

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 effect that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	St Nicholas C of E Primary School
Number of pupils in school	409 pupils
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	21.8% 89 pupils
Academic years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	3 years 2024 - 2027
Date this statement was published	31/12/2025
Full review completed	December 2024
Date on which it will be reviewed	Autumn Term 2025
Statement authorised by	Laura Newell
Pupil Premium Lead	Hannah Allen
Governor / Trustee Lead	Cressida Dolphin

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£156,551
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	
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	£156,551

Part A: Pupil Premium Strategy Plan

Statement of Intent

At St Nicholas C of E Primary School, we are committed to ensuring that every pupil, regardless of their background or the challenges they face, achieves significant progress and high attainment across all subject areas. Our pupil premium strategy focuses on supporting disadvantaged pupils in reaching these goals, including those who are already high achievers.

The primary purpose of Pupil Premium funding is to guarantee that all pupils benefit from high-quality Universal Provision (UP) through outstanding teaching. Evidence shows that this approach has the greatest impact on reducing the attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils while also benefiting their non-disadvantaged peers. To achieve this, we allocate Pupil Premium funding to initiatives such as Continued Professional Development (CPD) for staff and targeted academic interventions. These interventions, carefully designed by our team, aim to address learning gaps through methods like small group and one-on-one tuition led by teachers and teaching assistants.

Local Context

St Nicholas C of E Primary School is situated in a community where deprivation affects pupils in two dimensions, with rates of 23–25%. This context underscores the importance of targeted support to ensure all pupils can succeed. Since 2020, the number of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding has steadily increased, with a 1% rise recorded last year. This gradual growth highlights the evolving needs within our school population and the critical role that Pupil Premium funding plays in addressing these challenges.

Our Approach

Our strategy is informed by robust diagnostic assessments and tailored to address both common challenges and individual needs, rather than relying on assumptions about disadvantage. To ensure its success, we have adopted a cohesive approach that:

- Challenges disadvantaged pupils with ambitious learning goals.
- Intervenes early when needs are identified.
- Promotes a whole-school culture of responsibility and high expectations for disadvantaged pupils' outcomes.

We recognise the diverse challenges faced by vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND, those who have a social worker, or those serving as Young Carers. The activities outlined in this strategy are designed to support these pupils' needs, irrespective of their eligibility for Pupil Premium funding.

Wellbeing and Enrichment

We understand that a child's academic performance is closely linked to their self-esteem and overall wellbeing. Therefore, we have dedicated a portion of our funding to implementing the Thrive approach, which prioritises the social and emotional wellbeing of all children. Additionally, Pupil Premium funding supports pastoral care, including social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) initiatives, and enrichment activities such as Thrive Breakfast Club, counselling, mentoring, music therapy, physical development programs, and Forest School experiences.

Through these efforts, we aim to create an environment where all pupils can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally, while working diligently to close the attainment gap in our unique local context.

Challenges

At St Nicholas C of E Primary School, we recognise that addressing the barriers faced by Pupil Premium children requires a thorough understanding of the challenges they encounter. These challenges are influenced by a combination of individual circumstances, local context, and broader societal factors. The key challenges we have identified include:

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Attainment Gaps While the majority of disadvantaged pupils make expected or above-expected progress (93–96% in Summer 2025), attainment gaps remain significant. Only 35-57% of Pupil Premium children are achieving the expected standard or above, compared to 64-80% of their non-disadvantaged peers. Addressing this gap remains a primary focus of our strategy.
2	Socio-Economic Barriers and Aspirations Local deprivation rates (23–25%) contribute to socio-economic challenges faced by our pupils, limiting access to educational resources and enrichment opportunities. This can sometimes affect the expectations and aspirations for disadvantaged children within their families and communities. However, St Nicholas C of E Primary School has high aspirations for all children, regardless of their background, and works to inspire ambition and achievement for every pupil.
3	Emotional and Mental Wellbeing There has been a notable rise in pupils requiring emotional support, with 14% of children accessing this provision in 2024-2025. This includes counselling, support from services such as RISE and the Shakespeare Hospice, and therapeutic interventions like music therapy. The number of referrals to counselling services continues to grow, highlighting the ongoing impact of family circumstances on children's mental health and ability to thrive.
4	Attendance and Punctuality Attendance among disadvantaged pupils was 93.2% last year (a 1% increase on the previous year), compared to the school's overall attendance of 94.7%. Low attendance and punctuality often stem from challenges such as family instability or caring responsibilities, directly impacting pupils' engagement and progress.

