

Pupil premium strategy statement

This statement details Northern Counties 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 this academic year and the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils last academic year.

School Overview

Detail	Data
School name	Northern Counties School
Number of pupils in school	78
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	39%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2022-25
Date this statement was published.	November 2023
The date on which it will be reviewed	July 2025 (interim review 2024)
Statement authorised by	Martin Lonergan Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Simon Adams Ros Field Abi Cowie
Governor / Trustee lead	Jeff Lough

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£62,590
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	£62,590

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

We aim to use pupil premium funding to help us achieve and sustain positive outcomes for our most disadvantaged pupils. Whilst socio-economic disadvantage is not always the primary challenge our pupils face, we have identified some key areas that will support our pupils to acquire new knowledge and skills and to be able to transfer and apply these in their daily lives. These include:

1. Communication skills: receptive, expressive, and social communication skills
2. Wellbeing: happiness and emotional regulation
3. Independence skills: functionality in the activities of daily living
4. Parental engagement: support parents/carers to develop skills and access resources and training to help pupils achieve their EHCP outcomes.

Pupil premium funding will be used in different ways by different cohorts. Central to our approach is high-quality teaching and therapy focused on the needs of our most disadvantaged pupils but includes some strategies that will benefit our pupils. All our pupils have Education, Health, and Care Plans, and many have complex and co-morbid needs, so we will plan to help our non-disadvantaged pupils alongside their disadvantaged peers. Given the effective use of pupil premium funding in 2021-22 that led to disadvantaged pupils making better rates of progress than non-disadvantaged peers, we would seek to maintain the tangible benefits of some of these strategies through the next three academic years.

We will continue to support disadvantaged pupils to promote their independence and social skills through targeted therapy and positive risk-taking.

Pupil wellbeing post-pandemic continues to be a focus for the school. If students are settled and ready to learn, families can engage and support the development of a waking-hours curriculum.

Our strategy will be driven by the needs and strengths of the young people as described within their EHCPs. Pupil outcomes are based on detailed observation and assessments in conjunction with the summative assessment models in place within the school. At the heart of our approach is the provision of targeted actions to develop the knowledge, skills, understanding and 'readiness for learning' that prepare our young people for adulthood.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p>Communication skills: receptive, expressive, and social communication skills</p> <p>Our assessments, observations and discussions with pupils and their families/carers show significant and pervasive productive and receptive communication difficulties.</p>
2	<p>Wellbeing: happiness and emotional regulation</p> <p>Our assessment, observations and discussions with pupils and their families/carers identify that our pupils have significant emotional difficulties that impact on their wellbeing and ability to make academic progress. The pandemic has negatively impacted staff recruitment and retention, although the school has shown some recovery and increased stability from this in recent months.</p>
3	<p>Independence skills: functionality in the activities of daily living</p> <p>Our assessments, observations and discussions with pupils and their families/carers demonstrate that disadvantaged pupils have fewer opportunities to develop functionality in most aspects of daily living and require targeted support to achieve this. They need more support than their non-disadvantaged peers to gain independence skills.</p>
4	<p>Parental engagement: support parents/carers to develop skills and access resources to help pupils achieve their EHCP outcomes. Our conversations with families/carers indicate that they need and welcome opportunities to support each other, develop an understanding about their children's diagnoses, and develop communication skills that enable them to communicate effectively with their children and help them achieve their full potential. Parents need to feel engaged with the school and be able to rely on the school for coordinated emotional, well-being, moral and signposted support.</p>

Intended outcomes.

This explains the outcomes we aim for **by the end of our current strategy plan** and how we will measure whether they have been achieved.

	Intended outcome	Success criteria - at the end of our 3-year strategy - July 2025
1	<p>Communication skills</p> <p>Improve language comprehension and expression for disadvantaged pupils so that they can express themselves more effectively.</p>	80% of pupils achieve their EHCP communication outcomes
2	<p>Wellbeing</p>	90% of pupils achieve their iASEND PSED target (July 2025)

