

Pupil premium strategy statement

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

It outlines our pupil premium strategy, how we intend to spend the funding in this academic year and the effect that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	Highwoods Primary
Number of pupils in school	456
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	17.3%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2025-26
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	Annually
Statement authorised by	Paul Disley (Headteacher), Martha McLewin and Sam Jaques (Deputy Heads) and Trustees
Pupil premium lead	Kate Bradley
Governor / Trustee lead	Kieran King

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£118,170
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	£118,170

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our vision statement Learning for Life is for all children to become equipped with the knowledge, skills and character needed to thrive and be the best version of themselves. We want to enable all of our pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve their full potential and thrive. Our culture is to ensure that all of our pupils are safe and feel valued.

Under the renewed Ofsted framework (2025), disadvantage is understood broadly as both **so-cio-economic** and **contextual**. Our approach reflects this wider definition. While our Pupil Premium funding is allocated on the basis of FSM/FSM6 and children who are looked after or previously looked after, we also recognise that many pupils may experience **additional or overlapping barriers to learning**.

These may include:

- SEND needs
- Involvement with social care
- EAL and new-to-English needs
- Pastoral, safeguarding or wellbeing vulnerabilities
- Refugee/asylum-seeking experiences
- Family instability or short-term crisis

The number of children who are eligible for Pupil Premium Grant funding (PPG) is below the national average, however a further 10% of pupils have been identified as 'vulnerable' and need specific support and adapted provision and will benefit from this strategy. Vulnerable in our school includes poor mental health in the child or family, financial vulnerability but not eligible for PPG, domestic violence, children previously or currently under social care and substance abuse within the family.

There are 90 children who are defined as having SEND needs which is 20% of the school population. 11 children have EHCPs, with a further 12 in the process of being assessed or waiting to be referred.

There are 152 pupils who are defined as having EAL with 45 different languages spoken within our school or at home. This group of pupils are 33% of the school population (a percentage which has nearly doubled in the last 7 years) and well above the national average and very high for Colchester. The number of children who are classed as PPG and EAL has risen by 140% in that time with consistent increases over the last two years of 12% of pupils classed as PPG and EAL.

Currently, 66% of pupils are at risk of underachievement by being classed within the thresholds of EAL, SEND and/or PPG or 'vulnerable'. An extra Year 4 class was added to the cohort last year with 50% of the new 26 pupils being classed as EAL, 19% SEND and 19% PPG.

High- quality teaching and high expectations are at the heart of our approach. We recognise that quality first teaching is only successful if staff have the expertise to meet the needs of all children including all pupils facing disadvantage, whether long-term or temporary. Our strategy

therefore aims to provide equitable access to trained staff, a broad and balanced curriculum and wider school life. We focus on high-quality teaching, targeted academic support, and robust pastoral provision to ensure that pupils who face barriers to learning can thrive.

Our approach is to form positive relationships with our pupils and families. This allows us to build trust with our families so that we can support them. Strong relationships with pupils impacts on teaching and learning. For example, the feedback policy in staff training is integral in delivering effective feedback to our pupils to ensure progress; all children are supported to be part of the pupil voice elections.

Our strategy is underpinned by our school values of:

- resilience;
- inspiration;
- aspiration;
- accessibility.

Our approach will be responsive to the contextual challenges to our school and individual needs of our pupils. We recognise that early intervention is essential in order to support our pupils and their families.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1 attendance	<p>While our attendance data over the last 3 years indicates that attendance among disadvantaged pupils has been broadly in line with the rest of the school (<1% on average below non-disadvantaged pupils), it is above the national average thresholds by 2 - 2.9%.</p> <p>Observations, data and discussions with parents highlight the need for attendance to be monitored with interventions in place in order for attendance to continue to be high.</p> <p>For the academic year 2025-2026 so far,</p> <p>20% of children who are classed as persistent absentee (below 90% threshold) are from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p> <p>Includes pupils in Y1 to Y6 in line with national reporting.</p>
2 Oracy on entry to school	<p>Assessments, observations, and discussions with pupils indicate underdeveloped oral language skills and vocabulary gaps among many disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>These are evident from Reception through to KS2 and in general, are more prevalent among our disadvantaged pupils than their peers.</p> <p>Data source includes Foundation stage baseline assessments, observations and assessments.</p> <p>10 pupils (17% of cohort) have been identified as starting Reception year with Speech, Communication and Language Needs.</p> <p>24 pupils (40%) are at risk of being disadvantaged:</p> <p>14% SEND 28% EAL 9% PPG</p>
3 Attainment	<p>Our assessments, discussions and observations with pupils suggest disadvantaged pupils generally have greater difficulties with reading than their non-disadvantaged peers.</p> <p>In Reception over the last 4 years, between 50-80% of our disadvantaged pupils arrive with below age-related expectations for reading compared to 20-46% of non-disadvantaged pupils. This gap narrows but remains significant to the end of KS2.</p>

