



# Pupil premium strategy statement

## Dunster First School

***“Expect the Best in Everything, Then Play Your Part in Achieving It”***

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	86
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	14%
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>	2023-2026
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	Naomi Philp
Pupil premium lead	Naomi Philp
Governor / Trustee lead	Rev. Helene Stainer

### Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£22,200
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b>	£22,200
<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>	

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

**Initial Response:** Prior to noting our statement of intent, we wish to say thank you to all our parents and carers who worked so effectively with us through lockdowns or through periods of absence from school. Our pupils have returned to school life so well and have processed so much change at pace, they are a credit to us and to their families. Any identified gaps and strategy of support must simply be seen as methodology for us all moving forwards securing bright futures for all our pupils.

**Intention:** It is our intention that all pupils, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, make good progress and achieve high attainment across all subject areas. Our strategy is also integral to wider school plans for education recovery and support will be targeted to pupils whose education has been worst affected, including non-disadvantaged pupils. We adopt an approach which is responsive to common challenges and individual needs. This is rooted in robust assessment and our approaches aim to ensure that all children can excel.

**Principles:** The principles with which we make all our decisions are fundamentally based on keeping children, safe, happy, well and as such able to learn.

**Considerations:** We will consider the challenges faced by vulnerable pupils, such as those who have a social worker, young carer or affected by deprivation not captured by Pupil Premium measures. We recognise that not all pupils who are socially disadvantaged are registered or qualify for free school meals. We also recognise that pupils to whom the pupil premium applies are not all low attaining pupils. We recognise that not all pupils who receive free school meals are socially disadvantaged.

**Strategy:** Classroom Foci: Quality First Teaching is integral to our approach, and we will focus on the areas in which disadvantaged children need the most support. This approach is proven to have the greatest impact on closing the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils. It is our intent to sustain this approach. We utilise our own action research and the research from the Education Endowment Foundation toolkit to ensure our strategy is correct for ensuring our pupils can make the best progress.

- We ensure that teaching and learning opportunities meet the needs of all pupils.
- We ensure that appropriate provision is made for pupils who belong to vulnerable groups.

- We reserve the right to allocate Pupil Premium funding to support any pupil or groups of pupils the school has legitimately identified as being socially disadvantaged.

Our focus within the classroom practice, through professional development, continues our ongoing review of feedback, phonics and reading comprehension, and metacognition.

The following key facets of metacognition form a key focus for us in improving the outcomes for all our pupils. Actively teaching and engaging with this through our growth mindset programme:

- cognition – the mental process involved in knowing, understanding, and learning- actively teaching and modelling process for learning.
- metacognition – often defined as 'learning to learn' linking to growth mindset.
- motivation – willingness to engage our metacognitive and cognitive skills.

Our reading strategies will also link to oral language approaches such as:

- targeted reading aloud and book discussion with young children;
- explicitly extending pupils' spoken vocabulary;
- the use of structured questioning to develop reading comprehension; and the use of purposeful, curriculum-focused, dialogue and interaction.

Our maths strategies will give the children understanding of key vocabulary and will build upon the building blocks of how children learn from EY through to Year 4.

Our writing scheme in Early Years and KS1 will enable children to develop their vocabulary and mechanisms for writing, building strong foundations as children progress into KS2.

Feedback remains a key area for us specifically considering: feedback involving metacognitive and self-regulatory approaches may have a greater impact on disadvantaged pupils and lower prior attainers than other pupils. Developing methods for ensuring clear and actionable feedback to employ metacognitive strategies as pupils learn, as this information informs their understanding of their specific strengths and areas for improvement, thereby indicating which learning strategies have been effective for them in previously completed work.

**Strategy: Support:** Our support will include all manner of approaches, from those focused sharply on academic intervention to therapeutic support programmes.

We will:

- Provide small group work with an experienced teacher focussed on overcoming gaps in learning; e.g. Phonics and reading comprehension.
- Provide 1:1 support from teachers, learning support assistants to identified need.
- Provide additional teaching and learning opportunities provided by trained Learning Support Assistant or external agencies/ tutors.
- All our work through Pupil Premium and Recovery Premium- **will** be aimed at accelerating progress moving children to at least age-related expectations.
- Wellbeing will remain a sharp focus for support, along with developing pupils metacognitive learning habits and self-belief as learners.
- Initially our main curriculum focus will be improving skills in reading, writing and maths where gaps have arisen due to school disruption previously. This is not exclusive to those subjects.
- We provide quality CPD for all teachers to ensure the QFT in the classroom allows for all pupils to succeed.

We firmly believe in our pupils being able to lead their own learning, becoming increasingly independent. We also know that every child is unique and requires their own specific learning plan and their own set of appropriately challenging goals.

