

Applecroft School - Pupil Premium Strategy Statement

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 the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils last academic year.

| School Overview | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Detail | Data |
| Number of pupils in school | 420 |
| Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils | 10.7% (45 children) |
| Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers | September 2025 - August 2028 |
| Date this statement was published | September 2025 |
| Date on which it will be reviewed | September 2026 |
| Statement authorised by | Lisa Withe (Headteacher) |
| Pupil premium lead | Lisa Withe (Headteacher) |
| Trustee lead | Claire Coe |

| Funding Overview: | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Detail | Amount |
| Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year | £88,400 |
| Planned funding allocation this academic year for tuition | £4,284.13 |
| Pupil premium funding planned carried forward from previous year | £11,530.23 |
| Total budget for this academic year | £104,214.36 |

Part A: Pupil Premium Strategy Plan

Statement of Intent

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

We will consider the challenges faced by all vulnerable pupils, including those who have been 'looked after' children, those who have had a social worker, have a special educational need/s or are 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.

At the heart of our approach is the focus on ensuring that all children have a 'strong-start' to their 'Applecroft Adventure' in our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), have the support they need to become confident and able readers as early as possible and both receive, and enjoy, high-quality teaching in all year groups and subjects as they progress through the school.

Ensuring high-quality teaching is at the heart of our approach, as this approach has 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 is responsive to both common challenges and individual needs, rooted in robust diagnostic assessment. We do not make assumptions about the impact of disadvantage, instead we assess and monitor each child robustly as an individual and look for trends across the school to identify learning needs, necessary provision and more systemic needs such as staff CPD or resourcing. 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 and supported to meet the challenge e.g. through scaffolding, pre-teaching, post-teaching,
- through robust tracking, monitoring and assessment systems, identify needs early and act to intervene so that any gaps are filled and children 'keep up',
- adopt a whole school approach in which **all staff** take responsibility and ownership 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.

