

Pupil premium strategy statement – Soar Valley College

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium funding for the 2025 to 2026 academic year to help improve the attainment of our disadvantaged students.

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
Number of students in school	1567
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible students	31.5%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2024/25, 2025/26, 2026/27
Date this statement was published	December 2024
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2025
Statement authorised by	Julie Robinson (Principal)
Pupil premium lead	Mary Green (Assistant Principal)
Governor lead	Vibha Gohil (Chair of Governors)

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£ £524,850
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£ 0
Total budget for this academic year	£ £524,850

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intention is that all students, regardless of their background or the challenges they face, make at least good progress and preferably more, and are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need for the next stage of their education, and indeed, life.

We recognise that in our school there are many more 'disadvantaged' (DA) students than those identified as such, for example, with a number of children in families with very low income, children who are young carers, and those with little or no exposure to English language outside school. Our strategies will endeavour to meet the needs of this wide range of students and needs.

At the heart of our strategy is high-quality teaching, with a focus on the core subjects and the areas in which disadvantaged students require the most support or benefit more, such as effective feedback, metacognition and literacy. This will benefit those not classed as disadvantaged too, and implicit in the intended outcomes detailed below, is the intention that non-disadvantaged (NDA) students' attainment will be sustained and improved alongside progress for their disadvantaged peers.

A central feature of our Pupil Premium Strategy is the provision of high-quality, face-to-face tutoring. We have deliberately over-staffed in English and Mathematics to strengthen targeted intervention and increase access to appropriate resources for students who require additional support. This enables timely and focused support to help close gaps in learning. Our provision is personalised, evidence-informed and underpinned by diagnostic assessment, ensuring that interventions are responsive to individual need and context. Decisions are therefore driven by learning needs rather than by labels, allowing all students to access the support they require to make strong progress.

