Pupil premium strategy statement – Countess Wear Primary School

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 outcomes for disadvantaged pupils last academic year.

School overview

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school	182
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	45.1%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers **(3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement for each academic year)**	2025/2026 to 2027/2028
Date this statement was published	Jan 2026
Date last reviewed	July 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2027
Statement authorised by	Jonathan Bishop
Pupil premium lead	Tim Cook
Governor / Trustee lead	Lorwyn Randall

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£124,545,
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£124,545

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

As part of Cornerstone Academy Trust, at Countess Wear Primary School we seek to create and promote a challenging learning environment that inspires children to achieve high standards and become life-long independent learners. We work to set consistently high expectations, build children's confidence and ensure engagement for all. In each of our schools we endeavour to develop creative thinkers, inquisitive questioners and avid problem solvers, with flexible skills, who are successful communicators. All children learn to collaborate effectively at all levels, including working with our international partners, and adapting to the needs of a diverse and ever-changing society. By embracing technology as part of everyday teaching, our schools take a new approach to digital tools, embedding their use within a broad and balanced curriculum. We offer and promote a challenging computational learning environment. The children are taught from an early age to program, to develop good logical thinking skills, to solve problems and to collaborate effectively with their peers.

Our motto across The Cornerstone Academy Trust (TCAT) is "Fortune Favours the Brave" and our values include individual liberty and respect for other religions and cultures. These are discussed explicitly with the children during assemblies, and they are reinforced during class time.

Our intention is that all pupils, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, make good progress and achieve high attainment across all subject areas. The focus of our pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve that goal, including progress for those who are already high attainers.

We will consider the challenges faced by vulnerable pupils, such as those who have a social worker and young carers. 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 common challenges and individual needs, rooted in robust diagnostic assessment, not assumptions about the impact of disadvantage. The approaches we have adopted complement each other to help pupils excel. To ensure they are effective we will:

- ensure disadvantaged pupils are challenged in the work that they're set

- act early to intervene at the point need is identified
- adopt a whole school approach in which all staff take responsibility for disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and raise expectations of what they can achieve.

Challenges:

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	**Underdeveloped oral language, vocabulary and listening comprehension among disadvantaged pupils.** Assessments, observations and discussions with pupils indicate that weaknesses in oral language and vocabulary are evident from Reception and persist into Key Stage 2. While these needs are partially mitigated in EYFS, they are not sustained into KS1 and KS2. These weaknesses contribute directly to poorer phonics outcomes, reduced reading fluency, and weaker access to the wider curriculum for disadvantaged pupils.
2	**Attainment gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils widen rapidly as pupils move through the school.** Disadvantaged pupils make a comparatively stronger start in EYFS; however, gaps increase sharply from Year 1 onwards, particularly in early reading and mathematics. Internal data and the IDSR confirm that by the end of KS2, disadvantaged pupils achieve significantly below both national disadvantaged and national non-disadvantaged pupils, with several measures identified as below national and statistically significant.
3	**Insecure early reading and mathematical fluency act as barriers to sustained progress.** Phonics outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are significantly weaker than for non-disadvantaged peers, limiting reading fluency and comprehension. This pattern is reinforced in Key Stage 2 by weaker multiplication fluency, as evidenced by the Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check, where disadvantaged pupils score substantially below their peers. These foundational gaps constrain pupils' ability to access more demanding learning later in KS2.
4	**Social, emotional and wellbeing needs reduce engagement and readiness to learn for disadvantaged pupils.** Assessments (including wellbeing surveys), observations and discussions with pupils and families indicate that social and emotional challenges, reduced access to enrichment opportunities, and experiences such as bullying disproportionately affect disadvantaged pupils. These factors impact pupils' engagement, confidence and learning behaviours, contributing to weaker academic outcomes over time.

5	**Lower attendance and higher levels of absence compound existing attainment gaps.** Attendance data shows that disadvantaged pupils attend less regularly than non-disadvantaged pupils. Persistent absence is higher than national averages and reduces continuity of learning. Absenteeism therefore compounds existing gaps in reading, writing and mathematics and limits the impact of academic interventions for disadvantaged pupils.