| Details of Challenge | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 1) Communication & oral language skills | <p>Assessments, observations, and discussions with pupils show that disadvantaged pupils come to school with lower communication and oral language skills than peers. This negatively impacts their development as readers.</p> <p>2025-2026 internal, on entry data for Reception children shows that 100% of PPG eligible children are below age-related on-entry expectations (emerging) in 'Listening, Attention & Understanding' (LA&U) as well as 'Speaking' (S) compared to non-PPG children whose on-entry data shows 54.5% of children are at expected levels (EXS) in LA&U and 42.1% are in Speaking showing an already, significant gap.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2) Reading | <p>Assessments, observations and discussions with pupils show that disadvantaged pupils come to school with lower levels of oracy and less exposure and experience of shared reading experiences and knowledge of nursery rhymes and story language.</p> <p>The national picture shows that fewer children are reading for pleasure, and this is disproportionately high in disadvantaged groups https://clpe.org.uk/system/files/CLPE%20Reading%20for%20Pleasure%202021_0.pdf</p> <p>We want more children to become competent and fluent readers from the start, keeping up with the curriculum, accessing quality texts and developing a real enjoyment of reading for pleasure.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3) Vocabulary gaps | <p>Assessments, observations, and discussions with all pupils indicate less developed vocabulary and therefore gaps amongst our disadvantaged pupils.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4) Knowledge gaps | <p>Internal and external assessments show clear attainment gaps between our pupils who are experiencing disadvantaged (pupil premium) and those that are not (not pupil premium). Current gaps are Reading -38%, Writing -53% and Maths -33%.</p> <div data-bbox="256 1126 1516 1601" data-label="Figure"> <table border="1"> <caption>Pupil Premium</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Subject</th> <th>Below expected</th> <th>At/above expected</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Reading (26 pupils, Average: WTS)</td> <td>54%</td> <td>46%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Writing (26 pupils, Average: WTS)</td> <td>73%</td> <td>27%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maths (25 pupils, Average: EXS)</td> <td>48%</td> <td>52%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1"> <caption>Not Pupil Premium</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Subject</th> <th>Below expected</th> <th>At/above expected</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Reading (183 pupils, Average: EXS)</td> <td>16%</td> <td>84%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Writing (183 pupils, Average: EXS)</td> <td>20%</td> <td>80%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maths (136 pupils, Average: EXS)</td> <td>15%</td> <td>85%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> <p>Table shows gaps between those children in Years 2-6 (September 2025) who are at 'expected' levels or 'above' compared to those that are 'below' at any level.</p> | Subject | Below expected | At/above expected | Reading (26 pupils, Average: WTS) | 54% | 46% | Writing (26 pupils, Average: WTS) | 73% | 27% | Maths (25 pupils, Average: EXS) | 48% | 52% | Subject | Below expected | At/above expected | Reading (183 pupils, Average: EXS) | 16% | 84% | Writing (183 pupils, Average: EXS) | 20% | 80% | Maths (136 pupils, Average: EXS) | 15% | 85% |
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| 5) Wellbeing | <p>The need for SEMH support across our school, and nationally, has seen a sharp increase in recent years (& following the pandemic).</p> <p>Sadly local services are not what they used to be. Due to financial pressures nationally and locally, these are either non-existent or at best stretched, and most referrals will either not reach threshold or there is an extremely long waiting list meaning that early support is difficult to access.</p> <p>Assessment and observation show that SEMH barriers to learning are more prominent in those children eligible for the Pupil Premium and in turn, due to the reasons stated above, these often negatively impact the attainment and progress of these pupils.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6) Access to wider trips, | <p>Research on children from disadvantaged backgrounds also shows they have less access to wider experiences including trips, visits and reading for pleasure often due to financial</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| visits and experiences | barriers. We want children experiencing disadvantage to experience equity of access to these opportunities. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 7) Attendance | <p>In the 2024-2025 academic year, 'Persistent Absence' (PA) levels were significantly below national levels at Applecroft (8.2% Applecroft v 14.3% Nationally). However, there is still a school attendance gap (-2%) between children eligible for the Pupil Premium (94.8%) compared to those not eligible (96.8%).</p> <div data-bbox="287 353 1497 676" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Summary of 376 Pupils</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Attendance percentage</th> <th>15-18 days missed</th> <th>19+ days missed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Pupil Premium: 94.8%</td> <td>Pupil Premium: 5</td> <td>Pupil Premium: 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not Pupil Premium: 96.8%</td> <td>Not Pupil Premium: 9</td> <td>Not Pupil Premium: 15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>National: 94.8%</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Local Authority: 95.0%</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> <p>This gap widens when you look at the percentage of children that achieved either 'good' (96-98%) or 'excellent' (98-100%) attendance with 42.5% of those eligible for the PPG achieving this standard compared to 73.3% of those not eligible i.e. a gap of -30.8%.</p> <div data-bbox="279 878 1503 1120" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Group</th> <th>8.5%</th> <th>48.9%</th> <th>25.5%</th> <th>17.0%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Pupil Premium 47 pupils</td> <td>8.5%</td> <td>48.9%</td> <td>25.5%</td> <td>17.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not Pupil Premium 329 pupils</td> <td>5.5%</td> <td>21.3%</td> <td>28.6%</td> <td>44.7%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> | Attendance percentage | 15-18 days missed | 19+ days missed | Pupil Premium: 94.8% | Pupil Premium: 5 | Pupil Premium: 4 | Not Pupil Premium: 96.8% | Not Pupil Premium: 9 | Not Pupil Premium: 15 | National: 94.8% | | | Local Authority: 95.0% | | | Group | 8.5% | 48.9% | 25.5% | 17.0% | Pupil Premium 47 pupils | 8.5% | 48.9% | 25.5% | 17.0% | Not Pupil Premium 329 pupils | 5.5% | 21.3% | 28.6% | 44.7% |
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| 8) Self-Regulation | Data analysis of groups who have attended the school's 'Reflection Room' following behaviour incidents, shows that a disproportionately large number of visitors are disadvantaged including those who are eligible for PPG and/or have special educational needs. Most incidents involve children who have found regulation difficult when heightened and this has led to detrimental behaviours. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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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| 1) Improved communication and oral language skills among pupils eligible for the PPG and/or experiencing disadvantage who are below 'Age Related Expectations' (ARE) | Assessment and observations show significantly reduced oral language among disadvantaged pupils. This is evident when speaking with children, observing their engagement in class, book scrutiny and formative assessments. |
| 2) Improved attitude to Reading and attainment among pupils eligible for the PPG and/or experiencing disadvantage | Assessments across the school show improved attitude to reading and high levels of reading engagement from pupils and families eligible for the PPG. Pupil voice shows positive attitudes to reading and impact of support given. All of which positively influences reading attainment. |
| 3) Improved vocabulary among pupils eligible for the PPG and/or experiencing disadvantage | Assessment and observations show significantly improved vocabulary among disadvantaged pupils. This is evident when speaking with children about their learning, observing their engagement in class, book scrutiny and formative assessments. |
| 4a) Improved reading attainment among pupils eligible for the PPG and/or experiencing disadvantage | Reading work scrutiny and assessments across the school show improved outcomes for pupils eligible for the PPG and a closing attainment gap following a trend of improved outcomes. Pupil voice shows positive impact of support. |
| 4b) Improved writing attainment for pupils eligible for the PPG and/or experiencing disadvantage | Writing work scrutiny and assessments across the school show improved outcomes for pupils eligible for the PPG and a closing attainment gap following a trend of improved outcomes. Pupil voice shows positive impact of support. |
| 4c) Improved maths attainment for pupils eligible for the PPG and/or experiencing disadvantage | Maths work scrutiny and assessments across the school show improved outcomes for pupils eligible for the PPG and a closing attainment gap following a trend of improved outcomes. Pupil voice shows positive impact of support. |
| 5) Improved levels of wellbeing for identified pupils following targeted support | Pupil voice, assessments, observations and impact reports show positive impact of support on levels of wellbeing, interaction and engagement following targeted support. |
| 6) All pupils, including those experiencing financial disadvantage, are given provided with the same opportunities to: attend all trips, visits, clubs and leadership positions | 100% of pupils experiencing financial barriers are given equitable access to attend trips, visits, clubs and hold leadership positions and positively targeted & supported to do so. |
| 7) Increase the % of children eligible for the PPG and/or experiencing disadvantage who achieve 'good' (96-98%) or 'excellent' (98-100%) attendance | In school gap between PPG (42.5%) and non-PPG children (73.3%) achieving 'good' or 'excellent' attendance is reduced following an improved trend. Pupil, parent and staff voice will show the positive impact of support provided. |
| 8) Improved self-awareness, social awareness, emotional vocabulary and self-regulation skills for children eligible for the PPG and/or experiencing disadvantage that leads to a reduction in behaviour incidents | A reduction in the % of behavioural incidents seen / visits to the Reflection Room for pupils eligible for the PPG/ experiencing disadvantaged as a result of personalised support and improved levels of self-regulation. |

