

Pupil premium strategy statement – Hatfield Community Free School

This statement details our school’s use of pupil premium (and recovery 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 | 405 |
| Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils | 23.4% |
| Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended) | 2025-2028 |
| Date this statement was published | December 2025 |
| Date on which it will be reviewed | December 2026 |
| Statement authorised by | Victoria Hobson (Principal) |
| Pupil premium lead | Jo Pape (Vice Principal) |
| Governor / Trustee lead | Lauretta Baker (Premiums Link Trustee) |

Funding overview

| Detail | Amount |
|---|-------------|
| Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year | £145,440.00 |
| Pupil premium (and recovery premium*) funding carried forward from previous years (<i>enter £0 if not applicable</i>) <i>*Recovery premium received in academic year 2021 to 2022 can be carried forward to academic year 2022 to 2023. Recovery premium received in academic year 2022 to 2023 cannot be carried forward to 2023 to 2024.</i> | £0 |
| Total budget for this academic year <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> | £145,440.00 |

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, achieve their full potential across the primary curriculum and have access to enrichment opportunities that they may not have access to due to levels of vulnerability, deprivation and disadvantage. This includes support and provision for those pupils who are already achieving above age related expectations or have special educational needs.

An average proportion of our pupils qualify for pupil premium funding, though we also acknowledge that an above average number of our other families are in in-work poverty so do not qualify for benefits and therefore do not attract pupil premium. This means that a large proportion of our pupils require additional support in school to enable them to reach their full potential.

Quality first teaching for all pupils, is at the heart of our approach in supporting all learners. This means that the attainment and progress of all pupils (disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils) will be sustained and improved. Particular focus will be provided on areas in which disadvantaged pupils require the most support so that disadvantaged attainment gaps can be closed.

Our approach also acknowledges that emotional wellbeing is key to progress and achievements and therefore we implement Thrive[®] support across the school to support pupils in regulating their emotions and mental well-being.

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 have a voice and are given opportunities to actively participate in discussions regarding their need
- Ensure disadvantaged pupils have access to emotional support whenever needed
- Act early to intervene at the point need is identified through quality first teaching and learning as well as learning interventions
- Ensure all staff are aware of the disadvantaged pupils they work with and the targets for attainment and progress for them as an individual

Challenges

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

| Challenge number | Detail of challenge |
|------------------|---|
| 1 | Parental engagement and support for Pupil Premium children is lower than for that of non-Pupil Premium children. Parents are often unable to support their child's learning at home for a range of reasons, including high levels of EAL in the family, lack of knowledge of the expectations of the curriculum, lack of strategies and ideas to support, lack of access to resources at home and other health or social pressures. |
| 2 | Assessments, observations and discussions with pupils, teachers and parents indicate that emotional well-being and mental health of both pupils and parents is at an all-time low with high levels of attachment and pupils finding it difficult to regulate their emotions and conduct age-appropriate social interactions successfully. This is impacting their learning and the learning of others around them. Both parents and pupils are also showing high levels of anxiety. |
| 3 | Assessments, observations, and discussion 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. |
| 4 | Phonics understanding impacting on reading outcomes in KS1. Pupil Premium children are less likely to pass the phonics screening test or to make enough progress by the end of year 2. The pupils typically have less access to books at home and are less likely to read with/to an adult at home on a regular basis. |
| 5 | Teacher and pupil discussions suggest that our disadvantaged pupils have a reduced life experience and less access to wider opportunities such as extra-curricular clubs. Due to reduced income and the increase in the cost-of-living PP families are less likely to take advantage of wider curriculum opportunities for their children. |
| 6 | Persistent absence among Pupil Premium pupils (21.7%) remains significantly higher than that of non-Pupil Premium peers. Contributing factors include heightened anxiety in both children and parents, limited parental capacity to ensure regular attendance, and a tendency to keep children home for minor ailments such as headaches or colds. Health-related concerns may be exacerbated by poor nutrition, leading to lower immunity and increased illness frequency. These patterns not only disrupt continuity of learning but also compound existing attainment gaps. Addressing this challenge requires a multi-faceted approach, including targeted family engagement, attendance mentoring, and proactive health and wellbeing support to reduce barriers to consistent school attendance. |
| 7 | A significant proportion of our Pupil Premium cohort (54.7%) also have identified SEND, creating a 'Double Disadvantaged' group. Nearly one in five pupils within this group (19.44%) present with multiple SEND needs, adding further complexity to their learning profiles. These pupils often experience compounded barriers, including difficulties with communication, cognition, and emotional regulation, which significantly impact progress and engagement. The dual vulnerability of disadvantage and SEND increases the need for bespoke interventions, specialist staff input, and additional resources to ensure equitable access to the curriculum. This overlap also heightens risks of social isolation, reduced confidence, and persistent absence, placing considerable pressure on both teaching and pastoral systems within the school. |

