

# Pupil premium strategy statement – Firside Junior School

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	327
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	14.7%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers ( <b>3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year</b> )	2025/26 – 2026/27
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2026
Statement authorised by	Rosalind Robinson
Pupil premium lead	Ryan O’Malley
Governor / Trustee lead	Gav Dent

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£87,768
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years <i>(enter £0 if not applicable)</i>	£0
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b> <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>	£87,768

## Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

### Statement of intent

At Firside Junior School, 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 high attaining pupils.

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

Our key principle for achieving these objectives will be high-quality teaching in the first instance, 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 curriculum promotes long-term learning, and we believe that good progress means knowing more and remembering more: it is carefully planned and sequenced to ensure that previous knowledge is built on. We have developed a curriculum built on current research about how memory works to ensure that children not only have access to the important knowledge they need but have the opportunity to revisit this knowledge so that they can remember the curriculum content in future years and build on what they have learnt.

This approach will meet individual needs, which have been identified through formative assessment and teacher assessment. The approaches we have implemented will support all pupils to reach their potential.

To ensure we are effective, we will:

- Set challenging work for all children
- Regularly review the needs of disadvantaged pupils
- Act early to intervene at the point need is identified

All staff will 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>Our attendance data over the last 3 years indicates that attendance among disadvantaged pupils has been between 2 – 4.4% lower than for non-disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>23.6 – 33.9% of disadvantaged pupils have been ‘persistently absent’ compared to 9.9 – 14.8% of their peers during that period. Our assessments and observations indicate that absenteeism is negatively impacting disadvantaged pupils’ progress.</p>
2	<p>Assessments, observations, and discussions with pupils suggest disadvantaged pupils generally have greater difficulties with writing than their peers.</p> <p>Outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2 in the last 2 years, show that only between 47 - 67% of our disadvantaged pupils meet the age-related expectations compared to 73 - 74% of other pupils.</p>
3	<p>Assessments, observations, and discussions with pupils suggest disadvantaged pupils generally have greater difficulties with reading than their peers.</p> <p>On entry to Year 3 in the last 2 years, between 71.4 - 78% of our disadvantaged pupils arrive below age-related expectations compared to 43.5 – 58.5% of other pupils. This gap narrows towards the end of KS2.</p>
4	<p>Assessments, observations, and discussions with pupils suggest disadvantaged pupils generally have greater difficulties with maths than their peers.</p> <p>On entry to Year 3 in the last 2 years, between 64.3 - 90% of our disadvantaged pupils arrive below age-related expectations compared to 40 – 63.4% of other pupils. This gap narrows towards the end of KS2.</p>
5	<p>Our assessments, observations and discussions with pupils and families have identified social and emotional issues for many pupils, notably due to social development and a lack of enrichment opportunities. These challenges particularly affect disadvantaged pupils, including their attainment.</p>

## 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 achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	Sustained high attendance by 2027/28 demonstrated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the percentage of all pupils who are persistently absent being below 10% and the figure among disadvantaged pupils being no more than 5% lower than their peers.</li> </ul>
Improved writing attainment among disadvantaged pupils.	KS2 writing outcomes in 2027/28 show that more than 70% of disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard.
Improved reading attainment among disadvantaged pupils in Year 3.	End of year reading outcomes in 2025/26 show that the number of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard improves throughout the year. Accelerated Reader data will also show that disadvantaged pupils make good progress through improving their RA, quiz results and number of books read.
Improved maths attainment for disadvantaged pupils in Year 3.	End of year maths outcomes in 2025/26 show that the number of disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard improves throughout the year.
To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils in our school, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	Sustained high levels of wellbeing by 2027/28 demonstrated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>qualitative data from student voice, student and parent surveys and teacher observation</li> <li>a significant increase in participation in enrichment activities, particularly among disadvantaged pupils.</li> </ul>

## 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: £6,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Update materials already purchased from a <a href="#">DfE validated Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme</a> to secure stronger phonics teaching for disadvantaged pupils, as well as all pupils on the phonics programme.</p>	<p>Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base that indicates a positive impact on the accuracy of word reading, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p><a href="#">Phonics Teaching &amp; Learning Toolkit EEF</a></p>	3
<p>Enhancement of our maths teaching and curriculum planning in line with DfE and EEF guidance, to secure stronger teaching for disadvantaged pupils in all maths lessons.</p> <p>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).</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><a href="#">Mathematics guidance: key stages 1 and 2</a></p> <p>The EEF guidance is based on a range of the best available evidence.</p> <p><a href="#">Mastery Learning Teaching &amp; Learning Toolkit EEF</a></p> <p><a href="#">Improving Maths in Key Stages 1 &amp; 2 EEF Guidance</a></p>	4
<p>Purchase of standardised diagnostic assessments.</p> <p>Training for staff to ensure assessments are interpreted and administered correctly, so that gaps in learning and barriers for disadvantaged children are identified quickly and efficiently.</p>	<p>When used effectively, diagnostic assessments can indicate areas for development for individual pupils, or across classes and year groups.</p> <p><a href="#">Diagnostic assessment   EEF</a></p>	2, 3 & 4

