

Pupil premium strategy statement – Verwood First School

School overview

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school	284
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	11% (32)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (<i>3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year</i>)	2024 - 2027
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	A Nesbitt
Pupil premium lead	C Dear
Governor / Trustee lead	J Mearns

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£ 40,480
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (<i>enter £0 if not applicable</i>)	£ 0
Total budget for this academic year <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>	£ 40,480

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At Verwood First School & Nursery, our intention is that all pupils, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, make good progress and improve their attainment across all curriculum areas. The focus of this strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve that goal, including those who are already achieving well. We will ensure that our pupils are not disadvantaged in any way as a result of their socioeconomic context, whether they are in care or are young carers. We believe that, with the correct support, all pupils can achieve their full potential.

Our ultimate objectives are to:

1. Narrow the attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged.
2. All teaching and learning meet the needs of all the pupil and that all staff have high expectations of all children
3. Remove barriers to learning created by poverty, family circumstances, and background.
4. All pupils are able to read fluently and with a good understanding to enable them to access the breadth of the curriculum.
5. Enable pupils to look after their social and emotional wellbeing and to develop character and resilience.
6. Access a wide range of opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world.
7. Foster a strong sense of belonging and connectedness so that all adults and children can thrive. Ensure that relationships between pupils and staff are positive, respectful, and promote both emotional and physical safety.

Our Context:

VFS&N is a two-form entry first school and is part of Initio Learning Trust consisting of 19 schools. Eight of these are first schools. Verwood is predominantly an area of low deprivation and currently 11% (32) of pupils are disadvantaged. However, we also know there are pockets of deprivation and some families are not identified. The school works hard to identify these families to ensure they can access the support available to them.

Achieving our objectives:

- To achieve our objectives and overcome barriers to learning we will:
- Deliver a well-sequenced and progressive curriculum for all pupils.
- Improve the attendance of our disadvantaged cohort.
- Provide all teachers and TAs with high-quality, evidenced-based CPD to ensure that pupils access effective quality first teaching and additional support (through the use of EEF guidance, Walkthrus, UL&S, coaching and reflective dialogue).
- Provide targeted, evidence-based intervention and support to address identified quickly gaps in learning including the use of small group work and 1:1 tuition.
- Use diagnostic tools such as Star Reader to provide personalised targets.
- Target funding to ensure that all pupils have access to trips, extra-curricular clubs and online learning facilities.
- Provide appropriate nurture groups to support pupils in their emotional and social development. Ensure children from all Inclusion groups have opportunities to contribute to the wider life of the school and local community (through becoming Eco Warriors, Reading Leaders, Positive Play Leaders, Pupil Voice Champions etc.)

- Engage all pupils in extra-curricular opportunities for personal development.

Key Principles:

We will ensure that high-quality teaching, learning, and assessment meet the needs of all pupils through a carefully sequenced curriculum alongside the use of assessments and analysis of data. Class teachers will identify barriers and provide appropriate provisions through individual pupil premium plans, specific interventions, and support for individual pupils which will be reviewed termly. Alongside academic support, we will ensure that those pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs will access high-quality provision from appropriately trained adults including our ELSA.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Some children’s reading age is below their chronological age and this is impacting on both their reading and writing attainment, which is below ARE.
2	Some children show limited retention of phonemic knowledge, leading to slower phonemic development.
3	To improve writing outcomes for Pupil Premium pupils by focusing on the automaticity of handwriting. Improved fluency in handwriting will free up cognitive capacity so that pupils can focus more on ideas, spelling, and structure rather than forming letters.
4	Some pupils have underdeveloped oracy skills, which impacts their social communication and their ability to express ideas clearly.
5	To accelerate progress in maths for pupil premium pupils by developing fluency in number bonds, addition, subtraction, and early multiplicative understanding through targeted, structured practice.
6	Attendance of pupils with pupil premium is below that of their non-disadvantaged peers.
7	Some pupils’ social, emotional and mental health needs can affect their emotional wellbeing, leading to feelings such as anxiety or low self-esteem and impacting learning.

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
To close the gap between reading age and chronological age	Pupils will have a reading age in line with their chronological age. Pupils read age-appropriate texts independently.