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<b>Reading &amp; Phonics:</b> Phonics and reading for pupils in year 2- to ensure those not passing in Year 1, pass during the retake in June the following year, and as such are able to access their curriculum fully.
2	<b>Emotional, Social and language development:</b> Our reception age pupils are affected by missing key socialisation aspects of brain development during the pandemic, needing to access modelling from a higher adult to pupil ratio and a real focus on learning through play.
3	<b>Writing:</b> Writing is an area where pupils' outcomes have been affected adversely. Assessments and observations have shown that children's stamina and independence for writing has diminished. There are gaps in the children's understanding and application of spelling and grammar

	rules that need to be addressed. This further inhibits the children's ability to write with ease.
4	<p><b>Maths:</b> The learning gaps identified by subject reviews of content specifically reviewed maths curriculum coverage and rework. Where children have missed units of work in maths, and where there was varied interaction with the home learning (largely due to under confidence in maths as an area for parents to lead) provided during the national lockdowns and periods of partial school closures, our assessments and observations show that some disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children do not have the level of deep learning and understanding of processes that we would expect them to have for their chronological age.</p> <p><b>Children have had gaps identified. There is some variance in the implementation of the maths curriculum. Some teaching, including in the early years, can be more precise to ensure pupils learn the curriculum well. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their understanding, including their mathematical vocabulary.</b> In addition, some children have not been recalling and remembering knowledge and facts enough and this further hinders their understanding as the cognitive load can be too great.</p>
5	<p><b>Wider Curriculum:</b> The wider curriculum has been impacted. Some subjects had to be adapted during remote learning which included availability of resources, such as scientific experiments, art and music. Remote learning saw adaptations to some subjects and some key experiences were simply not able to occur. Therefore, it is important to consider the skills and knowledge that were not fully covered and plan and sequence the curriculum in such a way that the children's learning in the wider curriculum can be supported effectively. Many of the rich learning experiences have had to be altered to be Covid secure, and we have utilised funds to ensure much of the wider curriculum experience has been retained. Mixed age classes, provide a further challenge of delivering the wider curriculum ensuring progression of knowledge and skills in a sequential way.</p>
6	<p><b>Wellbeing, confidence and metacognition:</b> We have seen pupils' confidence, resilience and motivation affected adversely by the pandemic. Their learning habits and self-confidence have reduced. A range of therapeutic practices, alongside quality first teaching, tutoring, feedback, growth mindset, intervention, and collaborative learning is required to accelerate this high impact intrinsic aspect to learning and progress. A new scheme of work, supported by NHS, has been adopted across the school. The myHappy Mind scheme is in place to help children's understanding of how their brain works to help regulate their emotions.</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
Improved maths attainment for disadvantaged pupils. Increase knowledge and understanding of mathematical vocabulary.	Maths outcomes in 2025/26 show that disadvantaged pupils attain at the expected standard in line with non-disadvantaged and above the national average.
Improved outcomes for reception pupils to ensure all pupils achieve their age appropriate levels.	Reception children to make their expected level of development in order to be ready for the next phase of their learning.
Improved oral language skills and vocabulary among disadvantaged pupils.	Children will have secure use of relevant vocabulary and be able to make connections across core concepts taught in line with their peers.
Improved reading attainment among disadvantaged pupils.	Reading outcomes in 2025/26 show that disadvantaged pupils attain at the expected standard in line with non-disadvantaged and above the national average.
Improved writing attainment among disadvantaged pupils.	Writing outcomes in 2025/26 show that disadvantaged pupils attain at the expected standard in line with non-disadvantaged and above the national average.
To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all children in school, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	Sustained levels of wellbeing demonstrated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualitative data from pupil voice, parent surveys and teacher observations.</li> <li>An 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: £ 3,700

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Investment in staff to undertake collaborative action research activity to embed practices linked to learning pedagogy and curriculum development. The learning and research undertaken in our own setting based in robust research and strong academic theory, the most recent practice in order to implement the absolute best provision for our pupils over the next 3 years. Forefront of educational practices.</p>	<p>The proactive modes for actively teaching children about learning, motivating them and inspiring them has still one of the most beneficial impact measures. In line with 'common sense' the evidence bases are: EEF Toolkit for metacognition and self-regulation/ feedback/ mastery learning/ collaborative learning. This includes extensive academic reading on child development, learning theory, brain development, motivation, curriculum.</p>	5 & 6
<p>Enhancement of our maths teaching and curriculum planning in line with DfE and EEF guidance. We will fund teacher release time to embed key elements of guidance in school and to access NCTEM resources and CPD. Work with our Boolean maths hub, including to embed Mastering Number in Reception, Year 1 and 2 and to implement Mastering Number in Year 4. We will explore Mastering Number for parents.</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="#"><u>Maths guidance KS 1 and 2</u></a></p> <p>The EEF guidance is based on a range of the best available evidence: Improving Mathematics in Key Stages 2 and 3</p>	4
<p>Fund teacher release time to use Comparative Writing to measure progress, compare standards in writing in other schools and use diagnostics to identify areas to focus</p>	<p>Providing high-quality feedback to pupils is integral to effective teaching. Equally, gathering feedback on how well pupils have learned a topic is important in enabling teachers to address any misconceptions and provide the</p>	3