5	Speech, Language, and Communication Needs (SLCN) Baseline data highlights continued concerns around the speech and language skills and vocabulary acquisition of children entering Reception, especially among disadvantaged pupils. These gaps can hinder their ability to access the full curriculum and make accelerated progress.
6	Complex and Overlapping Needs A significant number of Pupil Premium children are part of multiple vulnerable groups. Many require support through Thrive or SEND provision, and Thrive data consistently identifies gaps in their development. Additionally, many of these children have experienced multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), such as trauma, loss, or instability in their early years, which further impact their emotional and academic development. These overlapping needs necessitate highly individualised approaches to enable children to flourish.
7	Impact of Local Deprivation Family circumstances linked to local deprivation have worsened post-pandemic, with many disadvantaged families facing increased instability. These challenges are reflected in the rising number of children accessing emotional support services, such as those provided by the Mental Health in Schools Team or CBT counsellors.

By addressing these challenges through targeted interventions, high-quality teaching, and a holistic focus on wellbeing, we aim to close the attainment gap and create an environment where all children, regardless of background, can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Intended Outcomes

To address the challenges faced by our disadvantaged pupils, we have established the following intended outcomes to support their academic, social, and emotional development. This explains the outcomes we are aiming for **by the end of our current strategy plan (3 years)**, and how we will measure whether they have been achieved.

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Attainment Gaps The percentage of Pupil Premium pupils achieving the expected standard or above in reading, writing, and maths will increase year-on-year, narrowing the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.	• The percentage of Pupil Premium pupils achieving the expected standard or above in reading, writing, and maths increases annually, reducing the gap with non-disadvantaged peers by at least 10% by Summer 2025. • Current progress data indicates that at least 93% of disadvantaged pupils make expected or above-expected progress in reading, writing, and maths. • Regular assessments (e.g. termly pupil progress reviews) demonstrate steady improvement in disadvantaged pupils' attainment. • To narrow the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and maths, both at ARE and GD.

Socio-Economic Barriers and Aspirations All children, regardless of background, will have access to enriching opportunities that build cultural capital, broaden horizons, and raise aspirations for their future.	• A higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils will participate in extracurricular activities, enrichment trips, and programmes aimed at inspiring ambition, with feedback reflecting increased confidence and engagement. • At least 85% of disadvantaged pupils participate in one or more enrichment opportunities (e.g. extracurricular clubs, cultural visits) during the academic year. • Pupil surveys show increased confidence, ambition, and a positive attitude towards learning and future aspirations. • Feedback from parents and carers indicates greater engagement with school-led initiatives that support their child's education and aspirations.
Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Disadvantaged pupils will receive targeted emotional and mental health support to help them develop resilience, emotional regulation, and readiness to learn.	• Thrive data will show significant progress in the social and emotional development of disadvantaged pupils, and the proportion of pupils accessing emotional support will stabilise or decrease as needs are met effectively. • A decrease in the number of incidents recorded on the school's behaviour management system related to emotional dysregulation. • Pupils requiring support from external mental health professionals are responded to swiftly, with a focus on early intervention. • Pupil feedback reflects improved confidence, resilience, and readiness to learn.
Attendance and Punctuality Attendance among disadvantaged pupils will improve, reducing the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils. Persistent absenteeism and number of late marks among disadvantaged pupils will decrease.	• By Summer 2026, attendance for disadvantaged pupils will rise to 94% or higher, in line with the school average of 94.9% and closing the gap with the MAT target of 96%. • Disadvantaged pupils' attendance is closely monitored, with targeted support resulting in fewer attendance-related interventions year-on-year and late marks decrease. • Punctuality records improve, with the number of late arrivals among disadvantaged pupils decreasing termly.
Speech, Language, and Communication Needs (SLCN) Disadvantaged pupils entering Reception will make accelerated	• Speech and language baseline data will show improved outcomes for disadvantaged children. • Reception pupils with identified SLCN make progress in their speech and language development, as