	<p>Expected improvement in reading fluency and comprehension, leading to a higher percentage of PP pupils achieving age-related expectation at the end of KS1.</p> <p>Star Reader data will show that a higher proportion of PP pupils have a reading age in-line with or exceeding their chronological age by the end of KS1/Year 4.</p>
PP pupils will have improved retention of phonics and will make at least expected progress or accelerated progress if there are gaps in their knowledge	<p>Phonic tracking data (from UL&S) will show children in Year R and 1 closing the gap on their non-PP peers.</p> <p>By the end of Year 1, the majority of children will pass the Phonic Screening and 100% by the end of Year 2.</p>
Improved fluency in handwriting	<p>Across all year groups, enhanced handwriting fluency will increase legibility and speed and reduce writing fatigue.</p> <p>Enhanced motor skills leading to improved handwriting will be evident.</p>
Develop oracy skills	<p>Pupils will leave the EYFS with significantly improved Increased confidence in speaking and improved social interactions.</p> <p>Enhanced communication skills will lead to improved reasoning and comprehension.</p> <p>Improved vocabulary and language use will be evident in both spoken and written work.</p>
Children across the school will have improved number fluency.	Tracking data will show an increase in the number of children achieving ARE in mathematics in YR/Y1/Y2/Y3/Y4, leading to a higher percentage of PP pupils achieving age-related expectation compared to 24-25 data.
The percentage of all children achieving 80% or above in the Multiplication Check at the end of Y4 will increase and this will include some PP children.	Tracking data will show an increased number of children demonstrating number fluency in the Multiplication Check. 50% of PP children will achieve 100% in the Multiplication Check.
<p>Attendance data for children with pupil premium shows improvement.</p> <p>(Last year Not FSM 95.8% FSM 91.1%)</p>	Attendance of our PP children will be tracked and subsequent support and intervention given when needed.

<p>Targeted pastoral support to address identified developmental needs, mental health, wellbeing and self-esteem.</p>	<p>Children will be happy to come into school, engage in all learning and begin to develop an awareness of strategies to support self-regulation.</p> <p>These children will also be given additional opportunities for pupil leadership roles and extra-curricular clubs.</p> <p>Eligible pupils to engage fully with learning and wider school life experiences, minimising anxiety and addressing individual needs effectively as shown on PP Support Plan target reviews.</p>
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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: £13,500

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Embedding WalkThrus within a coaching model so that teaching becomes more consistent, reflective and responsive</p>	<p>Consistent high-quality teaching - Breaking down teaching and learning strategies into clear, manageable steps, ensuring all staff consistently apply evidence-based practice.</p> <p>Coaching enables teachers to reflect on their practice and receive precise, actionable feedback linked to WalkThru strategies. This supports teachers to adapt teaching to meet the specific needs of PP pupils, including scaffolding, checking for understanding, and addressing misconceptions promptly.</p> <p>Cognitive Science Approaches in the Classroom: A Review of the Evidence Effective Professional Development</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6</p>
<p>The use of a DfE validated Systematic Synthetic Phonics Programme –</p>	<p>Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base that indicates a positive impact overall (+5 months) on the accuracy of word reading, particularly for disadvantaged pupils</p> <p>Phonics - EEF</p>	<p>1, 2</p>

Unlocking Letters and Sounds – to secure stronger phonics teaching for all pupils		
Use of Star reader assessments to inform next steps	The use of Star Reader allows staff to identify those with comprehension or retention concerns, enabling staff to target their teaching and interventions appropriately.	1, 2
The use of whole class reading instruction that aligns with reading development	Structured reading instruction, including modelled reading, guided discussion, and explicit fluency and comprehension teaching, is supported by research from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and the National Reading Panel, which highlights the importance of teaching vocabulary explicitly, developing fluency and discussing high-quality texts. Improving Literacy in KS2 https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/reading-house/fluency	1, 2, 4
The use of Kinetic Letters to improve automaticity	Explicit handwriting instruction can improve writing fluency and quality (EEF, Writing). Kinetic Letters is an evidence-informed programme that builds the cognitive and physical skills for handwriting.’ (Kinetic Letters Programme 2024) The key principle of the Kinetic Letters program is that building physical strength underpins handwriting and concentration. The Early Years Toolkit outlines the benefits of approaches which develop physical development. Physical Development Approaches Enhanced handwriting fluency will reduce writing fatigue and will reduce cognitive load so that effort can be directed towards composition, spelling and structure. Improving Literacy in KS2 <i>According to the evidence summarised in the guidance report, primary school pupils’ writing skills – including spelling, handwriting and typing –need to become automatic so that they can concentrate on the content of their writing.</i> The Writing Framework sets out principles and priorities for good handwriting teaching (explicit, frequent, sequential, focused on automaticity and transcription skills). GOV.UK Kinetic Letters meet these principles.	3