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 oral language skills and vocabulary among disadvantaged pupils.	Assessments and observations indicate significantly improved oral language among disadvantaged pupils. This is evident when triangulated with other sources of evidence, including engagement in lessons, book scrutiny and ongoing formative assessment.
Improved reading attainment among disadvantaged pupils at the end of KS2.	KS2 reading outcomes in 2027/28 show that more than 90% of disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard.
Improved maths attainment for disadvantaged pupils at the end of KS2.	KS2 maths outcomes in 2027/28 show that more than 90% of disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard.
To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils in our school, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	Sustained high levels of wellbeing by 2027/28 demonstrated by: • qualitative data from student voice, student and parent surveys and teacher observations • a significant reduction in bullying • a significant increase in participation in enrichment activities, particularly among disadvantaged pupils. This will be reflected in PASS survey outcomes
To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	Sustained high attendance by 2027/28 demonstrated by the overall attendance rate for all children being at least in line with national average, PP pupils being no less than 93%, and the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers has reduced by half, from 6% to 3%.

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: £37,326

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Purchase of standardised diagnostic assessments. Training for staff to ensure assessments are interpreted and administered correctly.	When used effectively, diagnostic assessments can indicate areas for development for individual pupils, or across classes and year groups: Diagnostic assessment | EEF £2548	1, 2, 3
Embedding dialogic activities across the school curriculum. These can support pupils to articulate key ideas, consolidate understanding and extend vocabulary. We will purchase resources and fund ongoing teacher training and release time.	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: Oral language interventions | Teaching and Learning Toolkit | EEF	1
Ongoing training around the use of Read Write Inc., a DfE validated Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme, to secure stronger phonics teaching for all pupils.	Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base that indicates a positive impact on the accuracy of word reading, particularly for disadvantaged pupils: Phonics | Teaching and Learning Toolkit | EEF £748	2,3
Enhancement of our maths teaching and curriculum planning in line with DfE and EEF guidance. We will fund teacher release time to embed key elements of guidance in school and to access Maths Hub resources	The DfE non-statutory guidance has been produced in conjunction with the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics, drawing on evidence-based approaches: Mathematics_guidance: key stages 1_and 2	2, 3

and CPD (including Teaching for Mastery training).	The EEF guidance is based on a range of the best available evidence: Improving Mathematics in Key Stages 2 and 3	
Access to digital resources to support teaching & learning. Use of Teams and OneNote resources to access the curriculum 1:1 Access to digital devices to support learning Use of video as tool to support communication and access to wider curriculum	As a national leading organisation in this area, children benefit from a curriculum that is rooted in technology – this is a curriculum that has been identified by Ofsted as Outstanding on multiple occasions. £20,500	2,3
Employment of specialist teachers working across all Trust schools – across Art, Music, PE.	We know that the single greatest factor in improving the outcomes of disadvantaged children is access to high quality teaching. In this instance, the specialist teaching ensures a high-quality access to the wider curriculum, enhancing the cultural capital of children who may not otherwise have access to such experiences. The importance of wider Arts experiences is highlighted by the EEF: Arts participation | EEF £13,530	2,3

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

Budgeted cost: **£44647**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
One-to-one mentoring (KS2) and focused tuition (KS1) for pupils in need of additional support, delivered in addition to, and linked with, normal lessons.	Tuition targeted at specific needs and knowledge gaps can be an effective method to support low attaining pupils or those falling behind: One to one tuition | Teaching and Learning Toolkit | EEF	1, 2, 3

Tutoring will be implemented with the help of DfE's guide: Tutoring: guidance for education settings	Small group tuition | Teaching and Learning Toolkit | EEF Mentoring | EEF £35,055	
Additional phonics sessions targeted at disadvantaged pupils who require further phonics support. This will be delivered in collaboration with our local English hub.	Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base indicating a positive impact on pupils, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds. Targeted phonics interventions have been shown to be more effective when delivered as regular sessions over a period up to 12 weeks: Phonics | Teaching and Learning Toolkit | EEF £8550	2,3
Provision of a Trust employed SALT	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 | Teaching and Learning Toolkit | EEF £1042	1,2,3

