



THE HERMITAGE SCHOOLS

Inspire, Learn, Achieve

Pupil Premium and Free School Meals Provision Policy

This document sets out the Pupil Premium and Free School Meals provision at The Hermitage Schools.

Person responsible: Pupil Premium Leader

Date adopted: Autumn 2025

Date of last review: Autumn 2026

Date of next review: Autumn 2027

Rationale

This policy incorporates our whole school commitment to ensuring that The Hermitage Schools are inspiring communities where every individual progresses and achieves in a stimulating, happy and safe environment. This is reflected in the desire, commitment and aspirations of our school staff to address and overcome socio-economic factors, or any other external factor, which may hinder pupil progress and attainment and ultimately affect their life chances.

At The Hermitage Schools, we recognise that not all pupils who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding are underachieving, while some pupils may be underachieving and not eligible for Pupil Premium funding. We identify and respond to areas of underperformance for individual pupils and groups of pupils. Pupil Premium provision complements, rather than replaces, the support and intervention available to all pupils according to their individual needs. Some pupils eligible for Pupil Premium may already be achieving well; funding may therefore be used to support and enhance their continued progress, educational experiences and future aspirations.

Aims

- To provide all pupils with fair and equal opportunities to achieve and excel in all areas of the curriculum using and applying the most effective pedagogy, supported by the use of additional delegated funding.

- To work in partnership with families and pupils eligible for Pupil Premium, to plan, monitor and evaluate support and interventions in order to secure individual progress and achievement.
- To work with external partners and organisations to provide additional support for the social, emotional, health and wellbeing of all pupils with potential barriers to learning and achievement.
- To ensure that every targeted Pupil Premium child has a trusted adult within school who can provide support, encouragement and help to raise aspirations. These staff members are known as Pupil Premium Champions, although this title is not used with the children.
- To ensure governors fulfil statutory responsibilities to make effective use of Pupil Premium funding in order to impact positively on pupils' achievement and attainment.
- To ensure that pupils with Pupil Premium status make accelerated progress where appropriate, moving children to at least age-related expectations.

Context

There are some common barriers (found locally and nationally) to learning for pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding, although these are not by any means exhaustive or applicable to all pupils who are eligible. We are also mindful that having a Pupil Premium status does not mean a pupil is of 'low ability'.

- Limited range of vocabulary and weaker language skills.
- Poor attendance (absence and/or punctuality).
- Lack of access to high-quality reading material.
- Less support at home.
- Lack of confidence and/or self-esteem issues.
- More frequent social, emotional, mental health or behavioural difficulties.

Roles and Responsibilities

All members of staff have a responsibility towards the implementation of the Pupil Premium Policy. The Executive Headteacher, Pupil Premium Leader, Inclusion Leader and other members of the Senior Leadership Team take strategic leadership for Pupil Premium.

The Executive Headteacher will:

- Have overall responsibility for Pupil Premium and ensure that all staff, governors, pupils and families remain informed and up-to-date with all developments relating to Pupil Premium.
- Develop robust systems and procedures for planning, monitoring and reviewing the impact of Pupil Premium funding.
- Ensure appropriate allocation and use of funding for pupils and training for staff and governors.
- Provide individual guidance and support for staff to ensure the most effective impact of funding.
- Provide regular, detailed and comprehensive information to governors.

The Pupil Premium Leader (PPL) will:

- Provide appropriate support and guidance for staff when planning for Pupil Premium targets and support.
- Liaise with external partners and agencies where necessary.
- Complete an audit when required.

- Monitor quality and impact of interventions.
- Provide termly Pupil Premium progress reports for the Executive Headteacher and governors.
- Ensure that current research-based evidence is evaluated and utilised if appropriate.
- Set clear, measurable targets and plan actions for improving outcomes for pupils as part of the school development plan.
- Work with other parties in the SWAN Trust to develop good practice.
- Develop close links with feeder schools and plan transition activities to help pupils feel confident with transition.
- Encourage the uptake of Free School Meals by removing barriers or stigma attached to claiming Free School Meals.
- Provide information on allocation for Pupil Premium funding via the school website and reports to governors.

The School Business Manager will:

- Monitor the delegation of funding for Pupil Premium.
- Work with the designated Pupil Premium Leader.

Inclusion Leader, SENDCo, Class Teachers, Support Staff, ELSA and HSLW will:

- Identify pupils in their class in September, ready for the coming academic year.
- Arrange meetings with parents/carers, where barriers and/or needs are identified.
- Work with pupils, parents/carers and other members of staff to plan, implement and monitor the impact of the support that needs to be in place.
- Ensure that classroom support staff are fully prepared to support and assess the progress and learning outcomes of these pupils.
- Liaise with the Pupil Premium Leader to seek support and address training needs.
- Ensure that high expectations for all pupils are maintained and modelled.
- Consider, implement and monitor, where appropriate, 1:1 support and/or small group work, focusing on overcoming gaps in learning.

