

# Pupil premium strategy statement – NCEA Grace Darling C of E 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 the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils last academic year.

## School overview

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school	373
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	49% (Rec-Y6)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers ( <b>3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year</b> )	2024 - 2027
Date this statement was published	January 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	
Pupil premium lead	Sharon Cole
Governor / Trustee lead	Sharon Cole

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£227,250 (150/331)
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b> <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>	£227,250

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

NCEA Grace Darling Primary School is located in the heart of the community in the former mining and fishing town of Newbiggin by the Sea. We serve the wards of Newbiggin Central and East and Seaton with Newbiggin West and have on site provision for children from 2-11.

Our school is committed to providing all children, regardless of their background, with the best possible educational experience. We believe that every child deserves the opportunity to thrive academically and socially. Our pupil premium funding is essential in helping to close the attainment gap, ensuring that children who are disadvantaged have access to the support and encouragement they need to reach their full potential.

*At Grace Darling, we are a family. Grace Darling Primary School is a place where children are safe, happy and successful. Our school is a place where children feel safe to be themselves, to follow their dreams and achieve success. Like in St. Paul's Gospel, everyone in our community is encouraged to "Let all that you do be done in love". With this as our guiding principle, children are nurtured and supported to live life to the fullest and confidently take up their places in society. Following the Trust's core values of Love, Inclusivity, Goodness, Hope and Truth, we encourage every child to "Let their light shine".*

Our curriculum is designed to meet the needs of the children of this community. It is coherently planned and sequenced to ensure that the knowledge and skills required to succeed in each subject, at each stage, are clearly defined.

Our carefully crafted lines of enquiry are designed to stir up curiosity and promote discussion and questioning. Children are encouraged to explore the history and geography of the local area as well as venturing further afield to explore the wider world. They feel safe to explore new things.

The children are encouraged to explore the world through reading and to build their vocabulary so that they can communicate successfully in a range of contexts.

With these foundations, starting in our 2-year old provision and continuing as the children journey through to year 6, it is our intention that the children will achieve our vision for them and go on to confidently take up their places in society and live happily, healthily and successfully.

In response to the needs of our community, the school has also developed additional specialist provision for pupils with significant special educational needs and disabilities. These classes provide a highly adapted curriculum and a structured learning environment designed to support pupils with complex needs, enabling them to access learning in a way that is appropriate to their individual development. Staff within this provision work closely with families and external professionals to ensure that pupils receive the tailored support they require to make meaningful progress academically, socially and emotionally. This provision reflects our commitment to

inclusivity and ensures that all children, regardless of need or starting point, are supported to engage with learning and feel a strong sense of belonging within our school community.

Our strategy is based on high-quality teaching and assessment, where knowledge gaps are identified quickly and strategies enable children to catch up to age related expectations. In addition to this strategy in classrooms, additional small group tuition will be provided for identified pupils, supported by targeted, proven interventions where appropriate. Further support for children to improve emotional wellbeing and remove barriers for engagement will also be in place in order to ensure that all children are able to fully engage in all areas of school life.

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<b>Challenge: High absence rates</b> Absence rates are higher than those nationally
2	<b>Challenge: Low on-entry data</b> At the start of their educational journey, a significant proportion of our pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium grant enter school with very low levels of development in key areas such as language, literacy, and numeracy. These children often have limited access to early educational experiences outside of school, which contributes to gaps in their knowledge and skills.
3	<b>Challenge: Increasing SEMH needs</b> Social and emotional well-being, managing self and self-regulation require a high level of support across the school, but particularly in EYFS. Disadvantaged children require more of this support. We have an increased number of children on a pathway for diagnosis.
4	<b>Challenge: Limited exposure to cultural opportunity</b> Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds often face barriers that prevent them from accessing a wide range of cultural experiences, including school trips, visits, and extracurricular activities. These opportunities are essential for broadening pupils' horizons, developing their interests and talents, and supporting their overall personal development.
5	<b>Challenge: Increasing numbers of children who are disadvantaged and have SEND</b> An increasing number of pupils at our school come from disadvantaged backgrounds and also have high levels of Special Educational Needs (SEN). These pupils face multiple barriers to learning, and we are committed to providing them with the tailored support they need to succeed.

