

# Pupil premium strategy statement – Merry Hill Infant and Nursery School

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 outcomes for disadvantaged pupils last academic year.

## School overview

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school	161
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	19% - 17 FSM, 8 EYPP and 6 SPP (+1 SPP in Nursery)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers ( <b>3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year</b> )	2024-2027
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2026
Statement authorised by	Melissa Adams
Pupil premium lead	Gemma Hall & Sarah Ineson
Governor / Trustee lead	Jarmo Kessanto and Donald Barrell

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£17,891
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b> <i>If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year</i>	£17,891

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

Our intention is that every pupil, irrespective of their background, attainment starting point or unique challenges, feels a strong sense of belonging and is effectively supported to make good progress throughout the curriculum.

Through the development and delivery of high quality teaching, we are committed to ensuring that our most vulnerable pupils, including young carers and those with/or those who have had social workers or other specific needs, are empowered to make good progress. Observations, assessments, pupil voice and discussions with families have been used during the exploration phase to ensure each learner's unique challenges have been considered when planning our shared goals.

We hold high expectations for all pupils, believing that every child can achieve their fullest potential with the right support and opportunities. We recognise the importance of strong parent partnerships in driving pupil success. By fostering open communication and collaborations with families, we aim to create a cohesive support system that ensure every child thrives.

### Key Principles of our Plan:

**Rigorous Assessment and Tracking:** We are committed to early identification of individual needs through robust and continuous assessment and tracking processes.

**Clear Communication:** The rationale for our strategy is shared with all staff to ensure a unified and informed approach.

**High Quality Teaching:** Implementation plans focus on equipping staff with the skills and training necessary to deliver consistently high-quality teaching through ongoing professional development.

**Evidenced Based Interventions:** Strategies and interventions are informed by research to address our key areas of need effectively

**Continuous Review and Improvement:** Regular reviews of pupil progress ensure we can adapt and refine our approach as necessary, identify further training opportunities and evaluate the impact of our strategy on pupil outcomes.

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Assessments and observations suggest that disadvantaged pupils generally have greater difficulty with <b>reading</b> than their peers.

	On entry to Reception in the last 3 years, between 40 and 89% of our disadvantaged pupils arrive below age related expectations compared to 37% of other pupils. This gap narrows at the end of KS1 but this remains a priority.
2	1 Assessments and observations show that <b>maths fluency</b> must remain a focus, both with the stand alone fluency sessions and with connections being made to the fluency sessions within the whole class teaching, so that all children and especially those that are disadvantaged are fluent and secure with the fundamental number facts needed for the rest of their maths learning.
3	2 Observations, teacher voice and discussions with the families have highlighted that the attainment and progress of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium are impacted by the children's underdeveloped <b>listening and attention skills</b> . This challenge is contributing to difficulties in collaborative work with children finding it hard to contribute to group discussion, listen to others' ideas or stay engaged during peer based tasks, impacting their social and academic progress.
4	Assessments, observations and discussions with pupils indicate underdeveloped <b>oral language skills and vocabulary gaps</b> among many disadvantaged pupils. Over the last three years the percentage of children across the whole school with EAL has increased from 26.4% to 32.6% and language difficulties can be exacerbated when a child's home language is not the language of instruction. Over the last 3 years, the end of EYFS CL data highlights a mean average gap of 11% between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils achieving the expected standard.
5	Internal and external assessments indicate that <b>writing</b> attainment among disadvantaged pupils is significantly below that of non-disadvantaged pupils.  End of Reception data in the last 3 years, between 27 and 50% of our disadvantaged pupils achieve below age related expectations compared to 17 and 31% of other pupils. This gap narrows at the end of KS1 but this remains a priority.
6	Our <b>attendance</b> data for the last academic year shows that attendance among those in receipt of free school meal funding is 5.1% lower than it is for all pupils.  13.8% of pupils in receipt of free school meal funding were 'persistently absent' compared to 9.9% of all children last academic year. Our assessments and observations indicate that absenteeism is negatively impacting some disadvantaged pupils' progress.

