

## Pupil premium strategy statement

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
School name	Merton Junior School
Number of pupils in school	262
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	33%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2023-24, 2024-25, 2025-26
Date this statement was published	14 <sup>th</sup> December 2023. Reviewed December 2024
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2025
Statement authorised by	Kate Fowkes Lead Governor
Pupil premium lead	Kayleigh Reading Head Teacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Kate Fowkes Lead Governor

### Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£148,295
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b> If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year	£148,295

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

Our school motto is: 'Be wise, together we succeed'. Our motto is strengthened by our school values. We encourage everyone to be Motivated, Enthusiastic, Respectful, Tenacious, Optimistic and Nurturing.

Through these we aim to:

- Develop outstanding future citizens who are confident, thoughtful, independent lifelong learners,
- Develop outstanding teaching and an exciting curriculum, which provides irresistible learning opportunities and a love of learning,
- Ensure all of our children are provided with the skills they need to succeed in life including those to lead happy and fulfilled lives,
- Develop strong positive partnerships with parents and the local community.

At Merton Junior School, we demonstrate our school motto so 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 high attainers.

We will consider the challenges faced by vulnerable pupils, such as those who have a social worker and are young carers. The activity we have outlined in this statement is also intended to support their needs, regardless of whether they are disadvantaged or not.

High-quality teaching is at the heart of our approach, with a focus on areas in which disadvantaged pupils require the most support. This 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.

Our approach will be responsive to common challenges and individual needs, rooted in robust diagnostic assessment, not assumptions about the impact of disadvantage. The approaches we have adopted complement each other to help pupils excel. To ensure they are effective 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

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p>Low Prior Attainment - On-entry attainment into EYFS is lower than national averages, especially in the prime areas. Baseline assessments show gaps in speech and language are evident. Our curriculum must ensure our children catch up and keep up so that gaps between specific groups don't widen as they move through the school. Lessons should be targeted on personalising the learning for individuals, and interventions run by LSAs planned to target any gaps that individuals may have. Tutoring is also provided for pupils who need support in getting them to the desired outcome.</p>
2	<p>Poor attendance and persistent absences of some of our disadvantaged children negatively impacts their progress and attitudes towards learning. It is important that we work closely with our families to ensure that attendance is not an issue or a barrier to children's learning. Missing school can make it difficult for a child to join back in with learning, particularly if they have low self-esteem or SEND.</p>
3	<p>'Readiness to learn' – Poor mental health and low self-esteem of some children may prevent them from being able to problem solve and stay focused, and therefore inhibits these pupils from achieving. Where children lack emotional resilience, this also impacts negatively on their achievement. Our assessments show that some children experience disrupted home and school routines daily and these children may need support to help settle them at school. This can cause some pupils to feel isolated from their peers as they stand out from others, which can affect their readiness to learn and reduces their sense of belonging significantly, having an adverse impact on progress and attainment. We have staff who are part of the Attachment and Trauma Awareness programme (run by the Virtual School) so that our staff are aware of how best to support these children. Our Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) / Therapeutic Active Learning Assistant (TALA) and our Play Therapist also provide targeted support, as do our Thrive Practitioners. Relax Kids is also used in school as an intervention for targeted children to develop strong emotional health.</p>
4	<p>Financial constraints can mean that some families are unable to pay for enrichment opportunities within school and/or enriching opportunities outside of school. It is vital that our curriculum incorporates experiences, trips, visitors and hands-on resources in order to excite and engage our learners, enabling them to embed their learning in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. We will also purchase IT equipment for children who don't have access to this, so that they are able to complete homework tasks which are set by their class teacher/s.</p>

5	Other needs – 46% (37/81) of our disadvantaged pupils also have an SEND need. SEND pupils have been identified as requiring additional support to develop their memory and recall skills to enable good progress.
6	Aspirations – some children may have limited aspirations which impacts negatively on their learning behaviours and consequently the progress that they make. When learners don't aspire to anything it can make it difficult for them to see the purpose of the learning, or the impact of this attitude on them, or others. Therefore, it is imperative that we provide them with a range of extra-curricular opportunities which they may not otherwise have the chance to do, as well as broaden their knowledge of the scope of opportunities which are available to them. We must make sure that our curriculum is as broad and balanced as possible in order to cater for all of our learners and the potential paths that they may venture down in the future.
7	We have noticed a decline in parental involvement and engagement since the pandemic - we have seen a direct correlation with this and individual pupil outcome/s. We are keen to increase our parental involvement and we are having an increasing number of parents request extra information on how they can best support their children and we aim to embrace this.
8	Sense of belonging – our children are part of a wider family at Merton, and it is imperative that they feel like they belong, whilst feeling safe, secure and loved. We will use some of our Pupil Premium allocation to purchase school uniform, shoes, coats, book bags etc. so that a child does not stand out from others if they don't have any of these things.

