

## 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	Hillcrest Early Years Academy
Number of pupils in school	217 (0-7 year olds) 148 (Reception – Year 2)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	52.4%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers ( <b>3 year plans are recommended</b> )	2024-25 2025-26 2026-27
Date this statement was published	September 2024
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2026
Statement authorised by	Samantha Stokes (Headteacher) & Lewis Commander (Acting Headteacher)
Pupil premium lead	Samantha Stokes (Headteacher) & Lewis Commander (Acting Headteacher)
Governor / Trustee lead	Lead for Pupil Premium

### Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£ 115,140
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£ 0
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b>	<b>£115,140</b>

## Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

### Statement of intent

At Hillcrest Early Years Academy, our intention is that all children, irrespective of background, ability or the challenges they face, achieve well and make good progress across all subject areas. At the heart of everything we do is the holistic approach we pride ourselves on – a focus on both childrens' positive wellbeing and disposition for learning are absolutely key to their success and is supported at every possible level.

Rooted within our approach is the consideration of challenges faced by vulnerable children such as those who have or have previously had a social worker, Young Carers or children who are in Local Authority Care – the strategy outlined in this statement is intended to support the needs of all children regardless of whether they are disadvantaged or not.

High-quality teaching is the key driver for our Academy and our children, 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 Academy.

Our strategy is also integral to wider school plans for education recovery, notably in its targeted support around Phonics and Early Reading.

Our strategy will be both proactive in identifying common challenges, responsive to individual needs and based upon robust assessment. The approaches we have implemented have been based upon research which has been carefully selected to ensure it is appropriate for meeting the specific and diverse needs of our children.

To ensure these approaches are effective we will adopt a whole- school approach in which all staff take responsibility for the outcomes for disadvantaged children, early identification of need and all will be aspirational for what can be achieved.

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p><b>Speech and language:</b> Many children who start our school have poor expressive and receptive language below or well below what is expected for their age. This means they may find it difficult to understand simple instructions or to answer simple questions. They cannot communicate their needs verbally. This is a significant barrier to accessing the curriculum.</p> <p>Poor letter sound articulation skills impact significantly on their reading and writing ability and their ability to apply the phonic skills they have been taught.</p> <p>In the EYFS, poor speech and language is also a social barrier to learning.</p>
2	<p><b>Social Skills, confidence and learning behaviours:</b> Some of our disadvantaged children have limited pre-school experiences and find it difficult to mix socially in group or whole class work. Learning confidence can be low and we have to develop this to enable them to have a secure disposition for learning.</p>
3	<p><b>Attendance and punctuality:</b> Some of our disadvantaged children have less than satisfactory attendance or a number of late arrivals resulting in persistent lateness. Our persistent absenteeism is above that of national and this impacts on their learning over time due to them missing sessions regularly. Although the attendance gap is closing, absence and persistent absenteeism outcomes remain higher than national.</p>
4	<p><b>Limited cultural capital and enrichment experiences:</b> Many pupils lack of cultural capital limits their educational experience, vocabulary and understanding.</p>
5	<p><b>Wellbeing concerns:</b> Some of our disadvantaged children have a level of wellbeing concern. This can cause anxiety, worry and emotional difficulties as the children cannot engage in their learning when their emotional well-being is affected. We have a high percentage of children who are open to children's services which negatively impacts on their wellbeing. Locality issues for our Academy are substance misuse and Domestic Violence and as a result, some of our children are exposed to this and require wellbeing support to further support their needs.</p>
6	<p><b>Phonics and Writing:</b> Assessments show that disadvantaged pupils generally do not achieve as well in Reading, Writing and Phonics as their peers and this therefore negatively impacts on their development as a reader and writer.</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>Improved receptive and expressive language and clarity of speech sound production amongst disadvantaged children. To close the vocabulary gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.</p>	<p>Assessments and observations indicate significantly improved receptive and expressive language amongst disadvantaged pupils (Wellcomm &amp; SALT sessions)</p> <p>Assessments and observations indicate significantly improved clarity of speech-sound production amongst disadvantaged pupils. (Wellcomm &amp; SALT sessions)</p> <p>This is evident when triangulated with other sources of evidence, including engagement in lessons, book scrutiny and ongoing formative assessment.</p> <p>Children demonstrate a wider vocabulary and communication and language/Listening, Attention and Understanding outcomes are strong and in line with national – where this is not the case, gaps are closing.</p>
<p>Improved social skills, confidence and emotional literacy of the children enables them to have secure disposition for learning.</p>	<p>The Gem Project is firmly embedded across the Academy and children can clearly articulate and demonstrate positive behaviours for learning.</p> <p>Children show a wider range of social skills such as turn taking.</p> <p>Children show an increase in confidence in their learning and willingness to challenge themselves through being able to articulate and demonstrate the Gem Project.</p> <p>Children have a better self-awareness and recognition of their feelings and know how to manage them.</p> <p>Children have all received ‘I can’t to I can’ sessions and are able to verbally talk about looping thoughts and how they are in control of changing them.</p>
<p>To achieve and sustain, improved attendance and punctuality for all children, particularly those who are disadvantaged. To reduce persistent lateness and absenteeism.</p>	<p>Significantly improved attendance from 2024/25 demonstrated by:</p> <p>The overall absence rate for all pupils being no more than 4% (Academy average around 96%) and evidence of the attendance gap between disadvantaged children and their non-disadvantaged peers being reduced.</p>