## 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 reading attainment among disadvantaged pupils.	KS1 reading outcomes in 2026/27 show that more than 85% of disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard
Improved maths attainment among disadvantaged pupils at end of KS1.	KS1 maths outcomes in 2026/27 show that more than 85% of disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard
Improved engagement during whole class and group learning activities among disadvantaged learners.	Sustained high levels of active engagement during whole class learning and turn taking participation during group work demonstrated by: - Qualitative data from pupil and teacher voice

	Learning walks show a significant increase in participation amongst our disadvantaged pupils both during whole class teaching and collaborative group work
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, work sampling and ongoing formative assessment. EYFS observations show increased participation in sustained shared thinking activities for our disadvantaged pupils
Improved writing attainment among disadvantaged pupils at end of KS1.	KS1 writing outcomes in 2026/27 show that more than 75% of disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard
To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	<p>Sustained high attendance by 2026/27 demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The overall absence rate for all pupils being no more than 5%, and the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils being no more than 3%.</li> <li>• The percentage of all pupils who are persistently absent being below 10% and the figure among disadvantaged pupils being no more than 2% above this.</li> </ul>

## 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: £9,500

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<b>Reading</b> Purchase of a <a href="#">DfE validated Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme</a> to secure stronger phonics teaching for all pupils.	Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base that indicates a positive impact on the accuracy of word reading, particularly for disadvantaged pupils: <a href="#">Phonics   Teaching and Learning Toolkit   EEF</a>	1, 4

Ongoing Reading Lead support to ensure fidelity to approach		
<b>Reading</b> Lead to trial whole class reading in Y2	<a href="https://medium.com/solomonkingsnorth/how-to-switch-to-whole-class-guided-reading-3f8489a8b557">https://medium.com/solomonkingsnorth/how-to-switch-to-whole-class-guided-reading-3f8489a8b557</a>  <a href="https://medium.com/solomonkingsnorth/reading-comprehension-a-new-approach-570d39ffac79">https://medium.com/solomonkingsnorth/reading-comprehension-a-new-approach-570d39ffac79</a>  <a href="https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10573569.2015.1029176">https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10573569.2015.1029176</a>  This study revealed that the children that received directed reading instruction improved the development of reading comprehension and expressive vocabulary.	1, 4
<b>Maths</b>  Enhancement of our maths teaching and curriculum planning in line with DfE and EEF guidance.  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).  Purchase of maths resources for each class so that children have access to the key structures we are using as a school.	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: <a href="#">Maths guidance KS 1 and 2.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a>  The EEF guidance is based on a range of the best available evidence: <a href="#">Improving Mathematics in Key Stages 2 and 3</a>  <u>EEF research finds that mastery learning has high impact for very low cost:</u> <a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/mastery-learning">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/mastery-learning</a>  Subject Leader to work collaboratively with year group staff to effectively develop the principles for Mastering across the school.	2, 3, 4
<b>Oral language and vocabulary</b>	There is a strong evidence base that suggests oral language interventions, including dialogic activities such as high-quality	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

<p>Continue to implement Word Aware across the school with fidelity. Key vocabulary mapped out on plans, shared with children and on working walls for children to use.</p> <p><i>EYA to provide support for EYFS to ensure ShREC approach implemented successfully across the setting</i></p> <p><i>Purchase of standardised diagnostic tool - Wellcomm screening for all EYFS children</i></p>	<p>classroom discussion, are inexpensive to implement with high impacts on reading:</p> <p><a href="#">Oral language interventions   Toolkit Strand   Education Endowment Foundation   EEF</a></p> <p>On average, students who participate in oral language interventions make approximately five months' additional progress over the course of a year. Some studies show slightly larger effects for younger children and students from disadvantaged backgrounds (up to 6 months additional progress).</p> <p>EEF states that, "Evidence tells us that we should prioritise the development of children's communication and language through socially-meaningful interactions. Children thrive on conversation and discussion with people they have a strong relationship with, focused on things they want to talk about."</p> <p>Delayed language skills lead to under-performance later in life. WellComm helps to identify pre-school and primary school children who are experiencing barriers to speech and language development so that you can support them early in their education journey.</p>	
<p>Improve teaching strategies for <b>writing</b> in EYFS and KS1 by providing high-quality, evidence-based CPD opportunities.</p> <p>EYA – scribing training in EYFS</p> <p>English Lead – KS1</p>	<p>Research by the <i>Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)</i> shows that effective professional development that includes a focus on subject-specific pedagogy (including writing) can improve teaching and lead to better outcomes for pupils.</p> <p>The <i>EEF's Literacy Guidance Report (2021)</i> emphasizes the importance of developing a strong foundation in phonics and early language skills for writing success.</p> <p>Studies highlight the impact of high-quality CPD in promoting effective practices in early literacy teaching.</p>	4, 5
<p>Provide <b>writing</b>-rich environments both inside and outdoors that include accessible</p>	<p>Research on the importance of the learning environment, such as the <i>Educational Endowment Foundation's</i> findings, shows that providing varied, stimulating materials can support children's literacy development.</p>	4, 5

