

Pupil premium strategy statement – Merdon Junior 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	223
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	12%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2023-2026
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2026
Statement authorised by	T Johnston (Headteacher from April 2025)
Pupil premium lead	C Sambles (Deputy Headteacher from September 2025)
Governor lead	Catherine Biggs

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£39,200
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£0
Pupil premium (and recovery premium*) funding carried forward from previous years (<i>enter £0 if not applicable</i>) <i>*Recovery premium received in academic year 2021 to 2022 can be carried forward to academic year 2022 to 2023. Recovery premium received in academic year 2022 to 2023 cannot be carried forward to 2023 to 2024.</i>	£0
Total budget for this academic year <i>If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year</i>	£39,200

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

‘One of the best measures of an advanced education system is how it treats pupils that are on the margins. How disadvantaged pupils attain has to be the measure of success for an institution. The Pupil Premium cannot guarantee complete equality of outcome, but it can give every pupil in the schooling system opportunities to succeed. High quality teaching and learning is fundamental to narrowing the gap.’

Marc Rowland

An Updated Practical Guide to the Pupil Premium, 2015

This statement details our school’s use of Pupil Premium funding to help improve the attainment of our disadvantaged pupils. Merdon Junior School strives to ensure that all children from both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged backgrounds have equal opportunities to access learning and develop academically, socially and emotionally. In order to achieve this, knowledge of each individual child and their barriers to learning are essential to providing the appropriate support.

The plan makes use of the three part model to ensure specific barriers are identified and targeted in order to ensure children are able to catch up to be in line with their peers. Merdon Junior School’s approach is centred on high quality inclusive first teaching and learning as well as well-delivered, purposeful interventions that support children’s access to their learning.

By evaluating and targeting provision based on a researched evidence base, children are given the best opportunities to make accelerated progress in order to achieve as well as their non-disadvantaged peers.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p>2023/24, 2024/25 - Average attendance for disadvantaged children is below 90% and not in line with non-disadvantaged children. Non-attendance has led to a drop in pupil progress.</p> <p>2025/26 – Although disadvantaged attendance has risen to above 90%, there is still a negative gap of around 4-5% between disadvantaged children and school attendance as a whole.</p>

2	<p>2023/24, 2024/25 - End of Key Stage 2 data shows a widening gap in maths attainment for disadvantaged children and non-disadvantaged children.</p> <p><i>2025/26 – There remains a gap between the attainment of disadvantaged children and non-disadvantaged in maths. This is impacting on the number of disadvantaged children reaching combined ARE at the end of KS2.</i></p>
3	<p>2023/24, 2024/25 - End of Key Stage 2 data shows a gap in writing attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children.</p> <p><i>2025/26 – There remains a gap between the attainment of disadvantaged children and non-disadvantaged in writing. This is impacting on the number of disadvantaged children reaching combined ARE at the end of KS2.</i></p>
4	<p>2023/24, 2024/25 - There is a widening gap in engagement of disadvantaged parents compared to non-disadvantaged parents in school events such as outcome events, parents' evening and whole school celebration events.</p> <p><i>2025/26 – There is minimal difference in disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged parent engagement in outcomes and school events. It is no longer felt that this presents a significant barrier to disadvantaged children's sense of belonging and engagement in school.</i></p>
5	<p>2023/24, 2024/25 - The percentage of disadvantaged children engaging in the wider curriculum activities/opportunities is less than non-disadvantaged children.</p> <p><i>2025/26 – There is still a difference in the number of disadvantaged children engaging in wider curriculum activities in comparison to non-disadvantaged children. Opportunities are not as accessible and viable for some disadvantaged pupils</i></p>
6	<p>2023/24, 2024/25 - Talking to disadvantaged pupils compared to non-disadvantaged pupils has led to an identified theme whereby children are less able identify their place within the school community and verbalise a love of learning. School is seen as more of a 'chore' for these children.</p> <p><i>2025/26 – There is still a difference in the number of disadvantaged children engaging in wider curriculum activities in comparison to non-disadvantaged children. Opportunities are not as accessible and viable for some disadvantaged pupils. This continues to impact on their sense of belonging in school.</i></p>
7	<p>2023/24, 2024/25 - A higher percentage of disadvantaged children compared to non-disadvantaged children are not able to regulate their emotions in order to develop resilience in both learning and social aspects of school life. There are a higher number of behavioural incidents recorded for disadvantaged children compared to non-disadvantaged children.</p> <p><i>2025/26 – Current behaviour records show a reduction in high level incidents caused by dysregulation and there is no longer a significant difference between recorded incidents for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.</i></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>Attendance for disadvantaged children increases from 81% to be in line with non-disadvantaged children.</p> <p><i>Updated for 2025/26 - Attendance for disadvantaged children will be broadly in line with non-disadvantaged children.</i></p>	<p>2023/24, 2024/25 - Attendance for disadvantaged children rises to be above 92%</p> <p>Persistent absence is reduced to 5%</p> <p><i>2025/26 – The gap between disadvantaged attendance and the whole school figure will be no more than 3%.</i></p> <p><i>Persistent absence for disadvantaged children will reduce so that less than 20% are PA</i></p>
<p>The percentage of disadvantaged children leaving Key Stage 2 having met the expected standard for maths rises from 43% to 70%</p> <p><i>Updated for 2025/26 – An increased percentage of disadvantaged children will leave Key Stage 2 achieving combined ARE</i></p>	<p>2023/24, 2024/25 - Accelerated progress is made by disadvantaged pupils</p> <p>Attainment of disadvantaged children rises to be 70%</p> <p>The percentage of children achieving the combined expected standard rises to 70% from 29%</p> <p><i>2025/26 – The percentage of disadvantaged children achieving the combined expected standard at the end of KS2 rises to 44% (up from 30% 24/25)</i></p>
<p>The percentage of disadvantaged children leaving Key Stage 2 having met the expected standard for writing rises 43% to 70%</p> <p><i>Updated for 2025/26 – An increased percentage of disadvantaged children will leave Key Stage 2 achieving combined ARE</i></p>	<p>2023/24, 2024/25 - Accelerated progress is made by disadvantaged pupils</p> <p>Attainment of disadvantaged children rises to be 70%</p> <p>The percentage of children achieving the combined expected standard rises to 70% from 29%</p> <p><i>2025/26 – The percentage of disadvantaged children achieving the combined expected standard at the end of KS2 rises to 44% (up from 30% 24/25)</i></p>