progress in speech, language, and vocabulary acquisition, enabling them to fully access the curriculum. Disadvantage pupils (across the whole school) have continued access to targeted interventions for speech and language needs.	evidenced by pre- and post-intervention assessments. - Targeted vocabulary programmes lead to measurable improvements in spoken and written language skills by the end of Key Stage 1. - Feedback from teachers and parents highlights enhanced communication skills in children receiving speech and language interventions.
Complex and Overlapping Needs Disadvantaged pupils with additional vulnerabilities, including SEND or adverse childhood experiences, will receive holistic, personalised support to meet their needs and ensure they can thrive academically and socially.	- Assessment systems will show sustained improvements in both academic outcomes and social-emotional development for pupils with overlapping needs, with regular reviews demonstrating positive outcomes. - Families of these pupils engage positively with the school's provision, including SEND and pastoral support. - Staff report increased confidence and competence in addressing the needs of pupils with complex challenges following CPD initiatives.
Impact of Local Deprivation Disadvantaged pupils will have their basic needs met, including emotional, social, and physical well-being, to minimise the impact of deprivation on their learning.	- Feedback from families indicates that support services have had a tangible positive impact on their child's education and well-being. - Disadvantaged pupils report feeling supported and equipped to engage fully with their learning environment.

Activity in this Academic Year

This details how we intend to spend our pupil premium **this academic year** to address the challenges listed above.

Teaching

Budgeted cost: £87,635

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Additional TA support in focus areas of the school	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/teaching-assistant-interventions	1, 6

Continue to embed the Thrive approach within our setting including ongoing CPD for staff Parent Thrive training to support parents provided through Family Thrive.	Currently, 12.36% (11 children) of children in our setting are accessing additional emotional support through Thrive sessions (autumn 2025). *Full-time Thrive practitioner is currently on leave so this is less than normal but will be expected to rise on her return. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/social-and-emotional-learning https://www.thriveapproach.com/about-thrive/impact-of-thrive/	3, 6, 7
Forest school sessions for all children	Key findings of Forest Research: https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/forest-schools-impact-on-young-children-in-england-and-wales/ The evaluation suggests Forest Schools make a difference in the following ways: • Confidence: children had the freedom, time and space to learn and demonstrate independence • Social skills: children gained increased awareness of the consequences of their actions on peers through team activities such as sharing tools and participating in play • Communication: language development was prompted by the children's sensory experiences • Motivation: the woodland tended to fascinate the children and they developed a keenness to participate and the ability to concentrate over longer periods of time • Physical skills: these improvements were characterised by the development of physical stamina and gross and fine motor skills • Knowledge and understanding: the children developed an interest in the natural surroundings and respect for the environment	1, 2, 3, 6, 7
Beacon Training	Beacon Behaviour Support for Schools specialist support provides opportunities for staff to look at the provision we offer for our children. Behaviour support will work with staff to: • Carry out assessments • Develop staff toolkits, strategies and identify resources to effectively support children • Develop interventions • Implement tailored support plans • Promote whole school strategies • Collaborate with communities • Continue to develop de-escalation techniques • Provide staff training for professional development	6