writing tools, resources, and areas where children can engage in writing activities freely.	The <i>Literacy Trust</i> notes that a writing-rich environment is key to motivating young children and improving their literacy skills over time.	
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## Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support, structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £5,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Additional phonics sessions targeted at disadvantaged pupils who require further phonics support.	Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base indicating a positive impact on pupils, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds. Targeted phonics interventions have been shown to be more effective when delivered as regular sessions over a period up to 12 weeks: <a href="#">Phonics   Toolkit Strand   Education Endowment Foundation   EEF</a>	1
Listening and Attention  LSA to lead ongoing CPD across the school to ensure the attention bucket intervention for our children who struggle with listening and attention, particularly our disadvantaged children, is embedded.	Our in school evidence base has shown that the attention bucket intervention has a positive impact on children's listening and attention when done just before the start of a teaching session. Children are better able to focus and get the most out of the high quality teaching that follows.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Implement small-group evidenced based interventions for pupils struggling with early writing skills, with a particular focus on developing fine motor skills, letter formation, and early spelling.  Researching interventions this academic year e.g <i>Write Away Together</i> to enhance engagement with writing.	The <i>EEF</i> report on <i>Small Group Tuition</i> <a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition</a> found that small group interventions can have a positive impact on pupil outcomes, particularly when they are targeted at pupils who are behind in their writing development.  Research by <i>The Literacy Trust</i> suggests that structured interventions and targeted support in early years education can significantly improve writing skills and long-term literacy outcomes.	4, 5

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

Budgeted cost: £3,391

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Whole staff training on behaviour management and anti-bullying approaches with the aim of developing our school ethos and improving behaviour across school.	Both targeted interventions and universal approaches can have positive overall effects: <a href="#">Behaviour interventions   Teaching and Learning Toolkit   EEF</a>	6
Embedding principles of good practice set out in the DfE's guidance on <a href="#">working together to improve school attendance</a> .  Attendance Champions time for analysis and appointing attendance/support officers and FSW to improve attendance.	The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced levels of absence and persistent absence.	6
Funding used to ensure all disadvantaged children are given the opportunity to join an after school club	<a href="https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/EC-and-outcomes-final-1.pdf">https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/EC-and-outcomes-final-1.pdf</a>  The EPI and Nuffield Foundation found that "After school club attendance was associated with positive academic and social outcomes for disadvantaged children in particular"	1,2,3,4,5,6
Ongoing, targeted support to empower parents/carers to support their children	<a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/parental-engagement">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/parental-engagement</a>  Parental engagement has a positive impact on average of 4 months' additional progress. It is crucial to consider how to engage with all parents to avoid widening attainment gaps.	1,2,3,4,5,6



**Total budgeted cost: £ 17,891**

## Part B: Review of the previous academic year

### Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Challenge	Monitoring	Next steps
1. Reading	<p>Phonics intervention groups and 1:1 interventions took place last year to support children to make the best possible progress. Of the 6 children in Year 2 who needed to retake the PSC from Year 1 at Merry Hill, 100% passed.</p> <p>Of the 7 children in receipt of pupil premium funding in year 1, 6 met the expected standard in the phonics screening check.</p> <p>Phonic reading books were allocated based on phonic ability of each child.</p> <p>Reading and phonic workshops were run for all year groups to support parents in understanding how we teach phonics and reading at school and resources were provided so that they could provide complementary support at home. If parents were not able to attend the workshops, we offered 1:1 meetings.</p> <p>In Summer 2025, 87.% of children in receipt of FSM funding achieved the expected standard in reading at the end of year 2 (which is above our 85% target).</p> <p>In summer 2025, 66.7% of children in receipt of FSM funding achieved the expected standard in reading at the end of Reception.</p>	<p>To use and embed strategies from the Reading Fluency course from HfL.</p> <p>To work with a representative from ELS for the day to evaluate our systems and daily processes for phonics and to help identify next steps.</p> <p>To provide disadvantaged children in Reception with more 1:1 support in reading.</p>
2. Maths Fluency	<p>Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 were taught Mastering Number 4 times a week throughout the academic year to support and develop fluency with number facts. This is to ensure children have the number facts securely in their heads and can use the known number facts flexibly to work out unknown calculations.</p> <p>In Summer 2025, 87.% of children in receipt of FSM funding achieved the expected standard in maths at the end of year 2 (which is above our 85% target).</p> <p>In summer 2025, 66.7% of children in receipt of FSM funding achieved the expected standard in maths at the end of Reception.</p>	<p>To develop Assessment for Learning techniques to ensure that anybody who is struggling to retain the number facts they need will get the additional practice they need to learn these and use them flexibly.</p> <p>Mastering Number at Home workshops – we will ensure parents of disadvantaged children are given a 1:1 meeting time to go over the resources, the games and the learning so that they can confidently play these games at home and reinforce the learning at home.</p>

