

Pupil premium strategy statement

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery premium for the 2023 to 2024 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	618
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	18%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2023/24 – 2026/27
Date this statement was published	First published December 2024
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2026
Statement authorised by	Graeme Atkins, Executive Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Liam Watters, Head of School
Governor / Trustee lead	Florrie Darling, Trustee

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£124,897
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£0
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	£124,897

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 structured around our ethos, values and drivers – great learning, great ambition and great experiences. 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 empowered to access all aspects of school life. This is implemented through the delivery of the strategies within this statement and the school's wider approach to inclusion.

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 promote strong progress; implementing a programme of tailored wider support and individualised care and by 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 pupils who face disadvantage and to reduce any potential barriers to engagement, belonging and achievement. Our ambition is that all pupils progress to the next stage of their education with the skills and experiences required to succeed.

Incorporated within this strategy is a focus on academic support which considers both internal and national data analysis to identify priority areas within our school's curriculum. Our approach ensures that the children who need the most support, including disadvantaged learners, have access to rapid, tailored and structured provision and that the impact of this support is reviewed coherently. This rapid and targeted support covers a broad range of areas including early reading/phonics development, number fluency and arithmetic skills and many other core aspects. This approach ensures that learners facing disadvantage have barriers to achievement reduced in a timely manner to build confidence and a sense of success.

At the heart of the strategy is a detailed understanding of our pupils and their starting points, needs and backgrounds. The school's 'Keep in View' approach ensures that pupils are known and understood as individuals and that all staff work to enhance belonging, attendance, engagement and achievement. We work hard to invest in building relationships with our pupils and their families and developing a sense of belonging in our school community. 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 an investment

in strategy groups incorporating senior and middle leaders as well as form 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	<p>Reading</p> <p>Diagnostic assessment, ongoing teacher assessment and discussion with teachers and pupils show a gap in reading development between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged peers. We are particularly keen to develop the reading fluency of our disadvantaged pupils to ensure they can read well across the curriculum to support their learning.</p>
2	<p>Mathematical fluency and reasoning</p> <p>Diagnostic assessment, ongoing teacher assessment and discussion with teachers and pupils show a gap in mathematics achievement between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged peers. This is particularly noticeable in pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills, as well as retention of key facts such as times tables.</p>
3	<p>Literacy skills including spelling</p> <p>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 embedding of our whole school reading and oracy strategies and renewed approaches to spelling teaching.</p>
4	<p>Social, emotional and behavioural needs</p> <p>We are experiencing higher levels of referrals for social, emotional and behavioural support. This has had a particular impact on disadvantaged 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. The need for emotional regulation support is higher than ever.</p>
5	<p>Attendance</p> <p>Attendance analysis for the past year shows that disadvantaged pupil attendance was lower than their non-disadvantaged peers. This attendance concern has increased, and, for some disadvantaged pupils, this has become an issue impacting achievement and engagement.</p>
6	<p>Raising ambition and aspiration</p> <p>For some pupils who face disadvantage, it is an ongoing area of focus to broaden horizons, ambition and aspiration. It is essential that school continues to provide the highest expectations to boost confidence, self-esteem and achievement. The curriculum must be as broad and varied as possible with high levels of enrichment across all subjects and 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
Improved reading comprehension and fluency across KS2 and KS3.	<p>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.</p> <p>In KS2, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving expected standard in reading will be in line with their non-disadvantaged peers.</p>
Children with significantly lower reading ages able to read with greater fluency and phonological 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.
Consistently 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.
Improved standards of literacy across all curriculum areas for disadvantaged pupils.	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, grammatical understanding including fundamental writing skills and spelling.
Improved and sustained increased attendance of all pupils, including disadvantaged learners and a reduction in PA.	Sustained high attendance demonstrated by the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers being continually reduced and the percentage of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent reducing.
Improved engagement and wellbeing of disadvantaged pupils in wider curriculum and enrichment opportunities.	Tracking disadvantaged pupils' participation very closely and ensuring that swift action is taken to address any gaps. Disadvantaged pupils will fully engage in school life and opportunities on offer. Through pupil voice, surveys and reviewing pastoral data, pupils will show increased engagement in school life.
Improved ambition, aspirations and intrinsic motivation through pupil and parent/carers engagement, advice and guidance.	Pupil voice demonstrates that pupils aim high, have improved self-esteem and understand their next steps. Data shows that all pupils participate in school life including 'Great Experiences', enrichment across the curriculum and careers education opportunities.

