

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	High Firs Primary School
Number of pupils in school	210
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	18.5%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2024/25-2026/27
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	March 2026
Statement authorised by	Andrew Kilbride
Pupil premium lead	Andrew Kilbride
Governor / Trustee lead	Steve Geary

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£60,200
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	£60,200

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intention is that all pupils, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, make good progress and achieve high attainment across all subject areas. The focus of our pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve that goal, including progress for those who are already high attainers.

We will consider the challenges faced by vulnerable pupils, such as those who have a social worker and young carers. The activity we have outlined in this statement is also intended to support their needs, regardless of whether they are disadvantaged or not.

High-quality teaching is at the heart of our approach, with a focus on areas in which disadvantaged pupils require the most support. This is proven to have the greatest impact on closing the disadvantage attainment gap and at the same time will benefit the non-disadvantaged pupils in our school. Implicit in the intended outcomes detailed below, is the intention that non-disadvantaged pupils' attainment will be sustained and improved alongside progress for their disadvantaged peers.

Our strategy is also integral to wider school plans for education recovery, notably in its targeted support through the National Tutoring Programme for pupils whose education has been worst affected, including non-disadvantaged pupils.

Our approach will be responsive to common challenges and individual needs, rooted in robust diagnostic assessment, not assumptions about the impact of disadvantage. The approaches we have adopted complement each other to help pupils excel. To ensure they are effective we will:

- ensure disadvantaged pupils are challenged in the work that they're set
- act early to intervene at the point need is identified
- adopt a whole school approach in which all staff take responsibility for disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and raise expectations of what they can achieve

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
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1	<p>Assessments, observations, and discussions with pupils indicate underdeveloped oral language skills and vocabulary gaps among many disadvantaged pupils. These are evident from Reception through to KS2 and in general, are more prevalent among our disadvantaged pupils than their peers.</p> <p>We see that our disadvantaged pupils enjoy a narrower range of life experiences by comparison with non-disadvantaged peers. This reinforces vocabulary gaps and leads directly to greater difficulties with reading comprehension, where context and vocabulary are key.</p> <p>7 children (23%) in Reception (24/25 cohort) requiring support for Speech and Language. 67% disadvantaged pupils compared with 20% non-disadvantaged.</p>
2	<p>Assessments, observations, and discussions with pupils suggest disadvantaged pupils generally have greater difficulties with phonics than their peers. This negatively impacts their early development as readers.</p> <p>Y1 DfE screening from 2025: 40% disadvantaged pupils reaching phonics standard and 96% non-disadvantaged pupils reaching phonics standard.</p>
3	<p>Internal and external (where available) assessments indicate that attainment in reading, writing and maths among disadvantaged pupils is significantly below that of non-disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>In most year groups the range of disadvantaged pupils' attainment at expected standard is 40-60% in reading, writing or maths. For non-disadvantaged pupils this range is typically 60-90%.</p> <p>The gaps are of a similar size in EYFS, KS1 and KS2.</p>
4	<p>Our observations and discussions with pupils and families have identified social and emotional issues for many pupils, due to isolation, and a lack of enrichment opportunities during school closure. These challenges particularly affect disadvantaged pupils, including their attainment.</p> <p>We have 50 children with recorded SEN, 11 of whom are Disadvantaged.</p> <p>Of that 50, 12 pupils (6 of whom are disadvantaged) currently require additional support with social and emotional needs.</p> <p>This shows that Disadvantaged children are over-represented in the group of children with social and emotional needs.</p>
5	<p>Our attendance data shows that disadvantaged pupils attend school approximately 3% less frequently than non-disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>Our assessments and observations indicate that absenteeism is negatively impacting disadvantaged pupils' progress.</p>

Intended outcomes

This explains the outcomes we are aiming for **by the end of this academic year**, and how we will measure whether they have been achieved.

2025/26 is the second year of this 3 year plan.

