



Pupil premium strategy statement 2023-2026

“There is solid evidence that poor teaching disproportionately disadvantages deprived children. Equally, evidence tells us that excellent teaching disproportionately benefits them. So high quality teaching must be at the core of all pupil premium work.”

John Dunford, National Pupil Premium Champion 2013-2015

School context

‘Our three-form entry junior school, located in an affluent commuter belt, serves a socially and economically diverse community. While overall attainment is strong, closing the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils remains a key priority, supported by targeted interventions and inclusive practices. We have a stable, experienced staff team, strong governance, and close collaboration with our linked infant school. SEND needs are increasing, prompting investment in professional development and specialist support. High academic standards, strong personal development, and a rich extracurricular offer underpin our ethos of equity and inclusion. Despite future demographic challenges, we remain committed to knowing every child and nurturing their potential within a culture that values diversity and excellence.’

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	Bernards Heath Junior School
Number of pupils in school	352
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	8%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2023-2024 2024-2025 2025-2026
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	April 2026 December 2026
Statement authorised by	Hayley Gilbert Interim Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Hayley Gilbert Interim Headteacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Eleanor Mack PP lead governor Chair of Standards and Curriculum

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£50,710
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	-
Total budget for this academic year	£50,710

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At Bernards Heath Junior School, we have fostered an ethos that underpins the whole school community: knowing every child. We are committed to ensuring that every pupil reaches their potential across the curriculum and to removing any barriers that might prevent this. This is exemplified by our school's central principle that all disadvantaged pupils should be at the front of the 'Virtual Queue' for additional or enhanced provision. We are committed to providing bespoke support to all vulnerable children and families which goes well beyond the classroom. We are also acutely aware of the impact on children who are Young Carers, in need of a social worker, are currently on a Child Protection or Child in Need plan or reside under a Kinship Care Order. At any point in our strategy where 'children in receipt of PPG' are referred to, you can assume that this extends to any child who also falls within the aforementioned categories. Our strategy is intended to meet their needs, even if they are not in receipt of the pupil premium.

This strategy has been written in conjunction with best practice guidelines provided by published research, which provides a robust evidence base for the interventions and strategies adopted by Bernards Heath. This includes the Education Endowment Foundation and OFSTED documentation. Alongside this, we utilise the strength and expertise of our experienced staff team. We recognise the impact of quality first teaching and are committed to ensuring that ongoing professional development, training and support are central to our strategy. Quality first teaching is absolutely key to all learners making progress and achieving, including non-disadvantaged pupils. Targeted support across the curriculum for disadvantaged pupils, of all abilities, is another key component of our strategy. At Bernards Heath, we recognise the importance of children being able to access learning. A number of our pupils have a range of vulnerabilities that require tailored support. We have developed our nurture group, 'The Hub' and emotional wellbeing intervention 'Vibe' with our cohort in mind. These wider strategies offer bespoke provision that focusses on the overall wellbeing of our pupils.

Our curriculum is designed to be accessible for all pupils with necessary adaptations to ensure we meet the needs of every individual pupil. As a school we have worked collaboratively on a curriculum that develops relevant, broad, balanced, enjoyable and essential skills and knowledge for all of our children, with particular attention to the most disadvantaged. Our curriculum is designed around carefully planned components that enable each child to make progress towards the next endpoint.

The usual cycle of data collection and the monitoring and tracking of the cohort's attainment, is used to demonstrate progress and enable the early identification of need, support and appropriate intervention. Teachers are constantly assessing children's learning through ongoing formative assessment and adapting the delivery of the curriculum to meet their changing needs. We hold termly Pupil Progress Meetings to discuss the progress of children causing concern, including children receiving pupil premium funding, with the class teacher and SLT. In conjunction with ongoing formative assessment, we complete summative assessments each term (3x a year) allowing the tracking of individual progress in English and Mathematics. The use of Pupil Premium is discussed with the Governing Body through individual meetings and feedback at formal governor meetings. Governors see this in action through 'Governor days' and termly learning walks.