<p>Parental involvement with the school increases leading to both parents and children feeling more comfortable within the school setting. OUTCOME MET JULY 2025</p>	<p>Attendance at Parents' Evening is 100% Number of parents attending outcome events or celebration events increases Greater parental engagement Numbers of parents attending regular coffee mornings increases</p>
<p>Children have equal opportunities for engagement in the wider curriculum which leads to increased confidence amongst peers.</p>	<p>2023/24, 2024/25 - All children are able to have full access to all aspects of the school curriculum, including the wider school curriculum Attendance at before and after school clubs shows a high level of involvement from disadvantaged children Pupil surveys and conferencing show that children have benefitted from wider involvement in the curriculum <i>2025/26 - Attendance at before and after school clubs shows a high level of involvement from disadvantaged children. Pupil surveys and conferencing show that children can describe how they have benefitted from attending more extra-curricular events</i></p>
<p>Children's learning behaviours improve and children consistently demonstrate a love of learning. <i>Updated for 2025/26- disadvantaged pupils are engaged and motivated by the curriculum, including parent exhibitions</i></p>	<p>2023/24, 2024/25 - Pupil survey shows an increase in learning behaviours The percentage of disadvantaged children receiving awards in assembly increases All children speak positively about challenge. All children recognise their value within the school community All children have a plethora of strategies which enable them to increase independence <i>2025/26 - Pupil surveys and conferencing show that children can describe what they have enjoyed about curriculum projects and how they have developed as learners during each project</i></p>
<p>Behaviour incidents involving disadvantaged children reduce OUTCOME MET JULY 25</p>	<p>The number of CPOMS behaviour incident logs reduce to be consistently less than 5 per week. Pupil and parent survey feedback results show that all children feel safe at school including at playtimes</p>

	Children employ strategies to support self-regulation and develop further resilience
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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: 13,744

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
High quality CPD on mathematical reasoning focused on language for thinking and reasoning. Working with a range of schools both within and outside of Hampshire through the Solent Maths Hub	<p>https://www.solentmathshub.org.uk/teaching-for-mastery Mastering maths means pupils of all ages acquiring a deep, long-term, secure and adaptable understanding of the subject. Future mathematical learning is built on solid foundations which do not need to be re-taught. The phrase ‘teaching for mastery’ describes the elements of classroom practice and school organisation that combine to give pupils the best chances of mastering maths. Achieving mastery means acquiring a solid enough understanding of the maths that’s been taught to enable pupils to move on to more advanced material.</p> <p>Two teachers are working with Solent Maths Hub to look at how to embed fluency and explicitly teach mathematical thinking in order to secure the best outcomes for focus children, including those in vulnerable groups such as disadvantaged pupils.</p>	2/3
Raising Attainment for Year 6	<p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-professional-development-in-schools/independent-review-of-teachers-professional-development-in-schools-phase-1-findings The Independent Review of Teachers’ Professional Development in schools: Phase 1 findings (May 2024) summarises it’s findings as ‘Teachers’ professional development is crucial to a high-quality education system. When teachers, as learners themselves, base their everyday practice on an updated, coherent and integrated professional knowledge base, this can lead to improvements in pupils’ learning outcomes.’</p> <p>The focus of the HCC Raising Attainment training is on Year 6 and securing the best outcomes for focus children, including those in vulnerable groups such as disadvantaged pupils.</p>	2/3

