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	Acorn Academy
Number of pupils in school	203
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	30%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers **(3 year plans are recommended)**	2024-2027
Date this statement was published	Oct 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2026
Statement authorised by	Cheryl Noble
Pupil premium lead	Emma Daniels
Governor / Trustee lead	Louise Burroughs

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£118,392
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	£118,392

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At Acorn Academy our intention is that all pupils, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, make good progress across all subject areas.

We will consider the challenges faced by vulnerable pupils, such as those who have a social worker and young carers. The activities we have outlined in this statement are also intended to support their needs, regardless of whether they are disadvantaged or not.

High-quality teaching is at the heart of our approach, with a focus on the challenges over which we have control that are having the most significant detrimental impact on our disadvantaged pupils.

Our strategy is also integral to wider school plans for education recovery, notably in its targeted support through the school-led tutoring programme for pupils whose education has been worst affected, including non-disadvantaged pupils.

We will consider all evidence available to us, including EEF and will ensure that strategies used match the context of Acorn Academy.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Assessments, observations, and discussions with pupils indicate underdeveloped oral language skills and vocabulary gaps among many disadvantaged pupils. These are evident from Nursery through to Year 2 and in general, are more prevalent among our disadvantaged pupils than their peers. Our on-entry communication and language assessments indicate that children are below ARE with their communication needs. Although we are usually able to close gaps by end of KS1, any delay closing gaps in language development has a wider impact on academic progress.
2	Assessments, observations, and discussions with pupils suggest disadvantaged pupils generally have greater difficulties with reading than their peers. On entry to Reception class in the last 2 years, majority of our disadvantaged pupils arrive below age-related expectations compared their peers. This gap narrows but remains significant.
3	Assessments, observations, survey responses and discussions with pupils and families have identified social and emotional issues for many pupils, and difficulties with self-regulation. These challenges particularly affect disadvantaged pupils, including their attainment.
4	Our attendance data over the last two years indicates that attendance among disadvantaged pupils has been lower than for non-disadvantaged pupils.

	Our assessments and observations indicate that absenteeism is negatively impacting disadvantaged pupils' progress.

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 speech, language and communication skills and vocabulary among disadvantaged pupils.	Assessments and observations indicate significantly improved speech, language and communication skills among disadvantaged pupils. This is evident when triangulated with other sources of evidence, including engagement in lessons, book scrutiny and ongoing formative assessment.
High quality teaching and learning of reading, writing and maths in all classes.	Outcomes at the end of KS1 demonstrate national average attainment or higher by 2025-26 in reading, writing and maths. Strong internal evidence of progress made by all children, including disadvantaged children.
To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils in our school, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	By 2025-26, improved wellbeing will be demonstrated by: • qualitative data from the children and from parent surveys and teacher observations an increase in participation in enrichment activities, particularly among disadvantaged pupils
To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	By 2025-26, overall attendance of statutory school age children will be 96%+, with an improving trend seen from the end of the 2024-25 academic year. By 2025-26, levels of persistent absenteeism will be in line with national levels.

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: £57,400

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
To ensure high quality teaching and learning of reading through extensive CPD on the teaching of reading and writing.	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/literacy-early-years https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/literacy-ks-1 www.kapowprimary.com Continued CPD for all staff to develop curriculum using new resources.	1, 2, 3, 4
Increase professional skills and expertise of classroom staff in the teaching specific groups of children including SEND and disadvantaged.	Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools | EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) New EEF research points way to closing disadvantage gap by 38%… | EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) High quality CPD through external consultants. High quality adaptive teaching carefully targeted through identification and assessment of need – To be managed carefully by Disadvantaged lead/SENCo.	1, 2

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

Budgeted cost: £24,124

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
To improve the percentage of children working at ARE+ across the curriculum through speech and language therapy support via a speech and language therapist and via additional classroom based support.	We will provide an additional specialist speech and language therapy across the school to deliver interventions to individuals and train staff in appropriate strategies. EEF toolkit (+6) Oral language interventions can have a positive impact on pupils' language skills. Approaches that focus on speaking, listening and a combination of the two show positive impacts on attainment: Oral language interventions | EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) Talk boost interventions across Reception and KS1. All staff now ELKLAN trained and we are a Communication Friendly School – this is embedded in whole school practice.	1
To improve the percentage of children working at ARE+ across the curriculum by identification and assessment of children's individual needs, followed by planned intervention.	Small group and one to one support carefully targeted through identification and assessment of need – To be managed carefully by Disadvantaged lead/SENCo. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/send Educational Psychologist assessments to form part of the package which identifies children's needs. Strategies from SLCN provision to use across the school to support identified children.	2

