Pupil Premium Strategy Statement for 2025-2026

This statement details Severndale Academy's use of pupil premium funding to help improve the attainment of our disadvantaged pupils.

It outlines our pupil premium strategy and how we intend to spend the funding in this academic year.

School Overview

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school	432 (Nursery to Post-19) 364 (Nursery-Y11)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	50.5% (Post-16 deducted as these pupils are not entitled to PP)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2025-2026
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2026
Statement authorised by	Lucy Lee (Executive Principal)
Pupil premium lead	Michelle Hill (Vice Principal)
Link Governor for Pupil Premium	Louise Burns

Funding Overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£178,955
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years *(enter £0 if not applicable)*	£0
Total budget for this academic year *If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year*	£178,955

Part A: Pupil Premium Strategy Plan

Statement of Intent

Severndale Academy is a larger than average special school located across three sites in Shropshire: Monkmoor Campus, the main school campus, Mary Web Satellite provision for KS3 and KS4, where thirty-plus students are educated on the shared site, and Futures Shrewsbury College for students aged between 16-25 years.

Education is commissioned through Shropshire Local Authority, and all students have an EHCP. The school educates young people aged between 2-25 years. Pupil needs vary, including moderate learning difficulties through to profound and multiple learning disabilities. The school has therefore crafted a careful curriculum to cover the age, stage and learning need for each pupil.

The curriculum is arranged into six key themes: My Communication, My Cognition, My Care and Independence, My Physical, My Creativity and My World. These themes enable National Curriculum and standardised qualifications to be taught for some students, or a fully sensory curriculum to be offered. This is achieved through arranging the six key themes across three pathways. Students' learning is therefore arranged through the pathway, e.g. KS2 Pathway 3. Inclusion is at the heart of the curriculum design.

Health colleagues work alongside the education team to design specialist plans to support the curriculum delivery and the aims of the EHCP, including Speech and Language Therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and discreet nursing care. Education staff deliver on these plans during the school day.

The school vision of 'Enabling Communication, Independence and Enjoyment for Life' is enabled through school values of Communication, Independence, Wellbeing and Inclusivity. These values are woven through all of Severndale's intentions.

The main barriers to achievement for students at Severndale Academy centre around our students' additional learning needs as identified in their Education, Health and Care Plans. Due to the complex nature of our cohort of students their attainment will be lower than age related national expectations.

We will ensure that effective teaching, learning and assessment meets the needs of all pupils through the rigorous analysis of data.

Alongside academic support, we will ensure that those pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs will access high quality provision from appropriately trained therapists such as Music Therapy, Play Therapy, Relax Kids sessions, and group music and storytelling sessions.

We will also continue to utilise PBS (Positive Behaviour Support) to support individual students' regulation to enable engagement in learning through the reduction of behaviours of concern.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	For various individual reasons, pupils do not always have the specialist resources they need which means that they are not always ready to access their learning.
2	Behavioural barriers (including sensory difficulties) for some pupils are preventing them from engaging in effective learning. We will ensure that staff practice supports regulation via Positive Behaviour Support (PBS).
3	We use a Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme (Read, Write, Inc) to teach our pupils to hear and produce each of the 44 phonemes and 250 graphemes in the English language and then use these to segment and blend these phonemes to read and write. This academic year, our focus will be on ensuring that phonics is taught every morning by the class lead and supported by Teaching Assistants. As a result, the consistent teaching of phonics will be high-quality for all pupils, in all pathways, across the school.
4	Communication, interaction, and engagement skills are significantly lower for the majority of pupils (pupil premium and non-premium) as a result of pupils' special educational needs. Pupils have a range of communication and interaction needs – including being non-verbal, having limited language and understanding, needing to use Makaton and speech output devices, social communication difficulties. Many pupils have difficulties in following instructions and processing information. Assessments and observations show that, due to their significant diverse learning needs, our pupils' abilities to communicate and express their needs are significantly greater than their peers.
5	Pupils demonstrate a high level of social and emotional need.
6	Family engagement and community links. Through observations and conversations with pupils and families, we know that families require support to access services for direct payment work and respite. This has a significant impact on the whole family and not just the child with special educational needs and disabilities. Lack of support for these families has meant that they have been unable to undertake meaningful activities away from the home and this has also been made more difficult with many support avenues closing following the pandemic.
7	Pupils have limited experiences beyond their home life and immediate community.

