

Early Years Pupil Premium Strategy Statement – Featherstone Nursery School

This statement details our school's use of early years' pupil premium funding to help improve the attainment of our disadvantaged pupils.

It outlines our early years' pupil premium strategy, how we intend to spend the funding in this academic year and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils last academic year

School overview

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school	88 (October 25 census)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	55%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2024-25, 2025-26 2026-27
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	Sharon Eeles
Pupil premium lead	Sharon Eeles
Governor / Trustee lead	Abigail Cartmale

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£30,000 (approx.)
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£0
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£30,000

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intention is that all children, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, make good progress and are on track in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage when they leave us to go to Primary School. The focus of our early years' pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve that goal and close any gaps in their knowledge or skills.

We will consider the challenges faced by vulnerable pupils, such as those who have a social worker and children with special educational needs. The activity we have outlined in this statement is 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 areas in which disadvantaged pupils require the most support. This is proven to have the greatest impact on closing the disadvantage attainment gap and at the same time will benefit the non-disadvantaged pupils in our school. Implicit in the intended outcomes detailed below, is the intention that non-disadvantaged pupils' attainment will be sustained and improved alongside progress for their disadvantaged peers.

Our approach will be responsive to each child's needs, informed by our 'All About Me' conversations with parents before children start nursery and ongoing observations and assessments of the child. Forest School has proved over many years to be an initiative that targets many of the challenges our children face and helps them develop the attitudes, knowledge and skills they need to succeed at primary school.

We have recently begun to implement other evidence based programmes recommended by the HEART – the Midlands Early Years Stronger Practice Hub. These will intentionally teach our children early concepts, maths understanding and vocabulary, enabling them to become on-track in their development.

We will base this and the other initiatives in a nursery curriculum and environment which is language-rich, nurturing and focuses first on the prime areas of learning. This will ensure that all children can fully assess all seven areas of learning at nursery and be ready and able to thrive in their Reception class when they leave us.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Wellcomm assessments, observations of children and discussions with parents show that disadvantaged pupils have generally lower levels of language skills and vocabulary than their peers.
2	Our disadvantaged pupils often live in flats and so, therefore, do not have access to a garden and this can result in less developed gross motor skills and understanding of the natural world.
3	Our disadvantaged pupils have higher levels of parents with mental health issues which can negatively impact their own wellbeing and self-confidence.
4	Our wellbeing screening shows that our disadvantaged pupils have lower engagement levels and well-being than their peers.
5	Conversations with parents and the children have shown that our disadvantaged children have less access to enrichment activities, books and educational toys outside of school.
6	Some of our disadvantaged children come to nursery hungry and not able to concentrate on their learning. This has been made worse due to the cost of living crisis.
7	Our baseline assessments show that our disadvantaged children are far off being on-track in maths. They have much less understanding of maths concepts and use less maths related language than their peers.

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 language skills and vocabulary	Children to have the gap closed in their Wellcomm score by at least one band by the time they leave the school to go to Reception
Improved self-confidence, concentration, independence skills and high wellbeing	Good engagement levels and independence skills are observed in the classroom. Children are on-track in PSED when they leave the school.
Enrichment experiences at nursery expand their vocabulary and knowledge	Children use new vocabulary they have been taught through our nursery curriculum in their everyday play and conversation. Children make links from experiences to activities completed in class
Children are well-fed and ready to learn and make healthy choices with food	No child says they are hungry at nursery or cannot concentrate due to feeling hungry The children develop healthy eating habits which will stay with them for life.
Improved maths knowledge, understanding and vocabulary	Children to be on-track in the maths area of learning by the time they leave the school to go to Reception

Activity in this academic year

This details how we intend to spend our early years pupil premium funding **this academic year** to address the challenges listed above.

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £18,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Consistent use of Wellcomm across the school to assess language skills & adult-led small group sessions to teach vocabulary using the Wellcomm materials	There is a strong evidence base that communication and language approaches consistently show positive benefits for young children's learning, including their spoken language skills, their expressive vocabulary and their early reading skills. Communication and language approaches EEF	1
Consistent use of Concept Cat to introduce vocabulary and teach difficult concepts (including maths and science concepts)	The school was part of the EEF trial of Concept Cat and initial findings show positive impact on children's understanding and use of verbal concepts. The programme also engaged parents in the children's learning. Concept Cat - trial EEF	1, 7
½ day Forest School sessions per fortnight to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop confidence, independence and self-esteem • develop language and communication skills • improve physical motor skills increase knowledge and understanding of the natural world	There is strong evidence that shows that children's academic attainment, social development, language and communication and emotional well-being is increased as a result of Forest School https://www.forestschoolltraining.co.uk/forest-school/research/ The EEF Early Years toolkit found that approaches supporting physical development and activity in young children can have a valuable positive effect on their learning. Positive impacts have been shown for early literacy and mathematics as well as other areas of the curriculum, such as geography and science. Physical development approaches EEF	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Cost of wider experience activities subsidised e.g. Living Eggs, Animal Antics, The PlayHouse Theatre	There is intrinsic value in teaching pupils creative and performance skills and ensuring disadvantaged pupils access a rich and stimulating arts education. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/arts-participation	1, 2, 5
Counting Collections – CPD for all classroom staff, resources purchased, small group	There is a strong evidence base that shows that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development may be particularly important in early numeracy. Professionals' knowledge of mathematics and of young children's 	4, 7

