



The Acorns
Primary and Nursery School

Mutual respect

Equity

Inclusivity

Love

The Acorns Primary and Nursery School

3 Year Pupil Premium Strategy (2025 - 2028)



Updated September 2026

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 effect that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	The Acorns Primary and Nursery School
Number of pupils in school (excluding nursery)	299
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	48% (National Average 24%)
OFSTED Disadvantaged	60%
Date this statement was published	September 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	January 2026; June 2026
Statement authorised by	Nathan Painter, Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Emma Leslie, Deputy Headteacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Sue Jones, lead for disadvantaged pupils

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£244,767.05
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
Total budget for this academic year If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year	£244,767.05

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our Vision: To provide a world class start to life.

We understand that each child who attends The Acorns Primary and Nursery School is a unique individual. We firmly believe that in the absence of equality, we must provide equity for all our pupils, especially those who are most disadvantaged. We must provide our pupils with whatever they need to be able to succeed in all aspects of school life.

The effective use of the pupil premium grant involves both elements of our mission statement at The Acorns Primary & Nursery School; all pupils, including the most severely disadvantaged, pupils with SEND and the highly gifted, are regarded as unique individuals and receive both challenge and support designed to meet their needs.

At The Acorns Primary and Nursery School, we are guided by educational research. We have embedded the Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) guidance on using Pupil Premium Funding Effectively, as well as the EEF's teaching and learning tool kit to focus on whole school improvement in key areas.

All members of staff at The Acorns hold the following key principles:

- In a school with such a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils, our whole school ethos must reflect our stance on supporting all pupils, especially our pupils most negatively impacted by their socio-economic standing.
- Education disadvantage cannot be tackled in isolation.
- The term 'disadvantaged' does not only refer to those in receipt of Pupil Premium funding.
- Expectations are high for all pupil groups and individuals; we do not equate deprivation and challenge with low attainment or poor progress.
- All teaching and learning strategies are designed to meet the needs of individuals and groups.
- Additional support is integrated into the teaching programme.
- Research, trialling and self-evaluation are embraced to allocate funding to actions that are most likely to have an impact on achievement.
- In providing support, we will not isolate pupils based on socio-economic factors. Therefore, it is likely that all groups receiving additional support will be a mix of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.
- A three-year Pupil Premium Strategy will ensure closely tracked key whole school development points and actions so that improvement builds year on year.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Pupils have not made strong progress in writing compared to their peers, resulting in a wider than average gap in some areas: Y3 & Y5
2	Through lack of exposure, our younger pupils (Rec-Y3) have not developed a love of reading and therefore do not read often enough to support excellent progress
3	Many disadvantaged pupils have not had access to the same developmental experiences as their peers
4	There is a high number of pupils with additional needs across the school: years 1-6 (17%), with this being most prevalent in Y3 (20%) & Y5 (25%)
5	Many of our pupils who first enter The Acorns (either joining our Caterpillar, Butterfly, or Reception provision) join developmentally behind their peers
6	Some disadvantaged pupils have several barriers to accessing school, which impacts negatively on learning
7	A high proportion of persistent absentees are disadvantaged
8	Social and emotional needs of some disadvantaged children negatively impact on progress rates