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
Pupils will have the resources they need to access their learning.	Through achievement of EHC plan termly outcomes.
Behavioural responses to situations are reduced (behavioural report comparisons using CPOMS).	Decrease in behaviour reports for pupil premium pupils. Pupils will work with staff where PBS is embedded within practice which will reduce dysregulation.
Sensory needs strategies embedded within professional development through Occupational Therapy.	Service Level Agreement with Sensory Occupational Therapist to assess relevant pupils and recommend programme of direct work.
Develop Severndale Academy's 'Phonics and Early Reading' strategy as a high-quality teaching intervention for all pupils.	'Severndale Spectrum of Reading' is published and understood by all teaching and learning staff; it will ensure that every pupil is valued and recognised as a reader; regardless of their age or pathway, pupils will appear on the Severndale Spectrum of Reading.
Pupils can use a range of communication systems to aid their understanding and to develop expressive communication skills.	Through achievement of EHC plan termly outcomes.
Identified pupils to have access to high quality therapies to support their emotional wellbeing and mental health needs.	Pupils will have improved emotional wellbeing and mental health which will support their ability to engage and improve attainment. This will be evidenced by individual case studies and reporting underpinned by The Music Therapy Star™ with scoring that has been developed by Triangle Consulting in conjunction with Coram London. Play therapy uses play as a way of helping people understand and express their thoughts and feelings. It's mainly used with children who may not be able to put how they are feeling into words. Play therapy helps them to communicate at their own level using everyday play things. This can help them learn to cope with what they're going through, to develop and to build relationships with others.

To continue providing a link between school and home for families. To signpost families to other agencies and services and offer support during contact with these agencies.	No Severndale family feels isolated or left behind. They have a point of contact to discuss problems. Whole Family Assessments support families through school-led Early Help leading to better outcomes for families.
Broaden experiences for individual pupils.	Pupils will have access to enrichment opportunities that widen their experiences and develop their cultural capital. These will include invitations to special events that enhance learning and make it memorable.

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

Budgeted cost: £53,273 + £21,000 + £15,000 + £3,000 + £4,130 + £2,300 + £3,000 = **£101,703.**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Contribution to the PBS Team to continue embedding PBS across classes to support regulation and engagement. **£53,273**	PBS is widely used and understand across health and care settings and has had an impact on the regulation and wellbeing of pupils across the school. NHS: The Key Messages About Positive Behaviour Support	2
Student Pupil Premium Request Forms **£21,000**	Through the £21,000 'Student Pupil Premium Request Forms' allocation, class teams can request items for individual pupils that will reduce barriers to engaging with learning.	1
Specialist Equipment	The £15,000 'Specialist Equipment' allocation enables the purchase of equipment such as work chairs recommended by physiotherapy colleagues, and	1

