

Pupil premium strategy statement

Annual update for 2026–27, within the three-year plan 2025–2028.

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	407
Number of disadvantaged pupils	51 (12.5%)
Number eligible for pupil premium funding	36 (8.8%), including 12 pupil premium plus
Pupils newly eligible, to be claimed at the October 2026 census	15
Academic years covered by our current plan	2025 to 2028
Date this statement was published	September 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2027
Statement authorised by	Bridget Norman, Head Teacher
Pupil premium lead	Lucy Newstead, SENDCo, Inclusion Lead, Pupil Premium Lead, and Data and Assessment Lead
Governor lead	Shamira Javed

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£70,170
Funding carried forward from previous years	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£70,170

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At Hillcrest Primary School, our ethos, "Taking PRIDE in all we do, where all belong and strengths shine through", underpins our commitment to ensuring disadvantaged pupils access the highest quality teaching, targeted support and wider opportunities. We aim to ensure that all pupils have equity of opportunity. No pupil should be excluded from an activity, learning opportunity or personal development activity because of their socio-economic circumstances, however those circumstances may change.

Our approach is rooted in the EEF's evidence-based three-tiered model and is aligned with the priorities in our School Development Plan 2025–28:

- High-quality teaching. We prioritise excellent phonics, reading, writing, maths mastery and oracy, so disadvantaged pupils benefit from consistently strong classroom practice.
- Targeted academic support. We use precise assessment and structured interventions to close learning gaps swiftly.
- Wider strategies. We address barriers linked to attendance, mental health, family circumstances and belonging, so pupils are ready to learn.

Two things have changed this year. First, 41% of our disadvantaged pupils also have SEND, so we plan for them as one cohort rather than two. Second, our summer 2026 data shows writing as the widest gap, so we have moved spend towards high-quality teaching, with writing as its focus. Delivery of this strategy is set out term by term in our Inclusion Action Plan 2026–27.

Challenges

These are the key challenges to achievement we have identified among our disadvantaged pupils.

Number	Detail of challenge
1	An attainment gap remains in reading, writing and maths. Disadvantaged pupils were at 34% in reading, 24% in writing and 55% in maths, against 78%, 70% and 83% for their peers. Writing is the widest gap.
2	Attendance for disadvantaged pupils is below that of their peers. The mean is 92.5% against 95.9%. The gap is driven by a small number of pupils: the median is 96.6%, and 7 of 29 pupils were below 90%.
3	Many pupils and families face social and emotional difficulties. 41% of our disadvantaged pupils have SEND, against 13% across the school. A high proportion of those pupils have SEMH or communication and language as a primary need. Pupils who are both disadvantaged and have SEND were at 8% in writing, which is one pupil in twelve.
4	Access to enrichment outside school is more limited for many disadvantaged families, which affects engagement and attainment.
5	Developing oral language and vocabulary remains an important area of focus, particularly for disadvantaged pupils from Reception to Key Stage 2.

Intended outcomes

This explains the outcomes we are aiming for by the end of our current plan, and how we will measure whether they have been achieved. Baselines are from summer 2026.

Intended outcome	Baseline	Success criteria
Increased attainment for our disadvantaged pupils in core subjects	Reading 34%, writing 24%, maths 55%	An increase of at least 10 percentage points in each core subject: reading 44%, writing 34%, maths 65%. Writing is the priority.
A holistic understanding of our pupils and families so that all stakeholders work to increase attendance	92.5% mean, 7 pupils below 90%	Attendance rises to 94.8%, in line with the national figure, and fewer than 4 pupils are below 90%. The Family Support Worker leads work with pupils who have ongoing attendance issues, and the leadership team tracks attendance with her.
A more inclusive environment that promotes physical and mental wellbeing for our disadvantaged pupils	Pupil survey and support list counted in term 1	Pupil-reported wellbeing scores rise by at least 15%, and 15% more disadvantaged pupils access small group or 1:1 mental health support.
Increased participation in enrichment activities that build cultural capital	Club and trip take-up counted in term 1	Participation rises by 20% by the end of the year, monitored termly.
Increased participation of disadvantaged families in school events and parent meetings	Count taken at the October 2026 meetings	Participation rises by 20% by the end of the year, supported by a range of parent workshops.
Enhanced oracy skills so pupils can articulate their ideas with confidence	Baseline taken in term 1	90% of disadvantaged children use sentence stems and are confident standing in class to express their opinion.

