

Alumwell Infant School Pupil Premium Strategy Statement 2024-25

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery 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	267
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	43%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2024-2027
Date this statement was published	November 2024
Date on which it will be reviewed	June 2025
Statement authorised by	Carole Hammond, Head Teacher
Pupil Premium lead	Damian Evans, Deputy Head Teacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Adnan Mallick + Debo Adesina, Link Governors for Pupil Premium

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£170,200.00
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (<i>enter £0 if not applicable</i>)	£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>	£170,200.00

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 and achieve high attainment across all subject areas. The focus of our pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve that goal, including progress for those who are already attaining highly.

High-quality teaching is at the heart of our approach, with a focus on areas in which disadvantaged pupils require the most support. Quality first teaching is proven to have the greatest impact on closing the disadvantage attainment gap and at the same time will benefit the non-disadvantaged pupils in our school. Implicit in the intended outcomes detailed below, is the intention that non-disadvantaged pupils' attainment will be sustained and improved alongside progress for their disadvantaged peers.

At Alumwell Infant School, we consider the challenges faced by vulnerable pupils, such as those who have a social worker and young carers. The activities we have outlined in this statement are also intended to support these children's needs too, regardless of disadvantage or not. We provide high standards of pastoral care to build children's resilience and give them the best chance to achieve their potential.

Our approach will be responsive to common challenges as well as individual needs. The approaches we have adopted are multi-faceted, rooted in robust diagnostic assessment and evidenced in successful application - not assumptions about the impact of disadvantage. The approaches we have adopted complement each other to help pupils thrive. To ensure their efficacy, we will:

- ensure disadvantaged pupils are challenged in the work that they're set
- act early to intervene at the point need is identified
- adopt a whole school approach in which all staff take responsibility for disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and raise expectations of what they can achieve

In March 2024, Ofsted recognised that at Alumwell Infant School, *"The school is aspirational for all its pupils...The school's curriculum is ambitious and designed with the needs of pupils in mind."*

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	According to Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) 2024, Walsall Borough is now the 17th most deprived local authority district (out of 317), a further decline from 25 th in 2019, putting it well within the most deprived 8% of areas in the country. It identifies the school's neighbourhood (Pleck) as an area of extremely high deprivation ranking it as the third most highly deprived ward in Walsall and amongst the most highly deprived wards in England.
2	The domains of deprivation referenced above are income deprivation; employment deprivation; health deprivation and disability; education skills and training deprivation; crime; barriers to housing & services; and living environment deprivation. School's internal Safeguarding monitoring records show that our disadvantaged pupils are overly represented in these figures with many being directly adversely affected by these deprivation factors and being further supported by outside agencies including Walsall Children's Services. In the year 2023-24, a higher percentage of disadvantaged learners (30.8%) were judged to be Persistently Absent from school (4% more than non-disadvantaged pupils)
3	Neglect is a strategic priority for the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership and this new multi-agency Neglect Strategy (2021-24) is aiming to drive development and improvement. We know that experience of neglect in childhood can have significant and long-term consequences, affecting many areas of a child's development and their life into adulthood. It is the most common type of abuse experienced by children in Walsall, as it is nationally.
4	According to Government statistics, in June 2024, 24.6% of all children are entitled to Free School Meals. At Alumwell Infant School, around 43% of our pupils come under this category. The Education Policy Institute's 2024 annual report affirms, "Throughout the stages of childhood, economic disadvantage can negatively influence children's learning in a variety of ways. These can accumulate over time to pull down the attainment of a disadvantaged child and increase the likelihood that they will fall behind their peers."
5	Mirroring the findings of the Education Policy's Institute's findings, in school data is showing a marked difference in the proportion of disadvantaged children meeting their age related expectations when compared to their peers. For example, at the end of the Foundation Stage in 2024, 10% fewer Pupil Premium pupils achieved a Good Level of Development when compared to their non-disadvantaged peers. For both groups, Literacy was identified as the lowest attaining specific area of learning. The proportions of children passing the Year 1 Phonics Screening check were relatively even but the exiting Year 2 cohort, the disparity in Pupil Premium children's attainment in Literacy was around 13%.
6	In September 2023, Speech & Language UK commissioned survey of over a thousand teachers which revealed that 1 in 5 children are struggling with their

	talking and understanding of words. At the same time, health visitor checks in England found almost 15 per cent of children aged 24 to 30 months were below the expected level in communication skills, up from 11 per cent in 2018. The Early Years Foundation Stage profile for the same period found that around 20 per cent of children in England are not at the expected level of learning for communication and language and 30 per cent were not at the expected level for literacy by the end of Reception.
7	According to National Statistics (September 2024) 42.2% (EHCP) and 38.3% (SEN Support) of children with SEND are eligible for free school meals. In this school, 44% of our SEND pupils are also identified as being disadvantaged (compared to 21.4% of non-SEND pupils Nationally).