	<p>The percentage of all pupils who are persistently absent is decreasing and the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers is closing.</p> <p>The percentage of all pupils who are persistently late is decreasing and the gap between disadvantaged and their peers is closing.</p> <p>Engagement with the Local Authority and other Collaborative Partnerships is having a positive impact on attendance within the community that we serve.</p>
<p>Children have the essential knowledge and experiences to prepare them for future success. Children know and remember more because their learning is linked to rich, immersive experiences.</p>	<p>Children have wider reaching opportunities through our creative curriculum and enrichment opportunities both within and outside of school. Through exposure to enrichment opportunities within the Curriculum, children know and remember more. Children can talk positively about experiences and the Academy value of 'Memories'.</p> <p>The Academy reaches the Silver Arts Mark Award in 2024-25 for further enrichment experiences through the arts.</p>
<p>Children are equipped with the skills to recognise and begin to manage their own wellbeing and emotional literacy.</p>	<p>The self-esteem, motivation and disposition for learning will be improved for disadvantaged children. Adults including pastoral practitioners are proactive in supporting children to enable them to reach their full potential. Children will display higher levels of emotional literacy and therefore dispositions for learning.</p>
<p>Improved outcomes for Phonics, Reading and Writing.</p>	<p>Outcomes in Phonics, Reading and Writing are broadly in line with national or gaps are closing where this is not the case, particularly for disadvantaged children.</p>

## 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: £3354

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Purchase Little Wandle subscription	<p>Synthetic phonics approaches have higher impacts, on average, than analytic approaches. Phonics has a positive impact overall (+5 months) with very extensive evidence and is an important component in the development of early reading skills, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p> <p><a href="#">Phonics   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a></p>	1 and 6
CPD for staff on Oracy and Early Language Development to further improve standards in Writing.	<p>Teachers reported that pupils' oracy skills improved as a result of the pilot; assessment results also showed that pupils' oracy skills improved.</p> <p><a href="#">Voice 21: Improving Oracy - second pilot   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a></p>	1 and 6
Purchase subscriptions to curriculum areas to support children with their knowledge and retention of key learning through the use of metacognitive strategies.	<p>There are <b>impact studies</b> showing that teaching relationship skills can improve children's PSED.</p> <p><a href="#">EEF   Personal Social and Emotional Development (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a></p> <p>The implementation of metacognitive strategies shows pupils' retention of knowledge has improved.</p> <p><a href="#">EEF blog: Anchoring Curriculum Knowledge Using Metacognitive...   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a></p>	1 and 6

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

Budgeted cost: £63,459

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Targeted deployment of Teaching Assistants who are trained to deliver interventions	<p>The average impact of the deployment of teaching assistants is about an additional four months' progress over the course of a year.</p> <p><a href="https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/teaching-assistant-interventions">Teaching Assistant Interventions   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a></p>	1, 2 and 6