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 well-being for all pupils enabling them to regulate their emotions, improve their mental health and develop their socialising skills to enable to access learning and enable themselves and others around them to learn | Thrive [®] to remain integrated into our whole school ethos with classroom staff engaging in regular Thrive [®] activities, Therapeutic Teaching approaches and Zones of Regulation displays to identify and support children before dysregulation occurs. Thrive [®] and Bonnie, our Dog Mentor, to be readily available to all pupils when they are not able to regulate or need some further support or a safe space to discuss emotions and problems. Pupils are then able to re-engage with learning and social experiences with minimal disruptions for themselves and others around them. |
| Improved learning outcomes for pupils enabling them to achieve their full potential | <p>Leaders will ensure teachers have access to high quality CPD so that they are able to consistently offer quality first teaching and learning. Learning Support Practitioners will receive CPD so they are able to provide additional, research-based interventions to enable the best outcomes for pupils without denying them wider curriculum experiences.</p> <p>Children who are double disadvantaged or persistently absent will be making progress in line with their peers as they are keen to be in school due to their emotional and educational needs being met.</p> |
| Improved parental support and engagement for pupil's learning outside of school | The school will provide a wide range of opportunities for parents to engage in school life. This will support with relationship building, reduce fear from parents stemming from their own school experiences and enable them to gain a strong understanding of what their children are learning. The school will also offer parental workshops run by the teaching team to support parental engagement and confidence in supporting learning outside of school. Support materials to be readily available on the school website for parents to access at convenient times to them. |
| Improved access to a wider range of clubs and extra curriculum learning experiences | Full support with payment for school trips and visits as well as free access to one extra-curricular activity of choice per term including sport, arts and technology. |

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: £41,780

| Activity | Evidence that supports this approach | Challenge number(s) addressed |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| <p>CPD – access to National college training modules and seminars and HfL /additional ad hoc training (£1,170 + £6,602)</p> <p>Teacher Development Lead (£3,527)</p> <p>PPA teacher and Additional support staff in EYFS (£30,481) (70% staffing)</p> | <p>High-quality teaching is the most significant factor in improving outcomes for all pupils, including those eligible for the Pupil Premium. Research from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) consistently shows that effective professional development for teachers leads to better classroom practice and improved attainment, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. The EPI review on professional development found that sustained, high-quality CPD has an impact on pupil progress comparable to major structural reforms, while also supporting teacher retention. Investing in CPD ensures that teachers have the skills and strategies to deliver excellent teaching, which is the single most effective</p> <p>EPI: Evidence review on high-quality professional development EEF - Effective Professional Development PPIW Report - Role of CPD in Closing the Attainment</p> <p>Research consistently shows that teacher retention is strongly linked to workload, well-being, and access to support. Investing in a PPA teacher to allow for flexible working for teachers and deploying additional support staff can significantly reduce administrative and pastoral burdens, enabling teachers to focus on high-quality teaching and maintain a healthier work-life balance.</p> <p>Do TAs improve pupils outcomes in mainstream schools? Link to research about teacher wellbeing</p> | <p>3, 4, 5, 6 & 7</p> |