<p>PBS training – LSAs and ECT</p>	<p>https://www.whentheadultschange.com/ 'In behaviour management, culture eats strategy for breakfast. Getting the culture right is critical. With the right culture the strategies that are used become less important. The culture is set by the way that the adults behave.' We align our views with those of Paul Dix and are working to ensure that our behaviour expectations are exemplified by all members of our school community</p> <p>All Learning Support Assistants and ECT have had opportunity to attend training with the Primary Behaviour service on: Understanding and Meeting the Underlying Needs of Behaviour Super Strategies for Positive Behaviour Management, with a Focus on Use of Language Understanding the Assault Cycle to support Children when they are Dysregulated This is to enable them to support children's regulation in class so that they can access learning effectively, which is particularly important for vulnerable pupils.</p>	<p>2/3, 6</p>
<p>Increased coaching through release of Maths and English Lead and support from the SENDco,</p>	<p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/effective-professional-development The Education Endowment Foundation outlined in it's 2021 report 'Effective Professional Development' that 'professional development effectively builds knowledge, motivates staff, develops teaching techniques, and embeds practice'. These mechanisms that make up effective Professional Development each fulfils a different role. The Maths and English Lead in school have weekly designated time to coach staff through planning alongside, modelling teaching, monitoring and providing feedback. This will lead to improved outcomes for all children in English and Maths, with a particular focus on pupils in vulnerable groups such as disadvantaged children.</p>	<p>2/3</p>
<p>Use of assessment tools to focus summative assessments on specific areas of need</p>	<p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/feedback The Education Endowment Foundation research shows that well-planned feedback has a well-evidenced, high impact on learning outcomes. The assessment tools that school use allows teachers to focus their assessments on particular aspects of learning so that the feedback they give to children, both verbal and written, is effective and moves the children's learning on.</p>	<p>2, 3</p>
<p>Educational psychology and EMTAS SLA to support teachers with teaching disadvantaged children with additional needs</p>	<p>Due to the increase in pupils requiring additional support with more complex needs, we will purchase additional EP hours and EMTAS time to support early intervention in, order to further support and reduce the barriers for these pupils.</p>	<p>2, 3</p>

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

Budgeted cost: £11,860

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Key Stage 2 Phonics intervention	<p>https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/about-us/our-pedagogy/</p> <p>As a school, we use Little Wandle as our systematic synthetic phonics teaching programme and we align our views with their pedagogical approach. Development of this SSP remains a focus and intervention to support pupils to catch up is a vital part of this.</p> <p>Rapid Catch Up is used where children are not meeting the age related outcome in reading and phonic knowledge has been identified as a barrier.</p>	2/3
Nessy	<p>https://www.nessy.com/en-gb/science-of-reading</p> <p>Nessy is a research-driven, online reading and spelling program which is rooted in a belief that when teachers are taught how to teach their children with the mechanics of reading and structured literacy, the number of children who become good readers increases dramatically. It aligns with the views of the 2000 report 'Put Reading First' by the National Reading Panel (USA). This report describes five elements of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.</p> <p>Across the school, Nessy is used as an intervention for children who are not meeting the standard in reading, despite high-quality teaching in the classroom. Nessy is used where phonics specifically has not been identified as a barrier. Nessy is used with children where writing systems, and their influence on reading issues, remain a barrier.</p>	2/3
ELSA time to intervention to children with specific SEMH needs (self-esteem, self-worth, friendships, anger management, resilience)	<p>https://www.elsanetwork.org/elsa-network/other-research/</p> <p>The ELSA network research on the benefits of ELSA provision found that pupils reported that the qualities of their ELSAs and the relationship they develop were important to their experience of the intervention and help them to meet their targets. They said that the relationship grew stronger over time and made them feel happier, more trusting and less alone. Pupils also appreciated their ELSA being available for them. At Merdon, ELSA support is used to target pupils' emotional and wellbeing needs individually or in small</p>	

	groups so that they feel confident in school and are ready to learn.	
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Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: 14,321