To improve children's mental health and well-being by supporting them to develop their emotional literacy. • OPAL (Outside, Play and Learning) • Mental Health Champions • Zones of Regulation • My Happy Mind	To develop outstanding opportunities for outside play for all of our children. https://outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/The-Case-For-Play-In-Schools-web-1-1.pdf To give children the ownership of managing their own mental-wellbeing. https://www.mind.org.uk/media-a/6090/mental-health-champion-toolkit-full-version.pdf To teach children self-regulation and emotional control; enabling them to identify how they feel and how to manage those feelings. https://zonesofregulation.com/ To help children build resilience, self-esteem and confidence by having a positive well-being. https://myhappymind.org/programmes/schools-programme/	3
AWARD Recognition	We believe that high-quality outdoor play is a vital part of children's development and wellbeing. Research shows that play supports physical health, emotional resilience, social skills, creativity and problem-solving, and helps children return to the classroom ready to learn. For many children, especially those who are disadvantaged, school may be the only place where they regularly access safe, stimulating outdoor play. Achieving OPAL Platinum has particular significance for our disadvantaged children. High-quality play provision helps to reduce inequalities by ensuring that all children — regardless of background, family circumstances or access to outdoor space at home — can benefit from rich play experiences. Our play offer provides: • Equitable access to a wide range of play opportunities, resources and environments that some children may not otherwise experience. • Opportunities to develop confidence, independence, communication and social skills, which are especially important for children who may face additional challenges. • A safe space for children to build positive relationships, practise negotiation and cooperation, and develop a sense of belonging. • Support for emotional regulation and wellbeing, helping disadvantaged children to feel settled, valued and ready to learn. Through OPAL, play at St Nicholas is not seen as a break from learning, but as an essential part of our curriculum and inclusion strategy. Our outdoor environments are designed to be open-ended, inclusive and responsive to children's needs, allowing every child to succeed, take risks, and develop resilience in their own way. Achieving the Platinum award demonstrates that St Nicholas has embedded a whole-school culture where play is recognised as a right for every child and a powerful tool in supporting wellbeing, behaviour and engagement — particularly for those who need it most.	

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

Budgeted cost: £33,107

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Doodle Learning (Home Learning for children in KS2)	To support our strategic aim of narrowing attainment gaps in reading, writing and mathematics for Pupil Premium pupils, we have implemented Doodle Learning across Key Stage 2 as part of both the school and home learning offer. Doodle's adaptive, personalised learning pathways help identify and target individual pupils' gaps in core knowledge, allowing tailored practice that supports consolidation of key skills. This approach aligns with evidence from the Education Endowment Foundation on the effective use of digital technology to improve learning: EEF guidance highlights that, when thoughtfully integrated with teaching and pedagogy, digital tools can enhance learning by providing increased opportunities for personalised practice and formative assessment that supports pupil progress. EEF Personalised adaptive programmes like Doodle can help reinforce classroom teaching, encourage regular engagement with core content, and support pupils who may have limited access to additional academic support outside of school. Teacher monitoring of engagement and progression ensures targeted in-school interventions are used where needed to accelerate progress and help close the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers over time. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/digital/?utm_source=chatgpt.com	1
Speech and language assessment and intervention in EYFS and whole school	Oral language interventions are based on the idea that comprehension and reading skills benefit from explicit discussion of either content or processes of learning, or both, oral language interventions aim to support learners' use of vocabulary, articulation of ideas and spoken expression. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/oral-language-interventions	5
Effective deployment of support staff - to support key children and year groups. 1:1 and small group support in English and maths; Pre-teach Post-teach Precision teaching	EEF Toolkit guidance: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/support-for-schools/school-planning-support/2-targeted-academic-support 'Some pupils may require additional support alongside high-quality teaching in order to make good progress. The evidence indicates that small group and one to one interventions can be a powerful tool for supporting these pupils when they are used carefully.' Learning in one to one and small groups is carefully linked with classroom teaching. For one to one tuition led by teaching assistants, interventions are likely to be particularly beneficial when the teaching assistants are experienced and well-trained. Small group tuition is most likely to be effective if it is targeted at pupils' specific needs.	1

Lowest 20% of readers are tracked and supported to maximise their reading abilities	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/teaching-assistants 'Research on TAs delivering targeted interventions in one-to-one or small group settings shows a consistent impact on attainment of approximately three to four additional months' progress	
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Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £35,809

