

# Early Years Pupil Premium Strategy Statement



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 the effect that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

## School overview

Detail	Data
School name	Allens Croft Nursery School
Number of pupils in school	124 (Jan 2026 Census)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	46% (Jan 2026 Census)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers <b>(3 year plans are recommended)</b>	2025-2025, 2026-2027 and 2027-2028
Date this statement was published	January 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	David Aldworth
Pupil premium lead	Stephanie Wheatcroft
Governor / Trustee lead	Prof. Chris Pascal

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£37,500
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£0
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
Amount spent to date this academic year	
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b> If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year.	0

## Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

### Statement of intent

Our intention at Allens Croft is that all children, irrespective of their background and the challenges they face, thrive, enjoy high levels of well-being and make strong progress from their individual starting points in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The focus of our early years' pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve these goals. We aim to close gaps in children's understanding, knowledge and skills so that they are on track in all seven areas of learning when they leave us to go to Primary School. We also aim to provide further challenge to those children working above age related expectation.

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

High-quality teaching underpins 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 children at Allens Croft. 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 individual needs. Our delivery of the curriculum is shaped by children's interests. Our pedagogy is responsive to children's individual needs, interests and prior experiences.

We get to know the children attending Allens Croft exceptionally well. This is achieved through daily dialogue with parents and strong parent partnership, sustained shared thinking with children, observation and assessment. This gives us a robust understanding of each child's well-being levels, interests, knowledge and skills. It also enables us to identify and understand barriers to each child's learning. We use this information to plan and implement initiatives within a nurturing and language rich environment in which children thrive and access a full early years curriculum.

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Baseline assessment, Wellcomm assessments, observations and feedback from parents highlight that on entry to nursery, a higher percentage of disadvantaged children are working below age related expectation in their communication and language skills and development compared to their peers.
2	Many of our children do not have access to a garden at home. This impacts on their opportunities to develop their gross motor skills and understanding of the natural world.
3	Many of our disadvantaged children do not have access to books at home. This is in line with statistics published by the National Literacy Trust, which cite that 1 in 5 children do not have access to books at home. This impacts on the development of children's early reading skills which longer term can affect their life chances.
4	Parental mental health issues affect some of our disadvantaged children. Studies confirm the link between maternal and paternal depression and an increased risk of later behavioural and emotional difficulties in children (Public Health England March 2021)
5	The cost of living crisis, especially food costs, continues to significantly impact our disadvantaged children and their families who are already living in an area of high deprivation.
6	Our assessments and observations suggest that more disadvantaged children are working below age related expectation in their maths skills and development compared to their peers.
7	Oral Health: The most recent data shows that the incidence of dental decay in children in Birmingham is higher than the national average and the West Midlands region. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birmingham (29%)</li> <li>• West Midlands (23%)</li> <li>• England (23%)</li> </ul>

## 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
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Improved communication and language skills.	Children to have closed the gap in their Wellcomm score by at least one band by the end of their nursery year. Children learn and use new vocabulary linked to their nursery experiences, core books and rhymes.
Improved gross motor skills and a robust knowledge and understanding of some key features of the natural world.	Twice weekly sessions delivered by sports coaches from Fit4Sport plus specific planning for the development of loco-motor skills, stability skills and manipulative skills to enhance and develop children's gross motor skills. Access to outdoor continuous provision has a positive impact on children's gross motor skills. Children are on track in physical development when they leave Allens Croft. Children can understand and talk with confidence about growth and decay, life cycles and seasonality.
Improved early reading skills	Assessment and observation indicate significantly improved early reading skills. Children are on track in reading when they leave Allens Croft.
High levels of self-esteem, resilience, confidence and engagement as well-being is nurtured.	Children engage in all areas of continuous provision with enthusiasm. Children develop good relationships with adults which encourages and motivates them to engage in all areas of continuous provision with enthusiasm and curiosity. Children develop good social skills and respond appropriately to routines and boundaries. Children develop strong friendships with other children. Children are on track in PSED when they leave Allens Croft.
Children have access to a variety of nutritious foods at nursery. They develop a good understanding of healthy eating and healthy eating attitudes and habits.	Children engage well with and enjoy meal and snack times. Children develop a good understanding of healthy food choices and eating habits that will stay with them for life.
Improved early maths skills.	Assessment and observation indicate significantly improved knowledge, understanding and application of early maths skills. Children are on track in mathematics when they leave Allens Croft.
Improved oral health and oral health awareness	Children engage well with oral health routines at nursery. Children will develop a robust understanding of why they need to brush their teeth and how to keep their teeth and gums healthy. An increased number of children will attend dentist appointments.