<p>4 Risk of impact on attainment due to additional needs.</p>	<p>We recognise that high percentages of our pupils are at risk of being disadvantaged by being classed within the thresholds of:</p> <p>PPG – 17% SEND - 20%, EAL – 33%, Vulnerable – 10%</p> <p>56% of our total school pupils are at risk of being disadvantaged - PPG, EAL and SEND.</p> <p>PPG – 17%. Of this total, 54% have EAL or SEND:</p> <p>38% of PPG pupils have SEND which includes 3 pupils with an EHCP.</p> <p>16% of PPG pupils have EAL.</p> <p>5% of PPG pupils have both SEND and EAL. 1 of these 4 pupils has an EHCP.</p> <p>Our assessments indicate that the education and wellbeing of many of our disadvantaged pupils is not in line with their non-disadvantaged peers as a result of being further classed as SEND or EAL.</p> <p>Reception – 80% of PPG are also SEND (4/5) with 80% having Speech, Language and Communication needs.</p> <p>Year 1 - 80% of PPG are also EAL (4/5) with one pupil being new to English. 75% of PPG and EAL pupils are working below in reading, writing, and maths.</p> <p>Year 2 – 33% of PPG pupils are also SEND (4/12). One pupil has an EHCP and being EAL and one further EHCP application in progress and so are not making expected attainment and progress in reading, writing and maths since Reception.</p> <p>Year 3 – 36% of PPG pupils are also SEND (5/14 pupils), 3 further pupils are EAL including one pupil who is EAL and SEND. 75% (6/8) of SEND or EAL and PPG pupils are not at expected standard in reading, writing and maths. Good Level of Development (GLD) in Reception was 31% for disadvantaged pupils compared to 61% of non-disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>Year 4 - 30% of PPG pupils working below expected standards in writing are SEND and another pupil being new to English (EAL).</p> <p>Year 5 – 35% of PPG pupils are also SEND (8/23) including one pupil with EHCP and three pupils are SEND and EAL.</p>
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	<p>30% of PPG pupils are also EAL (7/23).</p> <p>Writing is a significant issue with 88% of these PPG/SEND pupils and 71% of PPG/EAL pupils working below expected standards.</p> <p>Year 6 – 64% of PPG pupils are SEND (7/11) including one pupil with EHCP and one further application in progress. Writing is a significant issue with all 7 SEND pupils working below expected standards in writing and 5/7 pupils in reading and maths.</p>
<p>5 Additional SEMH needs</p>	<p>Teacher and parent discussions and referrals for many pupils in need of social and emotional support continues to increase. These challenges particularly affect disadvantaged pupils, including their attainment.</p> <p>20% of school pupils are SEND.</p> <p>53% (49 pupils) of SEND pupils currently require additional support with social and emotional mental health needs.</p> <p>Of these 49 pupils, 65% are PPG pupils (32 pupils)</p> <p>A further 10% of pupils (45) have been identified as ‘vulnerable’ who are not within the thresholds of PPG, EAL or SEND, but may be at risk of under achievement due to SEMH needs.</p>

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
<p>To sustain high attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance will be individually tracked for all pupils and reviewed fortnightly. • Engagement with families with attendance below 90% - to put a plan in place to support. • Attendance figure of 96% for all pupils including disadvantaged pupils. • the percentage of all pupils including disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent being below 10%. • Funding before and after school clubs for pupils to interact with peers, build friendships and improve self-esteem. • Accessing family liaison officer. • External counselling and wellbeing support for all pupils who are in need. • Trustees receive termly reports analysing the attendance and engagement of PPG pupils compared with non-PPG peers.
<p>To sustain wide variety of experiences and opportunities to develop oracy for all pupils.</p> <p>To sustain high levels of oral language skills and vocabulary among disadvantaged pupils.</p>	<p>Assessments and observations indicate high levels of oral language among disadvantaged pupils.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide rich environments that promote oracy and language - this includes book corners, role play areas and continuous provision in Foundation stage, Year 1 and Year 2. • Well stocked library for infants and juniors with high quality books. Purchase curriculum reading books for Key Stage 2 library to support knowledge retrieval and opportunities to read. • Opportunities for pupils to use language in their play and socialising will be maximised - this includes playtimes, lunchtimes • Forest school provision for all children in the school • Enhanced Forest school provision for pupils as identified as having extra need, including those pupils who are PPG, SEND and EAL. • Sustain the high number of visitors and guest speakers into school • School trips and enrichment events will be accessed and available for all pupils