Intended outcomes

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils at the end of KS2.	<p>Disadvantaged pupils will make at least good progress between Reception and Y6 and leave KS2 achieving in-line with their peers. Pupils will be tracked closely throughout KS2, and their needs will always be met. Performance of pupils in Testbase assessments will demonstrate secure knowledge of curriculum content over time. Termly moderation meetings for Writing (The Literacy Company) and Maths (First4Maths) will ensure expert CPD systems are in place to support staff to deliver ongoing quality learning experiences.</p> <p>Additional adults are utilised to support our eldest pupils make accelerated progress and leave us ready for their next phase of education.</p>
Improved attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Reading.	<p>Attainment in Reading will improve over time, or good progress will be made during prolonged periods of schooling by all pupils. This will be analysed at termly data drops. Data gained from Accelerated Reader and Star Reader assessments and Testbase assessments will show good progress and attainment over time. Pupils' performance is tracked weekly and immediate intervention is provided.</p> <p>Pupils have access to a range of high-quality texts within their book corners; these books are age and/or stage appropriate and draw from content across the curriculum.</p> <p>Pupils are presented with high-quality texts, matching their stage of learning.</p> <p>The school's library is a hub of reading and provides high-quality texts to read for pleasure and to be used as part of our Accelerated Reader system.</p> <p>Class book corners provide high quality texts, which have been chosen to link directly to our curriculum.</p>
SEND pupils are supported well in all areas of school life.	<p>High quality CPD and ongoing support ensures that all pupils with SEND are understood, and provision is tailored to meet their needs. Staff understand that good practice for pupils with SEND is good practise for all pupils. SEND pupils progress is tracked carefully and intervention is provided when needed. Children in need of specific intervention for speech and language are identified early; intervention is supported through classroom practice and vice versa. Pupils with SEND are offered a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sporting events and competitions – this is a specific target within our PE and Sports Grant Plan.</p>
Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in the acquisition and application of phonics and have attained well compared to peers by the end of Year 1.	<p>A rigorous and systematic approach to the teaching and learning of Phonics through our fully embedded Little Wandle programme. Staff are excellent teachers of phonics and receive support when needed to ensure this continues. Pupils progress well throughout the year and pupils who struggle are given immediate, additional support.</p>
Pupils who have experienced early childhood trauma have the	<p>Pupils who are assessed as in need of additional support emotionally and socially are supported within our 'Nurture'</p>

care in place within school to progress well.	classroom. These pupils are working behind their peers in Reading, Writing and Maths and receive small group tuition daily. All staff are trauma informed and are capable of supporting pupils who have experienced early childhood trauma. Our Relationship Policy outlines our trauma informed practice.
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support structured interventions)

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Pupils in Y6 who are working below the Expected Standard in Reading, Writing and Maths will make rapid progress.	Y6 pupils will receive additional support from known and trusted adults in school. Pupils will have regular opportunities to receive teaching in smaller groups, and sometimes 1:1 provision.
Pupils in KSI who are significantly below EXS achieve well.	Pupils identified as significantly below EXS receive high quality 'nurture room' provision to meet their needs and support them to have successful learning opportunities. Barriers to learning are removed effectively to ensure the pupils are ready to learn.
Pupils who are not proficient readers when they leave KSI make rapid progress to catch up to their peers.	Focussed phonics intervention and additional adult support ensures pupils continue to benefit from the Little Wandle programme as they move into Y3 to support rapid catch up.
Pupils in need of Speech and Language Therapy make good progress across an academic year.	A robust whole school approach to oracy supports the development of all pupils. Targeted support from a qualified TA to provide intervention for specific pupils with the greatest need.

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

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Improved wellbeing for all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, is achieved and sustained.	Two designated Family Liaison Officers provide daily support to pupils and parents through a range of methods. ELSA sessions support pupils and lead to improved wellbeing in pupils.
A wide range of experiences are available for all pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged.	The Acorns to Oak Trees programme ensures all pupils are involved in crucial developmental experiences throughout their time at The Acorns Every child in Y2, Y4 and Y6 has been provided with an opportunity for overnight residential trips which provide rich and varied activities. Children have a rich choice of extra-curricular provision, provided both within and after school hours. Classroom experiences are often used to promote learning across the curriculum. Staff have at their disposal a range of resources which they can draw upon to support the planning of quality experiences.
Pupils will be ready to learn and communicate positively from the moment the school day begins.	All children have access to a healthy breakfast through the Magic Breakfast programme. Numbers stay consistently high, and families are signposted to this provision if in need or new to school. Children attend school regularly, they arrive in school on time, calm and ready to learn.