	<p>Pupils are well-regulated and can attend to learning tasks for increased periods.</p> <p>Staff feel supported in school.</p>	<p>24-month staff turnover reduces by 50%</p> <p>Overall staff feedback through Hive increases from 6.5 to 7.5.</p> <p>Parent View responses reach the following rates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns are dealt with correctly 90% (from 76%) • School supports my child's personal development 90% (from 78%) • I would recommend this school 93% (from 83%)
3	<p>Independence skills</p> <p>Pupils develop skills to improve their independence in the activities of daily living.</p>	<p>80% of pupils achieve their EHCP independence outcomes.</p>
4	<p>Parental engagement</p> <p>Parents/carers feel skilled in creating supportive routines, environments, and communication with their children.</p>	<p>50% of parents/carers engage with pupil-centred sessions (workshops, training, or stay-and-play type activities), parent consultations and coffee mornings. Uptake and engagement through Marvellous Me and Earwig are increased to 50% or greater.</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 abovementioned challenges.

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £23,286

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Employ a part-time outdoor learning tutor.	<p>Forest School is a learning philosophy focused on child-led learning in a natural environment. It is a long-term process led by trained Forest School leaders who facilitate supported risk as well as facilitating holistic learning.</p> <p>https://www.cambridgeforestschoools.co.uk/schools/forest-school-and-outdoor-learning-research/</p> <p>https://www.lboro.ac.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2017/october/study-reveals-forest-school-benefits</p> <p>The Forest School impact on children: reviewing two decades of research. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03004279.2021.1889013</p>	1, 2, 3

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

Budgeted cost: £6,351

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Equipment to support sensory integration needs and readiness for learning.</p> <p>Including:</p> <p>Contribution to outdoor play and sensory regulation areas at Hillcrest</p> <p>Contribution to the Sensory Integration room in the main building</p>	<p>A planned integrated approach between teachers and therapists provides the best opportunities for pupils with sensory integration needs to develop the skills for everyday living. https://www.sensoryintegrationeducation.com/courses/take/sensory-integration-education-conference-2021-22-november-2021/lessons/29429501-integrating-therapy-and-education-by-rachael-thompson-bsc-pgce-with-qts-pgcert-in-si-msc-occupational-therapy</p> <p>Peden, M. (2021) 'The Underestimated Value of Sensory Play in Early Childhood Education', PEDAGOGICAL THINKER IN RESIDENCE, BIG FAT SMILE https://thesector.com.au/2021/03/24/the-underestimated-value-of-sensory-play-in-early-childhood-education/</p> <p>Uncommon Sense: Interactive Sensory toys that encourage Social Interaction among children with Autism. http://homepage.divms.uiowa.edu/~hourcade/idc2012-specialneeds/dsouza.pdf</p> <p>Bundy, A., Lane, S., Mulligan, S., & Reynolds, S. (2020). <i>Sensory integration: theory and practice</i> (Third edition.). F. A. Davis.</p> <p>Ofsted guidance: Positive environments where children can flourish. Updated 6 October 2021</p> <p>Staff expertise, capable environments and active, positive behaviour support reduce dysregulation and the use of restrictive practices, increase attention, and enable pupils to access learning tasks.</p> <p>Ayres, A. J. (1972). Sensory integration and learning disorders. Los Angeles, CA: <i>Western Psychological Services</i>. Analyses Reappraised. <i>Journal of Learning Disabilities</i>, 24(3), 160–168. https://doi.org/10.1177/002221949102400304</p> <p>Barnsley, B. & Bates, L. (2021) 'An Evaluation of Sensory Diets and the Impact on Sensory</p>	<p>2, 3</p>

	Processing, Engagement and the Wellbeing of Autistic Children'. <i>Good Autism Practice (GAP)</i> Vol. 22, Number 1. Bild. https://www.ingentaconnect.com/contentone/bild/gap/2021/00000022/00000001/art00005#Refs	
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More comprehensive strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, and wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £32,953

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Maintenance of a Wellbeing Coordinator role to support pupils, families, and staff	<p>The House of Commons Education and Health Committee published their report 'Children and young people's Health - the Role of education' in May 2017, and the DfE produced 'Mental Health and behaviour in Schools' in November 2018. Both reports highlight the importance of promoting positive mental health outcomes for students and the schools' role in this.</p> <p>Mental health and behaviour in schools</p> <p>https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhealth/849/849.pdf</p> <p>Furthermore, the DfE launched guidance around promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges in June 2021 (and updated in November 2022). Taking a coordinated and evidence-informed approach to mental health in schools and colleges leads to improved pupil and student wellbeing, which, in turn, can improve learning.</p>	2, 4