£15,000	communication devices and feeding equipment by Speech and Language Therapy colleagues.	
PBS Team **£3,000**	We have observed that sensory equipment and resources such as proprioceptor equipment can be effective at providing support for our pupils with sensory needs. The PBS Team has a budget of £3,000 to purchase sensory resources and items such as ear defenders and fidget toys.	1
Service Level Agreement with Sensory Occupational Therapist **£4,130**	Sensory integration is a crucial part of meeting the needs of pupils with complex learning difficulties. The role of the Sensory OT is to provide training, advice and guidance around interventions to support pupil's nervous systems to be more organised and regulated. Sensory Integration in Autism Spectrum Disorders: https://www.autism.org/sensory-integration/	2
Riding for the Disabled programme. **£2,300**	RDA activity can be our learners' main way of accessing physical exercise. RDA has a positive, long-term impact on confidence levels, relationship building, communication skills, enjoyment and physical ability. Regular riding improves core strength, balance and coordination and our welcoming groups help to combat isolation and loneliness and boost wellbeing and happiness (RDA.org.uk) Hippotherapy for Autism Spectrum Disorders: https://www.autism.org/webinars/hippotherapy	2
Further embed the RWI phonics programme. Purchase additional RWI resources and license for this academic year and continue to access support from a RWI consultant. **£3,000**	By using a validated scheme which has been self-assessed this will provide all teachers the key resources and approaches to teach SSP to children throughout a specialist school environment. Validation of systematic synthetic phonics programmes: supporting documentation EEF research shows that phonics has high impact for very low cost based on very extensive evidence: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/phonics	3

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

Budgeted cost: £20,960 + £13,028 + £12,920 + £18,000 + £2,000 = **£66,908.**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Music Therapy to be delivered by a HCPC registered music therapist to pre-formal and semi-formal pupils who can't effectively access talking therapies. Service Level Agreement for three-days per week. **£20,960**	Music therapy is an established psychological clinical intervention using sounds and music to help individuals whose lives have been affected by injury, illness or disability through supporting their psychological, emotional, cognitive, physical, communicative and social needs: Music Therapy for People with Autism Spectrum Disorder The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published updated guidance in October 2025 (NG252 – Rehabilitation for Chronic Neurological Disorders Including Acquired Brain Injury), which explicitly mentions creative therapies, including music therapy. It states: *"If the person has difficulty engaging in talking therapy because of cognitive or communication problems, or if speaking is not the person's preferred way of communicating, consider creative therapy (for example, music, art or drama therapy)."* (NICE NG252, section 1.17.15)	5
Relax Kids programme to be delivered by an accredited Relax Kids coach to pupils who need support for their emotional wellbeing. Service Level Agreement for two-days per week. **£13,028**	Relax Kids uses research based mindful and relaxation techniques alongside values and positive psychology to help support children. The Relax Kids system was used in a project run by CAMHS. It was awarded the 2011 Nursing Standards Mental Health Award. 'How relaxing develops and affects well-being throughout childhood' (Unicef, 2021).	5

Pupils will engage with visiting professional Sally Tonge's weekly music and storytelling sessions. Some people call her a storyteller; some call her a musician; Sally calls herself a Verbal Artist. Working work with words, stories, and prosody. Sally explores the sense and flow of a story, sometimes with people for whom words have no meaning but they still delight in being 'Bathed in the Music of Language'. **£12,920**	About a Storytelling Session with Sally Tonge. EEF blog: The power of storytelling in the Early Years.	5
A small Play Therapy caseload to be maintained by two Play Therapists. Service Level Agreement for two-days per week. **£18,000**	Play Therapy is a type of therapy where play and art materials are used as the main way for people to express themselves. Using play in therapy helps people to express themselves in their own way; especially if they are struggling to understand how they are feeling or are finding it hard to put their experiences into words. Play Therapy can be a particularly helpful approach for children in need of therapeutic support as pupils will have the opportunity to express their wishes and feelings and share their lived experience. We will identify whether Play Therapy may support individual pupils' emotional wellbeing. A pupil's SDQ score will confirm their suitability to try this intervention. Homepage - Play Therapy UK	5
Pupils can use a range of communication systems to aid their	**Symbol Creation Resources:** • The Communication Team will continue to support the	4