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
An improvement in the attainment levels of all pupils' literacy and numeracy and diminish any differences in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils	Gaps in learning identified through analysis of assessment evidence. Analysis has directly informed adjustments to the curricular provision to better meet the needs of the pupils and raise attainment.
Improved oral language skills and vocabulary among disadvantaged pupils.	Assessments and observations indicate significantly improved oral language among disadvantaged pupils. This is evident when triangulated with other sources of evidence, including engagement in lessons, book scrutiny and on-going formative assessment.
Improved attendance of disadvantaged pupils, so that they attend school more regularly and fewer are persistently absent from school.	In school systems regularly track the attendance of pupils and show improved school attendance. Interventions in place, including Family Support Worker, to particularly support those identified as persistently absent and diminish any attendance levels between them and their peers.
To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils in our school, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	Sustained high levels of wellbeing from 2025/26 demonstrated by: - qualitative data from student voice, student and parent surveys and teacher observations - an increase in participation in enrichment activities, particularly among disadvantaged pupils and their families
To build children's resilience to manage barriers to learning and increase parental engagement in the support of children's learning.	The emotional needs of disadvantaged pupils are supported in a stimulating and nurturing environment and pupils are able to play and approach learning tasks reflectively, confidently and demonstrate resilience (qualitative data from surveys and

	teacher observations report increased pupil confidence, self-esteem and happiness).
To develop outstanding practice in school in regards to developing resilience and independence.	Children are confident, articulate and mentally healthy and become caring, active citizens who are ready to engage with the challenges of the next stage of their school and public life.

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: £124,929.00

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Appoint a Diminish the Difference and Reading Lead Teacher and to reduce class sizes in Key Stage 1 and to deliver small group tuition across the school	The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) research found that in conjunction with other strategies and for our younger aged children, reduced class sizes can lead to a +2 month gain in pupil progress. The progress gain is doubled for small group tuition. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition	3, 4, 5, 7
Employ Teaching Assistants with specialist skills to deliver targeted interventions including RWI, small group mathematics intervention and oral language development programmes such as Word First, the Nuffield Early Language Intervention and Fast Track Tutoring as part of the RWI scheme.	The FFT evidences that when TAs are being used in this way to deliver targeted interventions, particularly those out of class, that the impact on children can be a +4months gain in progress. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/teaching-assistant-interventions	2, 4, 5, 6, 7

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

Budgeted cost: £10,492.00– *please note that for 2024/25 these costs are now funded by the main school budget due to reduced Pupil Premium funding this year

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Play Therapist to deliver training to staff on the concepts of nurture and developing children's resilience following trauma (particularly in response to the COVID19 pandemic). To provide vulnerable children with greater resilience to managing their personal circumstances and make more progress in school.	Many of our pupils, particularly those recognised as disadvantaged, have been subject to additional adverse childhood experiences and trauma which have affected their brain organisation, structure and development (Riggs 2006, Fishbein 2007). Research evidence into the impact of intervention from a Play Therapist shows how this work helps children to link cerebral pathways and strengthen structures which in turn leads to increasing their ability to manage strong feelings and stress later in life – skills that are vital for socio-economic success (Hariri 2000, Pennebaker 1993, Fossati 2003).	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
Purchase additional support sessions from SALT to provide early intervention in/with/for children with a recognised speech and language difficulty as well as to empower staff to deliver programs of support.	The company Speech Link which provided EEF with school data found that of the 50,000 four and five year olds starting school in September, an extra 20-25% of them needed help with language skills compared to the previous year. The https://www.rcslt.org/speech-and-language-therapy/#section-8 website attests to the many benefits of Speech And Language Therapy that extend beyond language gains and include improvements in social skills, peer relationships, self-confidence and literacy.	1, 3, 5, 6, 7

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

Budgeted cost: £49,000.00* (*Please note that this cost centre is also being topped up through the main school budget in order to meet this strategy)

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number (s) addressed
Employ Family Support Worker (KB) to address the non-academic issues, including attendance and support with pastoral issues.	The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) research affirms that positive parental engagement has a positive impact on average of 4 months' additional progress. This work must be adaptive in order to meet different family circumstances and barriers to progress. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/parental-engagement	1,2,3
Reading comprehension interventions including the purchase of additional resources, subscription to First News weekly newspaper, Storytime Magazine for Key Stage 1, termly story books for Reception and Coram Beanstalk volunteer reading organisation.	The EEF website shows how a focus on reading comprehension along with collaborative learning techniques and phonic activities can have a positive +6 month gain in children's progress. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Improve the quality of social and emotional (SEL) learning. SEL approaches will be embedded into routine educational practices and supported by professional development and	There is extensive evidence associating childhood social and emotional skills with improved outcomes at school and in later life (e.g., improved academic performance, attitudes, behaviour and relationships with peers): EEF_Social_and_Emotional_Learning.pdf(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	1, 2, 5, 6

training for staff. Deploy Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) to deliver an EP led intervention that promotes emotional wellbeing.		
<i>Work with external providers, includ- ing consultants and those from the charity sector, to up-skill families to gain more work- based competen- cies and practical ideas for support- ing their children's basic literacy and numeracy skills.</i>	Parental engagement has a positive impact on average of 4 months' additional progress. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/parental-engagement Alumwell Infant School seeks to provide opportunities to involve families in their children's learning be this through attendance at workshops, assisting learning at home or providing opportunities to up-skill parents and improve their work-based competences and increase their chances of securing higher-skilled employment	1, 2, 3, 4