6.	<p><b>Challenge: Exposure to antisocial behaviour within the local area</b></p> <p>Some pupils are regularly exposed to antisocial behaviour within the local area. This can influence pupils' understanding of relationships, behaviour and personal responsibility. As a result, some children require additional support to develop a strong sense of citizenship, respect for others and an understanding of how to make positive choices. The school works closely with external partners, including the police and community organisations, to provide positive role models and experiences that help pupils develop a strong understanding of community, safety and responsible citizenship.</p>
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## 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
<p>1. Absence rates will reduce, comparable to national benchmarks for both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.</p>	<p>The rate of absence for disadvantaged pupils will reduce with PA also decreasing in the long term.</p> <p>Target 93% Target PA 22%</p>
<p>2. Increased number of children reaching GLD at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.</p> <p>On Entry data shows that there are significant gaps between disadvantaged children and non-disadvantaged children in key areas: Word Reading: 53% gap Writing: 27% gap Speaking: 28% gap</p>	<p>An increased number of children will achieve a Good Level of Development which will enable them to access the key stage 1 formal curriculum and be successful.</p>
<p>3. Children's social and emotional well-being will be supported through a series of specific initiatives through a holistic approach which is underpinned by Thrive principles. (Thrive practitioner sessions, Thrive and Shine, Thrive and Dine, Nurture Group, sensory support etc)</p> <p>In addition, the school has appointed a Safeguarding and Family Liaison Officer who works closely with pupils and families</p>	<p>Sustained higher levels of wellbeing shown in pupil voice and pupil engagement.</p> <p>Children in targeted groups will demonstrate improved academic outcomes as a result of increased SEMH support.</p> <p>Progress seen in Thrive sessions</p>

to provide early intervention, strengthen home–school relationships and ensure that children receive the support they need to fully engage with school life.	
4. Equity of Opportunity: All pupils, regardless of their background, should have equal access to cultural, extracurricular, and enrichment opportunities.	Disadvantaged pupils will access the full range of extra-curricular opportunities on offer
5. Children with multiple barriers to learning are flourishing.	Evidence from IEPs which shows the progress of PP pupils with SEN in achieving their individualized goals, both academic and personal.
6. Pupils develop a strong understanding of positive citizenship, respect for others and the role that community services play in keeping people safe. Pupils build positive relationships with trusted professionals and are supported to make responsible choices in their behaviour and interactions with others.	Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of positive citizenship and the role of community services. Pupils show respectful behaviour and positive relationships across the school. Pupils engage positively with visiting professionals and recognise them as trusted role models.

## 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)

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Professional Development: Investing in staff training to ensure that teachers and support staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to work effectively with disadvantaged children	‘The evidence indicates that explicitly teaching strategies to help plan, monitor and evaluate specific aspects of their learning can be effective’ ‘These approaches are more effective when they are applied to challenging tasks rooted in the usual curriculum content.’	2, 3, 5

<p>(Internal and external CPD programme and coaching)</p> <p>ie. Fast-track tutoring, precision teaching, ASD, Apprenticeships, NPQs, Links with MathsHUB, Good practice visits, School improvement team.</p>	<p><a href="#">Link to evidence</a></p>	
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### Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support, structured interventions)