We also recognise the wider needs of our students, and a key part of our strategy is also to ensure the highest levels of pastoral care for students. The physical and mental wellbeing of children is fundamental to their success in school and, given the success of the strategy in previous years, we will build on already high-quality provision in this area of our work.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge																																																																																										
1	<p>Despite being in line with national figures for progress for NDA students, our DA students achieve less well than others in the school overall and certainly in the core subjects, which are so vital to progression and later success.</p> <table><tr><th></th><th colspan="3">English</th><th colspan="3">Mathematics</th><th colspan="3">Overall</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>All</th><th>DA</th><th>NDA</th><th>All</th><th>DA</th><th>NDA</th><th>All</th><th>DA</th><th>NDA</th></tr><tr><td>2019</td><td>0.33</td><td>- 0.12</td><td>0.66</td><td>0.48</td><td>- 0.01</td><td>0.72</td><td>0.45</td><td>0.05</td><td>0.56</td></tr><tr><td>2020*</td><td>0.34</td><td>0.18</td><td>0.46</td><td>0.44</td><td>0.09</td><td>0.71</td><td>0.47</td><td>0.26</td><td>0.63</td></tr><tr><td>2021*</td><td>0.39</td><td>0.02</td><td>0.57</td><td>0.58</td><td>0.01</td><td>0.86</td><td>0.59</td><td>0.11</td><td>0.83</td></tr><tr><td>2022</td><td>0.63</td><td>0.19</td><td>0.87</td><td>0.53</td><td>- 0.03</td><td>0.83</td><td>0.74</td><td>0.17</td><td>1.01</td></tr><tr><td>2023</td><td>0.44</td><td>0.03</td><td>0.63</td><td>0.56</td><td>0.26</td><td>0.70</td><td>0.67</td><td>0.28</td><td>0.82</td></tr><tr><td>2024*</td><td>0.57</td><td>0.16</td><td>0.71</td><td>0.61</td><td>- 0.02</td><td>0.82</td><td>0.77</td><td>0.24</td><td>0.94</td></tr><tr><td>2025*</td><td>0.34</td><td>0.0</td><td>0.49</td><td>0.59</td><td>0.32</td><td>0.71</td><td>0.68</td><td>0.34</td><td>0.79</td></tr></table> <p>* Estimates from SISRA collaborative data</p> <p>Despite being broadly in line with national figures for progress for non-disadvantaged (NDA) students, disadvantaged (DA) students at the school continue to achieve less well than their peers overall and across the core subjects of English and mathematics. This gap in progress remains a key priority, given the central importance of these subjects to future attainment and progression.</p> <p>The most recent SISRA collaborative estimates for 2025 present a mixed but positive picture. In English, DA students achieved a progress score of 0.00, broadly in line with outcomes seen in recent years. The gap between DA and NDA students narrowed slightly compared with 2024; however, this was primarily due to a decline in NDA performance rather than a marked improvement in outcomes for DA students. In contrast, mathematics outcomes for DA students improved substantially in 2025, rising to +0.32. This represents the strongest DA mathematics progress score across the period shown and reflects a significant improvement from 2024. As a result, the mathematics gap between DA and NDA students narrowed considerably.</p> <p>Overall progress estimates for 2025 indicate DA progress of +0.34, the highest DA overall figure recorded in the available data. While this represents a positive trend, DA students continue to make less progress than their NDA peers within the school, and the in-school gap remains significant.</p>		English			Mathematics			Overall				All	DA	NDA	All	DA	NDA	All	DA	NDA	2019	0.33	- 0.12	0.66	0.48	- 0.01	0.72	0.45	0.05	0.56	2020*	0.34	0.18	0.46	0.44	0.09	0.71	0.47	0.26	0.63	2021*	0.39	0.02	0.57	0.58	0.01	0.86	0.59	0.11	0.83	2022	0.63	0.19	0.87	0.53	- 0.03	0.83	0.74	0.17	1.01	2023	0.44	0.03	0.63	0.56	0.26	0.70	0.67	0.28	0.82	2024*	0.57	0.16	0.71	0.61	- 0.02	0.82	0.77	0.24	0.94	2025*	0.34	0.0	0.49	0.59	0.32	0.71	0.68	0.34	0.79
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	<p>Over a longer timescale, the data shows that the progress gap between DA and NDA students widened markedly in 2022, before reducing again in 2023 to a level broadly in line with 2019. In 2024, the gap widened once more, driven largely by stronger NDA performance rather than a decline in DA outcomes. In 2025, the gap narrowed again, reflecting improved DA outcomes in mathematics alongside weaker NDA outcomes in English.</p> <p>Subject-level analysis highlights differing patterns. In English, the DA/NDA progress gap has narrowed gradually since 2019, falling from 0.78 to 0.49 in 2025. However, this reduction has not been driven by sustained improvements in DA progress, which has remained relatively static. In mathematics, the gap increased up to 2024 but narrowed sharply in 2025 as a result of the significant improvement in DA progress.</p> <p>We are encouraged by the improving overall progress outcomes for DA students, particularly in mathematics, and by the fact that DA overall progress in 2025 compares favourably with the most recently published national progress figures. However, we recognise that these figures are not directly comparable and that a substantial in-school gap between DA and NDA students persists. Closing this gap remains a whole-school priority, and continued emphasis on high-quality teaching, curriculum coherence and targeted, evidence-informed intervention will be central to our work in the coming year.</p>
2	Assessments and observations indicate lower levels of reading and comprehension for disadvantaged students compared to others, which impacts on achievement across the curriculum.
3	Our work with children and families indicates increasing levels of social and emotional issues, such as anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. Incidents of self-harm for example.
4	Some of our disadvantaged students exhibit poorer attitudes to learning, do not always see the value of education, and this manifests itself in behaviours both in and out of school.
5	Attendance rates for disadvantaged students, and in particular certain ethnic groups within this category, are lower than their peers.
6	A number of students have recently joined us with little or no English. This seems to be continuing. These students need rapid programmes of language acquisition if they are to be able to make the progress of which they are capable.