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Improved oral language skills and vocabulary among disadvantaged pupils.	Assessments and observations indicate significantly improved oral language among disadvantaged pupils. This is evident when triangulated with other sources of evidence, including engagement in lessons, book scrutiny and ongoing formative assessment.
Improved reading and maths attainment among disadvantaged pupils.	Reading and maths outcomes in 2025/26 show that more than 60% of disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard across the whole school.
Improved writing attainment for disadvantaged pupils.	Writing outcomes in 2025/26 show that more than 50% of disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard across the whole school.
Improved phonics attainment for disadvantaged pupils at the end of Y1.	Y1 Phonics outcomes in 2025/26 show that more than 60% of disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard.
To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils in our school, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	Sustained high levels of wellbeing from 2025/26 demonstrated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • qualitative data from student voice, student and parent surveys and teacher observations
To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	Sustained high attendance from 2025/26 demonstrated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the overall attendance rate for all pupils being higher than the national average by more than 1% • attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers being reduced to less than 3%.

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 (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £13000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Use of standardised diagnostic assessments (NFER).</p> <p>Training for staff to ensure assessments are interpreted and administered correctly.</p>	<p>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:</p> <p>Standardised tests Assessing and Monitoring Pupil Progress Education Endowment Foundation EEF</p>	<p>1, 2, 3</p>
<p>Retention of HLTA to enable ongoing leadership release time (one and a half days per week), facilitating curriculum development, monitoring activities and pupil progress meetings.</p>	<p>Diarised release time opportunities available to be booked out enable leadership activity to gain momentum and vision to be embedded.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4</p>
<p>Embedding balanced diet of reading provision across the school.</p> <p>Embedding of Accelerated Reader to record and target reading progression in children's own reading choices across the school.</p> <p>We will purchase resources and fund ongoing teacher training and release time.</p>	<p>There is a strong evidence base that supports high impact on reading outcomes of vocabulary-rich, high challenge close reading approach.</p> <p>Reading Reconsidered – Doug Lemov</p>	<p>1, 2, 3</p>
<p>Embedding of a DfE validated Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme (Little Wandle – supported by Big Cat Collins for Little Wandle reading materials) to secure</p>	<p>Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base that indicates a positive impact on the accuracy of word reading (though not necessarily comprehension), particularly for disadvantaged pupils:</p>	<p>2</p>

<p>stronger phonics teaching for all pupils.</p> <p>Ensure Keep Up and Catch Up groups are set up, run and reviewed each term in KS1 and KS2.</p>	<p>Phonics Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF</p>	
<p>Enhancement of our maths teaching and curriculum planning in line with DfE and EEF guidance.</p> <p>We will fund teacher release time to embed key elements of guidance in school and to access Maths Hub resources and CPD (including Teaching for Mastery training).</p>	<p>The DfE non-statutory guidance has been produced in conjunction with the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics, drawing on evidence-based approaches:</p> <p>Maths guidance KS 1 and 2.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)</p> <p>The EEF guidance is based on a range of the best available evidence:</p> <p>Improving Mathematics in Key Stages 2 and 3</p>	3
<p>Review and refresh whole school curriculum to develop lasting knowledge over time through carefully sequenced learning opportunities that allow for application of new knowledge in different contexts in subsequent terms and year groups.</p> <p>Adoption of adapted teaching strategies toolkit – study impact and review.</p> <p>Use of Clicker/Widgit to support adaptations for disadvantaged pupils.</p>	<p>Ofsted framework of 2019 and Willingham, Rohrer and Taylor – all point to it becoming increasingly clear that using spaced or distributed practice, where knowledge is rehearsed for short periods over a longer period of time, is more effective than so-called massed practice, where we study more intensively for a shorter period of time. It is therefore good practice to block learning and repeat practice over time, as this leads to better long-term retention of knowledge.</p>	1, 2, 3
<p>Recruitment of assessment specialist to analyse termly data and identify patterns in attainment and progress for cohorts and groups – staff training to use data to target specific groups and individuals.</p>	<p>Efficient analysis of pupil data leads to savings teacher time and targeted support at an early stage for those who need it.</p>	1, 2, 3

