



# Merley First School 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 outcomes for disadvantaged pupils last academic year.

## School overview

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school	287
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	10.1%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2024-27
Date this statement was published	December 2024
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2025
Statement authorised by	Head Teacher Rebecca Baldwin
Pupil premium lead	Deputy Head Teacher Carolyn Waldron
Governor / Trustee lead	Academy Committee Chair James Tyler

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£43,500
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years <i>(enter £0 if not applicable)</i>	£0
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b> <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>	£43,500



# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

Our intention is that all pupils, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, make good progress, improve their attainment and leave our school at ARE (age related expectation) or beyond. The focus of this strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve that goal and to possess the essential skills and knowledge to be lifelong learners. We will ensure that our pupils are not disadvantaged in any way as a result of their socioeconomic context, whether they are in care or are young carers. We believe that, with the correct support and encouragement, all pupils can achieve their full potential.

### **Our ultimate objectives are to:**

- Ensure all teaching and learning meets the needs of all pupils and that all staff have high expectations of all children
- Narrow the attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers
- Remove barriers to learning created by poverty, family circumstance and background
- Ensure ALL pupils are able to read fluently and with good understanding to enable them to access the breadth of the curriculum
- Enable pupils to look after their social and emotional wellbeing and to develop character and resilience
- Access a wide range of opportunities, including for Personal Development, to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world
- Create a sense of belonging and feeling of connectedness so that all adults and children flourish
- Ensure relationships among pupils and staff reflect a positive and respectful culture where pupils feel safe and are safe

### **Our Context:**

Merley First School is a two form entry first school and is part of Initio Learning Trust consisting of 18 schools across Dorset covering children from 3-19 years of age. We are a BCP school (Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch). Merley is predominantly an area of low deprivation and currently 10.1% (29) of pupils are disadvantaged which includes 2 AFC and 1 LAC. We also have 2 forces children. Currently 7 PP children are also SEND.

### **Achieving our objectives:**

In order to achieve our objectives and overcome barriers to learning we will:

- Deliver a well-sequenced and progressive curriculum for all pupils
- Provide all teachers and TAs with high quality, evidenced based CPD to ensure that pupils access effective quality first teaching and additional support (through the use of EEF guidance, Walk-Thrus, UL&S, coaching and reflective dialogue)
- Provide targeted, evidence based intervention and support to quickly address identified gaps in learning including the use of small group work and 1:1 tuition
- Use diagnostic tools such as Star Reader to provide personalised targets
- Target funding to ensure that all pupils have access to trips, extra-curricular clubs and online learning facilities
- Provide appropriate nurture groups and ELSA provision to support pupils in their emotional and social development
- Ensure children from all Inclusion groups have opportunities to contribute to the wider life of the school (through becoming Eco Warriors, Pupil Voice Champions etc.)
- Engage all pupils in extra-curricular opportunities for personal development.
- Improve the attendance of our disadvantaged cohort.



**Key Principles:**  
 We will ensure that high quality teaching, learning and assessment meets the needs of all pupils through a carefully sequenced curriculum alongside the use of assessments and analysis of data. Class teachers will identify barriers and provide appropriate provision through individual pupil premium plans, specific interventions and support for individual pupils which will be reviewed termly. Alongside academic support, we will ensure that those pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs will access high quality provision from appropriately trained adults including our ELSA and will develop a strong sense of belonging within our school community.

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Children entering Reception have poor oral language and communication skills which impacts their social communication, interactions and developing reciprocal friendships.
2	Some children have poor retention and slow development of phonemic knowledge.
3	Some children’s reading is below ARE (age related expectation) and they struggle to close the gaps between themselves and their peers. This then impacts the development of writing skills. Some children’s reading age is below their chronological age and their writing attainment is below ARE.
4	Poor handwriting which lacks fluency and requires much cognitive effort impacts the quality of writing and spelling.
5	Social, emotional and mental health needs cause pupils to feel negative emotions such as stress, anxiety or low self-esteem and this can limit academic progress.
6	Attendance of pupils with pupil premium is below that of their non-disadvantaged peers.