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Family Support worker and Attendance Officer tracking attendance and behaviour logs on a weekly basis in order to work with parents to understand barriers and increase engagement by using a side by side approach before more formal procedures	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance The work of the Family Support Worker allows the school to follow the Government guidance from Working Together to Improve School Attendance August 2024	1, 6
Targeted spaces at clubs and extra-curricular activities run by	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d307b8de5274a14e9f6bc20/An_Unequal_Playing_Field_report.pdf The report 'An Unequal Playing Field: Extra-Curricular Activities, Soft Skills and Social Mobility' July 2019 by the Social Mobility Commission, found that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra-curricular activities are important to young people and result in a range of positive outcomes • Opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities are unequally distributed. 	1, 5, 6

school staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers in the UK labour market increasingly demand soft skills – and these types of skills (which may be developed via extracurricular activities) could be an important factor in driving intergenerational social mobility. • New programmes and initiatives are required to widen opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities <p>To ensure that, as a school, we follow the recommendation to ‘allocate space in teacher workloads for delivering activities themselves’, our teachers receive additional paid time to deliver extra-curricular activities. Disadvantaged children are given targeted spaces and these clubs are run at times which make them easier to access for parents.</p>	
Financial support provided for residential trips and school trips	<p>https://nasenjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1471-3802.12638</p> <p>Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs: Volume 24, Issue 2, Pages: 215-438, April 2024</p> <p>The outcome of this research found that, particularly for vulnerable children, educational school visits can have extensive benefits for children, including outcome-based affordances, learning engagement-related benefits and skill acquisition and development. Through the development of our new curriculum projects, we want to enhance learning through providing a range of educational visits, residential trips and visitors.</p> <p>WE want to ensure that cost is no barrier for any child and our disadvantaged children have the same access to enriching curriculum experiences as all pupils.</p>	1, 5, 6

Total budgeted cost: 39,925

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Outcome 1: Attendance for disadvantaged children increases from 81% to be in line with non-disadvantaged children.

Success Criteria: Attendance for disadvantaged children rises to be above 92% and persistent absence is reduced to 5%

Target not met

-disadvantaged attendance 2024/25 was 91.6%, close to the 92% target

-8 disadvantaged pupils were persistently absent, attending just under 90%, which is well over 5%

-5/8 of these pupils have additional SEMH needs

-specific work has been put in place for these families, including TALA, FSW support and support from external agencies

Outcome 2: The percentage of disadvantaged children leaving Key Stage 2 having met the expected standard for maths rises from 43% to 70%

Success Criteria: Attainment of disadvantaged children rises to be 70%, with the percentage of children achieving the combined expected standard rises to 70% from 29%

Target not met

-2024/25 - 30% of disadvantaged pupils achieved ARE in maths at the end of Year 6, with 30% of disadvantaged pupils achieving combined ARE

-3/6 of the pupils who were WTS in Maths had additional SEND needs

Outcome 3: The percentage of disadvantaged children leaving Key Stage 2 having met the expected standard for writing rises 43% to 70%.

Success Criteria: Attainment of disadvantaged children rises to be 70%, with the percentage of children achieving the combined expected standard rises to 70% from 29%

Target not met

-2024/25 - 40% of disadvantaged pupils achieved ARE in writing at the end of Year 6, with 30% of disadvantaged pupils achieving combined ARE

-2/5 of the pupils who were WTS in writing had additional SEND needs

Outcome 4: Parental involvement with the school increases leading to both parents and children feeling more comfortable within the school setting.

Success Criteria: Attendance at Parents' Evening is 100%, number of parents attending outcome events, coffee mornings or celebration events increases

Target met

-attendance at November 25 Parents Evening – 93%. One family did not attend but meet regularly with staff in other ways.

-there were less outcome events and celebration events in the latter half of 24/25 due to a change in school leadership. However, in the Autumn Term 25 the Remembrance Service, Educational Psychologist parent workshop on anxiety and PTA events showed increased attendance from both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged parents.

-a new curriculum begins in January 2026 with parent exhibitions scheduled at key points in projects. It is expected that this will increase parental engagement even further

Outcome 5: Children have equal opportunities for engagement in the wider curriculum which leads to increased confidence amongst peers

Success Criteria: Attendance at before and after school clubs shows a high level of involvement from disadvantaged children and pupil surveys and conferencing show that children have benefitted from wider involvement in the curriculum

Target partially met

-increased attendance is evident within school clubs, trips and residential. This needs to be tracked carefully to target individual pupils who still require support to access and engage.

Outcome 6: Children’s learning behaviours improve and children consistently demonstrate a love of learning.

Success Criteria: The percentage of disadvantaged children receiving awards in assembly increases and all children speak positively about challenge in their learning

Target partially met

-disadvantaged children are well represented in awards given in assemblies
 -disadvantaged children surveyed were able to describe learning activities where they had been challenged and responded positively to this

Outcome 7: Behaviour incidents involving disadvantaged children reduce

Success Criteria: The number of CPOMS behaviour incident logs reduce to be consistently less than 5 per week. Children employ strategies to support self-regulation and develop further resilience

Target met

2025/26 – there are less than 5 behaviour incidents week recorded for disadvantaged pupils. There is no noticeable difference between behaviour logs for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children

Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year
ELSA provision
The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils
Pupils feel more able to articulate their feelings and express these positively, making them more ready to learn.