Pupil premium strategy statement – Mereside Primary Academy

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	230
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	72.51%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2024/2025 - 2026/2027
Date this statement was published	November 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	October 2026
Statement authorised by	John McDonald (Headteacher)
Pupil premium lead	Lauren Richardson
Governor / Trustee lead	Martin Pickles

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£ 261,100
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years *(enter £0 if not applicable)*	£ 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*	£ 261,100

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At Mereside Primary Academy we understand the needs of our community and our vulnerable pupils, such as those receiving support as part of the safeguarding continuum of need and those with SEND. The activities we have outlined in this statement are intended to support their needs, regardless of whether they are disadvantaged or not.

Developing high-quality teaching inline with our academy improvement plan (January 2025), is at the heart of our approach. Our Vision (January 2025) is 'For all pupils to learn the high quality curriculum through fluency in oracy, literacy and maths; ensuring all our pupils are ready for the next stage in education'. We understand our disadvantaged pupils will require the most support in these areas, and these are the ones which will impact on the progress and outcomes our pupils achieve. We have reviewed our strategy in the light of our school data for end of EYFS, PSC, MTC and KS2 outcomes, internal data and external evidence to consider if this approach will have the greatest impact on closing the disadvantaged attainment gap, and will at the same time support the non-disadvantaged pupils in our school. The intention that non-disadvantaged pupils' attainment will improve significantly from the previous academic year, alongside progress for their disadvantaged peers.

Our approach will be responsive to identified contextualised challenges and individual needs, including any impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our approach is now informed through our updated curriculum 2025, newly introduced Mereside Way to Teaching and Learning and Mereside Way to Assessment September 2025.

To support staff to significantly increase pupil progress and outcomes for all pupils including those who are disadvantaged:

- *all staff will take responsibility for the progress of all pupils including those who are disadvantaged.*

- *as a result of our newly introduced effective assessment systems 2025, staff now act early to intervene at the point need is identified*

- *ensure disadvantaged pupils are challenged in the work that they're set through the updated curriculum 2025*

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	*Attendance* *Our attendance data over the last academic year indicates that this area remains a significant challenge, we continue to be within the highest 20% of all schools for absence and persistent absence.* *28.3% of disadvantaged pupils have been 'persistently absent' compared to 15.2% of their peers during the last academic year 24/25. Absenteeism continues to negatively impact all pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged pupils'.* *https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-attendance-in-schools/2024-week-29*
2	*Reading* *In the academic year 24/25 internal and external data, and quality assurance identified that reading was significantly below the national expectations for many children across school. Particularly for the cohort of children who are disadvantaged.* *Y1 PSC - 73%* *Y6 Reading - 43%* *Audits and observations show pupil working below chronological reading ages are struggling to access our broad and balanced curriculum*
3	*Oracy* *The senior leadership team at Mereside Primary School, with support from the trust, has been investigating the decline in end of key stage outcomes.* *A key barrier to closing this gap is the **limited vocabulary** of our disadvantaged students. This struggle makes it difficult for them to access and understand new concepts, making the challenge of improving results even greater.* *Upon entry data continues to show that we have a higher percentage of pupils working below the expected age related standards across subjects. Disadvantaged pupils typically arrive below age expectations compared to their peers. Disadvantaged pupils struggle to close the gap across the school.* *A challenge in developing pupils' ability to use a wide range of vocabulary is evident for the disadvantaged children.*
4	*Maths* *In the academic year 24/25 internal and external data and quality assurance identified that maths was significantly below for many children across school. Particularly for the cohort of children who are disadvantaged.* *Y4 MTC - 22% achieving full marks* *Y6 Maths - 27% (22% PP pupils passed)* *At the end of KS2, maths results were significantly below the national average.*