<p>Embedding reading comprehension strategies across the school curriculum. These can support disadvantaged pupils to comprehend the meaning of what they are reading. We will purchase resources and fund ongoing teacher training and release time.</p>	<p>When used effectively, reading comprehension strategies can be successfully utilised across a range of subjects providing significant impact across classes and year groups.</p> <p><a href="#">Reading Comprehension Strategies Teaching &amp; Learning Toolkit EEF</a></p>	<p>4</p>
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### Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support, structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £74,568

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Small group tuition for pupils in need of additional support, and linked with, normal lessons.</p>	<p>Tuition targeted at specific needs and knowledge gaps can be an effective method to support low attaining pupils or those falling behind:</p> <p><a href="#">Small group tuition   Teaching and Learning Toolkit   EEF</a></p>	<p>2, 3, 4 &amp; 5</p>
<p>Small group intervention for pupils in need of additional support with emotional literacy and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Intervention targeted at specific emotional, wellbeing and pastoral needs is an effective strategy to improve pupils' decision-making skills, interaction with others and their self-management of emotions.</p> <p><a href="#">Social &amp; Emotional Learning Teaching &amp; Learning Toolkit EEF</a></p>	<p>1 &amp; 5</p>

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

Budgeted cost: £7,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
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<p>Embedding principles of good practice set out in the DfE's guidance on <a href="#">working together to improve school attendance</a>.</p> <p>This will involve training and release time for staff to develop and implement new procedures and appointing attendance/support officers to improve attendance. Which in turn will allow time to support disadvantaged families.</p>	<p>The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced levels of absence and persistent absence.</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>Contingency fund for acute issues.</p>	<p>Based on our experiences and those of similar schools to ours, we have identified a need to set a small amount of funding aside to respond quickly to needs that have not yet been identified.</p>	<p>All</p>

**Total budgeted cost: £87,768**

## Part B: Review of the previous academic year

### Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

We have analysed the performance of our school's disadvantaged pupils during the 2024/25 academic year using key stage 2 performance data and our own internal assessments. We have also drawn on school data and observations to assess wider issues impacting disadvantaged pupils' performance, including attendance, behaviour and wellbeing.

To help us gauge the performance of our disadvantaged pupils we compared their results to those for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils at national and local level and to results achieved by our non-disadvantaged pupils (though we know 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).

We have also drawn on school data and observations to assess wider issues impacting disadvantaged pupils' performance, including attendance, behaviour and wellbeing.

Data from tests and assessments suggest that the progress and attainment of the school's disadvantaged pupils in 2024/25 was better than expected in both reading and maths. However, progress and attainment in writing was still below our expectations. There have been improvements made in attainment since the 2023/24 data, however there is still a difference between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils, particularly in writing. Progress and attainment in writing is addressed at a whole school level with the continual embedding of the small steps writing curriculum.

Our analysis suggests the reason for the improvements in reading and maths has been the impact of small group teaching provided through the daily small group teaching by the Deputy Head and Senior Teacher.

As a whole cohort, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 showed an improvement in all subjects from the 2023/24 data.

We are at present on course to achieve the outcomes we set out to achieve by 2025/26, as stated in the Intended Outcomes section above.

Overall attendance among disadvantaged pupils was 4% lower than their peers in 2024/25 and persistent absence 13.7% higher. We recognise this gap is too large which is why raising the attendance of our disadvantaged pupils is a focus of our current plan. This will be achieved through an individualised approach, assessing the barriers for each child and working with their family, using the Support First Approach, to overcome them.

We have reviewed our strategy plan and made changes to how we intend to use some of our budget this academic year, as set out in the Activity in This Academic Year section above.

## 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
None	

## Further information (optional)

Our pupil premium strategy will be supplemented by additional activity that is not being funded by pupil premium. That will include:

- Embedding more effective practice around feedback. [EEF evidence](#) demonstrates this has significant benefits for pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils.
- Employing a pastoral support manager. Providing targeted support for disadvantaged families from a highly trained DSL/pastoral support manager enables teachers to focus on the academic aspect of school. Families are well supported in a timely manner in a variety of aspects including attendance, health and finance.
- Offering a wide range of high-quality extracurricular activities to boost wellbeing, behaviour, attendance, and aspiration. Activities will focus on building life skills such as confidence, resilience, and socialising. Disadvantaged pupils will be encouraged and supported to participate.

### **Planning, implementation, and evaluation**

In planning our pupil premium strategy, we evaluated why activity undertaken in previous years had limited impact in some areas, but greater impact in others.

We triangulated evidence from multiple sources of data including assessments, engagement in class book scrutiny, conversations with parents, students and teachers in order to identify the challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils.

We looked at a number of reports, studies and research papers about effective use of pupil premium, the impact of disadvantage on education outcomes and how to address challenges to learning presented by socio-economic disadvantage. We also looked at studies about the impact of the pandemic on disadvantaged pupils.

We used the [EEF's implementation guidance](#) to help us develop our strategy, particularly the 'explore' phase to help us diagnose specific pupil needs and work out which activities and approaches are likely to work in our school. We will continue to use it through the implementation of activities.

We have put a robust evaluation framework in place for the duration of our strategy and will adjust our plan over time to secure better outcomes for pupils.