understanding and to develop expressive communication skills. **£2,000**	creation of resources which facilitate communication across the school. **E-Trans Frames:** • In collaborative working with the NHS SALT team, we will introduce E-Tran frames to specific pupils within our PMLD hub. **Speech and Language Comprehension Tools:** • In order to have the correct support in place, a full understanding of a student's comprehension and expressive abilities is essential. Whilst not to the same level as a SALT assessment, the resources purchased enable teaching staff to assess and develop student's communicative abilities in order to then tailor and target their support. **Mounting Options:** • Access to powered AAC devices can be challenging for students in the PMLD Hub. We will explore different wheelchair mounting options to ensure that AAC devices can be accessed and communication enabled. **Learn and Thrive:** • A new and innovative organisation, Learn and Thrive, create accessible resources to help teach PSHE and safeguarding concepts to students with complex needs. Alongside the physical resources, we will be able access to a suite of online modelling and learning videos. **Makaton Support for Periods:** • Learning about periods at the point that a girl has her first	

	period is too late. The concepts required to understand what is happening to their bodies needs to happen much earlier on, such as having an understanding of blood, pain, a month etc. The Makaton Support for Periods resource is a really useful resource for helping to both scaffold his learning but also to provide a form of expressive communication when needed.	

Wider Strategies

Budgeted cost: £7,100 + £900 + £790 = **£8,790.**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Contribution to casual Family Liaison Officer's salary. **£7,100**	Support for family members and the creation of Whole Family Assessments when needed to bring together a team to support relevant families via school-led Early Help caseload.	6

Opportunity for pupils to participate in activities which enhance and broaden the curriculum and their learning experiences.
 	
Moonbeam Theatre: **£900**
 	
Telford & Wrekin Road Safety Day: **£790.**
	<u>Moonbeam Theatre Visit:</u>
	• Visit from Moonbeam Theatre Company on 17/10/2025 to perform 'Exploshine' where lights glint and twinkle and ethereal music echoes through the air. Bold discoveries await… ready, steady, glow!
	  ○ Supported exploration of environment
	  ○ Engaging all the senses
	  ○ Immersive set design
	  ○ Fun, creative, imaginative
	  ○ Sensory-based approach
	
	Telford & Wrekin Road Safety Support Day:
	• On 27/11 2025, we have a visit planned from the **Be Bright, Be Seen** team, including Rocky the crocodile, a
		7

		character and an intervention to further support road safety awareness through workshops. Rocky will teach the Green Cross Code (Stop, Look, Listen, Think) and will talk about the importance of staying next to grown-ups when near the road.	

Total budgeted cost: £101,703 + £66,908 + £8,790 = £177,401

Part B: Review of the Previous Academic Year

Outcomes for Disadvantaged Pupils

Feedback from Learning Community Trust Review (02/07/2025):

- The scope and reach of Pupil Premium is impressive. There is strong multi-agency work evidenced, making a demonstrable impact on progress.
- Pupil Premium funding is used with deep thought around access, equality and impact.

Liquid Listening Training:

- After completing their Liquid Listening training, participants were asked to complete a survey which resulted in some powerful feedback and reflection. The training clearly had a profound impact on pupils and staff.
- Here is a selection of responses to the survey questions (full survey feedback available on request):

How has the training developed your understanding of wellbeing for pupils?

- Teacher: The training covered the theory and methodology behind the Liquid Listening music therapy. We firstly learned how to relax with each other and ground ourselves so that we had personal experience of the effects of the therapy. We were then supervised with students. We discussed and shared our experiences of each part of the training and how our students responded. Steph, our trainer also shared testimonials of well-being effects on students and what happens to our bodies when in this relaxed state.

Share some examples of the key things you've learnt.

- Teacher: Before the training, staff would struggle to support [redacted pupil] in the water as he'd always want to put his head under the water, but staff were fearful as he has thickened drink liquids. The Liquid Listening trainer showed me how to support [redacted pupil] so that he can put his head and ears under the water without risking putting his mouth in. [Redacted pupil] is much happier now in the water as his sensory needs are being met and he's safe. It's changed how we do sessions with [redacted pupil] and we can see from his responses that he's calmer and getting much more from the swim sessions now he can safely achieve what he wants (head and ears in the water).
- Teaching Assistant: I have learned how to hold a pupil in the water so that they feel safe and relaxed but also how I can be relaxed as well. The vibrations and sounds travel in the water and can stimulate the inner ear and through the pupils that I have been working with recently I feel that I have a better understanding of what sounds and positions that they respond to through their breathing and body positioning.