## 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
To ensure continued professional development of class teachers and adults in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and SENDCo (SLT) to support staff with the planning of staff (teachers and Learning Support Assistants) professional development</li> <li>• SLT to disseminate key information to staff</li> </ul>
Gaps in learning will reduce as all children will catch up and keep up, particularly in our disadvantaged children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disadvantaged children are making expected+ progress from their starting points</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils (both attainment and progress)</li> <li>• Impact of learning interventions will be positive from starting points</li> <li>• Assessments, observations, book looks and observation of engagement in lessons will reflect formative assessment</li> </ul>
Improved end of KS2 attainment in reading, writing and maths among disadvantaged pupils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increase in KS2 disadvantaged children to meet expected standard in reading, writing and maths</li> <li>• KS2 outcomes to be more inline with national disadvantaged children's outcomes</li> </ul>
To achieve and sustain positive home-school links with all pupils, especially parents of our disadvantaged pupils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents report that they feel well supported by the staff in school</li> <li>• Increase in parents seen and attending parents evening</li> <li>• Parents report positively about events at school</li> <li>• Parents are aware of how their children are progressing and how best to support them</li> </ul>
To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance of disadvantaged children will be in line with attendance of all pupils</li> <li>• Attendance of disadvantaged children will be in line with attendance of national disadvantaged children</li> <li>• A reported reduction in persistent absentees</li> </ul>
To achieve and sustain improved well-being for all pupils in our school; children will feel supported and ready to learn, especially our disadvantaged pupils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff report that children are ready to learn</li> <li>• Children will report that they feel well-supported and happy in school</li> <li>• Parent's feedback to school will reflect their children feeling positive and well-supported</li> <li>• The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils will reduce with both attainment and progress</li> </ul>
Ensure our disadvantaged children are given access to trips, events and opportunities, in line with all children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of disadvantaged pupils accessing trips and events will increase</li> <li>• Children report positively on events, trips and clubs that they have been able to access</li> <li>• All children, especially disadvantaged children, will be in full school uniform, leading to a sense of belonging</li> <li>• Staff report that children are ready to learn and are happy to be at school</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children are given the opportunity have breakfast at school</li> </ul>
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## Activity in this academic year

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

### Teaching

*Budgeted cost: £70,000*

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Training to ensure Learning Support Staff are confident in their teaching and are providing good practice across the school.	<p>High quality teaching improves outcomes for children and effective professional development offers a crucial tool to develop teaching quality in all reading activities.</p> <p>Use of over-learning and retrieval practice strategies help to place learning into long-term memory. This is a principle of Rosenshine and generally supported through EEF Research.</p>	1, 5
Enhancement of maths teaching and curriculum. Teacher release time to access maths courses and training, as well as time to mentor and coach others with their practice.	Use of over-learning and retrieval practice strategies help to place learning into long-term memory. This is a principle of Rosenshine and generally supported through EEF Research	1, 5
Each Learning Support Assistant to lead on a specific area.	Using evidenced-based interventions provides confidence in the programs provided to support children effectively to make accelerated progress. Learning Support Assistants make a positive impact on learner outcomes when provided with high quality training to deliver structured evidenced-based interventions	1, 3, 4, 5
Support from HIAS to support with reading and writing.	High quality teaching improves outcomes for children and effective professional development offers a crucial tool to develop teaching quality in all reading activities. <a href="#">Reading comprehension strategies</a> focus on giving pupils a range of techniques	1

	which enable them to comprehend what they read.	
Enhancement of reading and writing teaching and planning. Release time to access courses and training.	High quality teaching improves outcomes for children and effective professional development offers a crucial tool to develop teaching quality in all reading activities <a href="#">CPD</a> for staff plays a crucial role in improving the teaching quality and has a significant effect on pupils learning outcomes.	1
Whole school training on INSET days for reading, writing and mathematics.	<a href="#">High quality teaching</a> improves outcomes for children and effective professional development offers a crucial tool to develop teaching quality in all reading activities	1
Staff workshop training sessions to support new planning and curriculum development in reading, writing and maths	<a href="#">High quality teaching</a> improves outcomes for children and effective professional development offers a crucial tool to develop teaching quality in all reading activities  Use of over-learning and retrieval practice strategies help to place learning into long-term memory. This is a principle of Rosenshine and generally supported through EEF Research	1