	<p>There are no barriers to pupils attending school. Any that are discovered, are removed quickly and effectively.</p> <p>Families are supported to parent and educate their children; regular high-quality workshops are well attended.</p>
Attendance of disadvantaged pupils will be in line with non-disadvantaged pupils.	Attendance is tracked daily for all pupils. If any barriers to attendance are found, they are tackled through a range of methods. These include, transporting pupils to and from school, purchasing transport for pupils to attend school and improving pupils' level of enjoyment of school.
The social and emotion needs of all pupils will be met daily, allowing for positive learning experiences.	<p>Children at Child in Need or Child Protection are safeguarded: school works with partner agencies to ensure that the best outcomes for the children are found. Families engage well with the process, or school endeavours to try all ways to keep open lines of communication.</p> <p>Children can share their wishes and feelings both formally (following a situation); through planned activities and at any time they need to. This means that children have someone and somewhere to go to if they are not feeling happy.</p> <p>Children in need of more complex psychological help receive it in a timely manner from experts within that field.</p>
Pupils are well prepared for the next phase of their education.	<p>All transitional periods across school are well considered, planned for and as a result, are smooth and supportive for children and parents.</p> <p>Parents of children who are new to EYFS, new to KS1 and moving to KS3 are supported well.</p> <p>Children who are new to school are identified early if they are eligible for Pupil Premium funding; these children are supported to settle in well.</p> <p>The Acorns works closely with a range of High Schools to ensure a wealth of information is shared to support transition from KS2 to KS3.</p> <p>Our eldest pupils understand a range of pathways available to them beyond primary education and all have been given a taste of different jobs and careers.</p>

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)


Budgeted cost: £83,258.50

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Quality first teaching.	High quality and effective teaching and learning benefits all pupils, including those with SEND. School staff must be highly trained, research informed, and trauma informed to be able to build strong relationships and deliver meaningful learning opportunities, including providing effective feedback, that allow pupils to retain key information. To achieve quality first teaching, a strong programme of CPD support must be in place, which targets key areas in education. School ethos and policy must be research based and trauma informed.	1,2,4,5,6,7,9

	<p>Metacognition and self-regulation</p> <p>Very high impact for very low cost based on extensive evidence.</p>	<p>£ £ £ £ £</p> <p>£ £ £ £ £</p> <p>+7</p>	
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support structured interventions)




Budgeted cost: £82,832.60







Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Ensure that pupils have access to a quality IT infrastructure , which allows for quality learning experiences and instant feedback.</p> <p>Yearly subscription cost of TTRockstars, Accelerated Reader, Snap Science and SATs Companion.</p>	<p>Based on last year's Year 4 multiplication results, children benefit greatly from regular access to Times Tables Rock Stars to improve their speed and accuracy of recalling multiplication facts by the end of Year 4</p> <p>Online recourse can provide instant feedback from SATs style questions so that children can progress quicker and achieve better at the end of KS2</p> <p>Using a consistent reading comprehension strategy, supports pupils' development in reading</p>  <p>Following current research will enable staff to successfully embed good practice into the teaching of reading.</p> <p>Instant feedback is given via digital learning platforms to inform pupils of success and areas of development. This is achieved without adding to teacher workload</p> <p>Feedback</p> <p>Very high impact for very low cost based on extensive evidence.</p> <p>£ £ £ £ £</p> <p>£ £ £ £ £</p> <p>+6</p> <p>Digital devices & chosen homework support texts for Y6 pupils also allow for better quality, targeted homework to provide additional opportunities to retain key information</p> <p>Homework</p> <p>High impact for very low cost based on very limited evidence</p> <p>£ £ £ £ £</p> <p>£ £ £ £ £</p> <p>+5</p>	1,2,3,4,6
<p>Tailored support within a separate 'nurture classroom'. This ensures that the children who need it receive</p>	<p>Due to the variety of needs this group of pupils in KSI have, a smaller group setting is necessary as an alternative to accessing mainstream classroom practice. A HLTA runs this group with support of class teachers and the schools' SENCO</p>	1,5,7,8

