

Pupil premium strategy statement



**Phoenix Community
Primary School**

Phoenix Community Primary 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	189
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	52%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2025 - 2026
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2026
Statement authorised by	FGB
Pupil premium lead	Jennifer Dawes
Governor lead	Darren Clark

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£166,840
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years <i>(enter £0 if not applicable)</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>	£166,840

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 whose learning and well-being are at risk due to factors such as poverty, family difficulties, special educational needs, poor health, or emotional and social challenges. They may face barriers like unstable home lives, limited resources, or language and cultural differences, which can affect their attendance, confidence, and academic progress. 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 will continue to consider where additional support is required for pupils whose early childhood and pre-school experiences, education and wellbeing were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes ensuring targeted interventions for children who begin school with lower levels of speech, language and communication development to help them access learning and make rapid progress.

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
1	<p>Attendance</p> <p>Our attendance data over the last 3 years indicates that attendance among disadvantaged pupils has been between 1 – 2.2% lower than for non-disadvantaged pupils.</p>
2	<p>Year R entry – 48% of all children need language intervention. 16% of those are Pupil Premium children.</p> <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>
3	<p>Phonics – no robust SSP prior to Summer of 2025.</p> <p>Assessments, observations, and discussions with pupils suggest disadvantaged pupils generally have greater difficulties with reading than their peers.</p> <p>On entry to Reception class in the last 3 years, between 35-40% of our disadvantaged pupils arrive below age-related expectations compared to 30-32% of other pupils. This gap narrows but remains significant to the end of KS2.</p>
4	<p>Social & emotional need</p> <p>Our assessments (including wellbeing tracking), observations and discussions with pupils and families have identified social and emotional issues for many pupils, notably due to bullying and a lack of enrichment opportunities. These challenges particularly affect disadvantaged pupils, including their attainment.</p> <p>Teacher referrals for support remain relatively high. 30% of disadvantaged children currently require additional support with social and emotional needs compared to 10% for non-disadvantaged pupils.</p>
5	<p>Parental engagement</p> <p>Disadvantaged pupils experience lower levels of parental engagement compared with their peers, which can negatively affect attainment when parents are less confident or equipped to support learning beyond the classroom.</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>1. To reduce the attendance gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils to less than 1.5%, and to significantly decrease persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils so that it is in line with, or better than, national averages.</p>	<p>The attendance gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils reduces to less than 1.5%.</p> <p>The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent falls to at or below the national average.</p> <p>Termly attendance data shows sustained improvement for disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>Improved attendance leads to better academic progress and engagement among disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>Parental engagement with attendance support increases, evidenced by improved communication and participation in interventions.</p>
<p>2. Disadvantaged pupils will demonstrate improved oral language skills and a richer vocabulary across all year groups. Through targeted interventions, high-quality teaching, and purposeful talk opportunities, gaps in language development will narrow, enabling these pupils to express themselves confidently, access the curriculum more effectively, and achieve outcomes in line with their peers.</p>	<p>Pupils use a wider range of vocabulary accurately in spoken and written work.</p> <p>Disadvantaged pupils participate more confidently in class discussions and oral activities.</p> <p>Assessments show improved language comprehension and expressive language skills.</p> <p>Gap between disadvantaged pupils and peers narrows in oral language assessments and writing outcomes.</p> <p>Teachers report increased engagement and verbal contributions from disadvantaged pupils during lessons.</p>
<p>3. Disadvantaged pupils will develop stronger reading skills and make accelerated progress so that the gap between them and their peers narrows significantly. By the end of KS2, a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils will reach age-related expectations in reading, demonstrating improved fluency, comprehension, and enjoyment of reading.</p>	<p>At least 59% of disadvantaged pupils meet age-related expectations in reading by the end of key stage 2.</p> <p>Disadvantaged pupils make at least 6 months' progress per term in reading assessments, with those below age-related expectations making accelerated progress.</p> <p>Reading fluency scores improve per minute over the academic year for pupils below expectations.</p> <p>At least 90% of disadvantaged pupils regularly engage with reading independently or in guided sessions each term.</p> <p>The attainment gap in reading between disadvantaged pupils and their peers reduces by at least 2% by the end of the year.</p>