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

Budgeted cost: £ 36,868

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
To improve pupil wellbeing and attendance and readiness to learn via consistent family support via the school's home/school liaison officer.	Embedding principles of good practice set out in the DfE's Improving School Attendance advice. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/primary-sel	3,4
To ensure access to full enrichment offer, including access to outdoor learning through educational trips and visits and outdoor lunchtime clubs	https://www.awwltd.com/the-benefits-of-outdoor-education-on-mental-health/ World Health Organisation findings show that children raised with exposure to green space are as much as 55% less likely to develop mental health problems such as substance abuse, stress-related illnesses and eating disorders.	3, 4
Support nutrition and a good start to the day via the provision of free milk to all disadvantaged children. To improve nutrition and offer a calm start to the day via soft start/ breakfast club every morning for all children.	https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/milk-and-dairy-nutrition/ Milk is a good source of energy and protein and contains a wide range of vitamins and minerals, including calcium, essential for the development of young children's bones and teeth. Breakfast Clubs | Greggs Foundation	3

Total budgeted cost: £ 118,392

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.

We have analysed the performance of our school's disadvantaged pupils during the previous academic year, drawing on national assessment data and our own internal summative and formative assessments.

To help us gauge the performance of our disadvantaged pupils we compared their results to those for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils at national and local level and to results achieved by our non-disadvantaged pupils.

The data demonstrated that our Year 2 disadvantaged children achieved well in all areas

- Reading DA achieved 53% EXP
- Writing DA achieved 45% EXP
- Maths DA achieved 60% EXP

Based on all the information above, the performance of our disadvantaged pupils met expectations, and we are at present are on course to achieve the outcomes we set out to achieve by 2025/26 which is primarily based on closing the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children.

We have also drawn on school data and observations to assess wider issues impacting disadvantaged pupils' performance, including attendance, behaviour and wellbeing.
Our evaluation of the approaches delivered last academic year indicates that the attendance of our children has improved due to our 'soft start/breakfast' initiatives. This improved our attendance from 92% (2022/23) to 93% (2023/24) to 94% (2024/25)

We significantly reduced our levels of persistent absenteeism to 17% (2024/245). We are continuing to develop and embed our attendance procedures to ensure we are continuously below NA.

Our focus on the quality of teaching of Reading, Writing and Maths showed improved data outcomes. We introduced techniques to dramatically improve the quality of teaching as well as implementing comprehensive schemes of work for all subjects. We made rapid changes to our phonics and early reading teaching which had a significant impact on our reading achievements and is continuing to impact our phonics check results. We used support from an external consultant to aid our teaching of writing as well as support from trust excellence leads to develop our reading, phonics and maths teaching.

Our development of the speech and language skills of all our children, specifically our disadvantaged children, have greatly improved and is continuing to develop. We worked as a school to gain Communication Friendly Status which has had and continues to have a significant impact on all our learners, particularly our children with speech and language needs.

All children are able to take part in enrichment activities as we subsidise school trips/activities that require a cost, as well as offering free after school clubs to our disadvantaged children first to ensure they have a space if required. This has shown an increase in attendance of our DA children at all our extra-curricular clubs.

We have reviewed our strategy plan and made changes to how we intend to use some of our budget this academic year.

Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider
ELKLAN Communication Friendly Status	ELKLAN
Speech and language therapy	C&D speech and language therapy
Essential letters and sounds	Oxford University Press
White Rose Maths	WRM, Trinity MAT
Educational Psychology support	Essex Local Authority EP

Further information (optional)

Additional activity

Our pupil premium strategy will be supplemented by additional activity that is not being funded by pupil premium or recovery premium. That will include:

- embedding more effective practice around metacognition. EEF evidence demonstrates this has significant benefits for pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils.
- utilising Trust funding to develop oral language skills through the 'Mighty Oak programme'
- utilising Trust funding for all EYFS teachers to gain ELKLAN accreditation to support early language and communication

Planning, implementation, and evaluation

In planning our new pupil premium strategy, we evaluated why activity undertaken in previous years had not had the degree of impact that we had expected.

We triangulated evidence from multiple sources of data including assessments, engagement in class book scrutiny, conversations with parents, students and teachers in order to identify the challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils. We shared practice across the Trust to learn from their approach.

We looked at several reports, studies and research papers about effective use of pupil premium, the impact of disadvantage on education outcomes and how to address challenges to learning presented by socio-economic disadvantage.

We used the EEF's implementation guidance to help us develop our strategy and will continue to use it through the implementation of activities.

We have put a robust evaluation framework in place for the duration of our three-year approach and will adjust our plan over time to secure better outcomes for pupils.