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading support for pupils who are not making expected progress, including those who are disadvantaged • Use materials from Development Matters, Wellcomm and Speech Articulation Screener to capture true starting points for pupils who arrive significantly behind Reception baseline and identify language support interventions. • Continue with higher adult pupil ratio to allow for high quality interactions to support language development.
<p>To ensure that disadvantaged pupils are making strong and sustained progress and improved outcomes in reading, writing and maths that are more in line with their non-disadvantaged peers and above national averages for disadvantaged pupils.</p>	<p>KS2 reading, writing and maths outcomes in 2025-2026 show that the percentage of disadvantaged pupils who meet the expected standard or higher is significantly above the national average standard of disadvantaged pupils and broadly in line with non-disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and maths.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPG pupils who are making less than expected progress from end of KS1 data or are in danger of not meeting national standards are closely tracked by PPG Lead and actions are adjusted promptly. • Embedding the school's development of mastery teaching of maths • Implementing Mastering Number in Reception and Key Stage 1 • Pupil Progress meetings reflect discussions around pupils, including those who might be PPG, who are not making expected progress from key benchmarks. • Where pupils might be SEND and PPG, the SENCO supports staff to enable children to make progress and access the curriculum. Individual pupils' one plans and EHCPs' will reflect the level of need and support. • SLT tracking lowest attaining children in reading across KS2 - measuring fluency and accuracy and looking at reading habits and ensuring that their reading books are in line with their current attainment. • Where children might be EAL and PPG, the EAL Champion supports staff to enable children to make progress and access the curriculum. EAL Champion supports literacy lessons and small group language acquisition interventions. • Continue to develop libraries' bilingual books. • EAL section on school website with translation tool on school website • 'Importance of Home Language' document to all new EAL starters in Reception.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees receive termly reports analysing the attainment, progress and engagement of PPG pupils compared with non-PPG peers.
<p>To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>To continue to enable all pupils in need of mental health support have access to provision and long-term supportive strategies</p>	<p>Sustain high levels of wellbeing demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPG pupils report positive experiences of support and feel well-included in school life - qualitative data from pupil voice, pupil and parent surveys and teacher observations an increase in participation in enrichment activities, particularly among disadvantaged pupils. Pupils identified and able to access Thrive Therapy sessions with play therapist for children exposed to significant trauma Child first counsellors available for all pupils Lunch Bunch and nurture provision for increased unregulated time support. Support for parents through family support worker and play therapist. Therapeutic Thinking principles embedded into practice following Behaviour curriculum.

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.

1. Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £1,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Greater understanding of the challenges pupils and schools face in raising standards for pupils, including those who are eligible for PP.	<p>PPG lead to deliver staff meetings to teachers and training to LSAs to ensure disadvantaged pupils make strong and sustained progress, supporting improved outcomes, wellbeing, and access to learning.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/using-pupil-premium</p> <p>https://researchschool.org.uk/devon/news/supporting-disadvantaged-pupils-to-thrive-part-1</p>	1,2,3,4,5

	<p>https://researchschool.org.uk/eastlondon/news/understand?utm_source=kingsbridge&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=site_search&search_term=disadvantaged-c</p> <p>Addressing the catch up conundrum Durrington Research School</p> <p>2017 18 Achievement Unlocked Summary Update Report 25.6.18.pdf (northyorks.gov.uk)</p> <p>https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/closing-the-attainment-gap/</p>	
<p>Improve Quality First Teaching for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>Enhancement of our maths teaching and curriculum planning.</p> <p>We will fund teacher release time to embed key elements of guidance in school and to access Maths Hub resources and CPD for teaching of Mastering training and Mastering Number from NCETM</p>	<p>Staff CPD on quality first teaching-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maths lead to sustain the implementation of the Mastery maths curriculum. Provide teachers and LSAs with training so that there is shared understanding of the principles • Maths lead to implement Mastering Number CPD programme for Reception and KS1 teachers. <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/mastery-learning</p> <p>https://www.ncetm.org.uk/teaching-for-mastery/mastery-explained/supporting-research-evidence-and-argument/</p> <p>https://www.ncetm.org.uk/teaching-for-mastery/mastery-explained/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding precision teaching of times tables into year 3 • Deputy Head to work with teaching staff and LSAs on Feedback Policy and Quality First teaching. • Deputy head to lead on metacognition learning, spaced retrieval skills and retrieval practice • Ongoing staff training by English lead on model, guided practice, independent writing and spelling. <p>https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/eef-guidance-reports/metacognition/Summary_of_recommendations_poster_2021-10-27-151056_qiiz_2021-10-29-074723_miux.pdf?v=1734358550</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/metacognition-and-self-regulation</p>	<p>1,2,3,4,5</p>

