

Pupil premium strategy statement

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery premium for the 2022 to 2023 academic year) 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	Hexham Middle School
Number of pupils in school	543
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	12%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2021/22 – 2023/24
Date this statement was published	First published December 2021 Review published December 2022
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2023
Statement authorised by	Graeme Atkins, Executive Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Liam Watters, Head of School
Governor / Trustee lead	Barbara Hignett, Trustee

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£80,328
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£13,547
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£0
Total budget for this academic year If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year	£93,875

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At Hexham Middle School, we have designed an ambitious and empowering curriculum which has success for all learners as its core. The curriculum is driven by our ethos and 'outstanding eagerness to promote good learning'. The curriculum promotes a building of respect, high expectations rooted in a love of learning, education in its broadest sense and shaping children as citizens of the wider world.

We have high expectations for all pupils and carefully plan a curriculum to enable success for all, despite varied starting points and backgrounds. We want all pupils, particularly those facing disadvantage, to make rapid and sustained progress in their learning and to achieve well. We aim to create a positive learning environment where success for all is celebrated, and pupils are enabled to access all aspects of school life. This is implemented through delivery of the strategies within this statement.

As part of the strategy, we have an unrelenting focus on improving the quality of teaching and consistency of experience for all pupils; providing targeted academic support where it is needed to enable strong progress; implementing a programme of tailored wider support and care and offering a vibrant calendar of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities. All of these areas combine to provide a well-planned approach to closing the disadvantage attainment gap whilst ensuring the very best educational experience for all learners. It is our upmost priority to improve academic outcomes for our disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils to enable them to progress to the next stage of their education with the skills and experience they require.

Incorporated within this strategy is a focus on education recovery which incorporates both internal and national analysis to identify priority areas within our school's curriculum. Our approach ensures that the children who need the most support, including our disadvantaged learners, have access to tailored provision.

At the heart of the strategy is a detailed understanding of our pupils and their needs and backgrounds. We work hard to invest in building relationships with our pupils and their families. We respond to the needs of our children and adapt our provision accordingly. This strategy is not the responsibility of one member of staff. Our whole staff team understand the intentions and the strategies are adopted at a whole-school level with a shared understanding that raising achievement and enhancing experience for our disadvantaged learners is the priority for us all. This focus is reinforced through whole school professional learning and in investment in strategy groups incorporating senior and middle leaders as well as tutors, teaching and support staff.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Reading

	Diagnostic assessment, ongoing teacher assessment and discussion with teachers and pupils show a significant gap in reading development between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged peers. We have also found that reading is an area of concern for a wider group of pupils following the periods of school closure (when compared with 2018-29 achievement data).
2	Mathematical fluency and reasoning Diagnostic assessment, ongoing teacher assessment and discussion with teachers and pupils show a significant gap in mathematics development between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged peers. This is particularly noticeable in pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills.
3	Literacy skills (including spelling) Based on current assessment, we will continue to drive forward improvements in the teaching of literacy across all curriculum areas. This includes the development of vocabulary ('buzzwords' approach) to close the vocabulary gap, the incorporation of reading into all subjects' curriculum planning, the development of a reading strategy 'VIPERS' which can be used across subjects and the implementation of renewed literacy-focused feedback.
4	Social, emotional and behavioural We are experiencing higher levels of referrals for additional social, emotional and behavioural support. This has had a particular impact on disadvantaged and vulnerable learners. We have a greater number of pupils who require additional mentoring and support to enable them to fulfil their potential and remove barriers to their achievement.
5	Attendance Attendance analysis for the past year shows that disadvantaged pupil attendance was 2% lower than their non-disadvantaged peers. There is now a higher level of persistent absence, particularly in KS3, for disadvantaged pupils. This attendance concern has increased due to the pandemic, and, for some disadvantaged pupils, this has become an issue.
6	Parental engagement For some disadvantaged pupils, the level of parental engagement and home learning impacts on their progress. This may present as issues with organisation, preparedness for learning and general engagement in learning. As a school, we intend to continue working closely with parents and carers to encourage active engagement in learning and their child's educational experience.

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 comprehension and fluency across KS2 and KS3.	Strategies implemented will lead to an overall improvement in reading teaching which will impact on pupils' attainment, progress and reading confidence. This will be observed in both outcomes and in lesson observation/ assessment.