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

Budgeted cost: £36000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Improve the quality of social and emotional (SEL) learning through leading ELSA groups for identified groups and individuals.</p> <p>SEL approaches will be embedded into routine educational practices and supported by professional development and training for staff – Zones of Regulation training for all pupils and staff embedded across 2023/24.</p>	<p>There is extensive evidence associating childhood social and emotional skills with improved outcomes at school and in later life (e.g., improved academic performance, attitudes, behaviour and relationships with peers):</p>	5
<p>Retention of level 3 Forest School Leader.</p> <p>Run Forest School groups for two full days per week. Rolling timetable where all classes have a 10 week provision in woodland.</p>	<p>ecoActive Charitable Incorporated Trust found with forest school groups run for small cohorts of disadvantaged children that:</p> <p>84% of children showed improved social, verbal and non-verbal communication skills.</p> <p>69% of children became more engaged and motivated learners.</p> <p>Children who were struggling to interact began to build relationships and friendships.</p>	1, 4, 5
<p>Identified children to work with English As Additional Language (EAL) specialist teacher</p>	<p>Children with EAL need long term support to help develop language patterns, especially in writing, even when speaking and listening appears fluent.</p>	1, 2, 3
<p>Family Support Worker receives referrals from class teachers and school leaders to support vulnerable pupils and families.</p>	<p>Weekly meetings with parents in school, home visits to support families, phone contact and support, housing support and guidance, signposting to other services – financial support – all have had a huge positive impact on our most vulnerable families in recent years.</p>	4, 5
<p>Pastoral teaching assistant deployed to provide emotional support for pupils with anxiety. Trained to act as Dog Mentor, enabling vulnerable pupils to access emo-</p>	<p>Vital support for vulnerable children ensures that issues are addressed early, enabling good attendance and focus on learning to be maintained, even when life circumstances are most challenging.</p>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

<p>tional support and boost associated with working with dogs.</p>		
<p>Educational Psychologist support for specific children with reports actioned by class teachers and included in provision maps.</p>	<p>Ensures accurate and measurable outcomes for children with most challenging SEND.</p> <p>Regular visits ensures follow-up and pre-emptive support – rather than reactive, one-off approach only when EHCP assessments are needed.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3</p>
<p>Identified children to receive weekly support from internal specialist Speech and Language TA.</p> <p>NELI group for Reception children to produce accelerated outcomes in 20 weeks of early language acquisition support.</p> <p>TA to be supervised in next steps and assessments by termly Speech Therapist visits.</p>	<p>Supporting children with early language and speech barriers</p> <p>ICAN ACTT report – early S&L support leads to 50% increase in reading progress in primary schools.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3</p>
<p>Investment in maths interventions –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - timetable refresh to ensure keep up interventions happening daily in all classes - Dynamo maths for SEN children <p>Numberstacks to support catch up interventions for those with fundamental gaps and misconceptions.</p>	<p>Structured, small group maths interventions have evidence of improving pupils’ numeracy outcomes, with evaluated programmes showing on average two additional months’ progress when delivered regularly and consistently alongside classroom teaching. EEF</p> <p>Dynamo Maths is grounded in the <i>NumberSense MMR®</i> developmental framework, which has been validated through independent analysis with data from over 3,400 pupils and correlated by researchers at the University of Oxford.</p> <p>Embedding interventions into the daily timetable ensures consistency and prioritisation, aligning with evidence-informed practice to ‘keep up’ rather than solely ‘catch up’. EEF</p>	<p>1, 3, 4, 5</p>

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

Budgeted cost: 11200

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Attendance support a daily activity with strategy of monitoring, follow-up and referral.</p> <p>First day calls to all absentees.</p> <p>Daily meeting between DHT/HT and Attendance Administrator and weekly reporting of data and patterns.</p> <p>Pastoral TA to take on Pupil Premium Champion role – attendance incentives, club engagement.</p> <p>Attendance incentives for being in school the whole week following school holidays.</p>	<p>High profile of attendance support and additional incentives for disadvantaged children – positive discrimination to address the gap present in current data – with additional targeting and rewards for good attendance of disadvantaged children.</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Purchase of IT systems that enable more targeted support for disadvantaged children. CPOMS for safeguarding records.</p>	<p>Increased access to information will lead to earlier support.</p>	
<p>Rocksteady places funded by school for 40% disadvantaged children – leading to new skill acquisition and experience of self-esteem boosting performance opportunities.</p>	<p>Children with greater life experiences leads to increased language development.</p>	<p>1, 3, 4, 5</p>
<p>Subsidies available for disadvantaged children to attend school trips – including swimming lessons and funding of internal Panto experience.</p>	<p>Increasing access to broad range of experiences helps develop language and context for future reading and learning.</p>	<p>1, 2</p>

Total budgeted cost: £60200

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the 2024 to 2025 academic year.