Total budgeted cost: £170,476.64

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Intended Outcome 1: An improvement in the attainment levels of all pupils' literacy and numeracy and diminish any differences in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils

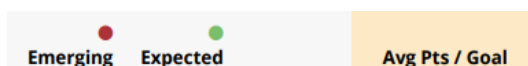
At the end of 2024, the proportion of disadvantaged children working at the Expected Standard in Writing doubled from the cohort's starting point of 20% to 43%, closing the gap between them and their peers. Whilst their attainment did not match with non-Pupil Premium pupils, 57% of whom met their age related expectations, it does show the school's drive to improve outcomes for this cohort who historically were the most affected by school closures during the Covid19 pandemic.

The impact of the school's refresher training of the RWI scheme showed in other aspects. In Year 1, 72% of Pupil Premium children passed the Phonics Screening Check – 4% higher than the National average for this pupil group.

Phonics Benchmark										2024 Disadvantaged				
Estab. No.	Estab. Name	Cohort	Mark						APS	Outcome				
			No Score	0-15	16-23	24-31	32-36	37-40		Q	A	D	WT	WA
-	NCER National	126,320	4.7%	14.0%	6.2%	6.8%	32.1%	36.3%	30.3	0.0%	0.5%	4.2%	26.9%	68.3%
-	Local Authority	1,138	6.9%	14.2%	5.4%	6.0%	29.8%	37.7%	30.6	0.0%	0.8%	6.2%	25.6%	67.5%
2001	Alumwell Infant School	29	0.0%	6.9%	0.0%	20.7%	31.0%	41.4%	32.8	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	27.6%	72.4%

At the end of the Foundation Stage, whilst a lower proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieved a Good Level of Development, there was actually little difference in their average point score. It is important to note that 20% of this cohort have additional Special Educational Needs or Disabilities, and half of these have an EHCP.

Eligible cohort: 36 Ineligible cohort: 0



All children



FSM children



Intended Outcome 2: Improved oral language skills and vocabulary among disadvantaged pupils.

Communication and Language skills are an essential pre-requisite to developing children's writing. To this end, using Pupil Premium Funding to purchase additional sessions from Speech & Language Specialists has resulted in more timely assessments, early identification and the

opportunity for children with such difficulties to receive support from trained professionals as well as specialist school staff. Monies were designated for a specialist teaching assistant to deliver the evidence-based 'Word First' strategy to children in Reception and throughout Key Stage 1. This intervention has shown to help children make an additional 4 to 6 months progress in their language skills so this was developed further by having all reception practitioners lead whole class Word First activities. From their starting point when no children on entry were on track to reach their age related expectations, 73% of all children went on to meet the Early Learning Goals in Communication and Language.

Intended Outcome 3: To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils in our school, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.

Through robust Safeguarding procedures, monitoring and diligence, it is recognised that all staff at Alumwell Infant School are committed to supporting children's well-being and personal development. *"The arrangements for safeguarding are effective"* (Ofsted Inspection Report March 2024). The impact of this was reflected in parental surveys where almost all respondents have said that their child is safe and happy in a school with well-behaved pupils. Parents state that school supports children's wider development, that children do well here and that most parents would recommend this school to another parent.

This level of satisfaction was mirrored in the most recent Pupil Survey, where the highest level of agreement with the pupil survey's statements showed that: children feel safe and looked after in this school; that children are taught well, and; that they make good progress.

Intended Outcome 4: To build children's resilience to manage barriers to learning and increase parental engagement in the support of children's learning.

The Pupil Premium children in this school are overly represented in the school's safeguarding monitoring lists with children facing a number of key issues in their lives including attachment difficulties, managing trauma and familial relationship, particularly when domestic abuse in the family home has been a common theme. The appointment of the Play Therapist has enabled such children to access specialist support that has enabled them and their families to create a more positive and emotionally healthy way of interacting with themselves and the world around them. The Play Therapist has also delivered training to staff and parents, particularly in the area of attachment, communication and child development in order to provide staff with greater knowledge and practical strategies for supporting our most vulnerable pupils.

Intended Outcome 5: To develop outstanding practice in school in regards to developing resilience and independence.

The School has a designated Senior Mental Health Lead and a wellbeing working party which consists of representatives from across the staffing body. Together, plans have been created to sustain a strategic, whole school approach to promoting good mental health and wellbeing for both children and staff. One notable impact of this work was in the school becoming recognised as an Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed School. As a part of this, the school's Behaviour Policy and management system was developed in order to adopt an approach that better accounted for the needs and behaviours of children with attachment difficulties.

School also has a trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistant who is able to support children individually or in groups with a range of issues including social skills, friendships, emotions, bereavement, anger management, self-esteem and solution focused counselling skills.

Externally provided programmes

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

Programme	Provider
Play Therapy – A highly qualified therapist leads sessions where children can explore their thoughts and feelings in creative and dynamic ways, without having to use words to articulate themselves.	Play Therapy UK contact@ptukorg.com

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

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