	Parents and carers will have a greater understanding of the importance of maintaining good oral health for their children.
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## Activity in this academic year

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

### Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Forest School training for two staff. This will further enhance and develop this area of our continuous provision to maximise children's participation and opportunities.	<p>Government research into the benefits of Forest School for children have highlighted the following key findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Confidence:</b> children had the freedom, time and space to learn and demonstrate independence.</li> <li>• <b>Social Skills:</b> children gained increased awareness of the consequences of their actions on peers through team activities such as sharing tools and participating in play.</li> <li>• <b>Communication:</b> language development was prompted by the children's sensory experiences.</li> <li>• <b>Motivation:</b> the woodland tended to fascinate the children and they developed a keenness to participate and the ability to concentrate over longer periods of time.</li> <li>• <b>Physical skills:</b> these improvements were characterised by the development of physical stamina and gross and fine motor skills.</li> <li>• <b>Knowledge and understanding:</b> the children developed an interest in the natural surroundings and respect for the environment.</li> </ul>	1, 2, 4
Myhappymind training	The Myhappymind programme has been validated by the University of Chester, demonstrating its effectiveness in developing	4

<p>This was for all staff in preparation for the roll out of Myhappymind and is ongoing every ½ term. Staff will have a good understanding of the programme</p>	<p>positive behaviours that strengthen pupil mental health, resilience and wellbeing. The program has been shown to significantly impact both pupils, teachers and parents, leading to improvements in children's mental well-being and happiness.</p> <p>'Promoting children and young people's wellbeing is a key part of keeping them safe, helping them develop and ensuring they have positive outcomes in adulthood.' (Public Health England, 2021).</p>	
<p>Startwell food and meal times</p>	<p>"Good nutrition is essential during childhood, as it is a time of rapid growth, development and activity." (Public Health Agency)</p>	
<p>Startwell oral health</p>	<p>"Over a quarter of children in Birmingham have dental decay." (Startwell, 2021)</p>	

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

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Using Wellcomm with all children to assess and develop language and communication skills.</p> <p>This will be achieved through:</p> <p>Adult led small group sessions and through continuous provision and everyday routines.</p> <p>Andrina Flinders (HT at</p>	<p>One of the key aims of the EYFS reform (September 2021) is to strengthen the language and vocabulary development of children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, in a bid to close the attainment gap</p> <p>"Having a large vocabulary helps children learn more. Words allow them to make sense of the world around them.</p> <p>Communication and language is an EYFS prime area which means that it's one of the important building blocks for all the other areas. If it's not developed early it's difficult to achieve later.</p> <p>Children's language skills are connected to their overall development and can predict their educational success. As speaking and listening develops, children build foundations for literacy, for making sense of visual and verbal signs and ultimately for reading and writing.</p>	<p>1</p>

<p>Fullbrook Nursery)to provide training to staff to deliver the key elements of Wellcomm through all areas of continuous provision and through playful interactions</p>	<p>Children from more disadvantaged backgrounds may have fewer chances to develop their vocabulary. However, research shows that lots can be done in the early years to avoid inequalities in children's language development.</p> <p>Provide a language rich environment full of stories, rhymes, songs and play with words that are of interest to children. Children can make good progress with early language development with the right support." (GOV.UK)</p> <p><b>Why Wellcomm?</b></p> <p>"The Wellcomm toolkits were developed by Speech and Language Therapists at Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust with the aim of providing easy to use support for everyone involved with children.</p> <p>Requiring no specialist expertise, they quickly identify areas of concern in language, communication and interaction development in order to ensure early targeted intervention.</p> <p>Once a profile has been drawn up for each child, The Big Book of Ideas provides focused teaching and intervention strategies to meet individual needs." (GL Assessment)</p>	
<p>Twice weekly sessions delivered by a sports coach from Fit4Sport to develop children's gross motor skills.</p> <p>This also supports our commitment to Learning outside of the classroom</p>	<p>"Fit 4 Sport are a unique Specialist PE and Fitness provider, working with children of all ages and abilities. "We use sport and physical activity to inspire children to be aware of the impact and benefits of playing sports and living a healthy lifestyle."</p> <p>"At Fit 4 Sport, all our services provided follow our 3 core values, the 3 b's:</p> <p><b>BE SMART, BE STRONG, BE HEALTHY</b></p>	
<p>Adult led small group sessions and focused planning and support in all</p>	<p>"Over the last two decades, there has been a deepening recognition of the fundamental importance of improving reading standards on a child's future academic achievement, wellbeing and success in life. The reading and writing of Standard</p>	<p>3</p>