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.

| High Quality Teaching (CPD, Recruitment & Retention) | | Budgeted Cost: £36,025 |
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| Activity | Evidence that supports this approach | Challenge |
| Continue to deliver explicit, intentional teaching of vocabulary through both the CUSP and our own curriculum | 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 impact on reading Oral language interventions Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF | 1, 3 |
| Continue to deliver our high-quality curriculum that is ambitious for all, coherent and carefully sequenced | The CUSP Curriculum has its foundations rooted in cognitive science. Evidence shows that cognitive science can have a significant impact on rates of learning in the classroom Cognitive Science Approaches in the Classroom Education Endowment Fund EEF | All |
| Continue to deliver high quality phonics through the 'Little Wandle' scheme & high-quality CPD to staff ensuring all pupils are receiving the support they need to 'keep up' with the curriculum and become fluent readers & staff become highly skilled teachers of reading | Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base that indicates a positive impact on the accuracy of work reading, particularly for pupils experiencing disadvantage Phonics Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF | 1, 2 3, 4a |
| Implement targeted assessment & 'Keep-up' teaching system for number Reception → Year 4 to ensure all children are secure in the foundations of number / number fluency as they move through the school | 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 Maths guidance KS1 and 2 (publishing.service.gov.uk) | 4b |
| Implement targeted assessment & 'Keep-up' teaching system for spelling Year 2 → Year 6 to ensure all children secure the spelling rules and key words appropriate for their year group and therefore 'keep up' and are able to fully access the next year's content and progress | The use of accurate assessment and rapid and precise targeted teaching has proven impact on closing knowledge gaps and accelerating progress EEF - Improving Literacy in KS2 | 4b |
| Implement targeted assessment & 'Keep-up' teaching system for handwriting Reception → Year 6 to ensure all children secure the handwriting knowledge/skills and fluency appropriate for their year group and therefore 'keep up' and are able to fully access the next year's content and progress group as they move through the school | Develop pupils transcription skills so they become fluent therefore reducing cognitive load and allowing for greater focus on writing composition EEF - Improving Literacy in KS2 | 4b |