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
Improved progress and attainment for disadvantaged students, with a closing of the gap between disadvantaged and all students.	<p>Whilst disadvantaged students at Soar Valley achieved well compared to non-disadvantaged students nationally, there is still an in school gap.</p> <p>Our intention is to reduce the progress gap to 0.3 during the life of this plan, and to also reduce the gap between disadvantaged students and their peers in the key headline measures, 5+ English and mathematics, 4+ English and mathematics, and the proportion achieving a good pass in the EBacc suite of subjects.</p> <p>Observations will show continued focus on our 'disadvantaged first' strategy.</p>
Improved reading levels for disadvantaged students at key stage 3 whose reading ages fall below their chronological age	<p>Revised curriculum at key stage 3 in English, including for the fortnightly library lessons.</p> <p>Improvements seen in the NGRT Sparx assessment, to be taken at the start and end of Year 7 and Year 8, usefulness to be assessed before confirming whether to continue with this strategy longer term.</p> <p>Improvements seen in NGRT reading and comprehension test outcomes also.</p> <p>Improvements seen for those students engaged in school-led interventions.</p>
Improved wellbeing for all students, including those who are disadvantaged.	<p>Effective programmes in place to support students with varying levels of emotional and social support. This include in-house strategies (counsellor, training of Associate Heads of Year) as well as of MHST colleagues. We provide a bespoke programme to meet individual needs of student. This can include a therapeutic provision.</p>
<p>Re-established routines and strategies leading to improved standards of behaviour.</p> <p>Students 'buying in' to their school experience, through increased opportunities, which will also address the cultural capital deficit for some.</p>	<p>Reduce the gap between disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged for suspensions, S4s and whole-school detentions.</p> <p>Participation Passport data to show targeting of disadvantaged students for extra-curricular, leadership and responsibility opportunities.</p> <p>Analysis of tuition opportunities shows disadvantaged targeted, including at homework clubs, study support, accelerated learning sessions.</p> <p>Establish an offer of a range of subsidised experiences and opportunities across Y7-11 that will increase buy in and add to students' wider knowledge.</p>
Improved attendance for disadvantaged students.	<p>Our aim is for the absence figure for disadvantaged students to be no more than 3% less than the overall figure, which would represent an improvement.</p>
Rapid improvement for those students arriving with little or no English, leading to their successful integration and progress.	<p>Clear assessment procedures in place to identify need, with planned support at different levels to ensure all are able to make excellent progress.</p>

Activity in this academic year

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

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: **£200,000**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Further refine the use of data from diagnostic assessment of reading in order to identify students for intervention and to inform planning of high quality teaching.	For intervention and teaching to be most effective it is vitally important to know the precise area of need. Standardised tests can provide reliable insights into the specific strengths and weaknesses of each pupil to help ensure they receive the correct additional support through interventions or teacher instruction: Standardised tests Assessing and Monitoring Pupil Progress Education Endowment Foundation EEF	1, 2
Continue to provide additional staffing in mathematics, English, Science and RE leading to smaller class sizes and more frequent and better targeted feedback.	Smaller class sizes have been shown to have at least a +3 month impact (EEF). Feedback has been shown to have a +8 month impact (EEF) or an effect size of +0.73 (Hattie, 2009). Smaller class sizes obviously allows for students to have more frequent and detailed feedback.	1, 2
Further enhance the CPD model [focussed on subject, subject pedagogical and pedagogical knowledge] to ensure that it is both research informed and tailored to the needs and interests of the individual teacher. Establish and embed further research informed strategies such as adaptive teaching.	CPD will focus on developing teaching techniques, as outlined in the EEF Guidance below, and within the framework of our Great Teaching @ Soar Valley statements. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/effective-professional-development	1
Refine assessment practice to ensure feedback given to	EEF toolkit (2019) states that 'providing feedback is well-evidenced and has high impact on learning outcomes. Effective feedback tends to focus on the	1, 2, 6

students allows them to accelerate their own progress. Embed a range of effective formative assessment processes in every lesson to ensure routine checking for understanding.	task, subject and self-regulation strategies: it provides specific information on how to improve.'	
Further refine the use of subject specific resources (particularly online resources) to support improved outcomes through effective revision.	Continue to provide access to well resourced platforms such as GCSE Pod and Educake.	