## 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 speaking, listening and social interaction skills	Children leave the EYFS with significantly improved language skills and attention spans. They can understand and use a broad vocabulary.



	Children are able to develop and sustain reciprocal friendships.
Children in Reception and year 1 will have improved retention of phonics and will make at least expected progress or accelerated progress if there are gaps in their knowledge	By the end of Year 1, the majority of children will pass the Phonic Screening and 100% by the end of Year 2.
All children will have a reading age at least in line with their chronological age	By the end of Year 2, the majority of children will have a reading age in line with their chronological age.
Improved fluency in handwriting and children will have increased stamina for writing	<p>The majority of children have the correct pencil grip and are able to form all letters correctly and automatically.</p> <p>They will have developed the physical strength in their core body, arms and fingers needed for improved handwriting and concentration.</p> <p>Across all year groups, improved stamina for writing will be evident.</p> <p>In KS2 in writing, disadvantaged children will achieve at least as well as their non-disadvantaged peers.</p>
Improved mental health, wellbeing and self-esteem	<p>Children will understand and are able to use a range of strategies to support self-regulation and their mental well-being leading to fewer episodes of dysregulation.</p> <p>Improved attendance and academic progress of identified children.</p> <p>All staff prioritise building relationships with all children and a sense of belonging is enhanced.</p>
Attendance data for children with pupil premium shows improvement	Attendance data for children with pupil premium is at least 95% and the number of persistent absentees is reduced from the previous year. Staff prioritise building relationships with all parents.

## 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: £12,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
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All staff engage in developmental dialogue and coaching	The use of Walkthrus is identified as a particularly effective element of professional development that enables teaching staff and TAs to review their own and reflect on others' actions in the classroom. <a href="#">New EEF rapid evidence assessment on remote professional development</a>	1, 2, 3, 4
Introduce <b>Drawing Club</b> in Reception	Anecdotal evidence from several schools shows that 'Drawing Club' can have a positive impact on children in reception in several ways, including supporting the development of imagination, language through vocabulary development, fine motor skills, writing and engagement. The Early Years Toolkit outlines the benefits of communication and language approaches: <a href="#">Communication and language approaches   EEF</a>	1, 4
Whole school implementation of <b>Kinetic Letters</b> to improve transcription	' <i>Kinetic Letters is an evidence-informed programme that builds the cognitive and physical skills for handwriting.</i> ' (Kinetic Letters Programme 2024) The key principle of the Kinetic Letters program is that building physical strength underpins handwriting and concentration. The Early Years Toolkit outlines the benefits of approaches which develop physical development: <a href="#">Physical development approaches   EEF</a>	3, 4
<b>Walk-thrus:</b> Teachers are explicit about the prior knowledge upon which they are building when teaching new content.	A professional development programme built using WalkThrus is supported by evidence from cognitive science which provides a clear model for learning and evidence from the study of effective professional development. WalkThrus are based on the work of prominent researchers and cognitive scientists including Dylan Wiliam, Barak Rosenshine, Dan Willingham, Graham Nuthall and Efrat Furst. Their ideas and the simplified model of learning informs all WalkThrus key teaching techniques.	2
Whole school speaking, listening and vocabulary development	Continue to develop and embed oral rehearsal techniques including <i>my turn/your turn, say it again/say it better, mathematics sentence stems</i> Development of whole school Oracy Curriculum <a href="#">Why Oracy Matters - Voice 21</a> <a href="#">Oral language interventions   EEF</a>	1