Our strategy is fully aligned with the School Development Plan, particularly priorities around leadership, curriculum coherence, adaptive teaching, behaviour consistency, attendance, and personal development.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge <i>(data updated annually to reflect the current cohort)</i>
1	<p>A large proportion of children in receipt of PPG have a range of vulnerabilities and specific social and emotional needs that impact upon their learning. Our observations, assessments and knowledge of the individual pupil and families have identified that some children have social and/or emotional needs that require support.</p> <p>At Bernards Heath Juniors, 16 children in receipt of PPG have been identified as needing extra support with their social and/or emotional development. All 16 children in receipt of PPG have access to targeted interventions.</p>
2	<p>Children starting the junior school having not achieving the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths at the end of Key Stage 1 (based on Teacher Assessment provided by our linked Infants school)</p> <p>24% of children in receipt of PP achieved ARE in Reading. 24% of children in receipt of PP achieved ARE in Writing. 24% of children in receipt of PP achieved ARE in Maths.</p> <p>At School, we aim to diminish the gap between the attainment of PPG and Non PPG each year and ensure children in receipt of PPG make at least good progress, always with the intention of achieving Age Related Expectations.</p>
3	<p>Our observations and discussions with families show us that many of our children in receipt of PPG lack wider life experiences that support cultural capital. Our ethos of the 'virtual queue' means that all vulnerable children have access to a vast array of opportunities such as singing at the Royal Albert Hall, representing the school at sports events, attending the Year 6 residential, speaking a foreign language and learning to play a tuned instrument.</p>
4	<p>Our analysis shows that some disadvantaged children need extra support to secure and sustain better attendance. The wider family needs support to understand the impact that non-attendance has on their children's progress.</p> <p>Our attendance gap for children in receipt of PP versus Non PPG was -11.3% (-4.7% adjusted data) for the academic year 2024-25. 5 children in receipt of PP were classed as persistent absentees, 2 Severely absent.</p>
5	<p>Our observations, discussions with families and knowledge of the children in receipt of PPG have identified that the cost of living crisis is having a significant impact on the families and children. Many of our families are accessing food bank vouchers through the school and seeking support with fuel tokens, school uniform and access to grants.</p>

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>Individual social and emotional needs are met through the employment of the wider strategies detailed later in this strategy, such as Hub and Vibe, mentoring and counselling. Children are on track to make good or better progress in all areas of the curriculum. Children with SEND access the curriculum through clear adaptations.</p>	<p>Boxall profiles and the Sterling Children's Wellbeing scale show all children have made individual progress. As this is highly personalised, their individual reports will show progress over the time they access the intervention, and as they move through the Key Stage.</p> <p>Mentoring is timetabled for individual children and their pupil voice shows an increase in positive attitudes towards school.</p> <p>Support plans written by class teachers, with input from SLT and external agencies (where necessary) with clear strategies for managing dysregulation.</p> <p>All staff will have attended update training on Attachment and Trauma and can understand the impact on children's ability to engage with the curriculum.</p> <p>All staff have attended Therapeutic thinking (previously Steps training) and follow the schools behaviour policy.</p>
<p>Pupil's attainment is in line with age related expectations in Reading, Writing and Maths. All children in receipt of Pupil Premium will make good or better progress by the end of Key Stage 2 (monitored through internal tracking)</p>	<p>The gap between Reading, Writing and Maths attainment of PP children and Non PP children will aim to diminish by the end of Key Stage 2.</p> <p>Children in receipt of PP funding will make at least good progress in Reading, Writing and Maths (using in-house tracking systems)</p>
<p>All children in receipt of PPG have good attendance and access all learning opportunities and interventions – this includes arriving to school on time. Persistent absenteeism will decrease.</p>	<p>Attendance of individual PPG children will have improved from last year (84.7%/91.3% adjusted data) and moves towards 95%+.</p> <p>This will have an impact on the rate of progress in learning.</p> <p>Reduce the number of persistent absenteeism among children in receipt of PPG by the end of the school year. For the academic year 2024-25, 5 children were deemed persistent absentees, 2 severely absent. In the academic year 2025-26, persistent absenteeism will have reduced.</p>
<p>Cultural capital is enhanced and supported through enrichment activities and wider</p>	<p>Children have had access to extracurricular activities, wider school roles, competitions and experiences that equip them for a</p>