	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges	
Parent/carer engagement through support for individuals and groups and workshops.	The Education Endowment Foundation produced their report, 'How can schools support parents' engagement in their children's learning? Evidence from research and practice. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/parental-engagement	4

Total budgeted cost: £ 62,590

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

This details our pupil premium activity's impact on pupils in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

Pupil Premium Impact Review 2023/3

Review Date 16/5/2023

Mr. Allan Lacey - M.Ed. (School Improvement Partner)

Review Focus:

An analysis of pupil premium spending and the impact in 2022/3

Method

Observations of interventions and discussions with key staff, governors, and pupils.

Purpose

- An examination of pupil premium spending and the impact so far
- Exploration of the effectiveness of existing initiatives

Context

In 2022/3 to date.

There are 85 pupils and young people on the school roll (May 2023)

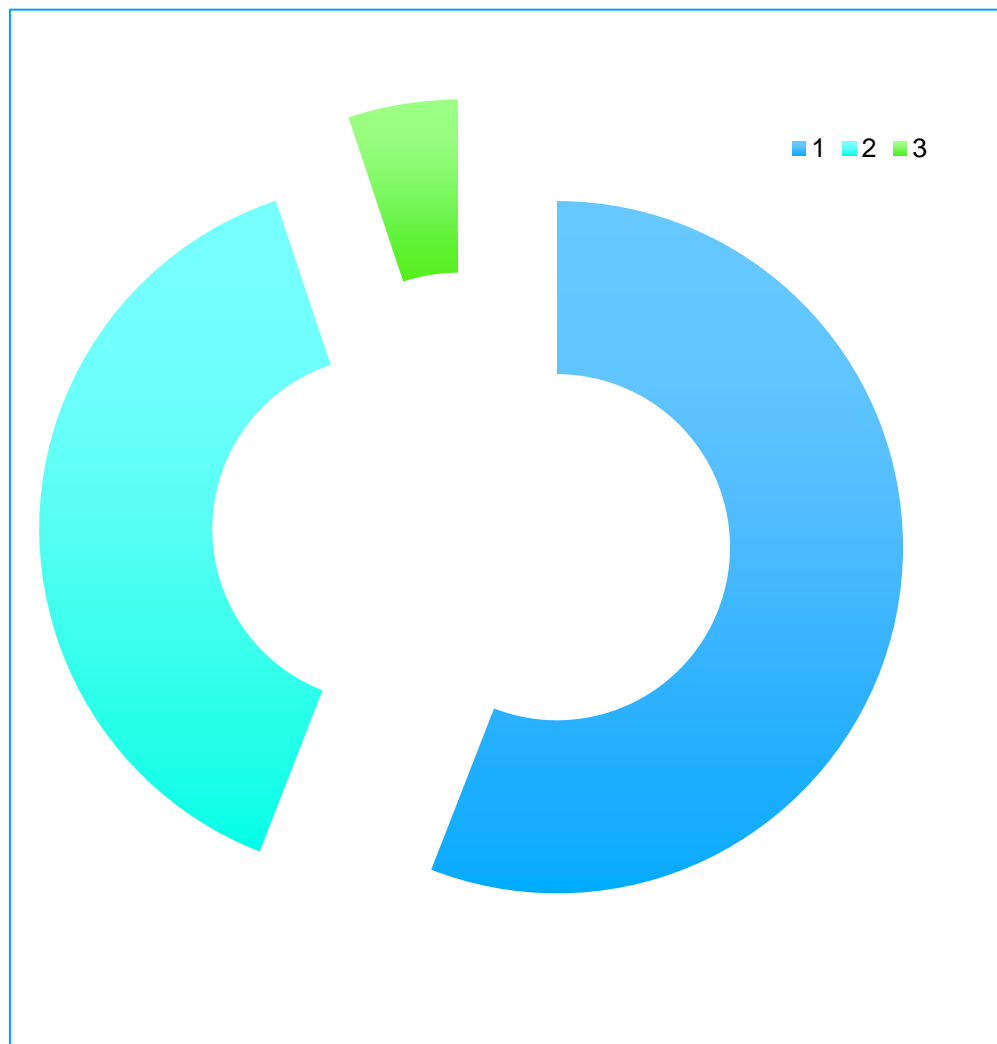
33 pupils (September Census) received pupil premium funding at 38%

The total pupil premium allocation for 2022/23 was £36,675.