Activity in this academic year

Teaching: budgeted cost £32,670

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s)
Targeted professional development, whole staff meetings with TAs, and bespoke coaching for teachers and teaching assistants, with release time for coaching with the Deputy and Assistant Head.	EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit; EEF Feedback	1, 3
Purchase NFER assessments termly to track progress, identify gaps early and inform intervention planning, with training so assessments are administered and interpreted correctly.	EEF and NFER assessment guidance; diagnostic assessment	1, 5
Detailed SEND assessments using the Birmingham Toolkit to identify needs precisely, with Walkthrus strategies and SEND five-a-day principles embedded.	Ofsted guidance on SEND and pupil premium; Birmingham SEN Toolkits	1, 3, 5
Specialist training on trauma-informed approaches to support pupils affected by adverse experiences.	Research on trauma-informed approaches	3
Work with English Hub specialists to implement and monitor a validated systematic synthetic phonics programme, focused on Reception to Year 2 and beyond where needed.	The reading framework; EEF Phonics	1
A sequenced writing curriculum focused on grammar, sentence structure and vocabulary, with PVPG in Key Stage 1 and 2 and writing fluency in Key Stage 2.	DfE research review series: English	1
Reading lesson structures using fluency, extended and closed reading from Year 1 to Year 6.	EEF Reading comprehension strategies	1
Oracy project: CPD, oracy lead training and release time, plus a WELLCOMM trial in Reception and Year 1.	EEF Oral language interventions	5
Whole staff SEND training on PDA, ADHD, ASD and dyslexia, including Neuroteachers.	EEF Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools	1, 3

Targeted academic support: budgeted cost £19,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s)
WELLCOMM speech and language intervention with identified pupils in Reception and Year 1, four TAs for one hour each per week.	About WellComm, GL Assessment; EEF Oral language interventions	1, 3, 5
Hamish and Milo programme to support emotional literacy for pupils with SEMH needs in Years 3 to 6.	Targeted SEMH development programmes	1, 3

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s)
Play therapy to support social and emotional development and address barriers affecting learning.	EEF Social and emotional learning	3
1:1 precision teaching for incremental skill development in literacy and numeracy, delivered by a trained teaching assistant.	EEF Targeted academic support; Teaching Assistant Interventions	1

Wider strategies: budgeted cost £18,500

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s)
After-school enrichment clubs funded by school for pupil premium children, to build cultural capital, creativity and social skills.	EEF evidence on cultural capital and engagement; Supporting school attendance	4
Specialist workshops and curriculum-linked trips, with a subsidised residential offer and subsidised educational visits from Reception to Year 6.	EEF Outdoor adventure learning; Learning About Culture	4
Proactive attendance monitoring, family engagement and targeted support to reduce persistent absence, with termly milestones per cohort and analysis using the DfE Similar Schools Comparison Report.	Working together to improve school attendance, DfE	2
Essential learning resources, including laptops, iPads and school uniform, to remove practical barriers to participation.	EEF Parental Engagement Guidance Report	2, 3
EDI Lead and Assistant Head to increase participation of disadvantaged families in school events, parent meetings and coffee mornings, with external speakers.	EEF Parental engagement	4
Weekly pastoral sessions for identified pupils, drop-in sessions for parents and children, and a Mental Health Action Group, with release time for stakeholders each term.	EEF Improving Social and Emotional Learning in Primary Schools; Anna Freud	1, 3

Total budgeted cost: £70,170

We have rebalanced the three tiers this year so that high-quality teaching is our largest area of spend. The EEF model places the greatest emphasis on teaching because it benefits disadvantaged pupils most and reaches every pupil in every lesson. With writing as our widest gap, that is where the money will make the most difference.

Tier	2025–26	2026–27	Change
High-quality teaching	£13,569 (16%)	£32,670 (47%)	Up £19,101
Targeted academic support	£36,278 (44%)	£19,000 (27%)	Down £17,278
Wider strategies	£32,650 (40%)	£18,500 (26%)	Down £14,150
Total	£82,497	£70,170	Within allocation

We have ended one-to-one and small group tutoring this year. Tutoring reached a small number of pupils at a high cost per pupil. The same money now funds coaching and release time, the writing curriculum work, oracy CPD and the oracy lead, and whole staff SEND training, all of which reach every disadvantaged pupil in every lesson.