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Early Intervention: We will ensure that resources and support are in place early in the child's education to prevent gaps in learning from widening.</p>	<p>1 'Language provides the foundation of thinking and learning and should be prioritised.'</p> <p><a href="#">Link to evidence</a></p> <p>'It is important to give feedback when things are correct – not just when they are incorrect. High-quality feedback may focus on a task, subject, and self-regulation strategies.'</p> <p><a href="#">Link to evidence</a></p>	<p>2, 3, 5</p>
<p>Small group tuition: targeted support outside of the classroom but designed in collaboration with the class teacher.</p>	<p>'Small group tuition has an average impact of four months' additional progress over the course of a year.'</p> <p><a href="#">Link to evidence</a></p>	<p>2, 3, 5</p>
<p>Personalized Support: Tailoring interventions to the specific needs of individual pupils, ensuring that each child receives the support they need.</p>	<p>'The evidence indicates that explicitly teaching strategies to help plan, monitor and evaluate specific aspects of their learning can be effective'</p> <p>'These approaches are more effective when they are applied to challenging tasks rooted in the usual curriculum'</p>	<p>2, 3, 5</p>

	content.’	
	<a href="#">Link to evidence</a>	

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

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Clear, efficient attendance tracking system for monitoring student attendance.	‘Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education.’  <a href="#">Link to evidence</a>	1
Regular analysis of attendance data.	See above	1
A structured, tiered approach to attendance interventions which is responsive, supportive, and specific to the needs of individual students and their families.	See above	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Raising the profile of school attendance with children and parents.	‘Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils including their safeguarding and welfare and should therefore be seen as everyone’s responsibility in school.’  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance</a>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Thrive practitioner in school providing 1:1, small group and responsive support	‘Establish school-wide norms, expectations and routines that support children’s social and emotional development.’  <a href="#">Link to evidence</a>	1, 2, 3, 5, 6
Subsidizing school trips and visits, supporting extra-curricular activities, covering transport costs,	‘There is some evidence that involvement in extra-curricular sporting activities may increase pupil attendance and retention.’  <a href="#">evidence</a>	4, 6

encouraging parental involvement.		
Regular visits from police and Safer Communities teams to build positive relationships with trusted professionals and develop pupils' understanding of safety, responsible choices and good citizenship.	<a href="#">Link to evidence</a>	

## Part B: Review of the previous academic year

### Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Key Stage 2 Results	Cohort	Reading		Writing		Maths		R, W & M	
		EXS+	GDS	EXS+	GDS	EXS+	GDS	EXS+	GDS
National (2025)	NA	75%	33%	72%	13%	74%	26%	62%	8%
School Results	54	44%	13%	46%	4%	37%	6%	24%	2%
Disadvantaged Pupils	27	33%	7%	33%	0%	22%	0%	11%	0%
Non Disadvantaged Pupils	27	56%	19%	59%	7%	52%	11%	37%	4%

Y4 Tables Check					
Mark	Cohort	15+	20+	25	Avg
National (2024)	NA	81%	67%	34%	20.6
School Results	46	71.7%	50.0%	37.0%	19.0
Disadvantaged	27	66.7%	48.1%	29.6%	18.7
Non Disadvantaged	19	78.9%	52.6%	47.4%	19.5

	Phonics			
	Cohort	Y1	Cohort	Y2
National (2024)	NA	80%	NA	89%
School Results	43	79.1%	56	92.9%
Disadvantaged Pupils	24	75.0%	27	88.9%
Non Disadvantaged Pupils	19	84.2%	29	96.6%

	Reception - GLD	
	Cohort	Outcome
National (2024)	NA	68%
School	33	51.5%
Disadvantaged Pupils	12	50.0%
Non Disadvantaged	21	52.4%

The table above shows the outcomes in statutory assessments for children at Grace Darling (including disadvantaged children).

#### Progress Commentary (against challenges, towards expected outcomes)

**Challenge 1 - Attendance** - we are demonstrating a continuous trend of improvement in attendance in spite of growing challenges in the community.