<p>Mastering Number implemented across Years R-3</p>	<p>Implement a mastery approach to teaching mathematics, focusing on deep understanding and fluency in multiplication.</p> <p>Memorisation and repetition of key facts (times tables and number bonds etc.) are important aspects of learning. Evidence from cognitive science research suggests that learning key facts so they can be recalled automatically ‘frees up’ working memory. It can then focus on more complex problem solving, rather than reaching cognitive overload trying to calculate simple operations.</p> <p>By implementing the Mastering Number Programme we will be supporting children to develop automaticity with number bonds and times tables.</p> <p>Mastery Learning</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Maths Hub Sustaining Mastery workgroup</p>	<p>Participating in the Developing Mastery workgroup enabled teachers to effectively reflect upon their teaching and develop their pedagogy.</p> <p>The MathsHubPrimaryMasteryspecialist. https://www.ncetm.org.uk/maths-hubs-projects/primary-mastery-specialists/</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Drawing Club - Reception</p>	<p>Anecdotal evidence from several schools shows that ‘Drawing Club’ can have a positive impact on children in reception in several ways, including supporting the development of imagination, language through vocabulary development, fine motor skills, writing and engagement. The Early Years Toolkit outlines the benefits of communication and language approaches:</p> <p>Communication and Language Approaches</p>	<p>4, 1, 2, 3</p>
<p>Embed oracy across the curriculum through structured talk activities and peer discussions.</p>	<p>Research shows that structured talk can improve oracy skills and academic outcomes. Staff will receive training on oracy strategies and how to plan lessons that incorporate talk, and create a supportive environment for discussion.</p> <p>Dialogic teaching strategies that lead to improved reasoning and comprehension will be explored through the WalkThrus/coaching cycles.</p> <p>https://voice21.org/why-oracy-matters/</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.</p> <p>EEF: Oral Language Interventions</p>	<p>4, 1, 2, 3</p>
<p>Improve the quality of social and emotional learning.</p>	<p>Implement a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing, including training for staff on Relational Behaviour (Boundaries/Big Emotions/The assault Cycle and window of tolerance/Emotional Coaching).</p>	<p>7, 6</p>

	<p>Integrate mental health awareness into the curriculum, and establish a clear referral pathway for students needing additional support in the aim of increasing student engagement and improved self-regulation skills, leading to better academic performance.</p> <p>The EEF reviews the best available research to offer school leaders recommendations to support good Social and Emotional for all pupils. It stresses this is especially important for children from disadvantaged backgrounds and other vulnerable groups -</p> <p>Improving Social and Emotional Learning in Primary Schools</p> <p>Develop a structured programme for pupil leadership - with the aim of developing leadership skills and increasing willingness to engage in school life.</p> <p>Encourage engagement in extra-curricular activities that includes targeted recruitment of disadvantaged pupils. Participation in extra-curricular activities has been shown to enhance self-esteem and social skills (EEF, Sports Participation).</p>	
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support, structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £12,500

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Unlocking Letters and Sounds interventions	<p>Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base that indicates a positive impact on the accuracy of word reading, particularly for disadvantaged pupils:</p> <p>The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) supports phonics interventions as a key strategy for early literacy, emphasising systematic teaching of letter-sound relationships.</p> <p><i>Phonics has a positive impact overall (+5 months) with very extensive evidence and is an important component in the development of early reading skills, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.</i></p> <p>EEF: Phonics</p> <p>'Keep-up not catch-up' strategies aimed at ensuring all children can access current learning in phonics. Backed up by Ambitious Expectations - a set of six focused intervention strategies that support children with reading.</p>	2

Reading Interventions	<p>Reading comprehension approaches have a strong evidence base that indicates a positive impact on pupils' reading capabilities and, coupled with phonic interventions, help pupils to develop their reading skills: EEF: Reading Comprehension Strategies</p> <p>The EEF toolkit states: The average impact of reading comprehension strategies is an additional six months progress over the course of a year. Successful reading comprehension approaches allow activities to be carefully tailored to pupils' reading capabilities, and involve activities and texts that provide an effective, but not overwhelming, challenge.</p>	1, 2, 3
Kinetic Letters Intervention	<p>Implement small group interventions focusing on handwriting practice. Small group interventions have been effective in improving specific skills (EEF, Small Group Tuition).</p> <p>Track progress through handwriting assessments and teacher observations.</p>	3
Targeted pastoral support to address mental health, wellbeing and self-esteem	<p>Provide one-to-one support for identified pupils focusing on emotional support and self-regulation strategies.</p> <p>ELSA programme - Research published by the Education Endowment Foundation in their Teaching and Learning Toolkit provides evidence to indicate the positive impact of Metacognition and Self-Regulation as well as Social and Emotional Learning as being +7 and +4 respectively. This indicates that it has a positive impact on children's learning. In addition, research by the Journal Educational Psychology in Practice on the impact of the ELSA programme on pupil well-being suggests that the ELSA programme has a perceived positive impact on multiple components of pupil well-being including positive emotions, negative feelings, engagement, resilience, optimism, accomplishment and relationships.</p> <p>Improving Social and Emotional Learning in Primary Schools</p>	7, 6