Governors will:

Appoint a Designated Link Governor for Pupil Premium, who will act on behalf of the Local Governing Committee to monitor and review the progress of pupils and impact of Pupil Premium funding. This will involve regular meetings with the PPL to evaluate pupil progress and the impact of funding on progress and attainment.

Provision and Monitoring

The Hermitage Schools use Pupil Premium funding to best support pupils and their families in the most appropriate way. We carefully target spending in order to provide early intervention and support both academically and to meet wider needs such as socially, emotionally and through extra-curricular opportunities.

We have previously used Pupil Premium funding for:

- Educational provision and resources, including purchasing and embedding a range of educational resources in order to enhance and enrich teaching and learning opportunities.

- Academic interventions, providing 1:1 or small group carefully targeted support focused on overcoming gaps in learning, with an experienced teacher or teaching assistant trained to deliver specific intervention programmes and learning strategies.
- Wellbeing and self-esteem building interventions, including specific additional pastoral support through our Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA).
- Targeted support from our Home School Link Worker (HSLW) for families of disadvantaged pupils, including parenting classes, signposting and support in a wide range of areas.
- Vouchers used towards school uniform/additional school costs.
- Financial support through termly vouchers to enable children to participate fully and actively in wider and extra-curricular activities, such as internally run clubs and trips.

Pupils are monitored both as individuals and as a group, and their progress is closely monitored to ensure the funding is having a significant impact. Assessment and monitoring include termly progress meetings, where the schools' senior leaders review pupils' progress and attainment with class teachers.

Funding

The Government provides additional funding to schools to support disadvantaged pupils. This funding is known as Pupil Premium. A set amount is provided to the school for each eligible pupil in accordance with current Department for Education criteria.

Pupil Premium eligibility includes pupils who are, or have been, eligible for Targeted Free School Meals (FSM) within the relevant Ever 6 period, as well as other eligible groups specified by the Department for Education, including looked-after and previously looked-after children and eligible service children. Expanded FSM eligibility does not, by itself, attract Pupil Premium funding.

Free School Meals Eligibility from September 2026

From the start of the 2026/27 academic year, eligibility for benefits-related Free School Meals (FSM) has been expanded. All children from households receiving Universal Credit who attend eligible schools are entitled to receive a free school meal. Benefits-related FSM eligibility is now described through two categories: Targeted FSM and Expanded FSM.

Targeted FSM

Targeted FSM applies to pupils in households receiving Universal Credit with annual net earned household income of £7,400 or less, as well as pupils meeting other qualifying benefits criteria set by the Department for Education. Pupils in this category are entitled to free school meals and remain within the relevant disadvantage measures and funding arrangements, including Pupil Premium where applicable.

Expanded FSM

Expanded FSM applies to pupils in households receiving Universal Credit who do not qualify for Targeted FSM, including households with annual net earned income above the £7,400 threshold. These pupils are entitled to receive free school meals but do not attract Pupil Premium funding solely as a result of their Expanded FSM eligibility.

Pupil Premium and Ever 6

Pupil Premium and the Ever 6 FSM cohort continue to be linked to Targeted FSM eligibility rather than Expanded FSM eligibility. Pupils who are, or have been, eligible for Targeted FSM during the

previous six years may continue to be included within the Ever 6 FSM cohort for relevant disadvantage funding and accountability purposes.

Transitional protections that had applied to benefits-related Free School Meals since 2018 ended at the end of the 2025/26 academic year. From the start of the 2026/27 academic year, eligibility is determined in accordance with the current FSM criteria.

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

The school also receives Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) funding for eligible children in the Early Years phase. EYPP is additional government funding provided to support disadvantaged children and is used to enhance learning, development, wellbeing and school readiness. EYPP funding may be used to provide targeted interventions, additional resources, enrichment opportunities and pastoral support. The allocation of funding is based on the individual needs of eligible children and aims to reduce barriers to learning and improve outcomes from the earliest stages of education.

School Food Standards and Governance

The school recognises its responsibilities in relation to the provision of healthy and nutritious school food and compliance with the statutory School Food Standards. State-funded schools are required to comply with the existing School Food Standards.

Updated School Food Standards are planned to come into effect from September 2027, subject to Parliamentary approval, with some secondary school requirements being phased in from September 2028. The schools will prepare for these changes by reviewing menus, catering arrangements, contracts and school food provision in line with Department for Education guidance.

As part of these preparations, the schools will plan to appoint a lead governor for school food from September 2027 and to publish their school food policy and menus on the school website from September 2027, in accordance with Department for Education guidance and any subsequent statutory requirements.

