, with disadvantaged pupils sustaining education, employment or training at a lower rate than their peers.

Overall, the evidence demonstrates that while there are areas of improvement, significant gaps persist across key measures. This highlights the need for strengthened, targeted interventions and refined strategic planning to accelerate progress and secure better outcomes for disadvantaged learners in the years ahead. Based on the information above, the performance of our disadvantaged pupils did not meet expectations. We are currently not on track to achieve the outcomes we set for 2027/28, as outlined in the Intended Outcomes section. Our evaluation of last year’s approaches indicates that, while some elements of our strategy at Westhoughton High School were effective, others were less successful and did not deliver the intended impact.

In response to this analysis, we have reviewed our strategy plan and revised how we will allocate and use our budget in the current academic year.

Programme / Support	Provider
Embedding Formative Assessment	SSAT
Skills Development Programme	Skills for Life NW Ltd
Behaviour & Wellbeing Support	The Bolton Impact Trust