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

Budgeted cost: **£42572**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Whole staff training on behaviour management and anti-bullying approaches with the aim of developing our school ethos and improving behaviour across school. Specifically, this is the roll out of "Price Training", the de-escalation and positive control training.	Both targeted interventions and universal approaches can have positive overall effects: Behaviour interventions | Teaching and Learning Toolkit | EEF £605	4

Whole Trust provision of a School Nurse, who can offer high quality social interventions to support inclusion, and who can contribute to teaching specific aspects of the RSE/SRE curriculum,	Both targeted and universal approached positive impact on children's attendance and welfare, £2388	4
Embedding principles of good practice set out in the DfE's guidance on working together to improve school attendance. This will involve leadership time to improve attendance.	The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced levels of absence and persistent absence. £1222	5
Access to wider trips, visits and residentials is reduced by 40% for children who qualify for PP funding.	In order to ensure as many children as possible can access a host of wide-ranging opportunities, we offer a significant discount to qualifying children. £7240	4,5
Purchase of one set of uniform, per annum, for PP children.	To ensure equity of access to school, with a measure of pride and self-respect. £185	4,5
Contingency fund for acute issues.	Based on our experiences and those of similar schools to ours, we have identified a need to set a small amount of funding aside to respond quickly to needs that have not yet been identified. £30,932	All

Total budgeted cost: £124,545

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Evaluation of outcomes at Countess Wear Primary School (2024–2025), with a focus on disadvantaged pupils

Outcomes at Countess Wear Primary School in 2024–2025 present a clear and consistent pattern. While early attainment for disadvantaged pupils is comparatively stronger, gaps widen rapidly as pupils move through the school, resulting in significantly weaker outcomes for pupils eligible for Pupil Premium by the end of Key Stage 2. This evaluation draws on statutory assessment outcomes, internal school data, pupil-level attendance and wellbeing information, and the DfE Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR) to triangulate performance against national benchmarks and trends.

Context

The school serves a community with high levels of disadvantage. Almost half of pupils (approximately 45–49%) are eligible for Pupil Premium or Free School Meals, significantly above national averages, alongside above-average SEND prevalence. This context is explicitly recognised within the IDSR and is critical when evaluating outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, as it increases the importance of securing strong, consistent teaching and high attendance to mitigate risk factors.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

EYFS outcomes in 2024–2025 provide a comparatively secure starting point. 75% of pupils achieved a Good Level of Development, and disadvantaged pupils performed reasonably well at this stage, with 66.7% of Pupil Premium pupils achieving GLD, compared with 80% of non-Pupil Premium pupils. While a gap remains, it is modest relative to later phases, and EYFS over-time data shows a clear upward trend for disadvantaged pupils over the last three years.

This suggests that early years provision is increasingly effective in mitigating disadvantage and preparing pupils for Key Stage 1. IDSR national comparisons support the view that EYFS is not the primary driver of later underperformance, and that many disadvantaged pupils begin statutory schooling with an appropriate foundation for learning.

Year 1 Phonics Screening Check

The most significant shift occurs at Key Stage 1. In 2024–2025, 60% of pupils met the expected standard in the Phonics Screening Check, well below the national figure of 80%. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils were substantially weaker: 47.6% of Pupil Premium pupils met the expected standard, compared with 88.9% of non-Pupil Premium pupils.

This marks a sharp widening of the attainment gap immediately after EYFS. The IDSR phonics section confirms that outcomes are below national expectations, and while cohort context is acknowledged, the scale of the gap indicates that early decoding is a significant barrier for disadvantaged pupils. These early reading weaknesses provide a clear explanatory link to later outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check (MTC)

The Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check offers a valuable mid-key-stage indicator. The IDSR shows that the whole-cohort average score (20.9) is close to the national average, with national distribution banding categorised as “close to average (non-significant)”. However, the IDSR also flags a high SEND context, which aligns with internal subgroup analysis.