<p>areas of continuous provision to develop children's early reading skills.</p> <p>We will continue to provide all children with their own book bag and promote the use of the home/school library to further involve parents in their child's learning.</p> <p>We will offer parent workshops to support and enhance home learning opportunities.</p> <p>We will secure an additional teacher for one day a week to focus on developing early reading linked to our curriculum and pedagogy plan.</p>	<p>English, alongside proficient language development, is the key to unlocking the rest of the academic curriculum. Pupils who struggle to read struggle in all subjects and the wonders of a knowledge-rich curriculum passes them by unread.</p> <p>Fluency of reading is also a key indicator for future success in further education, higher education and employment." (Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, Minister of State for School Standards. The Reading Framework, January 2022)</p> <p>Research evidence suggests that certain strategies, particularly those involving targeted small group interaction may have particularly positive effects on children from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p>	
<p>Adult led small group sessions.</p> <p>Focused planning and support in all areas of continuous provision to</p>	<p>"Mathematics plays a key role in a child's development. Very young children are naturally curious, noticing differences in quantity and the shape of objects, and using early mathematical concepts when they play. Mathematical understanding helps children make sense of the world around them, interpret situations, and solve problems in everyday life, whether that's understanding time, sharing amounts with their peers, or counting in play.</p>	6

<p>develop children's early maths skills.</p> <p>We will offer parent workshops to support and enhance home learning opportunities.</p> <p>We will secure an additional teacher for a day and a half per week to focus on developing early maths skills with the children linked to our curriculum and pedagogy long term plan.</p>	<p>Developing a sound understanding of mathematics when we are young is essential. Children's early mathematical understanding is strongly associated with their later school achievement. It has, therefore, a major impact on young people's educational progress and life outcomes." (Francis B, 2020)</p> <p>Research evidence suggests that certain strategies, particularly those involving targeted small group interaction may have particularly positive effects on children from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p>	
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## **Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
 <p>MyHappymind</p>	<p>Promoting children and young people's wellbeing is a key part of keeping them safe, helping them develop and ensuring they have positive outcomes into adulthood (Public Health England, 2021).</p> <p>"Mental health plays a key role in a child's overall wellbeing and can be affected by various factors, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• abuse and neglect</li> <li>• family circumstances</li> <li>• environment</li> <li>• stress</li> <li>• loneliness or social isolation.</li> </ul>	4

	<p>Negative experiences can adversely affect a child's mental health, just as positive experiences can help improve it." (NSPCC)</p> <p>We have been looking for some time for something to support and promote the well-being and positive mental health of the children. After much research, we have subscribed to myHappymind. myHappymind is a programme that teaches children how to build their resilience, self-esteem and happiness through science-backed lessons, resources and activities. There are 5 modules which are delivered to children over the course of an academic year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet Your Brain: Understanding how your brain works and how to ensure we look after it so that we can manage our emotions and be at our best. Growth mindset is a key part of this too.</li> <li>• Celebrate: Understanding your unique character strengths and learning to celebrate them. This is a fantastic module for building self-esteem.</li> <li>• Appreciate: Understanding why gratitude matters and how you can develop gratitude as a habit. Gratitude is key to wellbeing and resilience and we're all about making it a habit!</li> <li>• Relate: Understanding why positive relationships matter and how to build them. We're focussed on the building blocks of good relationships and friendships.</li> <li>• Engage: Understanding how to set meaningful goals that matter and how to keep resilient in times of challenge. This module is all about building self-esteem and resilience too.</li> </ul> <p>There is also a focus on staff well-being within the programme.</p>	
<p>Gardening and cooking as areas of continuous provision to develop children's understanding of healthy eating and sustainability</p> <p>This also supports our commitment</p>	<p>"Good nutrition is essential during childhood, as it is a time of rapid growth, development and activity. This is also a vital time for healthy tooth development and prevention of decay. General eating habits and patterns are formed in the first few years of life. Poor nutrition during these years is associated with an increased risk of obesity, hypertension, diabetes and coronary heart disease. Childcare providers therefore have a key role to play in introducing children to a wide variety of foods and establishing a pattern of regular meals and healthy snacks." (Public Health Agency)</p> <p>Opportunities to plant, grow, harvest and cook fruit and vegetables at nursery support children's</p>	<p>2, 4, 5, 7</p>