There was a Pupil premium funding carry forward from previous years of £44,524.62.

The total funds available are for 2022/3 -£81119.

Funding allocations Major expenditure 2022/3



- 1) £51,057
 - a) Employment of a part-time outdoor learning tutor
 - b) Training and purchase of SEN phonics materials and training for staff
- 2) £35,573
Employment of a Wellbeing Coordinator
- 3) £4,678
Equipment to support sensory integration needs and readiness for learning.

1a) Employment of a part-time outdoor learning tutor

Participation

Over a two-yearly rolling programme, each pupil has 12 one-hour sessions with the Forest School. All pupils receiving pupil premium have the same level of provision.

Activity

The school has created a Forest School within the grounds of Northern Counties School. The Forest School contains several well-established trees, a fire pit, a sitting circle, a large shed for internal study, birdhouses, mud gardens, etc.

Impact

Evidence indicates.

The lead teacher, supported well by a senior leader, has successfully created an environment that promotes self-esteem, creativity, confidence, and independence among the pupils at the school.

The lead teacher successfully uses child-centred learning centred around supported risk-taking, exploration and play.

The Forest School provides the pupils with long-term sessions that build on the needs and development of the child and young people.

The Forest School approach of learning via exploration fits well with the learning styles of the pupils and young people at Northern Counties School.

The Forest School provides an invaluable element in the curriculum offered at the school.

Evaluation of the overall impact



1b) Staff Training and Embedment of suitable SEN phonics materials and training for staff

Activity

Since September 2022, the school has introduced a linguistic phonics approach to our learners, 'Phonics for Pupils with SEN', written by Ann Sullivan.

Participation

All pupils and young pupils receiving pupil premium and who are either within the semi-formal or formal pathway are offered this approach for teaching phonics.

The approach is designed specifically for pupils with special educational needs. It is suitable for pupils with specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, and those struggling to acquire age-appropriate literacy skills.

All programme staff have received comprehensive and ongoing training in this area.

Impact

Gained evidence suggests.

As the scheme was introduced in January 2023, it has yet to impact practice and pupil progress fully. However, it does appear to significantly impact the development of early reading skills, comprehension, vocabulary, and spelling development.

The introduction of the scheme and subsequent training now means that the teaching of phonics is now explicit and systematic to support pupils in

making connections between the sound patterns they hear in words and how they are written.

School Improvement Partner Report June 2023 'Pupil's Progress in reading and reading skills are improving because of regular practice and good quality phonics teaching. The scheme's introduction has brought about a significant improvement in the quality of teaching phonics, which has significantly positively affected pupil progress.'

Funding has given pupils greater access to high-quality texts, encouraging them to read about areas of interest and support their learning.

The teaching of phonics is now matched to pupils' current skill level regarding their phonemic awareness and knowledge of letter sounds and patterns (graphemes).

The school is aware that phonics improves the accuracy of the child's reading but not necessarily their comprehension. Therefore, the school is ensuring pupils succeed in all aspects of reading, including comprehension, the development of vocabulary and spelling, which should be taught explicitly – where appropriate.



2) Creation of a Wellbeing Coordinator role to support pupils, families, and staff

Activity

Since April 2022, the school has employed a Wellbeing and Engagement Officer. This appointment is in line with the DFE Guidance on Pupil Premium Spending*

Intent

The intent is to “promote wellbeing throughout the school and offer staff support. Students and parent/ carers.”

Participation

The Wellbeing and Engagement Officer role is divided into roughly three equal parts – working with pupils, staff, and parents/carers.

Pupils

All pupils receive pupil premium and have access to the Wellbeing Coordinator.

Currently, the well-being coordinator sees seven pupils every week – 4 of whom are eligible for Pupil Premium.

Parents and carers

The Wellbeing coordinator is working with or has worked with 41 families in the year 22/23,

Staff

All staff have access to the Wellbeing Coordinator.

30% of staff have engaged with the support services provided by the Well-being Coordinator since April 2022- that is well over 60 staff.