| Targeted Academic Support (tutoring, 1:1 support, structured interventions): | | Budgeted Cost: £45,590.13 |
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| Activity | Evidence that supports this approach | Challenge |
| Class teachers to hold weekly learning conversations with children who are below 'expected standard' and eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) (or other identified disadvantaged e.g. PPG, SEND or P/CLA) in maths & English (evidenced in their maths & English books) that are having impact on learning & progress | There is evidence to suggest that feedback involving meta-cognitive and self-regulatory approaches may have a greater impact on disadvantaged pupils and lower prior attainers than other pupils. Pupils require clear and actionable feedback to employ metacognitive strategies as they learn, as this information informs their understanding of their specific strengths and areas for improvement, thereby indicating which learning strategies have been effective for them in previously completed work EEF - Guidance Report - Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning | 3, 4a, 4b, 4c, 5 and/or 8 |
| Provide additional, targeted support to develop oral language skills of pupils eligible for the PPG and/or experiencing disadvantage below 'expected standard' | Impact evaluations of the NELI programme has consistently shown that the children who receive the programme made on average between 2-4 months additional progress in their oral language skills than those that did not take the programme Nuffield Early Language Intervention Education Endowment Foundation EEF | 1, 3 |
| Provide additional, targeted Speech and Language support to enable pupils to speak clearly and fluently. | Elklan training works and it makes a statistically significant impact on pupils' receptive and expressive language skills Elklan Talking Matters | 1, 3 |
| Provide additional phonics sessions for children below 'expected standard' who are eligible for the PPG and/or experiencing disadvantage to enable them to 'keep-up' with our phonics curriculum | 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 Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF | 1, 2, 3, 4a |
| Provide additional maths teaching (pre-teach, post-teach and targeted) to close knowledge gaps and ensure all pupils become secure with number facts & fluent in key knowledge for their year meaning they are ready to fully access the content in the following year and keep up with 'age-related expectations' (ARE) | The latest guidance report for teaching maths from the EEF offers 5 recommendations for developing maths skills including using high quality targeted support to help all children to learn maths Improving Mathematics in the Early Years and Key Stage 1 Maths guidance KS1 and 2 (publishing.service.gov.uk) Tuition targeted at specific needs and knowledge gaps can be an effective method to support low attaining pupils or those falling behind, both 1-2-1 One-to-one tuition Education Endowment Foundation EEF And in small groups Small group tuition Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF | 4c |
| Provided additional tutoring in reading, writing and/or maths for individuals eligible for the PPG and/or experiencing | Research by the EEF shows that high-quality tutoring can have a significant positive impact on student attainment, with pupils making an average of four months' additional progress over the academic year EEF - Teaching & Learning Toolkit - Small Group Tuition | 4a, 4b, 4c |