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: £34,330

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Professional development for all staff focused on metacognitive and cognitive strategies and on high-quality adaptive teaching.	An investment in staff professional development with a particular focus on developing the pedagogy of teaching and support staff in relation to metacognition and adaptive teaching. This will include professional development opportunities within school and involving external professionals throughout the year. Enhanced focus on metacognition has been shown to have a positive impact (+7). https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/metacognition-and-self-regulation Metacognition and self-regulation Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF	1, 2 and 3
Purchase of diagnostic assessments for all year groups including GL baseline and end of year testing and reading/spelling standardised assessment.	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 This approach has been every beneficial in identifying gaps in learning and in shaping teaching provision. This will be supported by the introduction of new, whole school reading assessments.	1, 2, 3
Keep in View approach to continue the focused work targeting all aspects of pupil provision for disadvantaged learners.	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 'Keep in View 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
Enhanced focus on the reading strategy including the teaching of phonics, fluency, comprehension and	A whole school focus on the reading strategy to upskill all teachers in delivering high-quality reading teaching. This will include the teaching of fluency, comprehension and phonics. A focus on whole school spelling with clear links to phonemes, phonological awareness and spelling strategies. Reading comprehension +6 and phonics +5.	1, 2, 3

linked approaches to spelling.	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/phonics https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies	
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £30,990

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Fresh Start phonics programme implemented (incl. training).	<p>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 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.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/phonics</p>	1 and 3
Intervention staff recruited to provide targeted support in all year groups. This includes an Academic Support Coordinator for the school.	<p>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.</p> <p>Small group tuition Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF</p>	1 to 3
Purchase of online learning platforms to provide personalised tutoring and increase rates of home learning.	<p>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, Touch Type Read Spell, Learning by Questions and Spelling Shed to support online tutoring.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/one-to-one-tuition</p>	1, 2, 3 and 6
Delivery of oral language interventions incl. small group reading sessions.	<p>Oral language sessions develop pupils' oracy and vocabulary skills. School will implement small group reading sessions and a focus on building vocabulary. Discussion based groups also build confidence and self-esteem.</p>	1, 3 and 4

	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/oral-language-interventions	
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Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £65,010

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Whole school SEMH approach focused on regulation strategies and Emotion Coaching.	Significant investment in whole staff CPD and implementation of an inclusive social, emotional and mental health approach. This includes a re-launch of our behaviour management approach to ensure a relational focus. Research shows a focus on social, emotional learning can have a +4 months positive impact. Launch of 'Zones of Regulation' as a whole school strategy including parent and pupil workshops. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/social-and-emotional-learning	4 and 5
Disadvantaged pupil mentoring and develop the work of the Pupil Support Workers 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 from cross-trust Attendance Officer.	Building on the guidance set out by the DfE below as well as engaging with local academy chains who have turned the tide on persistent absence, targeted support and intervention will be provided. DfE's Improving School Attendance	5
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. This includes a development of our core skills and values through the Skills Builder Approach. 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	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

(informal) to provide support materials etc.		
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: £136,746

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 2025 to 2025 academic year.

Overall, we maintained strong progress towards achieving the objectives established in the plan. The ongoing impact of the pandemic and ever-changing needs and vulnerabilities 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 the level we aim for. The school is a positive and welcoming environment for disadvantaged learners and staff work hard to develop positive relationships with pupils.