Disadvantaged pupils perform markedly less well than their peers, with Pupil Premium pupils averaging 18.43. This indicates that fluency gaps are already well established by the middle of KS2, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, and that whole-cohort averages mask significant internal variation. The MTC outcomes help explain why mathematics attainment remains weak by Year 6, especially at higher standards.

Key Stage 2 outcomes (Year 6)

By the end of KS2, the attainment picture is stark, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. The IDSR confirms that whole-cohort outcomes are significantly below national averages in key areas:

- Combined Reading, Writing and Mathematics:
  School 31% vs national 62%, categorised as below national – statistically significant.
- Reading expected standard:
  School 52% vs national 75%, below national (significant)
- Mathematics expected standard:
  School 41% vs national 74%, below national (significant)
- Writing expected standard:
  School 62% vs national 72%, below national (non-significant)
- GPS expected standard:
  School 66% vs national 73%, close to average (non-significant)

The IDSR disadvantaged breakdown sharpens this picture further. In 2024–2025:

- Combined RWM: 21%, compared with 47% nationally for disadvantaged pupils and 69% for national non-disadvantaged pupils
- Reading expected standard: 29%, compared with 63% nationally (disadvantaged) and 81% (non-disadvantaged)
- Mathematics expected standard: 21%, compared with 61% nationally (disadvantaged) and 81% (non-disadvantaged)
- Writing expected standard: 50%, close to national disadvantaged averages but 28 percentage points below non-disadvantaged pupils nationally

- GPS expected standard: 43%, below national disadvantaged and well below national non-disadvantaged outcomes

The IDSR therefore confirms that disadvantaged pupils at Countess Wear perform significantly below both national disadvantaged and national non-disadvantaged pupils, particularly in reading and mathematics. In several areas, these differences are statistically significant, reinforcing that the gaps cannot be explained by normal cohort variation alone.

Attendance, behaviour and pupil attitudes

Attendance data provides important additional context. Overall attendance in 2024–2025 is broadly in line with national averages; however, attendance for pupils eligible for Pupil Premium (93.76%) is lower than the whole-school figure (94.52%), with higher levels of unauthorised absence. This reduced continuity of learning compounds existing attainment gaps and limits the impact of classroom teaching and targeted intervention for disadvantaged pupils.

Behaviour is a clear strength. There were no suspensions or exclusions during the 2024–2025 academic year, indicating that behaviour and conduct are not barriers to learning.

PASS survey data (GL Assessment) provides further insight into pupil attitudes. Survey results show that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, report positive and improving feelings about school, high levels of enjoyment, and a developing preparedness for learning. These findings demonstrate that motivation, engagement and attitudes are not limiting factors in pupils' achievement. Instead, the challenge lies in ensuring that positive attitudes and engagement are translated into sustained academic progress.

Overall evaluation

Taken together, the school's internal data, attendance and wellbeing evidence, and the IDSR present a coherent and credible narrative. Disadvantaged pupils make a relatively secure start in EYFS, but early gains are not sustained. A sharp decline in phonics outcomes marks the point at which gaps widen substantially, and by the end of KS2 these gaps are large, persistent and, in several cases, statistically significant.

The Year 4 MTC data demonstrates that weaknesses in fluency are embedded well before Year 6, while attendance data shows that reduced continuity of learning further compounds disadvantage. At the same time, positive pupil attitudes, strong behaviour and the absence of exclusions confirm that underachievement is not driven by disengagement or conduct, but by the consistency, sustainability and impact of learning.

Overall, the evidence shows that disadvantage is the central factor shaping outcomes at Countess Wear in 2024–2025, and that improving the consistency, sustainability and impact of provision for Pupil Premium pupils — particularly in early reading and mathematical fluency — must remain a core strategic priority.

Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider