Pupil Premium Strategy Statement - Mereside C of E Academy 2025-26

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	Mereside C of E Primary Academy
Number of pupils in school	364
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	15.3% (56)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers **(3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year)**	3 years **Sep 24** £116,920 (79 pupils @ £1480 ea.) **Sep 25** £96,800 (62 pupils @ £1515 ea.) **Sep 26** (£)
Date this statement was published	September 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2026
Statement authorised by	Mrs L. Hughes Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Mrs B. Bryant
Local Academy Committee lead	Mrs R. Dartnall

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£116,920
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years *(enter £0 if not applicable)*	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£116,920

If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year	

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

We believe all things are possible with God and in our Church school, this means that all of our children, irrespective of their backgrounds or starting points, should make good progress from their starting point while they are with us and achieve all they possibly can. Our pupil premium strategy is part of the support on offer to enable our children to do this.

We have considered the potential challenges faced by some of our children, such as those who are in receipt of pupil premium funding and those who are considered to be vulnerable to ensure we have planned the right support to enable them to make good progress while they are at Mereside.

Quality first teaching is at the centre of everything we do as our children only get one chance at school. Quality first inclusive teaching means all staff who work with and alongside our children need to have a good subject knowledge and understand how children learn. This is why our pupil premium plan has a CPD focus for our teachers, teaching assistants and volunteers who play a key role in helping our children make progress.

We understand that some of our children will need extra support to fill gaps in their learning and practice skills/knowledge they have learnt in school so that they become fluent. The additional interventions that we offer aids this need. Across the whole school, an adaptive teaching style is used along with additional scaffolding for those pupils who require it. The result of this is that all children have the same access to the knowledge and skills being taught.

Underpinning all of these approaches is our commitment to the children as individuals and ensuring they get the right support/help, they need at the right time. Our Pastoral Support Assistant and our Attendance leader play an integral role in identifying, providing and monitoring the support we offer to our children and families.

It is important to recognise that not all pupils who are socially disadvantaged are registered or qualify for free school meals. We reserve the right to allocate the Pupil Premium funding to support any pupil or groups of pupils the school has legitimately identified as being socially disadvantaged.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Many of our vulnerable children enter our school with under developed oral language skills and a limited vocabulary compared to their peers and other groups.
2	As a school, we want to ensure that all pupils achieve a reading age which enables them to read fluently and be able to access the wider school curriculum. Some of our pupils are in the bottom 20% for reading within their year group.
3	Some of our children have a limited experience of activities outside of school and living within a rural community with limited transport links, they often do not leave the local area. This results in limited experiences beyond the family home and limited first hand opportunities to develop their own cultural capital, enhancing their aspirations.
4	Our attendance data indicates that some of our PP pupils fall below the expected attendance levels which then has a direct impact upon their attainment in school. Some of our hard to reach/vulnerable families do not engage in terms of parent's evenings etc.
5	Observations/discussions tell us there is an increasing number of children who need additional support with their social skills, wellbeing and mental health issues. Social and emotional issues need to be supported to enable children to feel safe and secure, enabling them to learn.

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
1. Improved vocabulary and oral skills.	All children to experience direct teaching of vocabulary across the school. This to be evidenced through discussions with children and observations of learning and written work. Part of our teaching assistants time will be funded to support this work with identified pupils across the school.
2. For all children entering school below the expected standards to achieve 32+ in Y1 phonics and read fluently by the end of Y2.	Pupils eligible for PP funding will receive additional support/interventions as needed to ensure that they can make accelerated progress from their starting point in phonics and reading. The gap between pupils reading age and their chronological age narrows throughout the academic year.
3. For all children to experience a range of first hand experiences.	ALL children to experience school activities regardless of cost and for these experiences to have a positive impact upon learning and knowledge of the world. All PP children will be able to access both subsidised breakfast club and after school clubs.
4. To ensure all children achieve at least 96% attendance.	All pupils with attendance levels below 96% are monitored and supported by the admin team and the Attendance Leader. This will result in good attendance levels being achieved and families being supported/challenged when levels drop.
5. All children feel safe and secure, enabling them to focus upon their learning.	Vulnerable children are identified and additional support appropriate to their needs is put in place with the Pastoral Lead, enabling them to thrive. Children feel safe and happy in school. They know who their trusted adults are as well as how to safeguard themselves.