The strategies detailed within the plan were well-implemented and led to generally positive outcomes for individual pupils and the cohort (when compared with their own starting points). Across reading, writing, maths and EGPS, disadvantaged learners generally made rapid progress when compared with their school entry baseline. Gaps between non-disadvantaged and disadvantaged peers remain and a continued targeted improvement plan remains a feature of school development. We are confident that learners progressed into Year 7 with a strong foundation for the secondary curriculum and that any remaining gaps in knowledge could be supported in Key Stage 3. Where learning gaps remain, targeted intervention will be in place in Year 7 and Year 8 before pupils move to high 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 curriculum is strong and very well-planned to ensure the cohesion between key stages particularly in key stage 3 between middle and high schools which supports positive transition. Continued progress was also made in establishing close links in subjects with our first school colleagues so that curriculum transition is better understood between years 4 and 5.

A strong focus on developing reading and literacy skills has continued with investment in whole staff professional development and through collaboration with other trusts. 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. Staff understanding of reading fluency teaching has greatly improved with positive impact noted across the curriculum, not just in English lessons – this is a strength in science, for example. Significant investment was given to staff development to ensure that phonics provision was impactful and pupils with barriers to reading were empowered to succeed and we have trained further staff to deliver this programme successfully.

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 collaborative work of the Attendance Officer and the wider pastoral team continued to provide a more joined-up approach leading to swift impact on disadvantaged and vulnerable learners with many successful cases. The persistent absence of some disadvantaged pupils continued to concern school leaders and successful action was taken to improve attendance of

individual pupils. The implemented strategies continue to have a positive impact and persistent absence for key pupils is improving swiftly. The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils remains a significant area of focus and is woven into the wider school development plan. The introduction of a renewed 'Keep in View' approach across the school has continued to raise the profile of disadvantaged learners and to ensure more consistent implementation of strategies to reduce barriers to engagement and achievement.

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. A forensic approach to providing catch-up support was implemented and meant that gaps in pupils' learning were well-addressed more swiftly. There was a particularly strong impact on many Year 6 disadvantaged pupils when comparing their End of KS2 outcomes with their baseline starting points.

Despite a comprehensive approach to pastoral care, we still note a rising level of need and higher levels of dysregulation for many children and have seen a significant increase in social, emotional and mental health needs. A whole school focus was placed on positive reinforcement and consistent behaviour management systems which had a positive impact. The extension of the schools' 'Pupil Support Workers' provision meant that a programme of social, emotional and mental health support could be implemented, without an over-reliance on central services. This led to improved attendance and outcomes for disadvantaged learners who accessed this support, as well as an overall improvement in belonging.

Further information (optional)

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

- Implementation of a renewed whole school approach to social, emotional and mental health support through 'Zones of Regulation' including working with staff and parents/carers to embed the approach across the school.
- A significant staff development focus on metacognition and adaptive teaching will continue throughout the academic year to ensure that high quality first teaching is consistent across the school.
- Further 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 assessment so that the joined-up approach continues. This has been successful from Y7 to Y9 and will now continue to progress from Y3 to Y6. This will impact positively on all pupils including disadvantaged learners.
- A renewed Partnership approach from Y7 to Y11 to develop consistent subject commitments to detail how barriers will be reduced for disadvantaged pupils across the curriculum. This will be evidence-based alongside the RADY principles.
- Investing in embedding the already successful personal development curriculum including careers education across the curriculum, and doing this in a coordinated way with local Partnership schools.
- Developing new and creative ways to engage parents of disadvantaged pupils in their child's learning and school experience, including through embedding the school's 'Keep in View' approaches.
- New 'Belonging Days' will be introduced for disadvantaged pupils in Year 4 who will be moving to Hexham Middle in Year 5 – this will further strengthen transition work and ensure a positive start for pupils in the new school year.