

Pupil premium strategy statement – Hartlepool Free 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	46
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	72%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3-year plans are recommended)	2025 - 2028
Date this statement was published	October 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2027
Statement authorised by	Trust Board
Pupil premium lead	Tristan Keates – Principal Sarah Harrington – Operations and Finance Manager
Governor / Trustee lead	Jake Heightley and Stephen McGhee

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£28,560
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£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>	£28,560

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

School Context

Hartlepool Free School is a new, specialist SEMH setting in Hartlepool, supporting pupils with complex social, emotional, and mental health needs. A significant majority of our learners are eligible for Pupil Premium, reflecting high levels of disadvantage, social vulnerability, and barriers to education.

Our pupils often face multiple challenges, including adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), disrupted education, poor attendance histories, and unmet social and emotional needs. These factors impact their engagement, attainment, and readiness for adulthood.

Intent

Our intent is to use Pupil Premium funding to:

- Remove barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils
- Improve engagement, attendance, and readiness to learn
- Develop pupils' social, emotional, and behavioural skills
- Raise attainment and progress from individual starting points
- Ensure all pupils are prepared for successful transition into education, employment, or training.

We recognise that academic success in an SEMH setting is dependent on meeting wider needs first. Therefore, our approach prioritises **relationships, regulation, and resilience** alongside high-quality teaching. This, alongside our core values of Kindness, Personal Responsibility, Resilience and Growth Mindset help our students, especially those who are disadvantaged to have an improved start in education setting them on the right path for positive next steps.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Poor self-regulation and emotional literacy.
2	Low attendance and persistent absence.

3	Gaps in literacy and numeracy due to disrupted education.
4	Limited parental engagement and low parental aspirations.
5	Social, communication, and attachment difficulties.
6	Mental health challenges, including anxiety and trauma.
7	Reduced aspirations and limited exposure to enrichment opportunities.
8	Limited social and cultural capital.

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
1. Remove barriers to learning.	• Pupils report they enjoy school. • Pupils gain resilience to manage a school day. • Pupils respond well to the challenge and develop their interests. • Parents are engaged in their child's education
2. Improve engagement, attendance and readiness to learn.	• Behaviour incidents reduced. • Attendance improved.
3. Develop emotional social and behavioural skills.	• Pupils behaviour improved on trips. • Pupils develop local knowledge and cultural capital. • Pupils respond well and have gaps in development understood and planned for.
4. Raise attainment and progress from individual starting points.	• Pupils make good progress from starting points. • Pupils improve their reading.

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: internal

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Relational training provided to all staff, Zones of Regulation, Thrive.	Relational practice strengthens pupils' sense of belonging, improves emotional wellbeing and self-regulation, and increases engagement, attendance, and positive behaviour, enabling disadvantaged pupils to access learning more successfully.	1,2,3,5,6
Quality first teaching	Effective adaptive teaching can improve pupils' engagement, confidence and independence while supporting academic progress and reducing barriers to learning. It also reduces the risk of pupils becoming unnecessarily dependent on separate or additional provision by strengthening the capacity of classroom teachers to meet a wider range of needs through high-quality everyday practice. For pupils with SEND, Quality First Teaching should therefore be viewed as the foundation of inclusive provision, with targeted and specialist interventions complementing rather than replacing strong classroom teaching. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/metacognition	1,2,3,7
Thrive programme	Evidence suggests particularly positive outcomes for pupils with SEND. An independent evaluation reported improvements in SEND pupils' wellbeing measures and noted that Thrive was especially effective when implemented consistently across the whole school and embedded over time.	1,2,5,6