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
Attendance	
To improve attendance for all pupils so the vast majority of pupils are meeting the national attendance average by implementing our new Mereside Attendance Strategy 2025. This is particularly important for our disadvantaged pupils due to their vulnerabilities	Successful implementation of our new Mereside Attendance Strategy 2025. A continual improvement in attendance. The overall attendance rate for all pupils being in-line or above national 95.4% The percentage of all pupils who are persistently absent being significantly reduced and broadly in-line with national 20.7% Reduction in fixed penalty notice and PWO case load
Reading	
The majority of pupils achieve the phonics screening check at the end of year 1, through the consistent delivery of Read, Write Inc, our systematic phonics scheme introduced in Spring 2025.	From pupils' starting points, a continued improvement in progress can be seen at each assessment point for the RWI phonics scheme. An increase in % of pupils achieving the Phonics Screen Check at the end of year 1, inline or above local and national data. A reduction in % of pupils requiring RWI catch up intervention in year 2. A reduction in % of KS2 pupils accessing Freshstart catch up interventions. An increase % of pupils reading at the correct chronological age, ensuring that the majority of pupils are meeting age related expectations.
The majority of pupils are able to read fluently by the end of KS1	An increase in % of pupils accessing RWI comprehension at the correct chronological year group, ensuring that the majority of pupils are meeting age related expectations. A reduction in % of KS2 pupils accessing Freshstart catch up interventions.
The majority of pupils are able to read with comprehension, texts matched to their chronological age.	A reduction in the gap from pupils starting point to their expected reading comprehension age, for the majority of pupils. Ensuring the majority of pupils are reading at their chronological reading comprehension age. In order to access the broad and balanced curriculum.

Oracy		
To reduce the gap in communication and language by the end of EYFS for the vast majority of pupils.	Assessments and observations indicate significantly improved communication and oral language skills by the end of EYFS.	
Pupils are observed to be using and understanding a greater range of disciplinary vocabulary	Disciplinary vocabulary is identified as part as our fully updated sequenced curriculum Teachers are encouraging and supporting opportunities to develop oracy in the classroom Pupils are observed using to be using a wider range of vocabulary	
Maths		
Improve maths attainment for disadvantaged pupils at the end of KS2	In school tracking data and the end of Key Stage assessments will show an increase in the number of children working at age related expectation year on year for maths, and an increase in the number of disadvantaged pupils achieving the higher standard at the end of KS2. Progress data will show children making expected or above progress. Any gap in disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged will be targeted by intervention and monitored on a half termly basis.	

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: £ 100,004

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Reading		
Effectively deliver the Read Write Inc systematic and synthetic phonic programme.	Engagement with EEF: effective deployment of Teaching Assistants https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/teachingassistant-interventions Teaching of Systematic phonics https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/phonics	2
To quality assure and provide guidance to support the effective		

implementation of the RWI program and Freshstart.	Impact of RWInc: https://www.ruthmiskin.com/media/filer_public/9c/b5/9cb53f78-7520-453e-a434-2bac77df09c7/ruth_miskin_literacy_inc_-_read_write_inc_research_and_evidence_xbviibh.pdf	
Ensure pupils have all pupils have decodable phonics reading books to support their learning in school. *Trained staff to correctly use resources effectively, efficiently and with fidelity to Read, Write Inc scheme.*	Impact of phonics: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/phonics	
To provide opportunities for pupils to read at home using accessible texts by: *Purchase decodable reading books that match the Read, Write Inc scheme, for pupils to read.* *Purchase of Oxford Owl online subscription for pupils to access further appropriate decodable texts for enjoyment when at home.* *Purchase of MYON online subscription for pupils post phonics to access age appropriate texts at the age related reading ability.*	Research-informed SSP best practice dictates that home reading materials must align precisely with the grapheme-phoneme correspondences taught in school. This fidelity ensures pupils apply decoding skills with high accuracy, reinforcing successful reading strategies, building confidence, and accelerating the path toward early fluency (DfE Reading Framework guidance). Digital access ensures equitable access to a high volume of accurately matched texts, crucial for building reading volume and fluency, irrespective of socio-economic barriers to obtaining physical books. The platform also offers resources to support parents/carers in effectively supporting their child's phonics-based reading (The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) emphasises parental involvement in literacy).	2
Ensure pupils have texts that help them develop their comprehension and fluency skills. *This included purchasing the accelerated reader program Sept 25, and training staff to deliver it with consistency.*	Once decoding is secure, focus shifts to the development of reading comprehension, vocabulary, and background knowledge. This platform facilitates **reading for pleasure** (a strong predictor of academic success) by providing vast choice, and ensures texts are ability-matched (e.g., via Lexile banding) to promote appropriate challenge, stamina, and vocabulary acquisition critical for sustained attainment post-Key Stage 1.	
Correctly assess pupils in order to ensure they are accessing the correct teaching and	When used effectively, diagnostic assessments can indicate areas for development for individual pupils, or across classes and year groups: Diagnostic assessment	EEF	2, 3