What have you tried with pupils since you completed your training?

- Teacher: I followed the trainer's advice on how to encourage more mobile Pathway 1 pupils to 'relax' in the water and engage with the underwater sounds
- Teacher: With one student who expressed a dislike of being on his back, I placed him more onto his side so that one ear was still under the water and he was able to experience the underwater music.

What have you noticed about pupil engagement since starting Liquid Listening with them?

- Teaching Assistant: I feel that Liquid Listening has given me the opportunity to get a lot closer to the children and really spend some lovely quality time with them all individually. The pupils in my class have really relaxed in the water with me and I can feel how calm they are - even falling asleep!
- Teacher: We had one student who received a Liquid listening session and for the rest of the day he had no seizure activity, which was unusual.

Any other comments or words to describe the impact of Liquid Listening on your pupils and yourself?

- Teacher: I think that Liquid Listening is an amazing way of supporting student wellbeing with a combination of musical hydro-therapy, mindfulness and relaxation in a way that is accessible to our most severely disabled students who are in restrictive positions for the majority of their time.
- Teaching Assistant: As a swimming teacher for almost forty years, I found the training wonderful; something I had not tried before only heard of, but the impact on the children has been incredible. It is something that not only benefits the children but the Liquid Listening trained staff as well. The feeling and emotional calmness is magical.

Phonics

- A clearly structured phonics programme is in place, supported by consistent use of RWInc with termly consultancy input.
- Teaching of phonics is consistent and focused, with clear groupings and structured routines observed. Staff demonstrate commitment to delivering the scheme with fidelity.
- Phonics is now routinely taught across most classes. The subject lead for phonics routinely checks this on a weekly basis and shares this information with wider SLT. Where teachers are not routinely delivering phonics at the appropriate time or challenge point it is addressed by SLT.
- Half termly assessments are now being completed by all staff and providing information to allow teachers to deliver phonics to the challenge point of each student. The majority of students are now reading texts that are appropriate to their reading level and interests.
- In Autumn 1 and Autumn 2 2025, we saw 76% and 74% of students make progress in their phonics over the periods of teaching prior to assessment, that's about 5 - 6 weeks overall. We also saw 12% of students maintain their phonics scores. Of the 14% of students that did not make progress or maintain, this can be explained by absences and engagement within the phonics assessment.
- We now have homogenous teaching where pupils are now being taught at challenge points across key stages 2 and 3. This has really been embedded over the past Autumn Term and continues to widen this Spring.
- The recent learning walks in Autumn focused on phonics for pathways 2 and 3 with the majority of staff working at Step 4 and 5 of the Learning Walk Steps:

Area of Learning Walk	Percentage working at:
Phonics is taught and the correct time according to the class timetable.	0%
All staff show fidelity to the RWI structure. E.g. No other schemes (twinkle) in use, sounds are pronounced appropriately, RWI terminology is used e.g. 'my turn, your turn'.	9%
Students are appropriately grouped to ensure they are working towards their appropriate challenge point.	27%
There is adaptive teaching taking place in each group, where TAs are leading learning with students.	18%
Students can identify the sounds they are learning. They are able to show and share their reading book (matched to the RWI scheme).	45%

Music Therapy

- Music Therapy is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualised goals within a therapeutic relationship by a registered HCPC professional.

Music Therapy is an established health profession in which music is used to address physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs.

