

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	Watermill School
Number of pupils in school	236
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	24-25: 48% 25-26: 49%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2024-27
Date this statement was first published	Autumn 2024
Date on which this review was made	December 25
Date of next review	December 26
Statement authorised by	Jen Lomas
Pupil premium lead	Ellice Robertson
Governor / Trustee lead	Frank McGregor

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	24-25: £133460 25-26: £139220
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	24-25: £133460 25-26: £139220

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At Watermill School our school ethos “We like to teach the way you like to learn” underpins everything that we do. We believe that meeting the individual needs of each pupil ensures for the highest standard of personal achievement for all, regardless of their background. We strive to ensure that all of our pupils are happy at school and are supported to grow and develop educationally, socially, physically and emotionally. We aim to prepare our pupils for the wider world, giving them the building blocks to set them on the right track for a successful life when they leave us at Watermill School.

At the centre of our approach is high-quality teaching that focusses on the needs of the pupils that attend our school. We know that children learn through their total experience and as such the consistent, structured approach that underpins teaching and learning and our curriculum, alongside our carefully designed learning environment, supports everyone at Watermill to be successful at school. We are flexible in our approaches to teaching and personalise the curriculum through regular assessment and reflection on practice which is supported by a strong menu of professional development for staff.

The Pupil Premium’s central aim is to improve outcomes for socio-economically disadvantaged pupils. We recognise that disadvantage goes beyond the Pupil Premium label and that the challenges that our vulnerable pupils face are varied and complex. Therefore, our approach is responsive to the individual needs of our pupils and not made using assumptions about the impact of disadvantage. We utilise current research and supporting evidence, including that from The Education Endowment Fund, to develop our approach within this strategy.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	57% of pupils at Watermill School have an identified primary area of need as Communication and Interaction and 33% have it as a secondary area of need.
2	EHCP progress data shows end of Key Stage Outcomes and short term target attainment of Sensory and Physical targets to be the lowest (40% met and 33% partially met outcomes). In addition, there is an increase in number of pupils requiring formal and informal sensory assessments (86 in June 2024).
3	Attendance for pupils identified as eligible for Pupil Premium funding is lower than that of those who are not (84.7% compared to 88.3%).

4	Observations show that often pupils engage in less physical and outdoor activities than the recommended 30:30 minutes of exercise daily.
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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 attendance for disadvantaged pupils.	<p>Strong monitoring means that pupils at risk of poor attendance are identified and supported quickly.</p> <p>The number of sessions missed decreases for all pupils.</p> <p>The number of fixed term exclusions is decreased.</p> <p>Staff are confident in identifying and supporting pupils and families at risk of poor attendance.</p>
Pupils have greater confidence, resilience and independence to help them engage more with the wider community and prepare for adulthood.	<p>All pupils will have at least a termly opportunity to go on a visit or trip.</p> <p>The percentage of PfA EHCP targets and outcomes continues to be above 90%.</p> <p>Staff will feel confident in implementing the new curriculum.</p>
Pupils can use a range of communication systems to aid their understanding and to develop expressive communication skills.	<p>The Watermill curriculum meets the needs of all pupils at an individual level.</p> <p>The percentage of Communication and Interaction EHCP outcomes and short term targets achieved increases to at least 90%.</p> <p>Observations show that pupils are communicating effectively (utilising preferred methods) to advocate for themselves.</p> <p>External reviews (eg, from the Trust) demonstrate successful development of practice within communication.</p>
All pupils engage in at least 30 minutes of daily physical activity in school.	<p>Heat maps will show an increase in participation in activity in all classes.</p> <p>The percentage of Physical and Sensory EHCP outcomes and short term targets achieved increases to at least 90%.</p> <p>All pupils will have the opportunity to engage in extra curricular activities.</p>