<p>opportunities. (These are detailed later in our strategy) Families have been signposted to organisations that can support this outside of school also.</p>	<p>successful future. All children in receipt of PPG will have attended an extra-curricular club and/or represented the school at an event. All children in receipt of PPG will attend Year 6 school journey if they wish to do so.</p>
<p>Families are supported to access foodbank vouchers, support/grants for specific items such as school uniform, fuel bank vouchers, breakfast club etc. The school will work alongside the Family Worker (Vista).</p>	<p>Families are supported to meet basic needs. Children are able to engage fully with their learning. FFA will be undertaken for any family in receipt of PPG where the need arises.</p>

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)

Budgeted cost: £19,100

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Ongoing CPD on adaptive teaching, Rosenshine principles, and high-quality instruction	EEF: High-quality teaching is the strongest lever; Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction; Great Teaching Toolkit (2020)	1, 2
Embed consistent marking and feedback across all subjects	EEF: Feedback (+6 months)	2
Subject leadership time to strengthen curriculum coherence and progression	Ofsted Subject Reviews; EEF: Effective Professional Development	2, 3
Whole-staff training on attachment, trauma, and therapeutic approaches	EEF: SEL (+4 months); Hertfordshire Virtual School guidance	1
Mental Health Lead training and dissemination	DfE: Mental Health in Schools guidance	1
SEND specialist teacher delivering CPD on phonics, vocabulary, and adaptive strategies	EEF: Phonics (+5 months); Oral language (+6 months)	2
Maths 144 fluency programme	EEF: Mastery learning (+5 months)	2
Purchase and implementation of Herts for Learning Essentials Writing scheme to strengthen consistency, progression, and high-quality writing instruction across KS2.	EEF: <i>Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2</i> — explicit writing instruction, modelling, sentence-combining, structured planning and revising Oral language interventions (+6 months) Feedback (+6 months) Collaborative learning (+5 months) Metacognition and self-regulation (+7 months)	2, 1, 3

Insight Tracking subscription	Supports accurate assessment and monitoring	1–5
Developing formative assessment across foundation subjects	EEF: Feedback (+6 months); EEF: Metacognition (+7 months); cognitive science research on retrieval practice	2, 3
Embedding deep-questioning approaches to strengthen reasoning and retention	EEF: Metacognition (+7 months); Rosenshine: questioning and elaboration	2, 3
Hub and Vibe staff to deliver training to whole staff to share best practice in supporting children’s mental wellbeing	EEF: SEL (+4 months)	1, 2, 4

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

Budgeted cost: £ 17,300

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
1:1 and small-group tuition in English and Maths	EEF: 1:1 tuition (+5 months); small-group tuition (+4 months)	2
Phonics intervention for Y3–4	EEF: Phonics (+5 months)	2
Reading fluency support and echo reading	HfL Reading Fluency Project; EEF: Reading comprehension (+6 months)	2
SEND specialist teacher delivering targeted programmes	EEF: Individualised instruction (+4 months)	2
Maths small-group tuition	EEF: Mastery learning (+5 months)	2
High-priority readers supported by librarian	EEF: Reading comprehension (+6 months)	2
Targeted oracy intervention for pupils with identified language gaps (structured talk routines, vocabulary scaffolds, sentence stems)	EEF: Oral language interventions (+6 months)	1, 2