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

Budgeted cost: **£134,460**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Continue effective reading interventions for struggling readers through small group withdrawal with a specialist, paired reading with older students, tutor time reading, and/or support provided during AIM sessions in KS4. Continue reading activities during registration, purchasing books as required to allow for all tutors to read aloud to their classes regularly.	Acquiring disciplinary literacy is key for students as they learn new, more complex concepts in each subject: Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools Reading comprehension, vocabulary and other literacy skills are heavily linked with attainment in maths and English: word-gap.pdf (oup.com.cn)	1, 2, 6
Embed the use of Sparx Maths and Sparx Reader	Completion of homework has been shown to have an effect size of +5 months (EEF) at secondary level. In addition, Hattie has shown that spaced practice has	1

<p>across the school addressing homework and spaced retrieval practice for maths and reading/literacy for English.</p> <p>Use the Insights facility to target gaps in knowledge for specific students.</p>	<p>a +0.71 effect size on outcomes. Our DA students feature disproportionately in homework non-completion data.</p>	
<p>Ensure all students have access to a device to support learning at home, or have access to space and time in school for independent study.</p>	<p>Completion of homework has been shown to have an effect size of +5 months (EEF) at secondary level. In addition, Hattie has shown that spaced practice has a +0.71 effect size on outcomes. Our DA students feature disproportionately in homework non-completion data.</p>	1, 3, 4
<p>Ensure a high degree of engagement with online tuition for targeted students, including PP, in KS4 with a focus on English and maths.</p> <p>Ensure a range of revision sessions during the Easter break, targeting PP students to attend before opening up to others</p> <p>Ensure that PP students are able to attend a targeted homework club after school.</p>	<p>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:</p> <p>One to one tuition EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p> <p>And in small groups:</p> <p>Small group tuition Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF</p>	1
<p>Use additional capacity in mathematics and English to provide targeted face to face tutoring in these subjects.</p>	<p>Both individual and small group tutoring have been shown by the EEF to have at least 4+ months (small group tuition) and +5 months (individual tutoring). The EEF note that it has more impact when explicitly linked to lessons.</p>	1, 2, 6
<p>Continue to fund a bespoke curriculum offer for targeted students at risk of exclusion.</p>	<p>In school evidence shows that we have almost no permanent exclusions as a result of a highly inclusive approach. Some students require a bespoke pathway, comprising vocational and academic elements, enabling them to gain qualifications and relevant experience. Evidence also shows that,</p>	1, 3, 4, 5

	historically, these students have gone on to successful post-16 options and not been NEET.	
<p>Further develop provision for students with little or no English.</p> <p>Review the effectiveness of our provision in line with EEF report. Look at the deployment of staff for greatest impact.</p> <p>Employ an additional member of staff to lead this provision and to provide further capacity for EAL work.</p>	<p>Historic data shows students entering the school late on in key stage 4 with little or no English achieve poorly, and dedicated support is needed to boost attainment.</p> <p>EEF have commissioned a report on EAL in the mainstream classroom (due to identified gaps in achievement).</p>	6