	<p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/support-for-schools/school-planning-support/1-high-quality-teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing staff training by SENCo - Dyslexia, colour semantics and Speech and Language • Whole staff training on ASD delivered by the National Autistic Society. • Ensuring that reading books reflect the phonics attainment of children (purchase of additional books and continuing to categorising new and current books available) • Ongoing Staff Training by EAL Champion – whole school approach to understanding the psychological effects on an EAL learner and how to support EAL Learners in the classroom. • Support staff with CPD to ensure consistency in offer for phonics across EYFS and Key Stage 1 - fidelity to our scheme and policy. Observations termly from RWI lead - prioritise new RWI tutors. <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/phonics</p>	
<p>Embedding language activities across the school curriculum. These can support pupils to articulate key ideas, consolidate understanding and extend vocabulary.</p>	<p>English lead to continue to develop the understanding of oracy work with language across the school</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/oral-language-interventions</p> <p>Deputy Head to lead on Feedback policy, Assessment policy and precision teaching</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/feedback</p> <p>https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/eef-guidance-reports/feedback/EEF_Feedback_Recommendations_Poster.pdf?v=1734357125</p>	<p>2, 3, 4</p>

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

Budgeted cost: £96,976

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Targeted staffing to support pupils, including those for are eligible for PP funding, to make better progress.</p>	<p>Additional support and tuition into Years 4, 5 and 6 to target precision teaching and feedback.</p> <p>Additional adult support into Key Stage 1 and Year 3 to support smaller ratio of adults to children, and allow the development of social and emotional skills.</p> <p>Small group tuition EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/support-for-schools/school-planning-support/2-targeted-academic-support</p> <p>https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/support-for-schools/school-improvement-planning/Selecting_interventions_tool.pdf</p>	<p>1, 2,3,4,5</p>
<p>Targeted 1:1 support with tuition</p>	<p>Use internal data to identify pupils, including those who are eligible for PPG.</p> <p>One to one tuition EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p> <p>Using high quality support staff to run small group and individual tuition for pupils, in order to allow children to make better progress.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/teaching-assistants</p>	<p>1,2, 3, 4,5</p>
<p>Increased staff to allow smaller RWI groups and targeted support for pupils whose</p>	<p>Targeted additional adult support for children in Key Stage 1 in RWI and 1:1 reading</p> <p>EAL Champion to support language acquisition</p>	<p>2, 4</p>

learning is impacted by oracy deficiency.	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/oral-language-interventions	
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3. Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £20,194

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Embedding principles of good practice set out in the DfE's guidance on working together to improve school attendance.</p> <p>Training and release time for staff to develop and implement new procedures and appointing attendance/support officers to improve attendance.</p>	<p>The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced levels of absence and persistent absence.</p>	1
<p>Provide a broad a balanced curriculum for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corum PSHE curriculum and subscription • Music tuition for pupils identified • Forest school • Tuition after school so less narrowing of the curriculum for those pupils • Access for all pupils to clubs and trips 	1, 2,5
<p>Increased mental health provision for all pupils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child First subscription to provide access to counsellors and Family support worker • Thrive subscription license and training • Play therapist • Family support worker 	1, 5
<p>Improve provision for high quality play</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play leader to support high quality play and engagement at play and break 	1,2,5

at break and lunchtime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality resources and play equipment to encourage engagement • Lunch time club run by staff (Lunch Bunch). 	
Forest School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child in the school to access Forest school provision • Identified children selected for extra Forest school provision to support development of social skills, confidence and self-esteem • Targeted small group Forest school provision for children with additional needs 	1,2,4,5

Total budgeted cost: £118,170