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

Budgeted cost: £14,400

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Pastoral support and mentoring; retaining Pastoral/SEN HLTA team	EEF: SEL (+4 months); Behaviour interventions (+4 months)	1, 4
The Hub (nurture provision)	Boxall Profile; EEF: SEL (+4 months)	1
Vibe emotional wellbeing intervention	EEF: SEL (+4 months)	1
Family support worker (VISTA)	DfE: Working Together to Improve Attendance	4, 5
Attendance mentoring and daily calls	DfE Attendance Guidance	4

Access to enrichment, clubs, trips, residential	EEF: Arts participation (+3 months); Physical activity (+1 month)	3
Homework club	EEF: Homework (+5 months)	2
Multi-Bank and practical support for families	EEF: Parental engagement (+4 months)	5
OPAL (Outdoor Play and Adventurous Learning) project to improve resilience, social skills, and readiness to learn	EEF: SEL (+4 months); OPAL case studies; research on outdoor learning and self-regulation	1, 3

Total budgeted cost: £ 50,800

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the 2024-25 academic year.

1. Individual social and emotional needs are met through the employment of wider strategies (Hub, Vibe, mentoring, counselling). Children are on track to make good or better progress. Children with SEND access the curriculum through clear adaptations.

The school continued to see a sharp rise in pupils requiring emotional and mental health support, including those with EBSNA. In response, the pastoral and mental health offer expanded significantly. The SEN/Pastoral HLTA roles are now fully embedded, ensuring that wellbeing support, mentoring and targeted interventions are available for any child who needs them. A third staff member added to the Mental Health team in school.

- 8 children in receipt of PPG accessed individual mentoring
- 6 out of 8 PPG pupils attended the Hub nurture provision
- Vibe emotional-wellbeing sessions were well attended and positively received
- The Mental Health Team increased to three members, strengthening capacity
- Staff worked closely with the Education Mental Health Practitioner, School Family Worker, and external agencies

All staff received training in Attachment and Trauma and Therapeutic Thinking, improving consistency in relational practice and de-escalation. This contributed to calmer classrooms, improved emotional regulation, and increased readiness to learn.

SEND pupils benefitted from strengthened adaptive teaching, supported by CPD in CAPPS Collett assessment, trauma-informed practice and mental health. SEND specialist teacher involvement improved the quality of support plans and individualised learning pathways. Learning walks and book looks showed increased use of scaffolding, visual supports, chunked tasks and modelling, enabling pupils with SEND to access learning more independently. Recent feedback from the DSPL7 Primary SEND Lead, commented on how impressed she was by how inclusive the school is. She commented on how creative and personalised the school's approaches are so that all children can learn and participate in classroom routines with their peers. She also praised how well the school access external services so that we have the most up-to-date and specialist advice available to support identified children.

2. Pupil attainment is in line with age-related expectations in Reading, Writing and Maths. All children in receipt of Pupil Premium make good or better progress by the end of Key Stage 2.

Internal tracking shows that, although attainment varies across cohorts, pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium funding made good progress from their individual starting points.

The following approaches had the greatest impact on disadvantaged pupils' academic progress:

- Phonics intervention, particularly for pupils entering Year 3 below the expected standard
- SEND specialist teacher input, which strengthened individualised learning plans and improved access to the curriculum
- Active learning strategies, which increased engagement and supported retention of key knowledge
- Targeted small-group and 1:1 support, especially in reading and maths
- All Subject Leads have continued to attend local subject clusters to enhance and share good practice.

Together, these approaches helped disadvantaged pupils develop stronger fluency, improved confidence, and greater independence as learners, contributing to the positive progress outcomes seen across the year.