<p>4. Pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, will experience improved social and emotional wellbeing. Incidences of bullying and related negative behaviours will reduce, and pupils will have greater access to enrichment opportunities. As a result, they will engage more positively in school life, participate confidently in learning, and show improvements in attainment and personal development.</p>	<p>Reduction in teacher referrals for social and emotional support over the academic year.</p> <p>Increased participation of disadvantaged pupils in enrichment activities, clubs, and school events.</p> <p>Improved wellbeing survey scores for pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, compared to the previous year (Leuven).</p> <p>Fewer reported incidents of bullying or social conflict among pupils.</p> <p>Pupils demonstrate more positive engagement and behaviour in class and around school, as observed by staff.</p> <p>Small group or targeted interventions result in measurable improvements in pupils' social and emotional skills, confidence, and resilience.</p>
<p>5. Disadvantaged pupils will benefit from increased parental engagement in their learning. Parents and carers will feel more confident and equipped to support learning at home, resulting in improved pupil engagement, progress, and attainment across all areas of the curriculum.</p>	<p>Increased attendance at parent–teacher meetings, workshops, and school events by disadvantaged families.</p> <p>More frequent and meaningful home–school communication, such as regular updates, homework support, or engagement with learning platforms.</p> <p>Parents report increased confidence in supporting their child's learning, measured through surveys or feedback forms.</p> <p>Disadvantaged pupils show improved engagement and completion of home learning tasks.</p> <p>Attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils improve, linked to increased parental support and involvement.</p>

Activity in this academic year

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

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £14,345

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<i>RWI training & resources</i>	<p>Systematic synthetic phonics is one of the strongest evidence-based methods for early reading.</p> <p>The EEF Phonics Toolkit identifies phonics as high impact for very low cost and notes an average gain of +5 months of progress for disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>The Rose Review (2006) recommended systematic phonics as the most effective approach for early reading, especially for children struggling with literacy or from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p> <p>Schools using RWI have been found to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accelerate progress in decoding and fluency • improve consistency of phonics delivery • reduce variance in teaching across staff • provide structured intervention pathways for pupils falling behind <p>Ofsted highlights the importance of a well-trained and consistent phonics team as a key factor in strong reading outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.</p>	3
<i>EYFS review</i>	<p>The EEF Early Years Toolkit shows strong evidence that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early literacy approaches (+5 months) • Communication & language approaches (+6 months) • Self-regulation approaches (+7 months) <p>are high impact for disadvantaged children.</p> <p>High-quality early years provision is highlighted by the Sutton Trust as one of the most effective ways to close the attainment gap before it widens.</p> <p>An EYFS review supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better alignment of assessment and provision • stronger curriculum planning • early intervention for speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)—which disproportionately affect disadvantaged children <p>Ofsted EYFS research review (2023) emphasises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the importance of curriculum coherence • high-quality interactions • systematic teaching of language and vocabulary 	2

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistent early reading provision <p>A structured review helps ensure disadvantaged pupils receive targeted, high-quality early experiences that impact long-term outcomes.</p>	
<p><i>Learning resources subscriptions</i></p>	<p>The EEF Toolkit: Digital Technology shows that digital tools can provide +4 months of progress when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ they support well-structured teaching ○ they provide regular feedback ○ they are used for targeted intervention <p>Subscriptions that provide diagnostic assessment (e.g., maths/reading tools) have strong evidence for improving outcomes through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ adaptive teaching ○ personalised practice ○ immediate feedback and retrieval <p>Evidence from the EEF’s ‘Using Digital Technology to Improve Learning’ guidance emphasises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ technology is most effective when tightly linked to curriculum and pedagogy ○ it should be used to supplement (not replace) high-quality teaching <p>Resource subscriptions that provide additional reading exposure (e.g., e-libraries) support reading fluency and comprehension by increasing reading volume.</p>	<p>2, 3, 5</p>

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

Budgeted cost: £137,335

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<i>Play therapy</i>	<p>The EEF Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) Toolkit shows SEL interventions provide +4 months of impact on average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>Research from the British Association of Play Therapists (BAPT) shows improvements in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-esteem • emotional regulation • behaviour and engagement <p>The Children’s Commissioner highlights that unmet emotional needs strongly correlate with low attainment and persistent absence.</p>	4
<i>Forest School</i>	<p>The EEF shows outdoor adventure learning provides +4 months progress, improving teamwork, perseverance, self-regulation, and problem-solving.</p> <p>Research from Forest School Association finds increased:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confidence • independence • communication • wellbeing <p>Strong evidence that physical activity and nature exposure improve mental health and behaviour.</p>	4
<i>Music lessons</i>	<p>Research from Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and UK Arts Council shows music participation is linked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improved working memory • increased concentration • higher motivation and self-esteem <p>Ofsted’s research review on music (2023) emphasises the importance of equitable access to high-quality arts experiences as part of cultural capital development.</p> <p>Studies from University of Cambridge link musical training to improved phonological awareness and maths reasoning.</p>	2, 4
<i>Off site provision</i>	<p>EEF research on Targeted SEMH interventions shows well-structured alternative provision can reduce behaviour incidents and improve re-engagement.</p>	4