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Embedding principles of good practice set out in the DfE's Improving School Attendance advice. Attendance officer supports Head of school	DfE's Improving School Attendance advice. Data shows pupils with highest attendance make the most progress, due to increased opportunities for overlearning and access to a personalised curriculum. Dedicated person who monitors attendance and who has a good relationship with parents is most effective at ensuring good pupil attendance.	4
Counselling and staff supervision	Counselling in schools can make an important contribution to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of young people. Pupils experiencing stress or emotional problems find it difficult to reach their potential. A 'listening ear' can sometimes make a great difference. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a74ba8640f0b619c8659f41/Counselling_in_schools.pdf https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/mentoring	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7
Subsidised places available at breakfast club and specific vulnerable children invited to Thrive breakfast club	It has been found that breakfast clubs that offer pupils in primary schools a free and nutritious meal before school can boost their reading, writing and Maths results by the equivalent of two months' progress over the course of a year – and for very little cost. Readiness to learn: Continued development of a breakfast club to provide pupils with a nutritious breakfast and exercise before school. Breakfast clubs are available to help support the attendance of pupils who are persistently absent. Our attendance data has shown that this has improved the attendance of specific pupils who were persistently late or absent.	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7
Staff will organise a range of visits and visitors to enrich and enhance	Children who are exposed to these have an enhanced knowledge and understanding of the world. When finance isn't a factor for families, they almost always want their children to experience these Parent Power 2018 - Sutton Trust - How parents use financial and cultural resources to boost their children's chances of success (2018)	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7

curricular provision. Cultural capital experiences promoted in the curriculum. Essential experiences built into curriculum Swimming small group Balanceability Reduction in cost of trips for PP Residential trip cost is greatly reduced for PP	Enrichment activities offer children a context for leaning and a stimulus to trigger their interest which can be evidenced in pupil books and data Learning is contextualised in concrete experiences and language rich environments. Ofsted research (2019) places emphasis on improving cultural capital, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Enrichment activities offer children a context for leaning and a stimulus to trigger their interest which can be evidenced in pupil books and data. Physical activity EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) EEF – sports participation increases educational engagement and attainment. Outdoor adventure learning EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) EEF – outdoor adventure learning shows positive benefits on academic learning and self-confidence.	
Music therapy	Children have the opportunity to engage with therapeutic provision activities to unlock their hidden talents; developing confidence, self-esteem and resilience through the medium of music and play.	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7

Total budgeted cost: £156,551

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 2023/2024 academic year.

PUPIL PREMIUM ALOCATION FOR 2024 - 2025	
Pupils on roll	419
Those eligible for PP	95 – 22.7%
TOTAL AMOUNT of PPG	£161,120

Barriers to learning for our PP children:

Many of the eligible pupils have a range of barriers to learning, these include:

- Speech, language and communication needs
- Attachment needs
- Low resilience and self-esteem
- Attendance
- Early Help needs
- Moderate learning difficulties
- Accessing the curriculum in a whole class setting
- Social, emotional and mental health needs

Through the analysis of data, pupil interviews, needs across the school. The following focus areas were identified:

- **Targeted academic support:** Additional support in phases to deliver interventions that support pupil progress and attainment, including pre- and post-teaching, phonics, and spelling.
- **Forest School participation:** All children to take part, supporting engagement, confidence, and resilience.
- **Enrichment at lunchtime:** Providing structured activities to develop social, emotional, and communication skills.
- **Access to SEMH provisions:** Pupils supported through Thrive, counselling, and music therapy to address social, emotional, and mental health needs.
- **Whole school Thrive training:** Staff trained to work with whole classes to implement support strategies and identify areas of need using class profiles.
- **Expansion of Thrive provision:** Training an additional Thrive practitioner to meet the growing number of pupils requiring SEMH support.
- **Readiness to learn:** Support for pupils attending wraparound care and nurture breakfast club to ensure they arrive at school prepared to engage and learn.
- **Wider school opportunities:** Ensuring pupil access to residentials and after-school clubs to broaden experiences and cultural capital.
- **Physical development support (EYFS and KS1):** Pupils in Early Years and Key Stage 1 are receiving targeted physical development support to strengthen fine and gross motor skills. This is crucial as strong physical

development underpins writing, self-care, concentration, and overall readiness to learn, providing a foundation for future academic success.