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

Budgeted cost: £ 48,327

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Continued employment of Attendance Lead to support with increasing parental engagement through a personalised approach and reduce absence and persistent absenteeism.</p> <p>Attendance CPD for Attendance Lead.</p> <p>Insight tracking system purchased to track and monitor attendance .</p>	<p>Increasing parental engagement shows evidence of promise with raising attendance.</p> <p><a href="https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/new-evidence-review-finds-sending-personalised-letters-or-eeef">New: Evidence review finds sending personalised letters or...   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a></p> <p>Personalised approaches to improving attendance through differing and bespoke communication.</p> <p><a href="https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/eeef-blog-taking-a-tailored-approach-to-improving-attendance-eeef">EEF blog: Taking a tailored approach to improving attendance   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a></p>	1, 2, 4 and 6
<p>Participation in the National School Breakfast Programme.</p> <p>Employment of staff to provide Breakfast Clubs.</p>	<p>An impact evaluation of the National School Breakfast programme found that offering pupils in primary schools a free and nutritious meal before school can boost their reading, writing, and maths attainment by an average of two months' additional progress in Key Stage 1.</p> <p><a href="https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/national-school-breakfast-programme-eeef">National School Breakfast Programme   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a></p>	1, 3, 5 and 6

<p>Annual leasing of new Ipads to use digital technology to enhance learning.</p>	<p>Technology has the potential to increase the quality and quantity of practice that pupils undertake, both inside and outside of the classroom.</p> <p><a href="http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk">Using Digital Technology to Improve Learning   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a></p>	<p>1, 4 and 6</p>
<p>Ensuring opportunities and resources for enrichment to the Curriculum which provide rich and memorable experiences for children. Engagement in the Arts Mark Project.</p>	<p>There is evidence that character / essential life skills in childhood are associated with a range of positive outcomes at school and beyond.</p> <p><a href="http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk">Life skills and enrichment   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a></p> <p><a href="http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk">Arts participation   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a></p>	<p>2 and 4</p>

**Total budgeted cost: £115,140**

## Review of Expenditure 2024-25 - Teaching

Action	Desired outcome	Impact: Did you meet the success criteria? Include impact on pupils not eligible for PP, if appropriate.	Next steps for 2025-26	Cost
Purchase Little Wandle resources to ensure consistency and fidelity to this scheme (ongoing).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children make rapid progress in Phonics</li> <li>- Gaps are closing against national for the Phonics Screening Check</li> <li>- Children make rapid progress in Reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Following English Hub Audit, outcomes showed that the quality of teaching is consistently of a very high standard.</li> <li>- Children have made rapid progress:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2021-22, 50% of children achieved the pass mark for Phonics Screening</li> <li>- 2022-23, 68.4% of children achieved the pass mark for Phonics Screening</li> <li>- 2023-24, 86.2% of children achieved the pass mark for Phonics Screening</li> <li>- 2025-25, 75% of children achieved the pass mark for the Phonics Screening</li> </ul> </li> <li>- 80% of non-PP children passed the PSC compared with 68% of PP children – this gap has closed considerably and PP children broadly achieve in line with non-PP children.</li> <li>- Due to the implementation of the SEND Little Wandle Phonics, children who are PP/non-PP SEND have made good progress from starting points.</li> <li>- Of Year 2 children, 93% of children passed the Phonics Screening. 93% of PP children passed compared with 100% of non-PP children. Every effort will be made to ensure that the gap is closing between Y2 PP/non-PP children in 2025-26</li> </ul>	<p>Begin 'Exemplar' school journey.</p> <p>Further develop and embed the Reading Culture as an SDP priority for 2025-26 to further develop a love of reading across the Academy.</p> <p>Continue with use of Little Wandle SEN resources and programme to support children with SEN.</p>	£2000
CPD for staff on Oracy and Early Language Development to further improve standards in Writing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children make rapid progress in writing</li> <li>- Gaps are closing against national for writing</li> <li>- Writing has a higher profile across the academy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gaps have closed significantly across the Academy in writing and in KS1, outcomes are 20% higher in 2023-24 than in 2022-23 (50% compared with 30% in 2022-23)</li> <li>- At the end of the Academic year 2024-25 writing outcomes at the end of KS1 are 57% showing a further closing of the gap on national standards.</li> <li>- Recent feedback from Literacy consultant saw strong practice across the Academy and vast improvements in the Quality of Teaching and expectations of children which will therefore impact positively on outcomes in 2024-25.</li> </ul>	Oracy and Early Language Development to continue as a SDP priority for 2025-26 to ensure gaps are closing even further in writing across EYFS and KS1 for all pupils.	£2000