Activity in this academic year 2025-2026

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

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £33,388.90

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Part funding of teaching assistant hours to enable the organisation and timetabling/resourcing of intervention groups along with high quality in class support and nurture. Their role will include quality assuring the adaptive teaching methods being used, ensuring scaffolds and resources are in place.	Interventions and precision teaching are supportive when delivered in a timely manner by well trained staff. Adaptive teaching and scaffolded support means all children will receive the additional help/resource they need to succeed but some children will need more specific/specialist support to do this. **EEF Strand: Teaching Assistants** (+4 months) & **Adaptive Teaching** (often categorized under *Feedback* or *Individualised Instruction*, +4 months). **EEF Evidence Link:** The EEF notes that TAs have a high impact when deployed to deliver high-quality, structured small-group interventions. Furthermore, using TAs to free up capacity for targeted scaffolding allows disadvantaged learners to access the core curriculum effectively.	1, 2 & 5 Attendance lead to use afternoon hours to carry out this aspect *Total PM cost is £17,204.50*
Weekly SLT monitoring and evaluation time along with termly CPD sessions for all staff working with children on Early Reading, RWI Phonics and adaptation.	Subject knowledge being developed both for teachers and teaching assistants will result in the support in classes being of a higher quality, providing greater consistency and strong outcomes across the school. **EEF Strand: Professional Development** (Underpins all toolkit areas; effectively executed CPD can add +4 months of progress).	1 & 2 *Reading Lead and Phase Lead £32 ph x 2 x 5 x 39 =£12,480* *TA time for CPD* *£18.37 ph x 2 x 10 staff x 6 terms = £2204.40* *RWI consultant to deliver training and*

	EEF Evidence Link: High-quality professional development is considered the most effective lever schools have to improve pupil outcomes. The EEF toolkit explicitly states that supporting high-quality teaching through robust CPD has a disproportionately positive impact on disadvantaged pupils.	*support PP progress, £500 x 3 sessions = £1500* *Total £16,184.40*

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

Budgeted cost: £38,115.96

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Identified pupils to receive additional daily phonics sessions in Reception and Y1 (Talk Boost) as needed. This is to close gaps as soon as they appear.,	Quality phonics sessions have a strong evidence base and have a direct impact upon pupil progress, especially those from a disadvantaged background. Targeted phonics sessions with support staff have been shown to impact upon pupil attainment. **EEF Strand: Phonics** (+5 months) & **Oral Language Interventions** (+6 months). **EEF Evidence Link:** Phonics has a very strong evidence base for improving early reading, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Combining this with *Oral Language Interventions* (like Talk Boost) directly targets the spoken language gaps identified in Challenge 1.	1 & 2 *Two members of staff AM* *£18.37 x 2 x 10 x 39 = £14,328.60*
Focused on PP children in the bottom 20% in KS1. Working one to one with a trained Teaching Assistant to ensure all children can read by the end of Y2.	Research by the International Literacy Centre has shown that over 85% of children who have undertaken supported daily reading have: Developed fluency and stamina and that enables them to read longer texts. Learned to use rich language, develop complex sentences and have the	1, 2 & 5 *Three members of staff AM* *£18.37 x 3 x 10 x 39 = £21,492.90*

	ability to carry multiple ideas in their minds. **EEF Strand: One to One Tuition** (+5 months). **EEF Evidence Link:** Short, regular, focused 1-to-1 sessions delivered by well-trained TAs show high impact. The EEF highlights that 1-to-1 support accelerates reading fluency and comprehension when closely linked to classroom instruction.	
IDL English and Maths software to be used individually and in small groups to support and extend PP pupil's learning regardless of their ability level.	Targeting specific needs and knowledge gaps can be an effective method to support low attaining pupils or those who are falling behind. Both lower and higher attaining pupils. (EEF Research) **EEF Strand: Digital Technology** (+4 months) & **Small Group Tuition** (+4 months). **EEF Evidence Link:** The EEF suggests that digital technology is highly effective when used as a supplementary tool to target specific data-driven gaps (precision teaching), rather than as a replacement for high-quality teacher interaction.	1 & 2 *IDL costs £861.60* *Staff costs to facilitate (£18.37 x 2 hrs x 39 = £1432.86)*

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

Budgeted cost: £50,922.43

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Financial support for all pupils to experience more first- hand experiences e.g. school	Children need to have a wide range of experiences and general knowledge to make the expected progress across the curriculum; this is shown in	All areas *Arthog £3302.42* *Clubs £250* *Ed Visits £1630*

trips, PP children attending residential and attendance at before and after school clubs and activities.	OFSTED research and also through our own knowledge of our children. **EEF Strand: Arts Participation** (+3 months) & **Sports Participation** (+2 months). **EEF Evidence Link:** While the academic impact rating is lower, the EEF notes that subsidising these activities ensures equity of access. Extending the school day via breakfast/after-school clubs also provides safe environments that indirectly support academic readiness and attendance	*Music Lessons £589.56*
Pastoral Lead and other team members working with families around attendance and punctuality issues.	DfE guidance has been used to further develop our policies and procedures. Close work with the school's EWO has also enabled us to refine our practices and better support our families. **EEF Strand: Parental Engagement** (+4 months) & **Behaviour Interventions** (+4 months). **EEF Evidence Link:** The EEF's guidance report on attendance emphasises that personalised, intensive support from dedicated pastoral staff is highly effective at reducing persistent absence in vulnerable families compared to generic school-wide policies.	All areas *Pastoral Lead £23,904* *Office/Administration Support £3582.15* *Contribution to EWO £2500*
Teaching assistant training and time allocated to deliver social friendship/turn taking groups to support pupil's social skills.	EEF evidence around the importance of behaviour and social interventions. **EEF Strand: Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)** (+4 months). **EEF Evidence Link:** Targeted SEL interventions in small groups help children manage their emotions and improve self-regulation, which directly correlates with improved academic focus and classroom behaviour.	1 & 5 *One member of staff AM £18.37 x 10 x 39 = £7,164.30*
Access to specialist services and external agencies where required, such as Educational Psychology,	EEF evidence around the importance of behaviour interventions, post covid.	1, 3 & 5 *Estimated costs of £8000*