	In KS2, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving expected standard in reading will be in line with their non-disadvantaged peers.
Children with significantly lower reading ages able to read with greater fluency and phonic awareness.	Targeted support plans including phonics teaching, small group support and 1:1 reading (coupled with the wider reading strategies) will see the gap between chronological age and reading age close for disadvantaged pupils. This impact will be closely monitored throughout the year and beyond.
Improved mathematical outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.	In KS2, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving expected standard in maths will be in line with their non-disadvantaged peers. In KS3, outcomes will be monitored closely to ensure that the disparity is reducing, and that targeted support is provided rapidly.
Embedding of literacy approaches across all curriculum areas.	Across the school and following ongoing professional development through implementation of the literacy development plan, the quality of education review (incl. book reviews) will show an embedding of the school's approaches based on latest research. We will see an improvement in disadvantaged pupils' vocabulary retention incl. spelling.
Improve and sustain the attendance of all pupils, including disadvantaged learners.	Sustained high attendance demonstrated the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers being continually reduced and the percentage of all pupils who are persistently absent being below 5% and the figure among disadvantaged pupils being no more than 5% lower than their peers.
Improve the engagement and wellbeing of disadvantaged pupils in wider curriculum and enrichment opportunities.	A tracking system will be implemented which means that disadvantaged pupils' participation is closely monitored, and that swift action is taken to address gaps. Disadvantaged pupils will engage in school life and opportunities on offer. Through pupil voice, surveys and reviewing pastoral data, pupils will show increased engagement in school life.
Increase levels of parental engagement to enhance the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.	Parents regularly engaging with the Class Charts app. 1:1 parent meetings taking place throughout the year to build relationships, confidence and trust. A mentoring programme is in place for pupils which builds stronger home-school links. Calendar of opportunities for parent support in place including reading sessions. Online parents' evening option to increase attendance for disadvantaged pupils – review the attendance data.

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: £24,080

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Review and continue to develop curriculum planning with ambition for all learners at its core from year 5 to year 13 with a specific focus on developing the teaching of reading.	An investment in curriculum planning with a particular focus on developing the reading approach and curriculum has been shown to have +6 months positive impact. This will include further development of the whole class reading model, engaging with other schools and implementing strategies such as reading VIPERS. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies	1, 2 and 3
Purchase of diagnostic assessments for all year groups including GL baseline and end of year testing and CAT4 testing (in the absence of KS2 SATs data).	Standardised tests provide reliable insights into the specific strengths and weaknesses of each pupil to help ensure they receive the correct additional support through interventions or teacher instruction: Standardised tests Assessing and Monitoring Pupil Progress Education Endowment Foundation EEF	1, 2, 3
Vulnerable Learner Focus Group to continue their focused work targeting all aspects of this plan.	Our experience has shown that it is more effective for a team to be invested in the development plan and to lead on aspects to ensure that momentum is sustained, and approaches are reviewed continually based on the success of their implementation. The creation of 'Vulnerable Learner Plans' will enable all staff to review their impact on each individual pupil to ensure that all pupils achieve their full potential.	1 to 6
Professional development for staff including release time for colleagues.	A programme of professional development will be calendared to further embed the school's '10 Elements of Great Teaching'. This will focus on metacognitive strategies through effective lesson design, assessment and feedback. It will also focus on promoting successful adaptive teaching to empower all pupils to achieve well and to remove barriers to learning. Metacognition and self-regulation Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF	1, 2, 3

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

Budgeted cost: £37,920

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Fresh Start phonics programme purchased and	Implement the Fresh Start phonics programme for learners whose reading age is significantly below their chronological age and where reading fluency is a concern. This scheme is	1 and 3

implemented (incl. training).	widely used and is currently being assessed by the EEF for impact. Phonics investment for struggling readers is shown to give +5 months positive impact. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/phonics	
Intervention staff recruited to provide targeted support in all year groups. This includes an intervention coordinator for KS2.	Small group tuition is most effective when learning is well-matched to the needs of the pupils attending. Targeted and regularly reviewed intervention planned in conjunction with class teachers will target gaps and provide additional support. This will take several forms and will focus on developing reading comprehension, fluency, mathematics, spelling and grammar as well as memory and retention. Interventions will build confidence through well-planned practice time. Small group tuition Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF	1 to 3
Purchase of online learning platforms to provide personalised tutoring and increase rates of home learning.	Engaging with individualised tutoring can support progress by +5 months. The use of online tutoring means that sessions can also be accessed remotely. We implement and make successful use of programmes such as Reading Plus, Maths Whizz and Maths Flex to support online tutoring. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/one-to-one-tuition	1, 2, 3 and 6

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

Budgeted cost: £32,920

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Engage with the Poverty Proofing programme alongside Children's North East.	Based on positive experiences of other schools and the impact of the charity's work in the region, we will engage with them to review the school's policies and procedures. This will have a specific focus on the impact of the pandemic on children and young people and will involve sessions with SLT, pupils and parents.	1 to 6
Increase disadvantaged pupil mentoring and recruit a Pupil Support Worker to provide targeted wellbeing, behaviour and emotional support.	There has been a considerable rise in the number of referrals to external agency support and in the proportion of children requiring additional social and emotional support in school. The EEF shows a positive +4 months on the implementation of effective intervention here. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/social-and-emotional-learning	4, 5 and 6
Attendance monitoring, tracking and intervention	Building on the guidance set out by the DfE below as well as engaging with local academy chains who have turned	5