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 745 of children in the EYFS achieved the expected outcome for writing in 2024-25. Of those, 56% of PP children achieved the writing expectations compared to 86% of non PP children. This is an area of focus on the SDP priority for 2025-26.</li> </ul>	<p>Further develop writing for purpose to give children further motivation and purpose.</p> <p>Use of technology to support with the writing curriculum to overcome barriers to learning.</p>	
<p>Purchase subscriptions to curriculum areas to support children with their knowledge and retention of key learning through the use of metacognitive strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupils engage with high-quality subscription-based resources (e.g., Jigsaw, Kapow) to broaden subject knowledge and deepen understanding across curriculum areas.</li> <li>- Children demonstrate increased ability to recall and apply key learning through structured, consistent use of metacognitive strategies embedded in subscription content.</li> <li>- Pupil Premium learners show measurable progress in targeted subjects, reducing gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.</li> <li>- Pupils participate actively in lessons supported by engaging subscription resources, fostering confidence and motivation in learning.</li> <li>- Children develop independent learning habits and metacognitive skills that support long-term academic success beyond the immediate curriculum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to structured, high-quality resources ensures disadvantaged pupils receive consistent teaching aligned with national curriculum standards.</li> <li>- Increased retention of key concepts through metacognitive strategies leads to better performance in assessments.</li> <li>- Targeted use of subscriptions helps bridge gaps in knowledge and skills between Pupil Premium pupils and their peers.</li> <li>- Provides equal opportunities for enrichment activities that might otherwise be inaccessible.</li> <li>- Interactive and visually appealing content from platforms like Kapow and Jigsaw increases pupil interest and participation.</li> <li>- Pupils develop a positive attitude toward learning, improving attendance and lesson engagement.</li> <li>- Resources embed strategies such as self-reflection, planning, and evaluation, enabling pupils to become independent learners.</li> <li>- Long-term benefits include improved problem-solving and resilience in learning.</li> <li>- Teachers benefit from ready-made, high-quality lesson plans and resources, reducing workload and ensuring consistency across classes.</li> <li>- Supports staff in delivering lessons that meet diverse learning needs effectively.</li> <li>- Subscriptions often include creative and cultural elements (e.g., art, music, PSHE), enriching pupils' educational experience beyond core subjects.</li> <li>- Promotes holistic development, including social and emotional learning.</li> </ul>	<p>As a result, children are able to know and remember more and reflect back upon previous learning.</p>	£2000

## Review of Expenditure 2024-25 - Targeted academic support

<p>Targeted deployment of Teaching Assistants who are trained to deliver interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupil Premium learners make rapid and sustained progress in targeted areas (e.g., reading, writing, maths) through high-quality, evidence-based interventions delivered by trained TAs.</li> <li>- The gap between PP pupils and their peers narrows significantly in core subjects as a result of focused, structured support.</li> <li>- Pupils develop greater confidence and self-regulation skills, enabling them to access learning independently and participate fully in class.</li> <li>- Teaching Assistants deliver interventions with fidelity to research-based approaches, ensuring consistency and impact across year groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children have made good progress across all areas.</li> <li>- PP Children across the Academy made good progress but the still fall behind their non PP peers. That been said, the gaps are closing and the interventions in place are having an impact upon progress in reading, writing and maths.</li> <li>- At the end of KS1 PP children out perform their Non PP peers in writing with 56% of children meeting the expected standard compared to 44%</li> </ul>	<p>Continue with SLT next academic year.</p>	<p>£63,459</p>
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## Review of Expenditure 2024-25 - Wider strategies