Attainment and Progress data

8 pupils	Y2		Y3			
	Summer		Summer			
	% pupils Expected or higher	% pupils Above	% pupils Expected or higher	% pupils Above	Average progress from Y2 Summer	Average progress non disadvantaged
Reading	50%	25%	63%	13%	0	-0.1
Writing	38%	0%	50%	0%	+0.4	-0.1
Maths	38%	0%	38%	0%	0	+0.2

5 pupils	Y2		Y4			
	Summer		Summer			
	% pupils Expected or higher	% pupils Above	% pupils Expected or higher	% pupils Above	Average progress from Y2 Summer	Average progress non disadvantaged
Reading	0%	0%	60%	0%	+0.5	0
Writing	20%	0%	20%	0%	0	0
Maths	20%	0%	20%	20%	+0.3	+0.2

10 pupils	Y2		Y5			
	Summer		Summer			

	% pupils Expected or higher	% pupils Above	% pupils Expected or higher	% pupils Above	Average progress from Y2 Summer	Average progress non disadvantaged
Reading	50%	0%	70%	10%	+0.1	+0.1
Writing	40%	10%	50%	10%	0	+0.1
Maths	40%	0%	50%	30%	+0.3	+0.2

11 pupils	Y2		Y6 SATS			
	Summer		Summer			
	% pupils Expected or higher	% pupils Above	% pupils Expected or higher	% pupils Above	Average progress from Y2 Summer	Average progress non disadvantaged
Reading	18%	0%	27%	18%	Progress data unavailable	
Writing	9%	0%	36%	0%		
Maths	27%	0%	45%	9%		

Across all cohorts, disadvantaged pupils often matched or exceeded the progress of non-disadvantaged peers. The strongest gains were seen in reading and maths, supported by targeted interventions and SEND specialist input.

3. All children in receipt of PPG have good attendance and access all learning opportunities and interventions. Persistent absenteeism will decrease.

Attendance remains the most significant area requiring improvement. Despite strong pastoral engagement and close work with families, attendance for disadvantaged pupils declined compared with the previous year. Persistent absence remained a challenge for a small number of pupils, and the attendance gap widened.

- PPG attendance (raw): 84.7%
- Adjusted attendance (excluding 2 severely absent pupils): 91.3%
- 5 PPG pupils were persistent absentees
- 2 pupils were severely absent

Daily calls, pastoral check-ins, attendance meetings and multi-agency referrals were implemented consistently. The Pastoral TA increased parental engagement and maintained regular communication with families needing additional support. Although these measures supported individual families effectively, attendance remains a priority focus for 2025–26.

Attendance declined and remains the most significant area requiring improvement. This will be a major focus of the 2025–26 strategy, alongside strengthening curriculum coherence, adaptive teaching, and leadership monitoring — in line with the School Development Plan.

4. Cultural capital is enhanced and supported through enrichment activities and wider opportunities. Families are signposted to organisations that can support this outside of school.

Enrichment was a notable strength of the school's Pupil Premium strategy. All disadvantaged pupils accessed extracurricular clubs, trips, sports events and wider opportunities.

Key data:

- 6 out of 11 Year 6 PPG pupils attended the residential (others opted out for personal reasons, not financial)
- 18 out of 33 PPG pupils attended an after-school club free of charge
- All PPG pupils participated in day trips, swimming, bikeability and enrichment activities

The school's "virtual queue" ethos ensured that disadvantaged pupils were prioritised for opportunities that build aspiration, confidence and cultural capital. Families were also signposted to external organisations offering additional enrichment and support, such as 'Happy Camp'.

5. Families are supported to access foodbank vouchers, and other essential support.

Family engagement was a major strength of the school's approach. Staff built strong, trusting relationships with families and provided extensive practical support throughout the year.

Support provided included:

- Supermarket vouchers for every holiday
- Regular provision of school uniform
- Christmas hampers for two families
- Food bank vouchers for two families
- Support with secondary school applications for two families
- Close partnership work with the Family Worker (Vista)

This relational approach improved wellbeing, strengthened engagement with learning and increased parental confidence in the school. 'The Hive' (a community multibank) project is underway, lead by the Pastoral HLTA. Stock has been generously donated by the community, and it is being advertised persistently in the school newsletter.