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

Budgeted cost: £14,480

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Ensure disadvantaged children are represented in school roles and take part in extracurricular and enrichment activities	There are a number of whole school roles, including Play Leaders, School Council, Eco Warriors and Reading Leaders. Taking on leadership roles helps to instil confidence, and helps	6, 7

<p>linked to Personal Development.</p>	<p>children solve problems creatively, work in a team, and work collaboratively with others. Research shows that leadership opportunities can enhance self-esteem and engagement (EEF, Social and Emotional Learning).</p> <p>Having access to and being involved in extracurricular activities. Participation in extracurricular activities is linked to improved academic outcomes and well-being (EEF, Arts Participation).</p> <p>PP will have free entry to clubs of choice such as BRS football/multi sports/dance / Rocksteady / Netball</p> <p><u>(EEF, Sports Participation).</u></p>	
<p>Improve engagement of parents of PP children and work with them to help improve attendance.</p>	<p>Parental engagement has a positive impact on average of approximately four months additional progress. EEF research highlights the positive impact of parental engagement on pupil outcomes (EEF, Parental Engagement).</p> <p>Schedule regular workshops, provide resources, and invite guest speakers to engage parents effectively. Considering how to engage parents will be crucial in improving attendance for children.</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>Forest School - every child has access to a block of Forest School sessions.</p>	<p>Though there is little evidence of outdoor learning impacting directly on academic achievement, the EEF toolkit does acknowledge its positive impact on self-efficacy, resilience, motivation, self-confidence and teamwork; all essential life-skills that, in turn, can impact learning.</p> <p>Forest School has been shown to improve social skills and emotional well-being <u>(EEF, Outdoor Learning).</u></p> <p>Organise family Forest School sessions to encourage parental involvement and engagement with the school.</p>	<p>6, 7</p>
<p>Developing outdoor play</p>	<p>Research indicates that outdoor play enhances physical health, social skills, and emotional wellbeing (Gill, 2014). The EEF highlights the importance of quality teaching in all areas of learning. Outdoor learning has been shown to improve</p>	<p>6, 7</p>

	<p>engagement and motivation (Becker & Lauterbach, 2017).</p> <p>Allocate funding for equipment and resources, and schedule regular outdoor play sessions, including activities that promote physical health and social interaction.</p> <p>Professional development sessions focusing on outdoor play strategies, improving staff confidence in facilitating outdoor play, leading to enhanced pupil engagement and wellbeing.</p>	
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Total budgeted cost: £40,480

Part B: Review of 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:

2024-2025 Aims	2024-2025 Targets	2024-2025 Outcomes
Progress in Reading	PP chn to achieve progress in line with non pupil premium pupils.	Based on KS1 attainment 67% of PP pupils ARE 87% of non PP pupils ARE
Progress in Decoding	PP children will close gaps in their phonic knowledge and will pass the Phonic Screening at the end of Year 1.	Pupils receiving Unlocking Letters and Sounds interventions showed improved phonics screening scores, particularly disadvantaged pupils. 67% PP pupils met the expected standard 91% non PP pupils met the expected standard
Progress in Maths	PP children in Y2-4 will be accessing Greater Depth challenges in mathematics on a regular basis and some will achieve ARE+/GD at the end of the year. Children in YR/Y1/Y2 will have improved number fluency. The percentage of all children achieving 80% or above in the Multiplication Check at the end of Y4 will	67% of PP pupils ARE 87% of non PP pupils ARE 74% Pupils achieved 80% or above in the MCT. This was a significant increase from

	increase and this will include some PP children.	the previous year's outcome of 51%.
Parental Engagement	Parents of PP children will have better engagement with their children's learning	Parent workshops led to increased parental involvement, particularly in supporting home learning, contributing to improved homework completion rates and in-class engagement.
Attendance	High attendance and good relationships with families.	Embedding good practice in attendance monitoring reduced persistent absence rates among disadvantaged pupils. Attendance levels are slightly lower than non PP but good relationships with families have been made. Attendance 91.1% of PP Attendance 95.8% of non PP
Attitudes to Learning	Well motivated pupils with good attitudes towards their learning.	Staff CPD on WalkThrus and particularly on setting and sustaining expectations has ensured consistency of expectations across all classes and drop-ins show that concentration and engagement has improved. Pastoral support and ELSA provision supported improved emotional regulation and reduced behavioural incidents. Extracurricular participation, including Forest School, supported improvements in teamwork, engagement and confidence.

		Through participation in leadership roles, disadvantaged pupils demonstrated increased self-esteem and a heightened sense of responsibility.

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
Forest School	Woodland Experiences
Sports	BRS
Computing	ComputerXplorers
Dance	Creative Dance