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

Budgeted cost: **£150,000**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Continued funding to employ a school counsellor.</p> <p>Establish a routine for mental health triage.</p> <p>Provide access to an improved range of provision within school (including ELSA, Love4Life, EMHPs) before allocation to counsellor's casework.</p>	<p>The number of students presenting with anxiety has significantly increased, particularly following the lockdown periods. Having sufficient time from a trained professional to address this is essential.</p> <p>EIF's report on adolescent mental health found good evidence that interventions support young people's social and emotional skills and can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression:</p> <p>Adolescent mental health: A systematic review on the effectiveness of school-based interventions Early Intervention Foundation (eif.org.uk)</p>	1, 3, 4, 5
<p>Continued funding of an additional Pastoral Support Worker and Associate Heads of Year, to address behaviour and</p>	<p>The EEF cites behaviour management interventions as having a +3 months impact, with Hattie (2009) suggesting that effective classroom management has an impact size of +0.52, with classroom cohesion having an impact of a further +0.52.</p> <p>According to Gottfried (2014) absenteeism has an observable effect on academic outcomes from a very</p>	1, 3, 4, 5

attitudes, as well as attendance. Establish the non-teaching role of <i>Safeguarding and Welfare Lead</i> to provide improved capacity in these crucial areas.	early age. The Government has published clear research that shows a link between low attendance and low attainment: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/absence-and-attainment-at-key-stages-2-and-4-2013-to-2014	
Further refine programme for PSHE and the taught pastoral curriculum. Engage with <i>Progressive Masculinity</i> to deliver an intervention aimed at a specific identified group of boys.	EEF cites meta-cognition and self-regulation as having a +8 months impact on progress, with spaced practice (one of the strategies built into the taught pastoral programme) having an effect size of +0.71 (Hattie 2009). Metacognition and self-regulation Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF	3, 4
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
Continue funding to employ an Attendance Improvement Officer. Work to focus on DA students with serious absence.	The DfE's Working together to improve school attendance guidance (February 2024) suggests that improving attendance includes 'building strong relationships and working jointly with family, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and removing them.'	1, 3, 5

Total budgeted cost: £ 484,460

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged students

	2025		2024		2023		2019*
	All	PP	All	PP	All	PP	PP
P8	0.65	0.34	+0.77	+0.24	+0.67	+0.28	+0.05
Attainment 8	51.78	47.97	51.6	42.6	51.3	45.1	41.5
9-4 English/Maths	73%	70%	72%	54%	72%	59%	54%
9-5 English/Maths	48%	42%	58%	44%	53%	38%	34%
Attendance			94%	91%	96%	92%	96%
EBacc standard pass	23%	19%	19%	11%	18%	16%	8.5%

* Included for reference as outcomes returned to standards set in 2019

Assessment outcomes:

An analysis of the performance of our school's disadvantaged (DA) students demonstrates that attainment for the whole cohort has continued to improve from 2019 onwards. The Progress 8 (P8) figure for DA students has increased from +0.05 in 2019 to +0.28 in 2023, +0.24 in 2024, and now +0.34 in 2025 (estimated). This is a significant improvement and continues to show that the performance of disadvantaged students at Soar Valley remains stronger than that of non-disadvantaged students nationally.

Attainment outcomes for 2025 also show sustained improvement. The DA Attainment 8 score has risen from 41.5 in 2019 to 45.1 in 2023, 42.6 in 2024, and now 47.97 in 2025, representing one of the strongest outcomes for disadvantaged pupils over time. Similarly, the proportion of disadvantaged students achieving 9–4 in English and maths has increased to 70%, a substantial improvement on 2019 and broadly in line with the whole-cohort performance. Although the proportion achieving 9–5 in English and maths has decreased compared with 2024, outcomes remain above 2019 levels and broadly match prior trends.

EBacc standard pass outcomes also show significant long-term improvement, rising from 8.5% in 2019 to 19% in 2025, indicating that more disadvantaged students are accessing and succeeding in a broad academic curriculum.

Although the gap in attainment between DA and non-DA students remains, the reasons for this gap are complex, multifaceted and interconnected. A notable factor continues to be the disproportionate representation of disadvantaged students in some of our harder-to-reach groups, which has an adverse effect on overall cohort-level indicators. Nevertheless, within the cohort there continue to be many examples of excellent individual performance.