<p>Continued employment of Attendance Lead to support with increasing parental engagement through a personalised approach and reduce absence and persistent absenteeism.</p> <p>Attendance CPD for Attendance Lead.</p> <p>Insight tracking system purchased to track and monitor attendance .</p>	<p>Parents engage with raising attendance.</p> <p>Attendance is raised to be in line with national averages.</p> <p>The gap for persistent absenteeism is closing.</p>	<p>The continued employment of the Attendance Lead has had a significant positive impact on attendance across the school. Her ability to build strong, trusting relationships with families—including those historically difficult to engage—has been instrumental in improving parental engagement. This proactive approach, combined with a consistent daily focus on addressing non-attendance, has been widely acknowledged by parents and has helped ensure our attendance remains broadly in line with national averages each week.</p> <p>Bi-weekly Cause for Concern meetings provide rigorous monitoring of pupils whose attendance falls below expectations, enabling timely and effective interventions. As a result, persistent absenteeism has fallen sharply from 32% to 17.1%, and overall year-to-date attendance has risen to 93.5%, compared to 93% at the start of the 2023-24 academic year.</p> <p>Notably, attendance among disadvantaged pupils (PP) stands at 92% YTD, falling behind the 95.4% recorded for non-PP pupils. This reflects the need for a continued push of targeted strategies and sustained family engagement.</p>	<p>Continue to employ and develop the role of Attendance Lead next academic year.</p> <p>Work with DfE attendance Hub/Local Authority to further improve attendance and develop consistency to maintain standards.</p>	<p>£21857</p>
<p>Continuation of the Gem Project and purchase of resources to support children in promoting positive learning behaviours through social, emotional and cognitive awareness.</p>	<p>Visible increase in positive learning behaviours across the Academy</p> <p>Restorative approach allows children to become more independent</p>	<p>There have been fewer behavioural incidents since the implementation of the Gem Project. Children are confidently articulating their learning ‘powers’ and are demonstrating these in their learning. The Gem Project is very well embedded across the academy and has become our own ‘learning language.’</p> <p>High-quality modelling of restorative conversations by all staff are becoming embedded and therefore impacting positively on the children’s mindset and subsequent choices they make.</p> <p>The implementation of the ‘Playground Gems’ has had a significant impact on the playground with children modelling how to ‘bounce back’ and ‘support others’</p>	<p>Further develop the behaviour policy to create a ‘character curriculum which links into Ofsted feedback around British Values.</p> <p>Further develop play times/lunchtimes to ensure children are displaying these behaviours and characteristics more consistently on the playground.</p>	<p>£1000</p>

Participation in the National School Breakfast Programme	Children are starting the school day ready to learn.  Improved attendance.	The uptake of the National School Breakfast Programme has been significant with up to 60 children attending each day. The impact on attendance has been significant because many 'hard to reach' families have been able to access this therefore impacting upon persistent lateness/absenteeism. This has been used as one of the actions on attendance action plans to support families to arrive at school on time each day. Persistent absenteeism has reduced from 32% to 19%.	Continue with this provision next year.	£ 2000
Ensuring opportunities for enrichment to the Curriculum which provide rich and memorable experiences for children. Engagement in the Arts Mark Project.	Children are exposed to a wide range of experiences so can therefore make links to learning and have memorable experiences.  Arts Mark Silver Award achieved.	Children have been provided with a range of enrichment opportunities and one of the academy values of 'memories' is a key driver in this. Children can talk about and confidently articulate prior learning when hooked onto experiences. The social and emotional aspect of enrichment has been significant and children are more confident to take on new challenges as a result of being exposed to different situations which they have not experienced before. The impact on the children's vocabulary has also been significant.  There has been a greater uptake with clubs and children have had significantly more opportunities to participate in musical and art experiences.	Continue to Develop the clubs planner with stakeholder engagement and track/monitor pupil engagement.  Further develop experiential learning for children.	£30,000
Annual leasing of new Laptops and Ipads to use digital technology to enhance learning.	Children are able to access a high-quality curriculum.  Technology has the potential to increase the quality and quantity of practice that pupils undertake, both inside and outside of the classroom	The Ipads and laptops have been instrumental in enhancing the progress of children this year. Children now evidence their learning journey in foundation subjects via our interactive learning platform, Seesaw. They have developed in their independence and the technology supports children in their challenge time in KS1. Children in Year 1 are offered a bespoke approach and balance between formalised learning and learning through challenge time in the provision. The use of technology had also enabled us to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum particularly in subjects such as computing.  Writing outcomes in KS1 have continued to improve due to the impact of the technology we have available.	Continue with leasing of technology  Implement SDP priority to develop oracy and early language development throughout the curriculum to raise standards in writing.	£10,320  £3000

## Externally provided programmes

*Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you purchased in the previous academic year. This will help the Department for Education identify which ones are popular in England*

Programme	Provider
WellComm	GL Assessment

## Service pupil premium funding (optional)

*For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information:*

Measure	Details
How did you spend your service pupil premium allocation last academic year?	
What was the impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils?	