Overall academic data across the school shows significant progress towards closing disadvantaged gaps in attainment. Where they still exist, they are closing and are either meeting or close to the target of 50% at expected levels from last year's success criteria.

In 2021/22 the picture was as follows:

In most year groups the range of disadvantaged pupils' attainment at expected standard is 0-25% in reading, writing or maths. For non-disadvantaged pupils this range is typically 50-80%. The gaps are of a similar size in EYFS, KS1 and KS2.

This data suggests that previous targets to close the disadvantaged gap have not been fully achieved.

At end of 2022/23 internal data showed disadvantaged children at least reaching expected levels across Years 1-6:

Reading 46%

Writing 29%

Maths 51%

At end of 2023/24 internal data showed disadvantaged children at least reaching expected levels across Years 1-6:

Reading 48%

Writing 42%

Maths 55%

At end of 2024/25 internal data showed disadvantaged children at least reaching expected levels across Years 1-6:

Reading 51%

Writing 31%

Maths 54%

These outcomes above represent excellent progress from the position in 2021 at the start of the last 3-year plan.

EYFS – There is a mixed picture with Good Level of Development (GLD) in EYFS. 33% in 2022, 100% in 2023, 25% in 2024 and 50% in 2025 reached GLD.

Over the last 4 years in phonics – percentages who achieved the national standard shown:

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Disadvantaged	25%	40%	50%	40%
Non-disadvantaged	88%	80%	80%	96%

This encouraging picture shows increasingly robust phonics practice meeting the needs of the disadvantaged children more.

KS2 attainment of disadvantaged pupils was poor in 2024-25. The previous years showed pockets of good attainment, but not in all subjects, but the 2024 picture for the first time shows the combined figure of R/W/M exceeding the national picture for disadvantaged children. This was not sustained in 2025 with a cohort of disadvantaged pupils who also had high rates of SEN.

KS2 DISADVANTAGED PUPILS SATs		2025		2024		2023		2022		2019	
		High Firs %	Nat %	High Firs %	Nat %	High Firs %	Nat %	High Firs %	Nat %	High Firs %	Nat %
Reading	Ex+	50	60	67	62	100	62	58 ⁻⁴	62	33 ⁻²⁹	62
Writing	Ex+	25	56	50	55	0	55	58 ⁺³	55	67 ⁻¹	68
Maths	Ex+	25	54	67	56	50	56	58 ⁺²	56	50 ⁻¹⁷	67
R/W/M	Ex+	13	42	50	43	0 (less than one pupil different)	43	42 ⁻¹	43	17 ⁻³⁴	51

Improvements in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils were seen in the data in the second half of the academic year 2021/22. Over the whole year the gap between disadvantaged attendance and others was 6.43% - this arrested a three year widening gap (4, then 5, then 9%). This improvement has continued through 2022/23 to a gap of 4.8%. For 2023/24 this gap continued to close and was 3.1% by the end of the academic year. For 2024/25 the gap widened to 4.8% - but there were significant case studies uniquely affecting attendance data in this year. When those 5 case study children are removed from the data, the gap becomes 1.9% which represents the closest gap we have seen.

Subject leader monitoring and Ofsted inspection revealed children using accurate technical vocabulary and able to talk about their learning in mature and sophisticated language. Initiatives like the introduction of Knowledge Organisers in science have helped pupils to root their current understanding in the bigger picture of knowledge around the subject.

Pupil voice survey responses reveal happy and engaged pupils generally giving approval ratings over 75% to a range of metrics. Parents surveyed gave responses typically from 85-95% approval in Jan 25 internal survey and October 23 Ofsted survey.