<p>to Learning outside of the classroom.</p> <p>This links to the biodiversity and Climate Education and Green skills pillars of our climate action plan.</p>	<p>knowledge and understanding of healthy eating and sustainability.</p> <p>“Gardens are special places. They can improve our wellbeing in many ways, helping us feel calm or giving a sense of purpose.” (Thrive)</p>	
<p>Providing fruit and vegetable snacks every morning and afternoon.</p>	<p>Startwell is an obesity prevention programme targeting early years in certain Birmingham wards. The programme is based around 7 key messages to help Early Years settings, parents and health professionals create a healthier environment for our children and families.</p> <p>The Startwell programme's 7 key aims:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To demonstrate good behaviour and be a good role model for children;</li> <li>2. For children to snack just twice a day as part of a healthy eating lifestyle;</li> <li>3. For children to accomplish 3 hours of physical activity every day;</li> <li>4. To give children food portion sizes that are right for them;</li> <li>5. For children to try to avoid sitting still for prolonged periods of time;</li> <li>6. For children to eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day;</li> <li>7. To encourage improvement in children's movement and motor skills</li> </ol>	<p>2,5, 7</p>

<p>We are planning trips to Dudley Zoo and Attwell Farm, in addition to local walks, to broaden and enhance children's life experiences and opportunities. Children will receive a book linked to the theme of each visit.</p>	<p>"Trips and visits have a significant impact on children's well-being. They provide opportunities for outdoor learning and play, which are known to support mental health and well-being. Outdoor activities can improve resilience, self-confidence and the ability to relate to peers, contributing to a sense of belonging. Team building activities at outdoor centres and collaborative projects at zoos encourage communication, problem solving and trust, strengthening the bonds among peers and teachers. These experiences also foster social and emotional growth, bridging the gap between theory and practice and developing new skills." (Learning Through Landscapes)</p> <p>These trips are free for families eligible for EYPP.</p> <p>Evidence as detailed for early reading.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</p>
<p>Introduce and embed tooth brushing at nursery and encourage good oral health routines at home. All children will have a toothbrush for nursery but will also have one to take home in an Allens Croft bag with a tube of children's toothpaste, an oral health information sheet for families, a 2-minute sand timer (recommend</p>	<p>"The evidence tells us that brushing each day at school over a two - year period is effective for preventing tooth decay and can establish life-long behaviour to promote oral health. It is also important that school based toothbrushing activity should promote and support toothbrushing in the home as well as the school or early years setting." (NHS)</p> <p>Over a quarter of children in Birmingham have dental decay and the breakdown of prevalence by area is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West 30%</li> <li>• East 34%</li> <li>• North 22%</li> <li>• <b>South 21%</b></li> <li>• Central 18%</li> </ul> <p>(Startwell data)</p> <p>The Oral Health Foundation run National Smile Month which promotes four key messages for better oral health:</p>	<p>7</p>

<p>ed brushing time) and a link for parents to find their local NHS dentist.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Brush teeth for two minutes, last thing at night and one other time during the day, with a fluoride toothpaste.</li> <li>2. Clean between your teeth with interdental brushes or floss and use mouthwash every day.</li> <li>3. Cut down how much and how often you have sugary food and drinks.</li> <li>4. Visit a dentist regularly.</li> </ol> <p>“Poor oral health has wider impact at school and for families if a child misses school or when a parent has to take time off work if their child needs dental treatment. Oral health is an integral part of overall health. When children are not healthy, this affects their ability to learn, thrive and develop. Good oral health can contribute to “school readiness”. To benefit fully from education, children need to enter school ready to learn, to be healthy and prepared emotionally, behaviourally and socially. School readiness ensures that all children are able to participate fully in all school activities in order to be successful at school. Oral health is therefore an important aspect of overall health status and critical to children’s school readiness.” (Public Health England)</p>	
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## Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

### Pupil premium strategy outcomes

Area of learning	Autumn 24 Assessment: Children who were on track in their development	Spring Assessment 25: Children who were on track in their development	Summer Assessment 25: Children who were on track in their development
Communication and language	52%	62%	73%
Physical Development	53%	64%	78%
Literacy	37%	52%	68%
Mathematics	36%	50%	67%
PSED	48%	60%	74%

Many of the children eligible for EYPP were not working at age related expectation on entry to nursery in the areas detailed above. We planned activities and interventions that ensured every child made progress from their individual starting points with us. This approach included focussed, adult led small groups, opportunities in all areas of continuous provision, carefully planned key group times and support from external professionals such as Fit 4 Sport. This resulted in, on average, 72% of children eligible for EYPP being on track in their learning by the end of their nursery year in these five areas.

#### Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider
Wellcomm	GL Assessment
Forest School	Forest School Birmingham
Startwell	Startwell: Part of the Birmingham NHS Community Healthcare

Allens Croft Nursery School 2025-2026

Sessions with a sports coach to develop gross motor skills	Fit4Sport
myHappymind	MyHappymind