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: £ 29,220

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Develop the Watermill Curriculum offer – utilise the Equals curriculum to ensure curriculum meets the needs of pupils</p>	<p>EEF Supporting Attendance: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/leadership-and-planning/supporting-attendance</p> <p>In recent years there has been a change in the context on our school and it is necessary for us to reflect upon our curriculum and provision in light of those changes. Improving the ‘universal provision’ is supportive of improving long-term academic attainment and personal development and reduces the barriers to good attendance.</p>	<p>1,2,3,4</p>
<p>Staff CPD – to include support staff and teachers, subject leadership (including engagement with Trust Networks)</p>	<p>EEF Effective Professional Development Guidance Report: https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/eef-guidance-reports/effective-professional-development/EEF-Effective-Professional-Development-Guidance-Report.pdf?v=1732622727</p> <p>EEF Making Best use of Teaching Assistants: https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/eef-guidance-reports/teaching-assistants/TA_Guidance_Report_MakingBestUseOfTeachingAssistants-Printable_2021-11-02-162019_wsqd.pdf?v=1732623057</p> <p>The EEF states that ‘high quality teaching improves pupil outcomes, and effective professional development offers a crucial tool to develop teaching quality and enhance children’s outcomes in the classroom’. Additionally, Rauch and Coe explain that the quality of teaching is ‘arguably the single most important thing that teachers and school leaders can focus on to make a difference in children’s learning’. As such it is vital that our focus continues to be on the development of teaching practice.</p>	<p>1,2,3,4</p>

	We will include support staff to ensure that they are ‘fully prepared for their role in the classroom’, particularly with reference to supporting pupils to develop independence.	
Development of Pupil Profiles – including use of Evidence for Learning as part of evidence collecting and assessment, and individual Pupil Progress Meetings to ensure a targeted approach for each individual, CPD to support SMART target writing	<p>EEF Individualised Instruction: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/individualised-instruction</p> <p>The EEF found that individualised instruction had an impact of +4 months on pupils attainment but it is vital that schools consider accurate assessments of pupil knowledge and needs, as well as the monitoring of how effective implementation is. As such we will develop individual Pupil Profiles and Progress Meetings to support staff in ensuring assessment is accurate, provision is bespoke, and the impact is regularly evaluated.</p>	1,2,3,4
Play skills – development of subject leader, staff CPD	<p>The Lego Foundation: https://cms.learningthroughplay.com/media/wmtlmb e0/learning-through-play_web.pdf</p> <p>Chartered College Research Review: https://my.chartered.college/research-hub/the-importance-of-play-based-learning-beyond-eyfs/</p> <p>The Lego Foundation White Paper on Learning Through Play found there is a strong evidence base to positive outcomes when learning through play. Play has been found to support communication and interaction, be actively engaging, and provide meaningful experiences.</p>	1,2,3,4
Embed teaching of Makaton – staff CPD, access to Makaton website membership	<p>Studies such as Luckins et al (2025) show that a Total Communication approach is effective in supporting the communication needs of pupils with complex speech and language and communication needs.</p> <p>Is the Total Communication approach effective for children with complex speech, language and communication needs? - Jessie Luckins, Georgina Tongue, Judy Clegg, 2025</p>	1
Intensive Interaction – staff CPD	<p>Intensive Interaction Institute: https://www.intensiveinteraction.org/publications-bibliography/</p>	1,3

<p>Physical – staff training (including external support), Scootability, Forest Schools, purchase of adapted trikes and bikes</p>	<p>EEF Physical activity: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/physical-activity</p> <p>EEF Self-regulation and executive function: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/early-years/evidence-store/self-regulation-and-executive-function</p> <p>Research shows that there are vast benefits to increased participation in physical activity both in terms of wellbeing and physical health, but also in academic attainment and progress across the curriculum.</p>	<p>1,2,3,4</p>
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £ 65,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Supporting Sensory Needs – resources, staff CPD, developing sensory inclusive classrooms (including Rhino resources), support from Children’s Choice Occupational Therapy</p>	<p>Sensory Inclusive Schools: https://www.sensoryinclusiveschools.org/</p> <p>The Alert Program: https://alertprogram.com/</p> <p>By understanding a student's unique sensory profile, staff can make environmental adaptations, adapt tasks and support with appropriate sensory strategies to remove these barriers.</p>	<p>2,3</p>
<p>Digital resources – including assistive technology</p>	<p>EEF Using Digital Technology to Improve Learning: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/digital</p> <p>Technology has been found to have the ‘potential to increase the quality and quantity of practice that pupils undertake’. It can also improve the ‘accuracy of assessment, and the speed with which assessment information is collected, with the potential to inform teachers’ decision-making and reduce workload’.</p>	<p>1,2,3</p>

Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, well-being)