resources matched to their reading ability. *Using the standardised diagnostic assessments - STAR reading assessment*		
Oracy		
Reduction in class sizes in order to increase the opportunities for talk.	Quality of Interaction (EEF): The benefit of smaller classes is realised when the space is used to increase the quantity and quality of dialogue. This allows teachers to better monitor, listen, and provide high-quality, targeted feedback on pupils' verbal contributions and understanding.	3
Ensuring vocabulary that matches the curriculum is explicitly taught by teachers.	Vocabulary and Confidence: Smaller groups boost the verbal participation rate, particularly among hesitant or disadvantaged pupils. This directly supports the development of academic vocabulary and oracy by providing more frequent, lower-stakes chances for pupils to verbally process and articulate complex ideas.	3
Maths		
Reduction in class sizes in order to respond to misconceptions promptly	Quality of Interaction (EEF): The benefit of smaller classes is realised when the space is used to increase the quantity and quality of dialogue. This allows teachers to better monitor, listen, and provide high-quality, targeted feedback on pupils' verbal contributions and understanding.	
To incorporate a maths mastery approach in the development of the maths curriculum. *Training for staff to deliver this approach consistently and with impact across the whole school.* *The purchase of resources to support the delivery of the maths curriculum.*	Fidelity and Impact (EEF): High-quality, sustained, subject-specific professional development is required to ensure teachers have the precise subject knowledge and pedagogical skills (e.g., purposeful use of manipulatives, targeted questioning) to deliver the approach with high fidelity and consistency across the whole school. Deep, Secure Understanding: Emphasizes securing conceptual understanding over procedural fluency alone. This slow-and-deep approach prevents knowledge gaps from compounding, directly benefiting Pupil Premium pupils by ensuring solid foundations and improving problem-solving abilities (DfE guidance).	4
Introduce dedicated fluency time in addition	Cognitive Load Theory & Mastery: Ensures the automaticity of key facts and procedures,	4

	reducing the cognitive load during problem-solving tasks. This routine, separate practice supports spaced retrieval, moving knowledge to long-term memory, and directly addresses the National Curriculum aim of fluency.	
to the maths lesson to improve fluency and mastery. *Training for staff to delivery this approach consistently and with impact.*		
We will fund teacher release time to embed key elements of guidance in school and to access Maths Hub resources and CPD (including Teaching for Mastery training).	The DfE non-statutory guidance has been produced in conjunction with the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics, drawing on evidence-based approaches: Mathematics_guidance: key stages 1_and 2 The EEF guidance is based on a range of the best available evidence: Improving Mathematics in Key Stages 2 and 3	4
Training for staff to ensure interventions and strategies are in place eg training in Word Aware, Colourful Semantics	Oral language interventions can have a positive impact on pupils' language skills. Approaches that focus on speaking, listening and a combination of the two show positive impacts on attainment: Oral language interventions	EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	2, 3
SENDCO , through instructional coaching model, supporting effective T&L across the universal offer, including identification of need	Embedding the 5 recommendations (SEND in mainstream) , particular focus on SEND recommendation 2 and SEND recommendation 3: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/educat ion-evidence/guidance-reports/send	2, 3, 4, 5

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

Budgeted cost: £114,656

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Additional phonics sessions targeted at all pupils including disadvantaged who require additional phonics support. This will be delivered in collaboration with our local English hub.	Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base indicating a positive impact on pupils, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds. Targeted phonics interventions have been shown to be more effective when delivered as regular sessions over a period up to 12 weeks: Phonics	Teaching and Learning Toolkit	EEF	2, 3,

This includes the deployment of additional trained members of staff to deliver catch up phonics in reception and year 1, and Freshstart in KS2. *This includes purchasing the additional resources to deliver catch up phonics in KS1 and Freshstart in KS2.*		
Oracy		
'Communicate intervention' led by speech and language therapist and assistant 1 day per week. Interventions across the week led by TAs focus on Reception and KS1.	Oral language interventions can have a positve impact on pupils' language skills. Approaches that focus on speaking, listening and a combination of the two show positive impacts on attainment: Oral language interventions	3
Employ a SEND manager to upskill staff across school in adaptive teaching strategies to develop communication.	Quality First Teaching (EEF): Improves the core quality of teaching by embedding adaptive strategies (differentiation). This is the most effective way to meet the diverse needs of all pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, ensuring learning is accessible *before* the need for intensive intervention.	3
Maths		
Purchasing and trained staff to deliver First Class @ number, mastery @ maths, targeted maths interventions (NCETM)	Mastering number training completed and the training will be disseminated to Teaching assistant colleagues. Mereside are actively engaged with our local maths hub CPD delivered to TAS using guidance taken from : https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/educati on-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/teachingas sistant-interventions DFE recommended resources: https://www.ncetm.org.uk/features/covid-recover yprimary-maths-resources/	3
Employ a SEND manager to upskill staff across school in adaptive teaching strategies to develop the skills and knowledge to support	Quality First Teaching (EEF): Improves the core quality of teaching by embedding adaptive strategies (differentiation). This is the most effective way to meet the diverse needs of all pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, ensuring learning is	

pupils to access maths in the classroom.	accessible before the need for intensive intervention.	