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

Budgeted cost: £12,000



Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Unlocking Letters and Sounds phonics intervention	<p>Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base that indicates a positive impact on the accuracy of word reading, particularly for disadvantaged pupils:</p> <p><a href="#">Phonics   EEF</a></p> <p>The EEF toolkit states: <i>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.</i></p> <p>'Keep-up not catch-up' strategies aimed at ensuring all children can access current learning in phonics. Backed up by <i>Ambitious Expectations</i> - a set of six focused intervention strategies that support children with reading.</p>	2, 3
Reading intervention	<p>Reading comprehension approaches have a strong evidence base that indicates a positive impact on pupils' reading capabilities and, coupled with phonic interventions, help pupils to develop their reading skills:</p> <p><a href="#">Reading comprehension strategies   EEF</a></p> <p>The EEF toolkit states: <i>The average impact of reading comprehension strategies is an additional six months progress over the course of a year. Successful reading comprehension approaches allow activities to be carefully tailored to pupils' reading capabilities, and involve activities and texts that provide an effective, but not overwhelming, challenge.</i></p>	2, 3
Kinetic Letters intervention	<p><i>'Kinetic Letters is an evidence-informed programme that builds the cognitive and physical skills for handwriting.'</i> (Kinetic Letters Programme 2024) The key principle of the Kinetic Letters program is that building physical strength underpins handwriting and concentration. The Early Years Toolkit outlines the benefits of approaches which develop physical development:</p> <p><a href="#">Physical development approaches   EEF</a></p>	3, 4

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

Budgeted cost: £19,500

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
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<p>Access to Nurture group, 'emotions curriculum' and Zones of Regulation.</p>	<p>Research published by the <a href="#">Education Endowment Foundation</a> in their Teaching and Learning Toolkit provides evidence to indicate the positive impact of Metacognition and Self-Regulation as being +7 months. This indicates that it has a positive impact on children's learning. Evidence can be found here: <a href="#">Metacognition and self-regulation   EEF</a></p> <p>In addition, further research by the EEF also indicates the positive impact of social and emotional learning of +4 months and can be found here: <a href="#">Social and emotional learning   EEF</a></p> <p>An evidence summary about the effectiveness of teaching awareness of emotions and feelings can also be found here: <a href="#">Teaching awareness of emotions and feelings</a></p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Outdoor Adventurers - every child has access to a block of OA sessions. There is also a Nurture Group and after school/holiday club.</p>	<p>Though there is little evidence of outdoor learning impacting directly on academic achievement, the EEF toolkit does acknowledge its positive impact on self-efficacy, resilience, motivation, self-confidence and teamwork; all essential life-skills that, in turn, can impact learning. <a href="#">Outdoor adventure learning   EEF</a></p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Ensure disadvantaged children are represented in school roles and take part in extra- curricular and enrichment activities linked to Personal Development.</p>	<p>There are a number of whole school roles available including Voice Champions, Eco Warriors and Peer Mediators. Taking on leadership roles helps to instil confidence, and helps children solve problems creatively, work in a team, and work collaboratively with others. Having access to and being involved in extracurricular activities is known to be linked with social mobility: <a href="#">Extra-Curricular Activities, Soft Skills and Social Mobility</a></p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Personal Development</p>	<p>OFSTED defines personal development as <i>the development of a pupil's individual skills, attitudes, and understanding. This includes the development of self-awareness, self-esteem, and emotional intelligence, as well as the development of skills related to communication, teamwork, and critical thinking.</i> <a href="#">SMSC in Education: Everything you need to know</a></p>	<p>1, 5</p>
<p>EPIC - Developing outdoor play (EPIC - Explore, Play, Imagine, Create)</p>	<p>At Merely, we believe that quality play provision for all children has benefits for their health, wellbeing, self-esteem and social interactions. Our Play Policy rationale states that:</p> <p><i>'Our school believes that <b>all</b> children need opportunities to explore, play, imagine and create within the environment. We believe play provision should be welcoming and accessible to every child, irrespective of differences enhancing their sense of belonging within the school and promotes our school values of Respectful, Engaged and Ready.'</i></p>	<p>1, 5</p>





	<p>Though there is little evidence of its benefits <a href="#">Play-based learning   EEF</a>, feedback from colleagues in other Trust school's and our own experiences of Outdoor Adventurers, lead us to believe in its benefits for our children. The EEF document does however state: <i>The evidence base for play-based learning is not strong or consistent, but does indicate a clear relationship between play and early learning outcomes.</i></p>	
Maintain Early Bird Club and offer free places to children from disadvantaged backgrounds	<p>School breakfasts are more nutritious for some pupils and attending the club effectively prepares pupils for learning. Evidence shows that breakfast club schools often see an improvement in pupil behaviour <a href="#">Magic Breakfast - trial   EEF</a></p>	6
Improve engagement of parents of PP children and work with them to help improve attendance.	<p>Parental engagement has a positive impact on average of approximately four months additional progress. Considering how to engage parents is crucial in improving attendance for children. <a href="#">Parental engagement   EEF</a> <a href="#">Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance - GOV.UK</a></p>	6