Autism outreach, counselling and behaviour support through the local authority.	**EEF Strand: Behaviour Interventions** (+4 months) & **Social and Emotional Learning** (+4 months). **EEF Evidence Link:** The EEF recognizes that specialized, targeted behavior and mental health interventions provide vital foundations for learning, particularly for children experiencing complex barriers post-pandemic.	

Total budgeted cost: £122,427.29

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

End of Year data 2025-2026

EYFS (Reception)

2026 - GLD = 69.49% (41/59) *of our children achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD)*

100% PP child achieved GLD

-100% of the disadvantaged cohort hit the expected benchmark, showing highly successful early intervention.

Year 1 Phonics Screening

Y1 Phonics = 83% (40/48)

Y1 Phonics Disadvantaged = 50% (3/6)

Y1 Phonics Non-disadvantaged = 88% (37/42)

Year 2 – Cumulative Phonics (Children passing in either Year 1 or 2) – 100 %

- Targeted catch-up strategies successfully brought 100% of pupils to the standard by the end of Year 2

KS1 Assessment (42 pupils, 7 PP)

Multiplication Check -

Score	Total	Percentage
25	17/49	34.6%
20-25	36/49	73.4%

PPG 25	3/14	6% (21%)
PPG 20-25	9/14	18% (64%)

64% of PP scored 20–25, showing solid baseline fluency but lower top-tier mastery.

End of year Whole School Attendance – 96.6%

End of Year Attendance PA: 9%

PPG PA: Below 90%= 18/64 children= 29%

Summer 25:41.67% Autumn 25: 38.71% Spring 26:19.7% Summer 26: 29% (Incrase in G code)

While Summer 26 figure (29%) is a major improvement from the prior year's Summer 25 baseline (41.67%), it reflects a common national trend where attendance frequently declines and PA rates peak during the final term of the year.

Remaining Context: Nationally, pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM/PPG context) hover around a **38% PA rate** across all school phases. When measured against national peers of the

same demographic, your Spring 26 and Summer 26 figures are actually outperforming typical PPG national trends, even though they remain above the "all pupil" primary standard.

Positive Attendance Trends:
Overall daily attendance for all pupils in 2025/26 stands at 95.9%, which is "Above" the national average of 95.0%.
Persistent absence for all pupils (12.3%) is "Close to average" and lower than the national average (14.4%) in 2025/26.
Attendance for Free School Meals (FSM) eligible pupils (94.3%) and SEN pupils (93.1%) also shows "Relative improvement" or is "Close to average" compared to national, indicating effective strategies are in place to encourage consistent attendance, aligning with the school's improvement priority.
Attendance Lead accessing broader CPD offer has impacted analysis of data and the communication with staff.

KS2 Assessemnt

	EXS+ No & %	***GDS No & %***	***DIS EXS %***	***Non-dis EXS %***
Reading	37% 22/60	48% 29/60	82% 9/11	86% 42/49
Writing	60% 36/60	16.6% 10/60	82% 9/11	75.5% 37/49
Maths	43% 26/60	45% 27/60	100% 11/11	82% 40/49
EGPS	38% 23/60	47% 28/60	82% 9/11	86% 42/49
Combined R/W/M	55% 33/60	17% 10/60	82% 9/11	69% 34/49

Combined (+13%): Disadvantaged pupils outperformed their peers by a wide margin.

Non- disadvantaged out performed disadnataged children by **(-4%)** in reading and EGPS

Disadvantage children out perform peers by **(+6.5%)** in writing.

Significant Improvement for Disadvantaged Pupils: Mereside has made outstanding progress in closing attainment gaps for its disadvantaged pupils in 2026. Disadvantaged pupils achieved 100% in Maths expected standard, which is "Above (sig+)" the national disadvantaged average (62%) and represents a "Positive gap" of 18 percentage points (pp) against national non-disadvantaged pupils.
Similarly, Reading (83% vs national disadvantaged 63%) and EGPS (83% vs national disadvantaged 61%) expected standards were "Above (non-sig)," both showing a "Positive gap" of 2pp and 3pp respectively.
Progress measures for disadvantaged pupils in 2026 were also strong, with Maths progress "Above (sig+)" and Reading progress "Above (non-sig)," both demonstrating "Positive gaps." This directly addresses the improvement priority for inclusion and achievement for this group.