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

Budgeted cost: £82,062

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Attendance		
Consistent delivery of the Mereside Way to attendance	If children do not attend school, they are not able to access our curriculum and therefore creating gaps in learning. Attendance action plan *working together to improve school attendance.*	1
Employment of Pastoral lead x 2 to support pupils' engagement across the school day,so pupils want to attend school..	Attendance and Barrier Removal: Dedicated roles ensure non-academic barriers (emotional, social, and family issues) that cause poor attendance and disengagement are swiftly and effectively addressed through targeted support and family liaison. Academic and Behavioural Outcomes (EEF): Pastoral care is the vehicle for high-quality Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), which is proven to improve attainment, self-regulation, and behaviour, leading to a stronger sense of belonging and a desire to attend school.	1
Use of Pupil Welfare Service and SLT lead, including the use of attendance rewards to positively impact on attendance and punctuality	Local authority SLA; professional partner Engagement with DFE guidance: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schoolattendance/framework-for-securing-full-attendanceactions-for-schools-and-local-authorities	1
Contingency fund for issues that may impact on attendance	Based on our experiences and those of similar schools to ours, we have identified a need to set funding aside to respond quickly to needs that may impact on attendance and have not yet been identified for example providing uniform.	1
Improving pupils cultural capital experiences by	Trips, visits and experiences, including the use of wider Music opps, are carefully planned to ensure that children positively experience artistic,	3

including 6 trips a year to enhance knowledge and stimulate opportunities for discussion, therefore promoting oracy.	musical, sporting and cultural opportunities.These are provided through the grant of —--provided by however there is a short fall as residential trips are not covered. https://revisesociology.com/2016/04/05/culturalcapital-and-educational-achievement/	
(From 24/25 there is a reduction in spending in this area, as the school has successfully obtained a grant in this area)	'Cultural capital is one of the most important concepts within the sociology of education, and it goes a long way to explaining why middle class children do better in education than working class children.' Pupils require these experiences to be able to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world, helping them increase their oracy and understanding of texts.	

Total budgeted cost: £ 296,722

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Outline the performance of your disadvantaged pupils in the previous academic year and explain how it has been assessed. You should draw on:

- *Data from the previous academic year's national assessments and qualifications, once published.*
- *Comparison to local and national averages and outcomes achieved by your school's non-disadvantaged pupils (a note of caution can be added to signal that pupils included in the performance data will have experienced some disruption due to Covid-19 earlier in their schooling, which will have affected individual pupils and schools differently).*
- *Information from summative and formative assessments the school has undertaken.*
- *School data and observations used to assess wider issues impacting disadvantaged pupils' performance, including attendance, behaviour and wellbeing*

You should state whether you are on target to achieve the outcomes of your strategy (as outlined in the Intended Outcomes section above) and outline your analysis of what aspects of your strategy are/are not working well.

If last year marked the end of a previous pupil premium strategy plan, you should set out your assessment of how successfully the intended outcomes of that plan were met.

Overall Target and success criteria	*Evaluation impact*
To ensure all pupils have made expected or better than expected progress through ensuring high quality teaching, alongside targeted interventions. **Success criteria (following 3-year plan)** Key stage 2 results- 75% of disadvantaged children meet at least expected standards. At all key assessment points in school, all pupils continue to make at least expected progress, with a greater number of pupil premium pupils achieving national standards.	*2024 data for:* *End of KS2 results:* ● *Maths: 61%* ● *Reading: 75%* ● *Writing: 72.2%* *Compared to other Blackpool Authority primary schools:* ● *Reading had + 2.6% gap score* ● *Writing had a + 5.6% score.* *58.3% of the year 6 were in receipt of Pupil premium funding.* *When compared to the national data for pupils in receipt of pupil premium, taken from Perspective Lite, pupil outcomes were higher than national in all areas:* ● *Reading 71% compared to NAT*