- **Higher needs swimming support:** Pupils with additional physical or developmental needs receive targeted swimming provision. This is important for developing confidence, coordination, and physical fitness, as well as promoting safety and wellbeing. Access to swimming also supports social inclusion and can have a positive impact on self-esteem and engagement in other areas of learning.
- **Attendance monitoring and support:** Regular monitoring of attendance for Pupil Premium pupils to identify patterns of absence and intervene early. Attendance is closely linked to progress and attainment; pupils who attend school consistently are more likely to access learning, engage fully with the curriculum, and benefit from targeted interventions. Support may include liaison with families, attendance plans, and targeted pastoral interventions to remove barriers to regular attendance.
- **Beacon Behaviour Support for Schools** – staff training and individual pupil support: Staff receive targeted training and support from Beacon Behaviour Support for Schools to develop consistent, effective behaviour management strategies. In addition, individual pupils receive tailored support to address specific behavioural needs, helping them engage fully with learning and access the curriculum. This dual approach ensures a safe, structured, and positive learning environment, reduces barriers to learning, increases pupil confidence, and enables teachers to deliver interventions and targeted support more effectively.

The impact of PP spending:

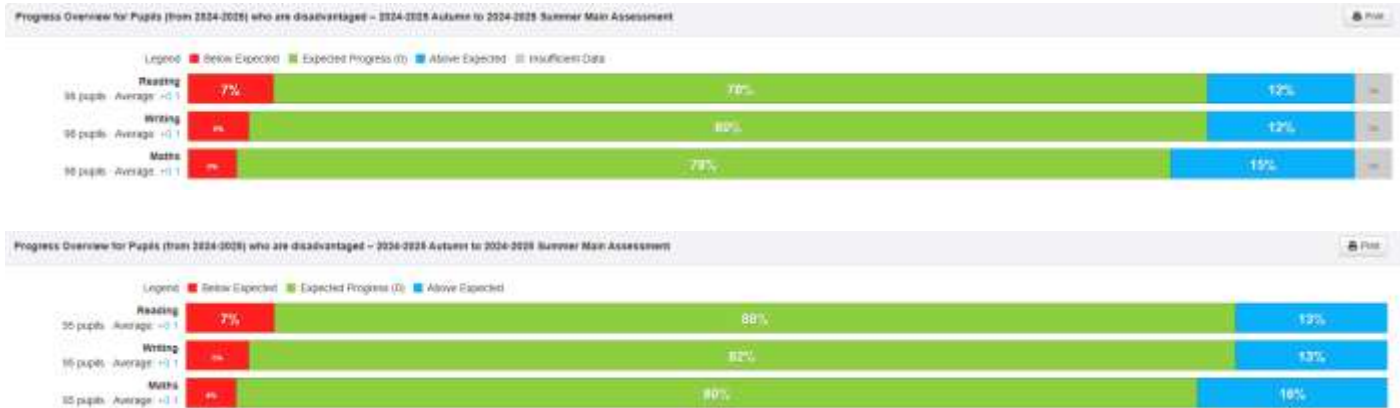
We continuously review our provision, and our evaluation focuses on pupil progress and how pupils' self-confidence has developed as a consequence of the intervention. Where an intervention is not working, we either change how we are doing it, or stop it altogether. Our school governors have a good understanding of the Pupil Premium funded activities and their impact, and challenge our school to narrow the achievement gap.

We measure the impact of Pupil Premium Grant spending by tracking every pupil's progress and knowing every child's needs. We measure the impact of quality class teaching and every intervention, using a variety of impact data, including:

- Lesson and intervention observations
- Work in books
- Pupil interviews
- Parent and carer surveys
- Attendance data
- Individual pupil target-setting
- Progress and review meetings
- Intervention records and progress data
- Social and emotional development through whole class and individual Thrive profiles

Progress during academic year 2024-2025

Pupil Premium progress from Autumn 2024 to Summer 2025



*Excluding children with no previous data

Compared to progress of non-Pupil Premium children



*Excluding children with no previous data

Externally provided programmes

Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you purchased in the previous academic year. This will help the Department for Education identify which ones are popular in England

Programme	Provider