The 2025 outcomes strengthen the pattern seen across the last five years: almost all headline indicators demonstrate clear improvement from 2019, showing that our long-term strategies are having a positive impact on the academic achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

Alongside published outcomes, we have continued to use school data and in-school observations to evaluate wider issues influencing disadvantaged pupils' performance, including attendance, behaviour and wellbeing. The 2025 attendance picture for DA students remains a concern, with attendance below that of the whole cohort and continuing to present a barrier to further improvement. This reinforces the importance of the strategies we have implemented in recent years—including the introduction of an Attendance Improvement Officer, the creation of a Safeguarding and Welfare Lead, and additional pastoral roles.

These roles ensure we sustain strong, supportive relationships with our most disadvantaged students and provide the high-quality pastoral and welfare interventions required to overcome these additional challenges. As a result, we continue to maintain high engagement for the vast majority of disadvantaged students through to the end of Year 11.

Based on all of the information above, the performance of our disadvantaged pupils in 2025 met expectations and shows that we remain on course to achieve the outcomes set for 2026/27. The strategy of prioritising high-quality teaching, alongside smaller groups in core subjects, continues to show positive impact on achievement for all students—and particularly for DA students.

This is complemented by our DA-first strategy, which ensures that disadvantaged students are systematically prioritised for high-quality experiences and targeted interventions. Alongside this, the dedicated work of our pastoral and Inclusion teams continues to drive strong engagement, improve wellbeing, and mitigate the impact of wider challenges.

The next logical development of our strategy is the continued expansion of targeted engagement work with low attenders. School data continues to demonstrate that attendance is a key driver of outcomes: DA students with attendance above 95% achieve an average P8 score of +0.86. Ensuring that all of our most disadvantaged students sustain high attendance is therefore essential to continuing to close the gap and securing further improvements in attainment and progress over the coming years.

Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider

Further information

In establishing our new pupil premium strategy for 2024-27, we combined a review of the previous strategy with our observations and data analysis, and available research evidence.

There are many strategies in place to support disadvantaged students which are not dependent on funding; some of these are listed below, under the headings of our core values.

Aspire

We will continue our focus with students on learning, with our mantra of 'Effort is Everything'. There will be a revision of our criteria to make high effort scores more demanding and to further raise expectations. We will recap what great effort is and continue celebrations of those who understand what it means to be a Soar Valley student and demonstrate this consistently. We constantly encourage each child to be the best version of themselves, and to achieve the best they can, irrespective of the performance of others.

Careers interviews will be scheduled first for our disadvantaged students, to give them goals and aspirations, and to improve attitudes to learning, and repeated where necessary.

Our 'disadvantaged first' strategy will be employed across a number of areas, including for example, when organising appointments for Parents' Evenings.

We will hold develop our transition programmes by adding an extended transition programme for Year 7 students moving into Yr 8, to remind of and reinforce our expectations, and undertake further targeted sessions with some where deemed appropriate.

Enjoy

There will be a major focus on activities and events which encourage all students, but particularly the disadvantaged, to become more engaged in school life, to enjoy their time in school and to buy into their learning as a consequence.

Much of this is not covered by funding but is a result of time given willingly by our fantastic staff team. Just a glance at the student bulletin will give an insight into the wealth of opportunities for students to get involved, with a vast range of extra-curricular activities, a plethora of House competitions, Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, etc. too. The Participation Passport is a way of monitoring this engagement and targeting students appropriately.

The addition of two Mental Health Support Practitioners from the MHST team working with us, adds greater capacity to those endeavouring to support students' mental health and wellbeing.

Achieve

We will continue to focus on assessment and feedback, with the intention of making sure feedback and students responding to it is a bigger focus than 'marking'. This will directly support, and be supported by, our focus on adaptive teaching.

Our departments will each have an external review, and undertake subsequent improvements as indicated in the feedback. Our whole school CPD model will focus very much on research, with all staff engaging with educational literature and, as groups, determining what aspects can be brought into our individual and whole school practice, with a focus back on the pedagogy of the classroom.