	62.9% ● *Writing 66.7% compared to NAT 59.1%* ● *Maths 61.9% compared to NAT 59.6%* *Across school, internal assessments confirm that disadvantaged pupils achieve similar to their peers.*
To ensure SEMH needs are identified and successfully met with access to relevant outside agencies where required. **Success criteria (following 3-year plan)** The profile of SEMH across school is raised with all staff trained through CPD, enabling greater confidence in identifying needs. The Senior Mental Health Lead's role within school has been established and the role embedded to ensure sustainability for the future. Demonstrated by: - Pupil voice - Teacher and parent observations and discussions - Successful transitions between key stages in school	*Evaluation of success criteria* ● *100% of staff have received training in supporting pupils with SEMH needs including Trauma Informed practice and FCATs graduated approach to meeting the needs of pupils with SEMH.* ● *Observations confirm, staff training has impacted positively on staff's interactions and abilities to support the behaviour of pupils who have identified SEMH needs.* ● *100% of year 6 pupils in receipt of pupil premium transitioned to the next stage of their education.* ● *Pupil voice confirms 91% of pupils, including those in receipt of pupil premium. understood, for the majority of their time in school, who is available to support them.*
Attendance in line with or improved attendance for PP pupils **Success criteria (following 3-year plan)** To close the gap between whole school attendance and pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding. Reduce proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium who are classed as persistent absentees. A downwards trend is evident in closing the gap and a sustainable model of support has been established.	*Evaluation of success criteria* *Academic year 2024/2025* *Total attendance 95.4%* *Academic year 2023/2024* *Total attendance for 92.8%* *PP total 92%* *Non PP total 95%* *Persistent absence total 25.4%* *PP total 28.3%* *Non PP total 15.2%*
Effective and sustainable systems of working with families of pupils in receipt of pupil premium.	*Evaluation of success criteria* ● *In 2023/24 school were awarded the Investors in Family Award.*

Success criteria (following 3-year plan) To achieve the Investors In Family award. Develop the new family hub The role is established and embedded in school and meeting the needs of all stakeholders.	● *A family hub has been created is well established and running successfully. This work has been supported by the employment of an School Home Support worker.*
Improve standards in speech and language across school. **Success criteria (following 3-year plan)** For a greater number of pupils to access Communicate services within school. To work alongside NHS speech and language developing new ways of working. Silver award for ELKLAN achieved. To have further embedded Blackpool Graduated Response, utilising all agencies to meet the needs of all pupils.	*Evaluation of success criteria* ● *Silver award for ELKLAN was achieved in 23/24.* ● *Welcomm data demonstrates impact of early intervention of speech and language needs which resulted in 72% achieving expected standard in communication and interaction at the end of reception for 23/24.* ● *There is evidence of progress in speech and language development for the vast majority of our identified speech and language cohort, with the majority of pupils in receipt of pupil premium* *N.B - School has invested in communicate services (Speech and language therapists) to support school one day a week, with an identified cohort of pupils.*
To develop our entitlement curriculum and learning opportunities for all children to thrive, learn and aspire to future success. **Success criteria (following 3-year plan)** Entitlement offer embedded with a wider range of opportunities. Residential offers available. Community links made to further embed the careers unit offer.	*Evaluation of success criteria* ● *75% of pupils participating in residential trips across school were pupils in receipt of pupil premium.* ● *100% of pupils in receipt of pupil premium have accessed at least two or more trips in the academic year.* ● *100% of pupils in receipt of pupil premium in UKS2 accessed and completed careers education.* ● *49% of pupils in receipt of pupil premium have accessed after school clubs.*

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
Bug Club	Pearson
Spelling Shed	EdShed
WellComm	GL assessment
Talk Boost	ICAN
Early Talk Boost	ICAN
Big Book of Ideas	GL assessment
Lexia	Lexia
PWO	Blackpool Council
Unstoppables/Fit to go	Blackpool Football Club Community Trust
White Rose Maths	Trinity MAT
Counselling service	Trinity Hospice Karen Brandwood
Bereavement Counselling	Trinity Hospice
Speech and Language	Communicate
NELI	Nuffield
Reading and Rugby	Fylde Rugby Club/ National Literacy Strategy
Phonics Tracker	Phonics Tracker
Resilience Coach	Blackpool Council

Service pupil premium funding

For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information: **How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year**
N/A

The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils
N/A

Further information (optional)

Meeting the needs of our families, and responding accordingly, we have used the funding to supplement the following in order to safeguard children and families and ensure pupils in receipt of pupil premium can access learning alongside their peers:

- Wrap around care
- Uniform
- Swimming kit
- Personal care items

- Trips