Impact

Staff

The approach adopted is a proactive and preventative approach to well-being.

Empirical evidence of direct impact on the various types of support staff receive is challenging to ascertain.

- 86% of staff who completed the questionnaire said they have a rewarding job and feel they work in a supportive team.
- Staff absence has improved significantly over the last 12 months.
- Staff written feedback is very optimistic about the provision.
- Anecdotal evidence from conversations with staff indicates that staff are highly optimistic about the provision.



Pupils

Empirical evidence of direct impact on the various types of support pupils receive is difficult to ascertain.

With pupils receiving 1-1 support, there is universal support for the view that this is having a very positive impact on the wellbeing of the pupils. The wellbeing Coordinator provides an essential element of the whole school approach to help pupils cope with day-to-day challenges and develop confidence and resilience.

The whole school enrichment days highly promote positive environments for fostering engagement and positive interactions between pupils.

The school council has developed significantly over the last 18 with the guidance and support of the Wellbeing Coordinator.



Parents and carers

The approach to Parental and carer support by the Wellbeing Coordinator is varied- consisting of the following.

- Parent/ Care coffee morning
- Parents Evenings
- Family events open to all – e.g., Summer Picnic
- Parent carer signposting and referral service
- Friends of Northern Counties
- Drop-in sessions.
- Parent/ Carer course

Empirical evidence of direct impact on the various types of support families and carers receive is difficult to ascertain. However, a wealth of anecdotal evidence suggests that it is well-received and successful in supporting and helping families.



3) Sensory Integration

Qualified SI Practitioners carry out sensory integration therapy at Northern Counties School: occupational therapists who have undertaken additional, rigorous postgraduate training in SI. This training involves developing a detailed understanding of the neuroscience and evidence base underpinning sensory integration and developing expertise in assessing and providing intervention for pupils with sensory integration problems.

Pupil Premium funding has, in part, allowed the creation of an SI base within the school designed by the School's Advanced Sensory Integration Lead and installed by Rhino Sensory UK.

The SI base has allowed SI therapy (or SI interventions) to be carried out in a specifically built environment with specialist equipment.

C frame swing with an array of attachments

- Climbing wall with crash mats
- Soft play pieces with slides, platforms, tunnels, and steps
- Sunken trampoline
- Ball pool
- Squeeze machine
- Dark den
- Whizzy dizzy
- Therapy balls and seating
- LED light stimulation
- Soft padding to walls and floor.
- Variety of balance equipment

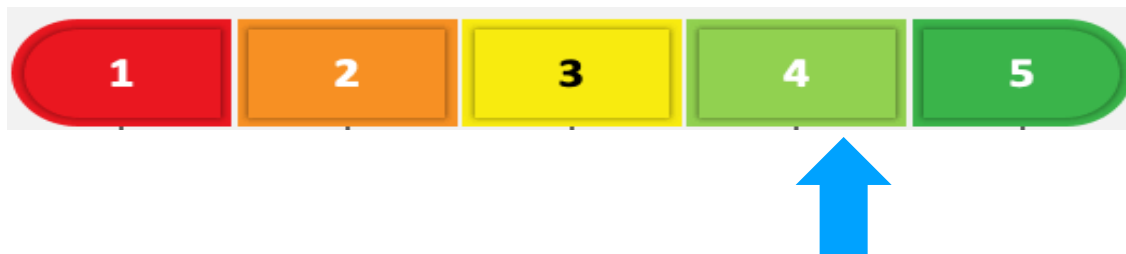
This equipment ensures a sensory-rich environment for students to have the opportunity to gain vestibular (movement), proprioceptive (deep pressure), tactile (touch), visual and auditory (sound) feedback to satisfy their senses.

Impact

The SI room is also designed to facilitate **Ayre's Sensory Integration (ASI) therapy**.

Research conducted in the United States has found that occupational therapy using Ayres Sensory Integration® is an effective evidence-based intervention for pupils with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

School-based evidence shows that an SI significantly impacts several pupil's communication, cognition, and motor skills. In others, it has improved social, behavioural, and motor skills.



Conclusion

Pupil Premium monies are being used appropriately and very effectively to support pupils eligible for the funding.

Externally provided programmes.

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

Programme	Provider
N/A	