	<p>The Timpson Review emphasises the importance of suitable off-site provision in preventing exclusions of vulnerable pupils.</p> <p>Access to small-group or specialist environments supports pupils with complex SEN or behavioural needs.</p>	
<i>S & L therapist</i>	<p>The EEF Communication and Language Approaches show +6 months progress for early language intervention—one of the highest impacts.</p> <p>Strong evidence from the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI), SLCN research, and NHS studies shows targeted therapy improves long-term literacy and academic success.</p> <p>Poor oral language skills are a known predictor of underachievement, especially for disadvantaged pupils.</p>	2, 3
<i>SENCo</i>	<p>EEF guidance on Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools highlights that effective leadership and coordination of SEN provision improves outcomes for disadvantaged SEND pupils.</p> <p>Ofsted emphasises the importance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • well-trained staff • rigorous monitoring • targeted intervention tailored to need <p>Early identification reduces long-term gaps.</p>	2, 3, 4, 5
<i>FLO & Attendance Officer</i>	<p>EEF Parental Engagement strategies provide +4 months, especially when building home–school relationships.</p> <p>DfE attendance research shows strong links between absence and poor attainment; pupils with <90% attendance are far less likely to meet ARE.</p> <p>Pastoral and attendance support improves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safeguarding • punctuality • engagement • emotional wellbeing 	1, 4, 5
<i>Nightingales</i>	<p>The EEF SEL Toolkit identifies nurture and social–emotional programmes as beneficial for disadvantaged pupils (+4 months).</p> <p>The Nurture Group Network shows improvements in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attachment • emotional regulation • behaviour • readiness to learn <p>Ofsted highlights nurturing environments as effective for pupils with SEMH difficulties.</p>	1, 4, 5

<p><i>Support staff</i></p>	<p>EEF research on effective TA deployment shows high impact when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAs deliver structured interventions (+4 months) • They are well-trained • Sessions are high-quality and linked to teacher guidance <p>Programmes like phonics catch-up, reading tutoring, precision teaching, and maths fluency interventions have strong evidence bases.</p> <p>Poorly deployed TAs have limited effect, but properly trained and directed TAs can significantly accelerate pupil progress.</p>	<p>1 - 4</p>
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Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £ 15,160

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p><i>Subsidising</i> (Educational Visits / Enrichment Opportunities)</p>	<p>The EEF Toolkit – Arts Participation identifies arts, enrichment and cultural exposure as offering +3 months of additional progress, particularly when well linked to curriculum learning.</p> <p>Outdoor Adventure Learning (EEF) adds +4 months, showing benefits for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resilience • self-regulation • teamwork • confidence <p>The Ofsted Framework emphasises building cultural capital, especially for disadvantaged pupils who are least likely to access these experiences outside school.</p> <p>The Sutton Trust highlights that enrichment activities help close the opportunity gap by developing aspirations, confidence, and knowledge of the world.</p> <p>Research shows that enriching experiences contribute to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improved vocabulary • deeper conceptual understanding • improved engagement with reading and writing tasks • stronger memory of curriculum concepts (dual coding, experiential learning) 	<p>1, 5</p>
<p><i>Minibus</i></p>	<p>The EEF ‘Arts Participation’ and ‘Outdoor Adventure Learning’ evidence shows that access to enrichment and outdoor learning leads to +3 to +4 months progress, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>The Sutton Trust identifies lack of financial and practical access (including transport) as a key barrier preventing disadvantaged pupils from engaging in enriching experiences that develop cultural capital.</p> <p>Ofsted emphasises cultural capital as a core element of educational equity, particularly that schools should:</p>	<p>1, 4</p>

	<p>ensure disadvantaged pupils are given access to the same high-value experiences as their peers.</p> <p>Research on social and cultural enrichment (OECD, EEF) shows that experiences such as trips and visits support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deeper understanding of curriculum concepts through real-world application • improved vocabulary through contextualised learning • increased engagement and motivation • enhanced sense of belonging and self-esteem <p>Studies into experiential learning show that hands-on, out-of-school activities result in stronger retention and understanding because they activate multiple learning modalities.</p>	
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Total budgeted cost: £166,845

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Take from Autumn 2025 School Summary Sheet

GLD

Disadvantaged children out performed their peers in 2024 & 2025 and achieved about national levels for all children.