support for Reading, Writing and Maths	<p>Small group tuition</p> <p>Moderate impact for low cost based on moderate evidence</p> <p>£ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £</p> <p>Allowing pupils an environment where they can receive more adult support supports their emotional and academic progress. This will lead to an eventual transition back into a mainstream class on a full-time basis</p>	
Specialist dyslexia screening; Specialist dyslexia intervention	<p>A number of our children present with dyslexic tendencies such as difficulties with memory, organisation and literacy skills. Allowing for daily practise as part of a whole school strategy will support academic progress. Staff regularly monitor and track pupil performance to ensure progress is being made</p>	1,3,4
SALT in school	<p>A significant number of children enter our school with language skills lower than expected. A number of children have specific needs in S&L which can only be addressed through intervention. Often waiting lists for NHS SALT mean that children are not always seen in a timely manner or are seen infrequently; in-school support from the NHS is limited</p> <p>Oral language interventions</p> <p>Very high impact for very low cost based on extensive evidence</p> <p>£ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £</p> <p>Additionally, some children may not meet the threshold for support so would never receive the help they require and ultimately this could have an impact on English attainment and progress. Therefore, our onsite SALT is necessary for both intervention and training staff who can implement strategies in their own teaching. This year all staff are well supported by both our on-site S&L therapist and our SENCo to assess children for S&L needs, know what to do to help and when to seek advice.</p>	5,7
Specific pupils in Y6 receive 1:1 or small group tutoring	<p>Analysis of pupil performance for the academic year 2023/2024 suggests that many pupils, especially in Y6, need to make accelerated progress in Reading, Writing and Maths to achieve EXS at the end of their current year. Therefore, 1:1 or small group tuition will be focussed on these areas. For this academic year (2024/2025) an additional, experience teacher as well as 2 experienced teaching assistants are working across the Y6 team to offer this support.</p> <p>One to one tuition</p> <p>High impact for moderate cost based on moderate evidence</p> <p>£ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £</p>	1,3,4
Disadvantaged pupils who also have additional SEND are well supported by more adults	<p>Disadvantaged pupils across school who have been identified as needing additional support due to having SEND are supported to access the curriculum and achieve well alongside their peers. In classrooms where there are higher numbers of these pupils, additional adult support is in place.</p>	1,2

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

Budgeted cost: £78,675.95

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
2 full time School Family Liaison Officers	<p>To ensure that safeguarding is exceptional two SFLOs are essential. Evidence over several years has shown that both members of staff have had a significant impact on the safety and wellbeing of children, especially those most at risk, whilst maintaining excellent relationships with families and external agencies.</p> <p>Whilst all members of staff are committed to safeguarding, having two designated staff members with their own rooms provides a specific point of contact and place of safety for children.</p> <p>Children need to be in school and on time to achieve their potential.</p> <p>Children will be provided with timetabled, structured sessions to enable them to explore their emotions and reprogram their thoughts where incorrect patterns have occurred.</p> <p>Social and emotional learning Moderate impact for very low cost based on very limited evidence</p> 	5,8,9,10
Magic Breakfast	<p>Providing children with a healthy breakfast ensures that they have energy for learning to enable them to concentrate. Additionally, it supports with children having a calm start to the day and ensures that any worries are addressed before teaching time. Finally, it supports parents financially and so they can use the money saved to provide dinner.</p>	8,9,10
Subsidised and free visits, experiences and clubs	<p>In the past, experiences have been difficult to fund. Therefore, we now ensure that all can function through careful use of the Pupil Premium grant. This ensures that disadvantaged pupils are exposed to the same school-led experiences as all other pupils.</p> <p>Our before and after school club is heavily subsidised and supports many PP children ensuring that their parents can work or that alternate travel arrangements can be met.</p> <p>There have been many missed opportunities when it comes to experiences outside of the classroom over the last 2 academic years. Pupils at The Acorns can still experience a wide range of enrichment opportunities linked to both curriculum learning as well as personal development and growth.</p> <p>2024 will be the first year our Y4 pupils visit London for their residential.</p>	2
Free PE kit for all	<p>Pupils access PE without barriers around clothing. Not feeling ready for any learning experience can lead to heightened levels of anxiety and result in negative feelings and unwanted behaviours. This initiative will allow all parents to access a free PE kit for their child. This also takes pressure off parents to ensure a PE kit is in school each week.</p> <p>Parental engagement Moderate impact for very low cost based on extensive evidence</p> 	8
Access to before and after school clubs	<p>Some children, who otherwise wouldn't have, are given access to before and after school clubs to support families and ensure adequate care is in place. This is to allow working parents affordable childcare and appropriate wrap around provision.</p> <p>Parental engagement Moderate impact for very low cost based on extensive evidence</p> 	2,8