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

Budgeted cost: £44,466

| Activity | Evidence that supports this approach | Challenge number(s) addressed |
|---|--|-------------------------------|
| Bespoke Maths Tutoring for children in KS2 on a weekly basis £5,000 | Research by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and National Foundation for Educational Research shows that individual tuition builds pupils' confidence and provides opportunities for staff to identify areas requiring specialist support. Many pupils find that tutoring offers a safe space to talk about concepts they have struggled with in the classroom. Research into affordable primary tuition found that pupils who received tuition made +5 months additional progress. Link to the EEF One to One Tuition Evidence | 1 & 3 |
| Counselling and Play Therapy sessions for those in receipt of PPG who have had significant ACEs affecting their engagement in learning and with their peers £5,323 (cost of 3 children receiving weekly sessions across the course of the academic year) | Children need to be given opportunities to express and understand their experiences in a safe and non-judgemental environment with a trained and trusted adult. Link to Safe Space Counselling Link to Buttercup Play Therapy | 1 & 2 |
| Provide targeted interventions to pupils within the classroom £34,143 (cost of 15 LSPs delivering one afternoon per week of interventions) | Targeted deployment, where learning support practitioners are trained to deliver an intervention to small groups or individuals have a higher impact. Link to the EEF Teaching Assistant Interventions Teaching and Learning Toolkit | 1,3 & 4 |

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

Budgeted cost: £59,194

| Activity | Evidence that supports this approach | Challenge number(s) addressed |
|--|---|-------------------------------|
| Access to one paid extra-curricular activity per term of the academic year for pupils in receipt of PPG £2,000 (cost of 96 children completing one club per week, per term) | Research shows too many young people from disadvantaged backgrounds never get the chance to undertake extra-curricular activities. As a result, they lose out on the benefits – increased confidence which helps social interaction, a real aspiration to go onto higher or further education, more soft skills and a sense of wellbeing and belonging. Link to Social Mobility Commission documentation about Extra Curricular Activities | 1,2, 5 & 6 |

