

# Pupil premium strategy statement



This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery premium) for the 2024 to 2025 academic year 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 effect that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

## School overview

Detail	Data
School name	Downlands Community School
Number of pupils in school	203 (excluding pre-school)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	4% (9 pupils)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	Sept 2024 - 2025
Date this statement was published	18th December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	18th December 2026
Statement authorised by	Mr J Rielly
Pupil premium lead	Mr J Rielly
Governor / Trustee lead	Mr Keith Dawson

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£11,840 (based on 8 eligible pupils at the time)
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£0
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	£11,840

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

The most important support that could be offered to a disadvantaged child is an excellent education to allow them to realise their full potential. Nevertheless, Maslow's hierarchy of need should also be considered in terms of providing the right foundations for children to prosper in school. Our principles are to make sure that fundamental needs are in place, particularly around emotional literacy and mental health alongside the support that might be needed to address academic gaps.

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Speech and language gaps Assessments, observations, and discussions with pupils and parents indicate underdeveloped oral language skills and vocabulary gaps among many pupils. These are evident from Reception through to KS2 and in general, are more prevalent among our disadvantaged pupils than their peers.
2	Maths fluency and confidence Attainment at Y6 for maths is below national averages (65% compared to 74%). Nevertheless, for the 10 Y6 pupils that have been at the school for at least 12 terms, results are slightly better at 70% ARE. For the 2 children identified as disadvantaged in Y6, 50% met the standard in maths. There were no identified disadvantaged children in YR or Y2. However, of the two disadvantaged children in Y4, 50% met the standard required in the MTC - with one child achieving full marks. The school is in its fifth year of implementing mastery maths across the whole school. It is also part of a new initiative to develop number fluency across the school.
3	Writing and early writing Attainment at Y6 for writing is well below national averages (54% compared to 72%). Nevertheless, for the 10 Y6 pupils that have been at the school for at least 12 terms, results are better at 70% ARE. However, for the 2 children identified as disadvantaged in Y6, neither met the standard in writing. Following support for early writing as part of a TSIO, weaknesses in pedagogy were identified linked to mixed phase teaching: the need to concentrate on quality not quantity and focus also only on writing skills identified in the NC for that age group. We have also identified the need to transform planning to enable a clearer focus on accuracy in writing as well as identifying how reasonable adjustments can narrow gaps. Or, where curriculum adaptations are needed where there are large gaps.
4	Reading

	Attainment at Y6 for reading is well below national averages (54% compared to 75%). Nevertheless, for the 10 Y6 pupils that have been at the school for at least 12 terms, results are better at 60% ARE. Attainment at Y1 for the phonics screening check has improved by over 40% in two years, but still lags behind the national average (67% compared to 80%). There were no disadvantaged children who sat the phonics test in 2025. The school received light touch support from Cornerstones English Hub.
5	<p>Emotional health</p> <p>From our observations and discussions with pupils and families we have identified that social and emotional issues are a significant challenge for many pupils. These challenges particularly affect disadvantaged pupils, including their attainment.</p>
6	<p>Attendance</p> <p>Our overall attendance figures for 24/25 were below our whole school targets: attendance was 95.4% overall, yet our target was 97%+. PA rates were 10.2% whereas we wanted this to be less than 10%.</p> <p>For the disadvantaged group (9 pupils) the overall attendance was lower than our whole school figure: 92.3% compared to 95.4%. The school was above national averages on all measures, but it seeks to narrow gaps and move towards raised school targets.</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
Children identified for interventions in school are making progress towards gaps identified in reading/ writing / maths and other core areas such as fine motor and gross motor skills.	School staff use APDR interventions which can evidence children making progress towards identified targets.
Children with gaps in speech and language skills are better enabled and supported through interventions: better scaffolding and adaptation of learning as appropriate.	Teachers/TAs/Keyworkers can evidence that pupils in receipt of interventions have made progress towards APDR targets.
Children at risk of suspension because of detrimental behaviours are supported to thrive better in our setting through the designing of bespoke plans in the involvement of outside agencies	Success criteria on bespoke plans are met and the need for suspensions is virtually eliminated.
Children's emotional health is supported at a universal and targeted level.	Pupils in receipt of ELSA and/or MHST support are shown to be engaging well and adopting strategies to help talk about their emotions and make valued behaviour choices in the moment
Children's attendance improves overall, eliminating the gap for disadvantaged children.	The overall target of 97%+ attendance is achieved and the gap between

	disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged is eliminated.
Children who may hold Young Carer roles are better identified and supported.	A programme of parental engagement and staff training leads to an up-to-date register of Young Carers. Also a new policy which underpins strategies and frequent activities to support children and families.

## 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 (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

**Budgeted cost: £ 2,029**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach
Cover to allow CPD for maths fluency and improved Number Sense £385	The school is part of NCETM maths hub research led programme to improve maths pedagogy. In addition to the costs associated with this five year programme, the school has joined another pilot project linked to improving children's number fluency - Mastering Number.
Cover to allow CPD for developing Early Writing £385	The school has continued to receive support from a local academy trust to strengthen the delivery of writing across the school.
Sustained development of phonics scheme through continued training of staff. £510 Investment in Early Reading Books to better align with phonics scheme £749	Education evidence (EEF) +5 months impact The average impact of the adoption of phonics approaches is about an additional five months' progress over the course of a year. Phonics approaches have been consistently found to be effective in supporting younger pupils to master the basics of reading, with an average impact of an additional five months' progress. Research suggests that phonics is particularly beneficial for younger learners (4–7 year olds) as they begin to read. Teaching phonics is more effective on average than other approaches to early reading (such as whole language or alphabetic approaches), though it should be emphasised that effective phonics techniques are usually embedded in a rich literacy environment for earl
Training of all staff and identification of Young Carer lead £(cost in 25/26)	Young carers can face particular challenges in their school attendance. Data from the Department for Education (DfE) <sup>6</sup> found that, in the 2022/23 academic year, almost two in every five (39.0%) recorded young carers were persistently absent, defined as missing 10% or more of school. This was almost double the proportion of those who were not identified as young carers (21.1%).