Finally, one member of staff was successfully awarded NPQH status, strengthening leadership skills and enhancing knowledge.

Further information (optional)

We believe that at Bernards Heath Junior's our unique selling point is our dedication to know every individual child and their families. We are passionate about the children we work with and driven by the desire to ensure that every child is successful, happy and supported. We strive to make sure that all is done to provide equity for our families who may be disadvantaged. This knowledge of our families, their successes and their needs means that we all take a joint responsibility for ensuring that we close the gap academically, socially and emotionally.

Whilst writing this report, Senior leaders spoke to the staff at school about what it is that we do at Bernards Heath Junior school that stands out in terms of our PP provision. Without exception, all staff commented on our knowledge of our families and what we call our 'Virtual Queue'. We have developed the 'Virtual Queue' in school for any additional support, visits or extra-curricular activities. This enables any child in receipt of PPG to go to the top of any list, ensuring they remain at the centre of the school's work. We are aware that some pupils have limited wider life experiences and therefore, the Virtual Queue is not just focussed on academic outcomes. It is about allowing all pupils develop a wide cultural capital. We want all of our pupils to take part in off-site visits, including the Year 6 residential. We aspire to facilitate all of our pupils experiencing sporting fixtures and competitions against other schools. Some of our children in receipt of free school meals learn a tuned instrument (outside of music lessons) that is funded by the school. We understand that to support the child we must support the wider family. Our person centred approach also extends to family support to help with wider life issues, such as applying for secondary school or free school meals as well as supporting families with Holiday food vouchers and referring to the local foodbanks.

We have also developed our provision for children in receipt of Pupil Premium over many years. There are many strategies that we adopt in and outside of school that underpin our commitment to this group of children and their families. These are embedded in the culture of our school.

Although not necessarily stated on this strategy, please find some examples of these below;

Pupil progress meetings are pre populated with information regarding PP children, regardless of attainment, progress, ability and aptitude. Every child is discussed and actions are written to ensure that the individuals in this group have the best opportunity to thrive-not just academically, but socially and emotionally.

The Hub and Vibe-these are highly individualised tailored nurture interventions, open to children across the Key Stage. These groups meet regularly to support children's social, emotional and mental wellbeing. Led by senior teachers and supported by TA's, this intervention is key to the success in school of some of our pupils.

School librarian-Bernards Heath Junior school values its library and the outstanding librarian that looks after it. Our Librarian also works on a daily basis to provide 1:1 or small group reading, comprehension and fluency support for our PP children. She is highly effective and will ensure that children have a suitable reading book according to their level alongside a library book to enjoy. She assists in creating Reading Challenge activities that are widely taken up by the children.

Young Carers club-providing a lunch time club where children take part in tailored activities and trips, giving them a safe space to enjoy their peers and being a child.

Specialist Music teacher-All children leave school being able to play a tuned instrument. They have the opportunity to participate in solo, group, and cohort musical activities. Our Music teacher supports identified children to learn an instrument outside of the lessons themselves.

Dedicated SEN/Pastoral HLTA team-This team supports children, their families and staff. They carry out roles such as mentoring, brick therapy, attendance monitoring, supporting colleagues with specialist advice and practical strategies, liaison with families to further enhance parental involvement.

We support families to view school as a positive, caring environment. Some of our parents begin their time at Juniors as reluctant visitors. At times in Year 3 we have to be proactive at encouraging all parents to attend consultation meetings. However, by the end of Year 6, those parents feel comfortable in school.

During COVID times, we visited our most vulnerable families regularly each week to check in, deliver school learning, provide tailored lessons from the SEND teacher and check on their wellbeing. Through this, we have recognised the strong relationships it allowed us to make with them. We have continued to forge these relationships since.