activities embedded in the classroom	<p>development in mathematics supports early mathematical learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted early numeracy approaches may help children from disadvantaged backgrounds to catch up with their peers by the beginning of formal schooling. <p>Early numeracy approaches EEF</p>	
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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
Adult led 1 to 1 / small group sessions to develop attention, listening and language skills using Bucket Time and Concept cat	<p>Evidence shows that small group tuition is effective and, as a rule of thumb, the smaller the group the better. Some studies suggest that greater feedback from the teacher, more sustained the engagement in smaller groups, or work which is more closely matched to learners' needs explains this impact.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition</p> <p>There is a strong evidence base that communication and language approaches consistently show positive benefits for young children's learning, including their spoken language skills, their expressive vocabulary and their early reading skills.</p> <p>Communication and language approaches EEF</p>	1

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

Budgeted cost: £2000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
A healthy breakfast is provided to ensure children are fed and ready to learn.	<p>Young children are growing quickly and have high energy and nutrient requirements for their size. They also eat smaller amounts than older children and adults, so it is important for them to eat regular meals and snacks that contain sufficient energy and nutrients for their needs.</p> <p>The pilots for the universal free school infants meals by the DfE found that children eating healthy meals at school had improved performance in the classroom. Improvements in attainment were strongest amongst pupils from less affluent families and amongst those with lower prior attainment. They also found social and behavioural benefits from children who sat down to eat with friends and teachers</p> <p>https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/commons-committees/Education/evidence-check-forum/Universal-infant-free-school-meals.pdf</p> <p>The children's charity, Magic Breakfast, states that "having breakfast at school makes a big impact across a child's education. It's not just a great start to the day. For pupils experiencing socio-economic disadvantage it has been continuously proven to positively impact educational attainment, concentration, focus and behaviour of all pupils in the classroom."</p> <p>Impact: Transforming Lives Through Food - Magic Breakfast</p>	6
Fruit / vegetable sticks / plain starchy snacks provided for snack mid-morning and mid-afternoon Startwell Programme	<p>Research confirms that healthy eating habits in the years before school are very important because they influence growth, development and academic achievement in later life</p> <p>In 2024 the School Food Standards E-learning states that 21.4% of children are either overweight or obese by the time they join reception class in primary school and that in the most deprived areas like Erdington 12.4% of children are obese.</p> <p>Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (May 2025)</p> <p>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6839b752210698b3364e86fc/Early_years_foundation_stage_nutrition_guidance.pdf</p>	6
Early Words Together Parent Courses	<p>There is strong evidence that suggests that in the early years, programmes that encourage parents to engage with their children's learning are consistently associated with children's subsequent academic success.</p> <p>Parental engagement EEF</p>	1

Total budgeted cost: £30,000

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

In the academic year 2024-25 all 3-4 year old children at our school had a fortnightly session in Forest School. This impacted positively on the children's development in Understanding the World, PSED and Communication and Language. This was extended to include our 2 year old children in April 25 using the additional EYPP funding we received for our vulnerable 2 year old children.

We have continued to close the attainment gap for our early years pupil premium eligible children and also for our disadvantaged children who are not eligible for EYPP. In their Nursery 2 year the percentage of children who were age-appropriate increased from:

- 22% to 51% in Communication and Language
- 18% to 64% in Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- 31% to 72% in Physical Development
- 13% to 42% in Literacy
- 12% to 42% in Maths
- 10% to 44% in Understanding the World
- 10% to 57% in Expressive Arts and Design

On entry to their N2 year, only 22% of our children were at their expected language levels on the Well-comm screening. On exit 63% were at their expected language level. 93% of N2 children had closed or narrowed the gap in their language by at least 3 months.

Parents commented in the July 25 questionnaire that they felt we had helped their children get ready for school. Many of them said we had helped their child increase in confidence, social skills and improved their communication and language skills. 99% of parents said that we support their child's wider personal development.

Our provision of breakfast and snack became even more important this year as families struggled with the cost of living crisis. This initiative is enabling children to concentrate on their learning in nursery.

The Early Words Together parent course ran successfully in 2024-25, with all parents reporting that the course enabled them to encourage their child's language and communication skills more.

The listening and attention skills of the targeted children were greatly improved over the year by the use of 'bucket time' in small group sessions.

The Concept Cat programme was also successfully embedded with the 3-4 year olds. This had a positive impact on children learning new vocabulary and concepts at nursery and at home. This was also introduced with our two year olds.

We were externally assessed as having embedded all the healthy eating and physical activity messages into our curriculum and we achieved our Startwell Award in April 2025

Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider
Wellcomm	G.L.Assessment
Concept Cat	HEART Stronger Practice Hub
Counting Collections	HEART Stronger Practice Hub
Startwell Birmingham	NHS