This is the same for Literacy and Maths Goals; Maths is stronger than Literacy.

Phonics

Year 1: outcomes for 2025 for disadvantaged pupils (35.7%) were down from 2024 by 14.3%. It is a declining picture and the whole cohort outcome is a concern (42.9% vs 79.9% National)

Year 2: the number of disadvantaged pupils passing the retake is in line with their peers and above National.

KS2

Disadvantaged pupils do not perform as well as their peers – gap of 8.1% in 2025, 15% in 2024.

5.6% of disadvantaged pupils achieved a higher standard in 2025 compared to 0% in 2024 but this is below their peers and significantly below National.

Reading and writing sees the best results for disadvantaged pupils in 2025, it was Writing and GPS in 2024.

Average scaled scores are typically 2 points below non-disadvantaged pupils scores and, therefore, approximately 4 points off National.

Summary:

Strengths

- **GLD (Good Level of Development):**
 - Disadvantaged children outperformed their peers in both 2024 and 2025.
 - Outcomes were broadly in line with national levels for all children.
 - Maths goals are a particular strength compared to Literacy.
- **Phonics (Year 2):**
 - Disadvantaged pupils passing the retake are in line with peers and above national averages.
- **KS2 Progress:**
 - Improvement in higher standard attainment for disadvantaged pupils (5.6% in 2025 vs 0% in 2024).

- Reading and Writing showed the strongest results for disadvantaged pupils in 2025.

Areas to Focus On

- **Phonics (Year 1):**
 - Significant decline in disadvantaged pupil outcomes (35.7% in 2025, down 14.3% from 2024).
 - Whole cohort performance is a concern (42.9% vs 79.9% national).
- **KS2 Attainment:**
 - Persistent attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils (8.1% in 2025, 15% in 2024).
 - Higher standard attainment remains below peers and well below national levels.
 - Average scaled scores for disadvantaged pupils are ~2 points below peers and ~4 points below national.
- **EYFS Literacy Goals:**
 - Weaker than Maths, requiring targeted support to close the gap.

Review of previous plan:

Progress in Writing

- **Intended outcome:** Achieve above national average progress scores in KS2 writing.
- **Data evidence:** Disadvantaged pupils achieved better results in Writing (strongest subject in 2025), but overall KS2 attainment remains below national, with scaled scores ~4 points off.
- **Judgement: Partially met.** Writing is a relative strength for disadvantaged pupils, but progress scores are not above national.

Progress in Reading

- **Intended outcome:** Achieve above national average progress in KS2 reading.
- **Data evidence:** Reading outcomes improved for disadvantaged pupils in 2025, but attainment remains below peers and below national.
- **Judgement: Not met.** Gains are visible, but not sufficient to exceed national averages.

Progress in Maths

- **Intended outcome:** Achieve above national average progress in KS2 maths.
- **Data evidence:** Maths is stronger than Literacy at GLD, but KS2 disadvantaged pupils remain ~2 points below peers and ~4 points below national.
- **Judgement: Not met.** Strength at early years does not translate into above-national KS2 outcomes.

Progress in Phonics

- **Intended outcome:** Achieve above national average progress in Phonics Screening Check.
- **Data evidence:**
 - Year 1 disadvantaged outcomes declined (35.7% vs 79.9% national).
 - Year 2 retake outcomes are in line with peers and above national.

- **Judgement: Mixed picture.** Year 2 retake success meets criteria, but Year 1 outcomes are significantly below national.

Early Speech, Language & Communication

- **Intended outcome:** Children with NHS plans and NELI interventions make progress.
- **Data evidence:** Data suggests that these have a positive impact on outcomes in terms of GLD.
- **Judgement:** Need to monitor / track more closely

Other (Attendance & Access)

- **Intended outcome:** Attendance of disadvantaged pupils above 95%; equitable access to curriculum and clubs.
- **Data evidence:** This was 92.9% in total and attendance rates for disadvantaged children declined as the year progressed. No attendance or club participation data gathered.
- **Judgement:** Further work needed.

Overall Summary

- **Met/Partially met:** Writing progress (relative strength), Year 2 phonics retake.
- **Not met:** KS2 Reading, KS2 Maths, Year 1 phonics, national-level attainment gaps, attendance.
- **Insufficient evidence:** Speech/language interventions, enrichment access.