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

**Budgeted cost: £24,575**

+Activity	Evidence that supports this approach
SENSS specialist teacher £3,600	Specific reports of impact from experienced former LA adviser, relating to diagnosis, strategy plans and summary reports which improve progress and transition for SPLD pupils on the SEN register.
Nessie license for supporting school led	Results of a Pilot Study Using Nessy Reading and Spelling at Glasgow High School: 'An independent study into the effectiveness of the Nessy

interventions for SPLD (English) pupils £760	Reading and Spelling program. Students were aged between 8-10 years. Spelling ability was tested at the beginning and end of the 4 month trial. The average increase was 8 months. Three students who barely used the program made no progress. Several students used the program 3 or 4 times a week in addition to their scheduled time with the teacher. The student who used the program most intensively made 21 months progress. A huge difference in motivation was observed among the pupils
Maintaining ELSA availability and parent pastoral support Staff cost: £19,700 Supervision cost £515	Education evidence (EEF) +4 months impact The average impact of successful SEL interventions is an additional four months' progress over the course of a year. The security of this evidence is, however, very low, so schools should carefully monitor the efficacy of approaches in their own settings. Alongside academic outcomes, SEL interventions have an identifiable and valuable impact on attitudes to learning and social relationships in school. Public data on the attainment of young carers is not currently available. However, research consistently shows the relationship between attendance and attainment, with higher levels of absence correlated with lower levels of attainment.

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

**Budgeted cost: £1,278**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach
Arts Week £400	Education evidence (EEF) +3 months impact Overall, the average impact of arts participation on other areas of academic learning appears to be positive but moderate, about an additional three months progress. Improved outcomes have been identified in English, mathematics and science. Benefits have been found in both primary and secondary schools. Some arts activities have been linked with improvements in specific outcomes. For example, there is some evidence of the impact of drama on writing and potential link between music and spatial awareness. Wider benefits such as more positive attitudes to learning and increased well-being have also consistently been reported
Transition special events for Y6 children at neighbouring secondary school: special transition 'Maths Matters' day; watching the secondary musical production £198	The Impact of School Transitions and Transfers on Pupil Progress and Attainment: Maurice Galton, John Gray and Jean Ruddock Homerton College, Cambridge "Schools need to find out how pupils see each of the transition years and to present a picture of 'the next year' that makes pupils look forward to it with excitement - in terms of both opportunities to extend their learning and opportunities to be 'more adult' and responsible."
Social and emotional learning programmes:	Education evidence (EEF) +4 months impact The average impact of successful SEL interventions is an additional four months' progress over the course of a year. Alongside academic

<p>Training and investment in JIGSAW PSHE digital</p> <p>£680</p>	<p>outcomes, SEL interventions have an identifiable and valuable impact on attitudes to learning and social relationships in school.</p> <p>Although SEL interventions are almost always perceived to improve emotional or attitudinal outcomes, not all interventions are equally effective at raising attainment. Improvements appear more likely when SEL approaches are embedded into routine educational practices and supported by professional development and training for staff. In addition, the implementation of the programme and the degree to which teachers are committed to the approach appear to be important.</p>
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**Total budgeted cost: £27,882**

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

### Pupil premium strategy outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

100% of disadvantaged children [6 children] made progress in reading according to teacher assessments

100% of disadvantaged children [6 children] made progress in writing according to teacher assessments.

67% of disadvantaged children [6 children] made progress in maths according to teacher assessments.

Furthermore, disadvantaged pupils achieved an attendance of 92.3% in the academic year 24/25, compared with 92.1% for disadvantaged pupils nationally.

### Service pupil premium funding

Measure	Details
How did you spend your service pupil premium allocation last academic year?	<p>Downlands School has a high proportion of children eligible for services premium (96%).</p> <p>As such, it apports the vast majority of the allocated fund to support the salary of additional teaching assistants who achieve a direct impact on the school experience for services children:</p> <p>HLTA/ELSA</p> <p>The school maintains a 4 dpw ELSA provision which softens the impact of high mobility in services in terms of: loss of friendships; low self-esteem/confidence; coping with absent parents; impact of possible PTSD experienced by a parent. The ELSA offers structured 6 – 8 week programmes of support as well as on-going nurture where a need is identified</p> <p>Family support groups for parents</p> <p>The HLTA and Assistant Headteacher plan and deliver termly self-help and support groups for parents which seek to strengthen understanding of approaches used in school, particularly for those children with additional needs and for parents new to the school community. They are supported by Dorset Mental Health Support Team (MHST) in this endeavour.</p> <p>The school also invests over and above in resources that facilitate children who have recently arrived to the school, so that they have a differentiated approach with their learning, reflecting their contrasting starting points. For example, having already invested significantly in enough iPads for each KS2 pupil, the school now invests significantly in the ongoing upkeep of these machines. It also invests in an annual license for adaptive online software such as TTRS, Mathletics, Nessy and Edshed.</p>



	The school also secures quick assessments for additional needs and specific learning difficulties, using a private consultant to carry out SENSS assessments.
What was the impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils?	<p>These services children achieved the following based on teacher assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 93% making on or above expected progress in reading</li> <li>● 92% making on or above expected progress in maths</li> <li>● 88% were also seen to be making progress in their writing</li> </ul> <p>Furthermore, attendance of services children during this year was 95.2% compared to national levels of 94.5%</p>