- At Severndale Specialist Academy, the clients and HCPC-registered music therapist (Connie Drinkwater) build a trusting relationship through musical play using a variety of instruments and voices.
- The client's self-expression is encouraged enabling them to develop their emotional well-being, self-awareness, confidence, and ways of relating and social skills to help them reach their full potential.
- During the 2024-2025 academic year, 30 pupils attended at least one block of Music Therapy sessions with Connie Drinkwater.
- Connie Drinkwater uses The Music Therapy Star™ as a tried and tested tool for supporting and measuring change. As an outcomes tool it enables organisations to measure and summarise change. It is also a clinical tool designed to be helpful to parents, referrers, and music therapists by helping all those involved with the client to identify and communicate key issues, needs and progress. The Music Therapy Star™ and scoring was developed by Triangle Consulting in conjunction with Coram.
- Detailed individual reports and assessments are available for all pupils who attended Music Therapy.

Play Therapy:

- We have an in-house trained member of staff who not only continues to develop her skills and training within the play therapy remit but now impacts a larger number of pupils as her experience and training has increased.
- The sessions have prompted a better understanding of pupils' needs and emotions both at school and home, thereby reducing barriers to learning for our pupils and in some cases improving home situations for our learners.
- During the 2024-2025 academic year, 15 pupils attended at least one block of Play Therapy sessions with one of two play therapists.
- Detailed individual reports and assessments are available for all pupils who attended Play Therapy.

Contribution to Positive Behaviour Support:

- Successful implementation of SHINE Group provided a 12 sessions per week of sensory, pastoral and behaviour focussed group sessions ran by a member of SHINE team to support the development of social skills, regulation skills and independence skills, along with providing sensory sessions to meet pupil need.
- Feedback from the Learning Community Trust Review on 02/07/2025:
    - Leaders can articulate how behaviour and interventions are measured and are clear about how to measure the newer initiatives to see impact.
    - The role of the shine team is changing as the schools moves away from reactive to proactive strategies and there is a plan of how best to intervene, these programmes are in the early stages, but leaders are clear about how they will measure the impact of further improvement/staff resource/staff training.
    - Evidence is in place to show the decrease in incidents across the whole school, with improvement being made to proactive strategy rather than reactive practice. School feels calm, safe and organised.

Communication

- **Symbol Creation Resources:**
    - The communication team continues to support the creation of resources which help facilitate communication across the school. These include lanyard symbols, aided

language displays, communication books, tactile resources and resources to support regulation such as Velcro timers.

- **E-Tran Frames:**
  - In collaborative working with the NHS Speech and Language Therapy(SaLT) team, we have introduced E-Tran frames to specific pupils within our PMLD hub. These E-Tran frames support the cognitive understanding required for higher-tech assistive technology eye gaze solutions. Students develop their ability to shift their gaze and focus on presented visuals in an accessible and motivating way. The NHS SALT team have been supporting the modelling of using these devices with class teams.
- **Speech and Language Comprehension Tools:**
  - In order to have the correct support in place, a full understanding of a student's comprehension and expressive abilities is essential. Whilst not to the same level as a SALT assessment, the resources purchased enable teaching staff to assess and develop student's communicative abilities in order to then tailor and target their support.
- **Mounting Options:**
  - One student within our PMLD Hub uses a powered AAC device; however, access to the device is a challenge for him. We have explored different wheelchair mounting options to ensure that he has the ability to access his device, enabling his communication.
- **Learn and Thrive:**
  - A new and innovative organisation, Learn and Thrive create accessible resources to help teach PSHE and safeguarding concepts to students with complex needs. Alongside the physical resources, the academy gets access to a suite of online modelling and learning videos.
- **Makaton Support for Periods:**
  - Learning about periods at the point that a girl has her first period is too late. The concepts required to understand what is happening to their bodies needs to happen much earlier on, such as having an understanding of blood, pain, a month etc. The Makaton Support for Periods resource is a really useful resource for helping to both scaffold his learning but also to provide a form of expressive communication when needed.