## Targeted academic support

Budgeted cost: **£33,300**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Intervention programmes bought and training sessions to implement these – e.g. LSA to run Lightning Squad to improve reading skills	Lightning Squad tutoring is a blended approach with face-to-face tutoring supported by an online tutoring platform. The activities are designed and structured to improve reading skills, fluency, comprehension, spelling and phonics. Pupils work through especially written, engaging and illustrated stories. Using evidenced-based interventions provides confidence in the programs provided to support children effectively to make accelerated progress. <a href="#">Learning Support Assistants</a> make a positive impact on learner outcomes when provided with high quality training to	1

	deliver structured evidenced-based interventions	
Tutoring by class teachers in a small group, with identified children	Tuition targeted at specific needs and knowledge gaps can be an effective method to support low attaining pupils or those falling behind, both one-to-one: <a href="#">One to one tuition   Teaching and Learning Toolkit   EEF</a> And in small groups: <a href="#">Small group tuition   Teaching and Learning Toolkit   EEF</a>	1, 5

## Wider strategies

Budgeted cost: **£45,000**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Embedding principles of good practice set out in the DfE's <a href="#">Improving School Attendance</a> advice.  This will involve training and release time for staff to develop and implement new procedures and appointing attendance/support officers to improve attendance.	The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced levels of absence and persistent absence.	2, 3
All curricular school trips to be paid for by school – this includes visitors/experiences in school as well	All children will be given the opportunity to attend trips and experience places they may not have seen. Children report positively on being able to participate in a school trip, as well as having a sense of belonging when in full school uniform.	4, 8
Support with funding for school residential.	All children will be given the opportunity to attend trips and experience places they may not have seen.	4
Support with funding for uniform and general support.	Children to be provided with school uniform, coats and shoes where financial constraints apply, so that the children have a sense of belonging amongst their peers.	4, 8
ELSA support for vulnerable children experiencing social and emotional issues. Support is	The positive impact of <a href="#">ELSA</a> is well established in educational research. Children struggle to access learning if they are not ready. ELSA provision	3, 6

also provided to families as and when needed	ensures that children are able to fully immerse themselves in their learning.	
Laptops and internet for families that are not able to access online work at home	Children who do not have access to IT equipment (e.g. laptops or data for the internet) to be issued with this so that they are able to complete homework tasks set by their class teacher/s.	1, 4
Relax kids (an intervention aimed at supporting children to build good emotional health through relaxation and meditation)	Children will have the chance to attend a six-week programme of Relax Kids where they will learn skills and strategies to support and build good <u>emotional health</u> .	3, 6
Breakfast Club	Breakfast Club has been used as a strategy to get children into school and to improve attendance. It is also used to support families when situations around work/employment change and can be accessed temporarily and school cover costs to reduce the added financial burden and pressure.	2
Bagels	Each child is provided with either: half a bagel, or some cereal - each morning of the school year so that they are ready for the day and have had a good breakfast before starting their learning. Studies show that having a good breakfast improves energy levels and ability to concentrate.	3
Play Therapist sessions with children to support their well-being.	Evidence shows that play therapy gives children the tools to communicate and process their emotions, thus improving their ESMH: Through play, therapists may help children learn more adaptive behaviours when there are emotional or social skills deficits (PedroCarroll & Reddy, 2005). The positive relationship that develops between therapist and child during play therapy sessions can provide a corrective emotional experience necessary for healing (Moustakas, 1997). Play therapy may also be used to promote cognitive development and provide insight about and resolution of inner conflicts or dysfunctional thinking in the child (O'Connor & Schaefer, 1983; Reddy, Files-Hall, & Schaefer, 2005).	3, 6

**Total budgeted cost: £148,300**

## Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

### Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

At the end of KS2 in 2024, our Pupil Premium pupils outperformed our non-Pupil Premium pupils, with 58% of Pupil Premium pupils achieving Reading, Writing and Maths (combined), compared to 51% of our non-Pupil Premium pupils.

In 2024, the gap between our Pupil Premium and non-Pupil Premium was +7% which has reduced from -25% in 2023; the percentage of children achieving Reading, Writing and Maths (combined) has increased by 26%.

Comparatively, nationally in 2024, 46% of Pupil Premium pupils achieved Reading, Writing and Maths combined, meaning we are 12% above this. Nationally, 3% of Pupil Premium pupils achieved Greater Depth for Reading and Writing and Maths combined, whereas 12% of our Pupil Premium pupils achieved this, which is 9% higher.

Attendance of our Pupil Premium pupils increased by 0.2% between 2022-23 and 2023-24, and is 0.2% above National (Pupil Premium (2024)). The percentage of persistent absentees who are Pupil Premium, has decreased by 4.5% (between 2022-23 and 2023-24) and is 2% between National (Pupil Premium (2024)).