Targeted support keeps WELLCOMM, Hamish and Milo, play therapy and precision teaching. In wider strategies we have ended sports mentoring and individual behaviour support plans. Whole-school behaviour and regulation work continues through our Strategic Inclusion Plan, which funds two nurture rooms, daily sensory circuits and the PACE approach from the Inclusive Mainstream Fund rather than from pupil premium. Enrichment, trips and the residential subsidy, attendance work, essential resources, family engagement and weekly pastoral sessions all continue.

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

We monitored the progress and attainment of our disadvantaged pupils through national assessments, internal summative and formative assessment, and ongoing data analysis. The cohorts in this data experienced disruption from Covid-19 earlier in their education, which has affected learning trajectories differently across pupils.

Across the school in summer 2026, disadvantaged pupils were at or above the expected standard as follows.

Group	Reading	Writing	Maths	Pupils
Disadvantaged	28%	21%	44%	39
Not disadvantaged	79%	71%	83%	297
Disadvantaged with SEND	21%	5%	32%	19
All pupils	73%	65%	78%	337

Review against last year's targets

Target	Review	Status and next steps
Gaps for disadvantaged pupils are identified and closed	20% of disadvantaged pupils made above expected progress in writing and maths. Termly staff meetings focused on disadvantaged pupils, adaptive teaching and EEF five-a-day. Bright Minds tutoring drew positive feedback from parents and teachers, with increased reading, writing and confidence. School-wide outcomes are in the table above, with writing the widest gap.	Ongoing. Tutoring ends this year and the funding moves into high-quality teaching, which reaches every disadvantaged pupil. Strengthen diagnostic assessment and responsive teaching (SDP 3.1, 3.2, 3.3). Keep disadvantaged pupils a priority in quality assurance (SDP 1.2).
Disadvantaged pupils improve oral language and vocabulary	Pupils continue to make progress, supported by daily talk-rich teaching and structured discussion. Classroom evidence shows increased confidence, greater participation in small-group dialogue and more effective use of sentence starters.	Ongoing. Expand targeted oral language and vocabulary programmes (SDP 2.2, 2.3, 3.6). Embed whole-school use of sentence stems across subjects.
Disadvantaged pupils read as regularly as their peers	Phonics and early reading improved following targeted intervention and a change of scheme to Unlocking Letters and Sounds. Precision teaching and prioritised reading enabled disadvantaged pupils to read as regularly as their peers. Some pupils still require additional support to reach age-related expectations.	Met. Continue prioritised reading with TAs and trained volunteers (SDP 3.1, 3.2). Maintain precision teaching for decoding and fluency.

Target	Review	Status and next steps
Attendance improves and moves in line with the national figure	Attendance for disadvantaged pupils improved to 91.4% from 90%, still below the national figure of 94.8%. We supported new arrivals with a translator, uniform and resources, including a scooter and helmet to remove a barrier to attendance, and developed a robust induction process for children new to the country or school. The DfE Similar Schools Comparison Report identified Year 6 and SEN pupils as areas of focus.	Ongoing. Strengthen family engagement and root-cause analysis (SDP 4.2). Introduce attendance plans for key pupils and link attendance to pastoral, SEND and behaviour systems.
Disadvantaged pupils realise their potential and leave ready for the next stage	Hamish and Milo was particularly effective in boosting self-esteem and metacognitive strategies, evidenced by entry and exit questionnaires. Calm spaces, the PACE approach and curious time were introduced. More than 30 children at risk of social thinning were identified and discussed in every staff meeting. PACE is leading to less conflict and more children remaining in the green zone. Transitions to secondary school were successful, with enhanced transition where needed.	Met. Maintain a strong SEMH and enrichment offer (SDP 5, 6). Embed metacognitive teaching. Continue developing inclusive practice that removes barriers.

Externally provided programmes

Non-DfE programmes funded by pupil premium in the previous academic year.

Programme	Provider
WELLCOMM speech and language screening and intervention	GL Assessment
Hamish and Milo SEMH programme	Hamish and Milo
Unlocking Letters and Sounds phonics programme	Unlocking Letters and Sounds

Service pupil premium

We have no pupils eligible for service pupil premium this year, so this section does not apply.