15 Ks2 children access Passion 4 Learning club each week for the academic year	<p>Passion for Learning work to support disadvantaged pupils to gain access to experiences they may not have otherwise. Pupil well-being is tracked over time and progress is monitored. The club is match funded and pupils receive regular additional gifts, including hampers, learning resources and trips/visits, well above the cost to school.</p> <p>Social and emotional learning <small>Moderate impact for very low cost based on very limited evidence</small></p> <div> <div>£ £ £ £ £</div> <div>      </div> <div>  </div> </div>	2,10
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Total budgeted cost: £244,767.05

Part B: Review of outcomes in the academic year

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the 2024 to 2025 academic year.

End of KS2 data outcomes improved considerably for disadvantaged pupils in Maths (+29%) and in Writing (+11%) compared to last year. A lower proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieved the Expected Standard in Reading than last year (-8%). However, the number of disadvantaged pupils in the year 6 cohort was much higher than we have ever had at The Acorns (70%). A much higher proportion of pupils met the Expected Standard in Maths, Writing and Reading combined (+29%) compared to last year.

This year also saw a high proportion of pupils achieving a higher standard in Reading at the end of KS2 (30%) compared to last year (11%) and in Maths (15%) compared to last year (0%).

As a school, we have assessed phonological knowledge earlier than ever and have used this to ensure maximum provision is in place. All staff have completing English Hub validated phonics training. The % of pupils passing the Y1 Phonics Screening Check increased from 76% (2024) to 84% (2025).

Pupils in Y4 had more access to learning opportunities designed to support them to retain expected multiplication and division facts. The 2025 MTC demonstrated that a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils have done this, with 83% of disadvantaged pupils answering 20 or more correct answers. This is compared to 60% of pupils in 2024, and 33% in 2023

First4Maths feedback has stated how well pupils are progressing within their mathematical development. Moderation meetings have been mostly positive and where areas of improvement have been identified, additional support has been placed. This has included supporting teachers in mixed classes prepare for September '25.

The Literacy Company feedback has evidenced the strong teaching, learning and assessment at The Acorns and how well staff have used the Pathways to Write units to the meet the needs of our pupils.

The use of Testbase summative assessments have empowered teachers to reach accurate assessment points, in line with the rigor of the end of KS2 statutory assessments. These tests have also showcased the amount of progress some pupils have made.

Overall attendance of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding has consistently been above national average – ending the year on 93.2% (above by 0.7%). The proportion of pupils in receipt of funding who are classed as persistent absentees is also more positive than the national picture (19.5% compared to 20.9% nationally). There has been a wide range of positive attendance strategies that have had a positive impact. Those in receipt of pupil premium funding are closely tracked termly. The number of pupils who are late to school each day has significantly decreased since 'late gate' was introduced, making the start of the school day a much more formal process for any late attendees.

A lot of work has been done to ensure all PP pupils have been identified. 33 pupils have been identified this academic year.

P4L ran across the entire academic year with great success: pupils reported high levels of enjoyment, and they have accessed several quality experiences during this time. We are continuing this into next year

with 20 pupils being invited. Specific pupils were supported through mentoring and additional enrichment opportunities, such as a local circus.

Due to a subsidised cost to parents, every child who wanted to attend the Y2, Y4 and Y6 residential did. These trips were truly memorable and a massive part of our Acorns to Oak Tress personal development plan. Many alternative sources of funding were found to ensure all pupils had the option to attend, regardless of financial situations.

Pupils at The Acorns continue to experience a wide range of enrichment opportunities. This included trips to local areas. Every child in years 1-6 visited The Ellesmere Port Library and all KS2 pupils have worked with Cheshire Phoenix to improve health and well-being, and many more opportunities which are part of our Acorns to Oak Trees enrichment curriculum.