	https://web.thriveapproach.com/hubfs/Thrive/Thrive%20Impact%20Ed%20Evaluation%20Report%202026%20PDF.pdf https://wp.cdn.thriveftc.com/prod/uploads/2020/03/Thrive-Users-Evaluation-Survey.pdf	
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support, structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £7,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Outdoor learning, fully funded trips and visits	Learning outside the classroom can improve engagement, confidence, wellbeing, self efficacy and social skills for pupils with disadvantage and may support improved attendance. Enjoying experiences together may helping young people develop a greater sense of belonging and readiness to learn, and to allow them to develop greater social capital. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/englands-largest-outdoor-learning-project-reveals-children-more-motivated-to-learn-when-outside https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-mental-health-of-babies-children-and-young-people/improving-the-mental-health-of-babies-children-and-young-people-methodology-literature-review-and-stakeholder-feedback-that-informed-the-framework	1,2,3,5,6,7,8
Education psychology input	Educational Psychologist (EP) input can have a significant impact on pupils, staff, families, and whole-school practice by improving identification of needs, supporting inclusion, and helping schools implement evidence-based strategies. Educational psychologists are trained to understand learning, behaviour, emotional wellbeing, and child development. The British Psychological Society highlights that EPs contribute to reducing exclusions, improving inclusion,	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8

	supporting mental health, and driving whole-school and system-wide improvements. DFE research supports this approach. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-send-reform-developing-the-experts-at-hand-offer/developing-and-delivering-the-experts-at-hand-offer-in-year-1-supporting-guidance	
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Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £21,560

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Aspiration of 100% poverty proofed day including provision of all equipment, uniform, lunches and snacks	Children experiencing poverty are more likely to face barriers including lower attainment, poorer attendance, reduced participation, and increased social, emotional, and mental health needs. These challenges can be compounded for pupils with SEND and those who have experienced ACEs. Poverty-informed approaches, including reducing hidden school costs and ensuring all pupils can participate fully in school life, help improve educational equity and reduce disadvantage. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/link-between-attendance-and-attainment https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/pupil-premium-statement-research-project https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-school-uniforms/cost-of-school-uniforms	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8

Alternative provision included in timetable to improve enjoyment and motivation to learn	Alternative Provision is used as a targeted intervention for disadvantaged pupils experiencing significant barriers to learning. By providing tailored academic, pastoral, and emotional support, high quality AP improves engagement, attendance, behaviour, and wellbeing, helping pupils to successfully access education and achieve positive long-term outcomes. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/pupil-premium-statement-research-project https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision-in-local-areas-in-england-a-thematic-review/alternative-provision-in-local-areas-in-england-a-thematic-review	1,2,3,5,6,7,8
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Total budgeted cost: £ 28,960

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

The biggest impact for students has been seen in attendance and behaviour, as evidenced below;

- Disadvantaged pupils attendance improved from 2024-25 academic year, from 56.7% to 64%, this included a cohort increase from 15 to 38.
- Authorised absence decreased from 14.6% to 11.9%
- Negative behaviour incidents decreased from 146 in 2024-25, which could be statistically measured as 10 incidents per head. This has reduced to 122 incidents in 2025-26 (3.2 per head). This is a significant impact.
- Suspensions slightly decreased from 105 to 100. (7 per head down to 2.6 per head). When considering the changed cohort, this is a significant reduction.
- Reduction in behaviour incidents for PP pupils last year to this year.
- Positive behaviour for disadvantaged students is significantly lower than for non disadvantaged students, although it is anecdotally improved on 2024-25. The 2025-26 year was the first year that positive behaviour was measured in the MIS system.
- Student attainment made steady progress but with the biggest gains being in outdoor learning and students EHCP outcomes.

Attainment average grade (school internal data)

Year	2024-25	2025-26
English	2	2
Maths	2	2
Humanities	1.7	1.8
Science	2	2
EHCP	1.8	2.2
Outdoor learning	1.8	2

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
NA	

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

<i>For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information:</i> How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year
NA
The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils
NA

Further information (optional)

Use this space to provide any further information about your pupil premium strategy. For example, about your strategy planning, implementation and evaluation, or other activity that you are delivering to support disadvantaged pupils that is not dependent on pupil premium funding.