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| disadvantage either 1:1, 1:2 or in small groups | EEF - Teaching & Learning Toolkit - One to One Tuition | |
| Wider Strategies (attendance, behaviour, wellbeing, reading for pleasure): | | Budgeted Cost: £22,599.23 |
| Activity | Evidence that supports this approach | Challenge |
| Improved self-awareness, social awareness, emotional vocabulary and self-regulation skills for children eligible for the PPG/experiencing disadvantage that leads to a reduction in behaviour incidents | <p>Research recognises the positive impact of explicitly teaching Social and Emotional Learning skills including developing their self-awareness, emotional vocabulary, social awareness and self-regulation</p> <p>EEF - Guidance Report - Improving Social and Emotional Learning in Primary Schools</p> <p>Universal behaviour systems are unlikely to meet the needs of all pupils therefore for children who present with more difficult behaviours, the approach should be adapted to meet individual needs. The importance of knowing and understanding your children and their influences should not be underestimated and should be at the heart of supportive behavioural support and teaching systems</p> <p>EEF - Guidance Report - Improving Behaviour in Schools</p> | 5, 8 |
| Provide additional 1:1 and small group interventions including specific therapeutic and social thinking interventions to support emotional regulation and reduce difficult behaviours | <p>Both targeted interventions and universal approaches can have positive overall effects:</p> <p>Behaviour interventions Education Endowment Foundation EEF</p> <p>There is extensive evidence associating childhood social and emotional skills with improved outcomes at school and in later life e.g. improved academic performance, attitudes, behaviour and relationships with peers.</p> <p>Social and Emotional Learning Education Endowment Foundation EEF</p> | 5, 8 |
| Ensure all pupils, including those eligible for the PPG/experiencing disadvantage, have equity of opportunity to engage in trips, visits, clubs, Rocksteady and leadership roles across the school | <p>Through participation in these challenging physical and emotional activities, outdoor adventure learning interventions can support pupils to develop non-cognitive skills such as resilience, self-confidence and motivation. Links with academic outcomes are as yet not researched robustly.</p> <p>Outdoor Learning Activity Education Endowment Foundation EEF</p> | 6 |
| Family Link Support worker and attendance champion to continue to carefully track and monitor attendance of individuals and groups daily providing support and signposting to external services | <p>There is a clear link between improving attendance and the wider culture of a school. We will implement all recommendations from the guidance that are statutory and we believe will improve attendance of pupils with less than 'good' attendance, working closely with families to achieve improved rates.</p> <p>DfE's Working Together to Improve School Attendance</p> | 7 |
| Further promote 'Reading for pleasure' and improve attitude to reading amongst pupils eligible for the PPG and/or experiencing | <p>The National Literacy Trust reports that there are many benefits to reading for pleasure and their ongoing research into this area demonstrates a consistent link between reading for enjoyment and reading frequency. Reading for enjoyment therefore helps a child create a</p> | 2, 3, 4a, 4b, 5 |

| | | |
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| disadvantage that don't already have a positive view of reading | habit of reading which in turns supports the development of children's language and learning. Reading for pleasure can also help to enrich a child's awareness of the world and develop empathy. There is also consistent evidence that reading for pleasure promotes positive mental wellbeing | |
| Contingency fund for acute issues | Based on our experiences we have identified a need to set a small amount of funding aside to respond quickly to needs that have not yet been identified | All |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Total Budgeted Cost: | £104,214.36 |
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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 2024-2025 academic year.

We have analysed the performance of our school's disadvantaged pupils during the previous academic year using key stage 1 and 2 performance data, phonics check results and our own internal assessments.

To help us gauge the performance of our disadvantaged pupils we compared our results to those for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils at a national and regional level.

| Subject: | Disadvantaged EXS or Above | Other EXS or Above | Difference EXS or Above |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| EYFS GLD | 66.7% | 71.7% | - 4.4% |
| Year 1 Phonics Screening Check | 70.0% Met the Standard | 85.1% Met the Standard | - 15.1% |
| KS2 Reading, Writing & Maths | 44.4% | 68.9% | - 24.5% |
| KS2 Reading | 66.7% | 80.5% | - 13.8% |
| KS2 Writing | 55.6% | 78.1% | - 22.5% |
| KS2 Maths | 44.4% | 80.2% | - 35.8% |
| KS2 SPAG | 44.4% | 88.0% | - 43.6% |

The gap is prevalent across the school with the largest differences being in the % of children reaching the 'Expected Standard' in Maths at KS2 (& therefore % of children reaching EXS in Reading, Writing & Maths) and KS2 SPAG.

Relative successes were seen in the EYFS where the attainment gap was reduced from -31.1% last year to -4.4% and in KS2 Reading and Writing where the gap was reduced from -32.7% for reading to -13.8% and from -29.1% to -22.5% in Writing.

At KS2, our disadvantaged pupils performed higher than those in Welwyn Hatfield (66.6%), Hertfordshire (59.8%) and Nationally (63.2%) in Reading at the 'expected standard' but below all 3 for the 'higher standard'. They also performed above Welwyn Hatfield (52.1%) and Hertfordshire (51.7%) in Writing at the 'expected standard' but again, were below local, county and national figures at the 'higher standard'.

In the light of impacts last year, we have reviewed our strategy plan and made changes to how we intend to use some of our budget this academic year, as set out in the 'Activity in this Academic Year' section above with a focus on ensuring the foundation knowledge in reading, handwriting, spelling & maths is secured as early as possible and key content is secured year on year.