<p>on. Early Years Staff to receive bespoke training on encouraging writing in Reception.</p>	<p>right level of challenge in future lessons. Assessment and Feedback Toolkit Strand</p> <p>Progress as a result of Drawing Club scheme of work.</p>	
<p>Embedding dialogic activities across the school curriculum. These can support pupils to articulate key ideas, consolidate understanding and extend vocabulary. We will reinforce vocabulary to ensure children can articulate, through spoken and written language, deep subject knowledge and make connections between concepts. Moorland Federation EYFS project focussing on the environment to encourage high quality talk.</p>	<p>There is a strong evidence base that suggests oral language interventions, including dialogic activities such as high-quality classroom discussion, are inexpensive to implement with high impacts on reading: Oral language interventions   Toolkit Strand   Education Endowment Foundation   EEF</p>	<p>2 &amp; 5</p>
<p>Continued to embed our chosen validated systematic synthetic phonics programme</p> <p><b>Change to Little Wandle</b> to strengthen our phonics teaching. This includes subscription to online portal and Development Days. Children are set in phonics groups so work is at appropriate level to improve learning opportunities.</p>	<p>Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base that indicates a positive impact on the accuracy of word reading (though not necessarily comprehension), particularly for disadvantaged pupils: Phonics Toolkit Strand</p> <p>Education Endowment Foundation EEF</p>	<p>1</p>

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

Budgeted cost: £ 10,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Additional phonics sessions targeted at disadvantaged pupils who require further phonics support. Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base indicating a positive impact on pupils, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds	Targeted phonics interventions have been shown to be more effective when delivered as regular sessions over a period up to 12 weeks:  Phonics   Toolkit Strand   Education Endowment Foundation   EEF	1
To provide targeted support and intervention to meet the needs of pupils academically, emotionally and socially. Allowing pupils to access provision both within the school and externally as needed.	As above. To include all research into Trauma, ACEs, Attachment.	2 & 6

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

Budgeted cost: £ 8,500

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
To provide a trained Learning Support Assistant to deliver emotional literacy support, counselling	There is extensive evidence associating childhood social and emotional skills with improved outcomes at school and in later life	2 & 6

and time to talk (ELSA, Draw and Talk).	(e.g., improved academic performance, attitudes, behaviour and relationships with peers): EEF Social and Emotional Learning	
To provide therapeutic learning experiences for pupils, providing the space to experience as well as learn to self soothe and provide reflection space.	As above, but also linking to learning from Trauma informed schools research, ACEs understanding and attachment awareness. Processing trauma positively.	2 & 6
To enhance cultural enrichment that is accessible as part of the curriculum for all children. Subsidising trips, residential, clubs, uniforms etc.	The evidence in EEF Toolkit and literature review on non-cognitive skills suggest that character related approaches can be most effective for improving attainment when they are specifically linked to learning. Life skills and enrichment EEF Toolkit	5
To ensure attendance for children in receipt of PPG to be in line with non-PPG.	The DFE Guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced levels of absence and persistent absence. DFE Improving School Attendance 1-6  Contingency fund for acute issues. 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.	1 – 6
Contingency fund for acute issues.	Based on our experiences from the pandemic, we have identified a need to set a small amount of funding aside to respond quickly to needs that have not yet been identified.	1 – 6

**Total budgeted cost: £ 22,200**

## Part B: Review of the previous academic year

### Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Due to COVID-19, performance measures have not been published for 2020 to 2021, and 2020 to 2021 results will not be used to hold schools to account. Given this, please point to any other pupil evaluations undertaken during the 2020 to 2021 academic year, for example, standardised teacher administered tests or diagnostic assessments such as rubrics or scales.

*If last year marked the end of a previous pupil premium strategy plan, what is your assessment of how successfully the intended outcomes of that plan were met?*

Our internal assessments during 2024-2025 showed that, whilst all children in KS2 attained slightly less well than expected, disadvantaged children achieved in line with non-disadvantaged or outperformed their peers. The largest gap was in writing. We have been successful over the past few years on diminishing the differences and this was evident in teacher assessment for 2024. Data successes/ strengths:

Data successes/ strengths 2023/24:

- GLD – 70% (7/10) (above national average)
- Phonics – 90% (9/10) Year 1, 100% (1/1) Year 2 retake (both sig above national averages)

Data successes/ strengths 2024/25:

- **GLD-66.7% (broadly in line with national average)**
- KS1 Writing, Reading and Maths R-68%, W-68%, M-77%-upward trend from last year.
- MAS 21.4 significant improvement

There has been a relative improvement in FSM attendance

Children's confidence with maths in all year groups has increased. Children are independently applying stem sentences from Mastering Number into all areas of maths. MAS score has improved significantly due to targeted QFT interventions and new resourcing.

We are also continuing to support pupil wellbeing and implement our universal and targeted offers, including the ELSA role. We have extended this with tutoring and a multitude of therapeutic practices, including new scheme of work myHappy Mind.

## 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
N/A	

## Further information (optional)

Outdoor learning is an integral part of the Curriculum offer at Dunster and pupils at all stages regularly access learning outdoors and undertake eco related learning.

Children have the opportunity to work within the local community, helping to enhance and improve it, such as community singing events, leading the Remembrance Services.