| | | |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| <p>Thrive Approach to be used for individually identified children as well as a whole school approach in all classrooms</p> <p>£37,800 (cost of accreditation, license, 80% staffing and CPD for the year)</p> | <p>Schools using the Thrive Approach report benefits including fewer disruptions in class, reduced exclusions and improved academic results. It enables pupil's needs to be better understood and met.</p> <p>Link to the Thrive Approach</p> | <p>1, 2, 5, 6 & 7</p> |
| <p>Wide range of Parent Workshops and events on offer to increase parental engagement and support for learning outside of school</p> <p>£0</p> | <p>Parental engagement has a positive impact on average of 4 months' additional progress.</p> <p>Link to the EEF Parental Engagement Teaching and Learning Toolkit</p> | <p>1, 2, 3 & 4</p> |
| <p>Access to Welwyn and Hatfield local schools partnership</p> <p>£2,586.00.</p> | <p>Membership of the local schools partnership will enable our school to provide families with access to a wide range of specialist services, including mental health support, parenting assistance, and SEND resources. Research from the Education Endowment Foundation and Public Health England demonstrates that addressing these non-academic barriers is essential for improving attendance, engagement, and attainment among disadvantaged pupils. By signposting families to expert support, we strengthen parental capacity and create a stable environment for learning.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/supporting-parents Wellbeing - why it matters to health summary of key points https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/poverty-and-education</p> | <p>1, 2, 5, 6, 7</p> |
| <p>full funding of school trips for pupils in receipt of PPG each academic year</p> <p>£11,108</p> | <p>Research shows too many young people from disadvantaged backgrounds never get the chance to undertake extra-curricular activities. As a result, they lose out on the benefits – increased confidence which helps social interaction, a real aspiration to go onto higher or further education, more soft skills and a sense of wellbeing and belonging.</p> <p>Link to Social Mobility Commission documentation about Extra Curricular Activities</p> | <p>2 & 5</p> |
| <p>Purchase of two pieces of school uniform per academic year, a blazer for each Pupil Premium pupil entering UKS2 and a backpack for each YR commencing at HCFS.</p> <p>£3,000</p> | <p>Being able to wear your full school uniform brings a sense of pride, can improve behaviour and well-being. Not all families in receipt of PPG can afford to purchase the full school uniform for their child, despite the new law brought in in 2021 to make uniforms more affordable for families which mean pupils could be vulnerable to losing a sense of belonging to the school community.</p> <p>Link to benefits of school uniform Link to school uniform guidance</p> | <p>1, 2 & 5</p> |
| <p>Access to an enrichment activity relating to the arts at Christmas time</p> | <p>Research shows too many young people from disadvantaged backgrounds never get the chance to undertake extra-curricular activities. As a result, they lose out on the benefits – increased confidence which helps social interaction, a real aspiration to go</p> | <p>2 & 5</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|---------------------|
| <p>£700 (cost of pantomime for Y2, Y3, Y4)</p> | <p>onto higher or further education, more soft skills and a sense of wellbeing and belonging.</p> <p>Link to Social Mobility Commission documentation about Extra Curricular Activities</p> | |
| <p>Animals in school</p> <p>£2,000 (cost of Dog Mentor training and fish tank maintenance)</p> | <p>Research shows are many benefits to having animals in school, including: a calming effect on pupils, particularly those with behavioural or learning difficulties. improved behaviour and concentration, reduced stress, willingness to come to school and improved self-esteem. encouraging expression and participation in more withdrawn children.</p> <p>Link to The Dog Mentor</p> <p>Link to Pets in School</p> | <p>2, 3 & 5</p> |

Total budgeted cost: £145,440.00

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Development of a language rich curriculum and environment in EYFS

81% of the cohort achieved GLD (Up from 65% from previous year). 96.6% of the cohort achieved the expected level in listening, attention and understanding (up from 78.3%). 89.7% of the cohort reached the expected level in speaking (up from 76.7%). These numbers are significantly higher than the previous year even though the baselines of children on entry were equally as low and SEN need at a similar level.

Thrive Approach (Accreditation and License, Staffing and CPD) to be used for individually identified children as well as a whole school approach in all classrooms

Approx. 61 children have benefited from this provision over the course of the year. Improved mental health, attitudes and behaviours have been observed with the vast majority of children who attend Thrive. Parents of children receiving more targeted Thrive support are working more confidently in unison with the school as the Thrive team have worked hard to build relationships with the community. Thrive continue to hold various successful family-focused events which are received well by the children and parents.

- **Access to one paid extra-curricular activity per term of the academic year for pupils in receipt of PPG**
- **Full funding of school trips for pupils in receipt of PPG each academic year**
- **Purchase of two pieces of school uniform per academic year as well as a blazer for each pupil entering UKS2 and a backpack for each YR commencing their learning journey at HCFS**

Financial support for clubs, trips and uniform ensured that PPG children were not impacted financially for these costs. The children having the opportunity to attend an extra-curricular club of their choosing also helps develop their character (building confidence, resilience and independence) and discover new interests/talents.

Access to an enrichment activities such as pantomimes, sports competitions and workshops

Providing these activities has had many benefits. Firstly, many children had never had these experiences before and brought much joy, supporting mental health developed new interests in the children. Ensuring all children were able to participate in such enriching activities also benefitted attendance as children did not want to miss out.

Externally provided programmes

| Programme | Provider |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Thrive | The Thrive Approach |
| Counselling | Safe Space |
| Play Therapy | Buttercup Play Therapy |
| 1:1 Maths Tutoring | Third Space Learning |

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

| |
|--|
| <i>For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information: How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year</i> |
| N/A |
| The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils |
| N/A |