from the new cross-trust Attendance Officer.	the tide on persistent absence, targeted support and intervention will be provided. DfE's Improving School Attendance	
Forest School curriculum for disadvantaged pupils.	Although the research base is minimal and no 'months progress' is articulated, we have observed positive social and emotional benefits of our pupils engaging with a Forest School curriculum. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/outdoor-adventure-learning	4
Parental engagement sessions planned throughout the year. This will include online events, reading workshops and 1:1 meetings (informal) to provide support materials etc.	Implement an approach of parental engagement sessions which empower parents to better support their child's learning and engagement. Research shows +4 months progress. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/parental-engagement	6
Contingency allocation for day-to-day expenditure such as uniform, Breakfast Club, equipment etc.	Based on our experiences and those of similar schools to ours, we have identified a need to set a small amount of funding aside to respond quickly to needs that have not yet been identified.	1 to 6

Total budgeted cost: £94,920

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

Overall, we maintained strong progress towards achieving the objectives established in the plan. The impact of the pandemic meant that our focus day-to-day continued to be on ensuring that disadvantaged learners got the best possible experience in school, and that their attendance returned to pre-pandemic levels. We worked hard to ensure that routines and high expectations were quickly re-established so that pupils could achieve well in school.

Our work to strengthen curriculum planning including collaboration with other schools progressed at a rapid pace. This involved working with leading experts and collaborating within and between schools to strengthen the curriculum experience for disadvantaged learners. The direction is clear and progress has been made in many areas to improve the cohesion between key stages particularly in key stage 3 between middle and high schools which supports positive transition. This focus will now extend to the transition between first and middle school.

A strong focus on developing reading and literacy skills was needed as we noted significant gaps when children returned to school. Pupils' spelling was noted as a key area of concern and the school implemented a renewed approach to the teaching of spelling which is leading to a positive increase in engagement and attainment. In reading, the continued targeted support, coupled with whole class strategies meant that pupils' reading achievement improved significantly September 2021 to July 2022. Significant investment was given to staff development to ensure that phonics provision was impactful and pupils with barriers to reading were empowered to succeed.

Attendance strategies were well implemented and school staff worked with parents/families of disadvantaged pupils to return children to pre-pandemic attendance levels. A significant focus was placed on improving attendance for all disadvantaged learners with bespoke action planning in place for individual children. The attendance of pupils increased from 89.6% in 20/21 to 92.6% in 21/22. As we entered the 22-23 school year, a new Attendance Officer joined the school and is providing much-needed capacity to have swift impact on disadvantaged and vulnerable learners with many successful cases. The persistent absence of some disadvantaged pupils was concerning during school year 21/22 and we noticed a negative impact post-pandemic. The implemented strategies continue to have a very positive impact and persistent absence for key pupils is improving swiftly.

Targeted academic support continued successfully and had a very positive impact on pupils. At HMS, we implemented a coherent approach to academic support with a particular focus on reading, writing, grammar, spelling and mathematics. Outcomes at the end of KS2 improved for disadvantaged pupils in 2022 when compared with internal data during the previous two school years, and to the last available performance data in 2019. A forensic approach to providing catch-up support was implemented and meant that gaps in pupils' learning were well-addressed.

Despite a comprehensive approach to pastoral care, we still recognise the impact of the pandemic on many children and have seen a significant increase in social, emotional and mental health needs. With

all children back in school, a renewed focus was placed on positive reinforcement and consistent behaviour management systems which meant that most pupils settled back into schools well. The introduction of the schools' 'Pupil Support Worker' provision meant that a programme of social, emotional and mental health support could be implemented in school, without a reliance on central services. This led to improved attendance and outcomes for disadvantaged learners who accessed the support.

Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider

Further information (optional)

This plan will be supported by wider development work, including:

- Implementing a renewed whole school approach to social, emotional and mental health support through 'Emotion Coaching UK'. Working with staff and parents/carers to embed the approach across the school.
- A significant staff development focus on assessment, reading/literacy and adaptive teaching will continue throughout the academic year to ensure that high quality first teaching is consistent across the school.
- The school has also recruited an Academic Mentor via the NTP who will be led by the Academic Support Coordinator and will strengthen the provision to academic support across all year groups with a particular focus on reading, spelling and mathematics.
- Strengthening the capacity of our attendance team to enable the objectives above to be met as well as providing additional capacity to allow the Attendance Officer to provide targeted support and to work with families and external agencies.
- Further developing the Partnership liaison including a focus on curriculum planning and assessment so that the joined-up approach continues. This has started successfully from Y7 to Y9 and will now continue to progress from Y3 to Y6. This will impact positively on all pupils including disadvantaged learners.
- Training Y8 pupils to become Peer Mentors to provide social support. This is in conjunction with mental health training received in 20/21 as part of the local authority's approach.
- Relaunching the school's teaching and learning policy with a specific focus on how we provide feedback in all subjects and how this is used by learners. This will be based on the latest research here: [EEF evidence](#).