		Meet with parents to ensure they can access Numbots at home. Encourage this to support additional practice of number facts.
<b>3. Listening and attention skills</b>	<p>Attention Bucket supported pupils to focus their listening and attention in the classroom. External advisors came in to observe the intervention and to give feedback to individual staff. Staff also supported each other within school with peer- to-peer observations.</p> <p>4/11 children in receipt of FSM funding struggled with listening and attention skills in KS1. Of these 4 children, 2 made significant improvements and no longer needed the intervention at the end of the year. 2 continued to have the intervention, which benefitted their listening and attention when learning with the whole class.</p>	New Merry Hill Behaviour Curriculum, being rolled out from September 2025, to include key behaviour skills needed for learning.
<b>4. Oral Language and Vocabulary</b>	<p>Wellcomm screening data indicates that the majority of pupils demonstrate age-appropriate oral language skills, with a significant reduction in the number of pupils requiring targeted language support following intervention.</p> <p>Findings from learning walks, book looks and targeted pupil voice, show the vast majority of pupils were able to accurately explain subject-specific vocabulary.</p>	The newly implemented writing curriculum places a clear and explicit focus on oracy to further strengthen pupils' spoken language. The continued implementation of Word Aware will ensure the effective teaching of cumulatively sequenced vocabulary, enabling pupils to increasingly speak and think like historians, geographers and scientists etc
<b>5. Writing attainment</b>	In Summer 2025, 62.5% of children in receipt of FSM funding achieved the expected standard in writing at the end of year 2. (Of the 3 children who did not make the expected standard, only 1 made less than expected progress from the end of the EYFS.)	<p>Writing is now a priority on our School Development Plan. We are going to use and embed Essentials Writing as our main writing curriculum, focusing on the fundamentals of writing, transcription and the children seeing themselves as authors.</p> <p>To work with our SEA on the Every Child Programme with a focus on writing, handwriting and automaticity.</p>
<b>6. Attendance</b>	<p>Attendance for children in receipt of FSM funding was 90% from Sept 24 – July 25, which was 4% below all children.</p> <p>From beginning of Sept 2024 – end of July 2025, 18 pupils were persistent absentees (attendance below 90%),</p>	To continue to work closely with the families of persistent absentees or children who are in danger of becoming a PA to identify strategies to support school attendance.

	which was a decline from 22 children in the previous academic year.	
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## Externally provided programmes

*Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you used your pupil premium to fund in the previous academic year.*

Programme	Provider
Attention Autism	
Zones of regulation	

## Service pupil premium funding (optional)

<i>For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information: <b>How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year</b></i>	
<p>How did you spend your service pupil premium allocation last academic year?</p> <p>To help new Forces children and their families in <b>settling into the school</b> and <b>becoming part of their new community</b>.</p> <p>To raise the profile of our Forces Community through our Year 2 Ambassadors, resources within school and links to Northwood HQ</p> <p>To provide additional pastoral support for exceptional circumstances</p>	<p>Forces Club</p> <p>Forces Liaison Mentor (Sarah Ineson)</p> <p>Deployment pastoral support – Drawing and Talking course</p> <p>Event Days Celebrating the Armed Forces Community</p>
The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils	
<p><b>Forces Club</b> – parent and pupil voice showed that pupils enjoyed the club and it boosted their confidence</p> <p><b>Forces Liaison Mentor</b> – parent voice showed that this role was appreciated and utilised. Our Y2 Ambassadors were given tasks to promote independence and leadership skills.</p> <p><b>Event Days Celebrating the Armed Forces Community</b>- pupil voice showed this had a positive impact on both our Forces children and our whole school community</p>	

## Further information (optional)

Our pupil premium strategy will be supplemented by additional activity that is not being funded by pupil premium:

*To closely monitor and track our disadvantaged pupils we use pupil passports to provide personalised and targeted support. This passport is shared with parents/carers to strengthen the parent partnership and empower parents to more confidently support learning at home.*

*To support the transition process for our service children moving onto a new school we provide a PIP (Pupil Information Profile) to the new school with additional information that will help the child settle more quickly.*

When planning our pupil premium strategy we:

Triangulated evidence from multiple sources of data including assessments, engagement in class, pupil led book study, conversations with parents, students and teachers in order to identify the challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils.

Looked at a number of reports, studies and research papers about effective use of pupil premium, attended training by Marc Rowland and purchased his books about Pupil Premium to further understand the impact of disadvantage on education outcomes and how to address challenges to learning presented by socio-economic disadvantage. We also looked at studies about the impact of the pandemic on disadvantaged pupils.

Used the [EEF's implementation guidance](#) to help us develop our strategy, particularly the 'explore' phase to help us diagnose specific pupil needs and work out which activities and approaches are likely to work in our school. We will continue to use it through the implementation of activities.

Have put a robust evaluation framework in place for the duration of our three-year approach and will adjust our plan over time to secure better outcomes for pupils.