Budgeted cost: £55,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Regular opportunities to engage in the wider community – to practise skills and demonstrate real world applications in multiple contexts</p>	<p>Drawing on evidence from the Equals curriculum, it is important for children to have regular experiences of the real world in order to support their transferring of skills and independence in preparation for adulthood.</p>	<p>1,2,3,4</p>
<p>Implementation of new Attendance Policy – including regular monitoring to identify individuals at risk of poor attendance, allocating portion of admin staff time to supporting attendance, raising the profile and importance of attendance with staff, utilise strong relationships with families via class teams (including use of ClassDojo)</p>	<p>EEF Parental Engagement Toolkit: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/parental-engagement</p> <p>EEF Supporting Attendance: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/leadership-and-planning/supporting-attendance</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>Communication with families – use of ClassDojo, use of Evidence for Learning, parent information meetings</p>	<p>EEF Parental Engagement Toolkit: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/parental-engagement</p> <p>Research shows that strong relationships with families is incredibly supportive of children’s progress, attainment, and wider wellbeing.</p>	<p>1,2,3,4</p>
<p>Development of Oracy awards – including working with other schools</p>	<p>EEF Oral Language Interventions: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/oral-language-interventions</p>	<p>1</p>

in the Trust, staff training		
<p>Development of playground – fenced areas, equipment, CPD</p>	<p>EEF Physical activity: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/physical-activity</p> <p>EEF Self-regulation and executive function: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/early-years/evidence-store/self-regulation-and-executive-function</p> <p>EEF Supporting Attendance: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/leadership-and-planning/supporting-attendance</p> <p>Being inclusive by design breaks down the barrier to school attendance. If children are in school more then they are able to learn more. As such we need to develop playground equipment, and classrooms, to ensure they meet the needs of our pupils.</p> <p>In turn there will be greater and wider access to and participation in physical activity which has been shown to have beneficial impact on pupils.</p>	2,3,4
<p>Sports and exercise enrichment opportunities – lunch clubs, house competitions</p>	<p>Youth Sport Trust Report: https://www.youthsporttrust.org/news-listings/news/new-research-finds-physical-activity-in-schools-worth-between-4-5bn-and-9bn-in-wellbeing-benefits</p> <p>Social Mobility Commission Report: https://socialmobility.independent-commission.uk/research-stats/an-unequal-playing-field-extra-curricular-activities-soft-skills-and-social-mobility/</p> <p>The Social Mobility Commission report ‘An Unequal Playing Field’ investigated the availability and impact of extra curricular clubs in schools. It found that ‘ultimately our report shows that a young person may miss out on some of the most valuable experiences in life –a chance to bond with others, aspire to learn more, and gain the soft skills so important to employers –simply because of their social background and where they grew up. It is time to level the playing field.’ The Youth Sport Trust have also found that physical activity has a huge impact on improved life satisfaction and wellbeing, including those with additional needs and disabilities.</p> <p>There is also some evidence that involvement in extra-curricular sports activities can improve attendance.</p>	2,3,4

Total budgeted cost: € 139,220

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 2024 to 2025 academic year.

Intended outcome	Evaluation
Improved attendance for disadvantaged pupils.	Although there has been some progress in improving attendance there remains a gap between those identified as eligible for PP and those not. We have seen a increase in staff understanding and awareness of supporting attendance and continue to embed our policy, including robust procedures around monitoring and tracking.
Pupils have greater confidence, resilience and independence to help them engage more with the wider community and prepare for adulthood.	Development of the new curriculum continues, and staff are becoming more confident to articulate this. Pupil Progress meetings have taken a closer look at individuals and how they can be best supported to make progress.
Pupils can use a range of communication systems to aid their understanding and to develop expressive communication skills.	The Communication Lead has delivered staff training and has a plan for further training this year. Staff have also had access to training delivered by Equals. There is a plan for a review of approaches and teaching across every class, supported by SALT this year.
All pupils engage in at least 30 minutes of daily physical activity in school.	Physical activity continues to be a priority across school, with training delivered to all staff and monitoring of approaches by the PE Lead. There has been a greater focus on individual participation and engagement and ensuring all are engaging in highly active movement, at an individual level.

Externally provided programmes

Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you purchased in the previous academic year. This will help the Department for Education identify which ones are popular in England

Programme	Provider
Rapid Reading/Phonics	Rapid reading
Equals Curriculum	Equals

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information:

Measure	Details
NA	