**Total budgeted cost: £43,500**





## Part B: Review of the previous academic year

### Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils 2023-2024

2023-24 Aims	2023-24 Targets	2023-24 Outcomes
Improve progress in reading	Continue to close the gap between children's reading age and chronological age. Fewer than 11 children deemed to be PP will be in the bottom 20% in reading by the end of the year.	In Year groups 2 - 4, the number of children with PP whose reading age was below their chronological age decreased from 41% to 27% by the end of the year. In Year 1, 80% of children with PP had a reading age in line with or above their chronological age. Although more than 11 children with PP were in the bottom 20% of readers by the end of the year, 94% made expected or better progress in their reading.
Improve progress in phonics in KS1	Children deemed to be PP, will close any gaps in their phonic knowledge and will pass the Phonic Screening at the end of Year 1.	In KS1, the Phonic Screening test shows 94% of all children met the expected standard compared with 80% nationally. 80% of children with PP achieved the expected standard compared with 68% of PP pupils nationally. For our disadvantaged cohort, this showed an increase from their mock screening marks in the spring term where only 40% were on track to pass. In addition, by the end of KS1, all Year 2 children had passed the screening.
Progress in mathematics	Children deemed to be PP in Y2-4 will be accessing Greater Depth challenges in mathematics on a regular basis and some will achieve ARE+/GD at the end of the year. The percentage of children who are BARE in mathematics will decrease and fewer than 7 children deemed to be PP will be in the bottom 20% in mathematics by the end of the year.	Book scrutiny, drop-ins and discussions with teachers showed that the majority of children with PP were accessing next steps challenges on a regular basis. At the start of the year, only 0.5% of pupils with PP in Y 2-4 were deemed ARE+/GD but by the end of the year this had increased to 23%. At the end of the year 42 of all children in years 1-4 were in the bottom 20% and of these, 8 were children with pupil premium. However, of these, 75% made expected or better progress.
Progress in mathematics	The percentage of all children achieving 80% or above in the Multiplication Check at the end of Y4 will increase and this will include some children deemed to be PP.	The percentage of all children scoring 80% or above in the Multiplication Check was 81% (52% in the previous year), and this included 63% (0% in the previous year) of our disadvantaged children.
Progress in mathematics	Children in YR/Y1/Y2 will have improved number fluency.	Number fluency was prioritised across the school everyday and anecdotal feedback, book looks and drop-ins show that children in years R-2 demonstrated improved mental mathematics and quicker recall of number facts.
Concentration and engagement	YR and Y1 children deemed to be PP show greater concentration and maintain	Staff CPD on WalkThrus and particularly on setting and sustaining expectations has ensured consistency of expectations



	engagement and Y2-4 PP children are more confident mathematicians.	across all classes and drop-ins show that concentration and engagement has improved. ' <i>Engaged</i> ' is one of our core school values which is consistently promoted and modelled so pupils are clear about what it 'looks like'. However, this remains an area of focus and we will seek to further enhance this outcome.
PP children will have improved attendance.	Parents of children deemed to be PP will have better engagement with their children's learning and children deemed to be PP will have improved attendance.	<p>Engaging parents of children with pupil premium remains an area for development. We have tried various methods of communication including coffee mornings and invitations to discuss issues affecting individuals but take-up remains stubbornly low. We will seek to develop next steps in the coming year including a survey of all our parents of children with PP to try to improve engagement.</p> <p>Attendance of non-PP children was 96.5% which is 1.2% above FFT National. Attendance of children with PP was 93.0% which is 1.3% above FFT National. For the 2023-24 academic year the school received a certificate of attendance from FFT for being one of the top 10% of all FFT primary schools in England. Attendance of children with PP remains a priority for action in the next academic year as we are aiming for 95% attendance from all our disadvantaged cohort.</p>

## Externally provided programmes

*Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you used your pupil premium to fund in the previous academic year.*

Programme	Provider
Forest Schools	Outdoor Adventurers