23- 24 overall attendance was 90.9%

24- 25 overall attendance was 92.1%

25- 26 we are aiming for 93% overall attendance this year

Persistent absentees:

23- 24 PA was 30.9%

24- 25 PA was 24.4%

25- 26 we are aiming to reduce PA to 22% this year

**Challenge 2 - GLD** - children in Early Years make good progress from their starting points. In the 3 lowest areas from the Mid-Year data capture (January 2026), children have made good progress from their starting points:

Word Reading was 14.3% on entry and is now 43.8%

Writing was 35.7% on entry and is now 37.5%

Speaking was 57.1% on entry and although this is now 50%, this can be attributed to 2 additional pupils joining the cohort (from 14 disadvantaged children to 16).

**Challenges 3, 4 and 5 - Increasing SEMH needs, Limited exposure to cultural opportunity, Increasing numbers of children who are disadvantaged and have SEND**

Our November inspection report from the National SIAMS office states that:

- The school's Christian vision fosters a highly inclusive environment, providing effective support and genuine care for pupils and their families.
- Caring leaders prioritise wellbeing, creating a nurturing climate where both pupils and staff flourish. This culture fosters strong, supportive relationships rooted in Christian love.
- Strong relationships, rooted in the Christian vision, are enhanced through collaboration with the parish church, diocese, and trust. These partnerships provide valuable challenge and guidance to school leaders, enriching and refining the school's provision.
- Leaders, including governors, are deeply committed and model the vision with love and fidelity. Their decisions prioritise inclusion, dignity and opportunity, especially for the most vulnerable.
- The curriculum is adapted to be relevant to the school context. Great care has been taken to promote an understanding and appreciation of diversity through the curriculum.
- The school's vision is a lived reality for pupils, but especially for those with additional needs. With the backing of leaders and governors' bold decisions are taken to enable these pupils to thrive. Leaders have also recognised the need to support pupils' and families.
- Strong relationships highlight the school's inclusive nature and are highly valued.
- Parents and carers deeply appreciate the approachable staff and the culture of love and support they believe extends beyond the school. This positive atmosphere is a direct result of the school's guiding vision, shaping both relationships and the wider community ethos.

- The school's vision actively promotes a thoughtful culture of justice and responsibility. Pupils appreciate how the school's vision inspires them to care for their community and the wider world

### **Challenge 6 - Positive Citizenship**

- The vision is evident in the friendliness, politeness, and excellent conduct of pupils ... this creates a happy and supportive learning environment where many children can self-regulate their behaviours. (SIAMS)

Our annual staff survey also demonstrates that our relational approach in school is helping children to develop a strong understanding of positive citizenship, respect for others and the role that community services play in keeping people safe.

Statement: The pupils' behaviour is at least good at this school.

Response: Over 3 years, the percentage of staff who agree or strongly agree has risen (36% - 59% - 82%)

Statement: Pupils are safe at this school

Response: Over 3 years, the percentage of staff who agree or strongly agree has risen (72% - 85% - 97%)

*Outline the performance of your disadvantaged pupils in the previous academic year and explain how it has been assessed. You should draw on:*

- *Data from the previous academic year's national assessments and qualifications, once published.*
- *Comparison to local and national averages and outcomes achieved by your school's non-disadvantaged pupils (a note of caution can be added to signal that pupils included in the performance data will have experienced some disruption due to Covid-19 earlier in their schooling, which will have affected individual pupils and schools differently).*
- *Information from summative and formative assessments the school has undertaken.*
- *School data and observations used to assess wider issues impacting disadvantaged pupils' performance, including attendance, behaviour and wellbeing*

*You should state whether you are on target to achieve the outcomes of your strategy (as outlined in the Intended Outcomes section above) and outline your analysis of what aspects of your strategy are/are not working well.*

*If last year marked the end of a previous pupil premium strategy plan, you should set out your assessment of how successfully the intended outcomes of that plan were met.*

## 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

## Service pupil premium funding (optional)

*For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information: **How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year***

<b>The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils</b>

## formation (optional)

*Use this space to provide any further information about your pupil premium strategy. For example, about your strategy planning, implementation and evaluation, or other activity that you are delivering to support disadvantaged pupils that is not dependent on pupil premium funding.*