Reporting

The Hermitage Schools have a robust and in-depth Pupil Premium Strategy Statement, which outlines in detail the schools' use of Pupil Premium funding.

As well as this, it is the responsibility of the Pupil Premium Leader to co-ordinate and produce regular reports for the Local Governing Committee and school website. These will include information regarding:

- Progress made towards narrowing the attainment gap for socially disadvantaged pupils.
- Provision made since the last report.
- The cost effectiveness and impact of spending in terms of progress made by pupils receiving a particular provision.
- Evidence that funding has been spent within the requirements published by the DfE.
- Attainment and progress of pupils who are eligible for Pupil Premium as compared with other pupils.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

Pupil Premium funding is used to raise attainment and/or provide opportunities and support for all children who qualify for the funding.

Supporting Documents

Please see the school website for the following documents:

- The Hermitage Infant School Pupil Premium Strategy Statement
- The Hermitage Junior School Pupil Premium Strategy Statement

References

- Department for Education, Free school meals: guidance for schools and local authorities (updated September 2026).
- Department for Education, School food standards and School food in England guidance (updated 14 September 2026).

Appendix 1

Pupil Premium Letter to Parents

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Pupil Premium and Free School Meals

What is Pupil Premium funding?

Pupil Premium funding from the government is given to schools to help eligible pupils reach their full potential, regardless of their background or financial situation. Pupil Premium eligibility is determined separately from the wider entitlement to Free School Meals. Relevant groups include pupils who are, or have been, eligible for Targeted FSM within the Ever 6 period, looked-after and previously looked-after children, and eligible service children.

The Hermitage Schools receive additional funding for pupils who meet the government criteria for Pupil Premium. Registering for benefits-related Free School Meals remains important so that the school can identify pupils who may be eligible for additional support and funding. Expanded FSM eligibility does not, by itself, generate Pupil Premium funding.

Pupil Premium funding is used to improve educational provision, provide targeted interventions, support wellbeing and ensure eligible pupils can access wider opportunities and enrichment activities. This additional funding can make a real difference to the quality of education and support we offer.

For example, we have previously used Pupil Premium funding for:

- Educational provision/resources
- Academic interventions
- Wellbeing and self-esteem building interventions
- Extra-curricular internal clubs and school trips
- Vouchers towards school uniform/additional school costs

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

Families with eligible children in the Early Years phase may also be entitled to Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP). This additional government funding helps schools provide targeted support, resources, interventions and enrichment opportunities to enhance children's learning, development, wellbeing and school readiness. Parents and carers are encouraged to speak to the school office for further information about eligibility and registration.

Is my child eligible for Free School Meals?

From September 2026, all children in households receiving Universal Credit who attend eligible schools are entitled to receive Free School Meals. The entitlement is divided into Targeted FSM and Expanded FSM for funding and accountability purposes.

- Targeted FSM: for pupils who meet the established benefits-related criteria, including households receiving Universal Credit with annual net earned income of £7,400 or less. These pupils may also attract Pupil Premium funding where the relevant criteria are met.
- Expanded FSM: for pupils in Universal Credit households who do not meet the Targeted FSM threshold, including households with annual net earned income above £7,400. These pupils

receive a free school meal but do not attract Pupil Premium solely because of Expanded FSM eligibility.

Families receiving other qualifying benefits may also meet the Targeted FSM criteria. Registering remains important even if your child chooses not to take a school meal, as Targeted FSM registration may enable the school to receive additional Pupil Premium funding where applicable.

Universal Infant Free School Meals

All children of infant school age (pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) are entitled to a free school meal through the government-funded Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) scheme. This entitlement does not extend to nursery-aged children. UIFSM is different from benefits-related Free School Meals and Pupil Premium funding. Families should still ensure that eligible pupils are registered for benefits-related FSM, as Targeted FSM eligibility may enable the school to receive additional funding through Pupil Premium.

Does my child have to eat the free school meals?

No. Pupils who are registered for Free School Meals do not have to eat them. If you are eligible but want your child to have packed lunches, you should still register. Where your child meets Targeted FSM and Pupil Premium criteria, registration may contribute to additional funding that can support your child in other ways.

How do I register?

You only need to register once at the school.

When you complete your child's admission form at the start of their school career at The Hermitage Infant School, your parental details are checked to see whether your child is eligible for benefits-related Free School Meals and, where applicable, Pupil Premium. This information is shared with The Hermitage Junior School when your child starts there in Year 3. If you are registering your child at The Hermitage Junior School and they did not previously attend The Hermitage Infant School, please speak to a member of the Office Team to check eligibility.

If your employment, income or benefit circumstances change at any time, you should inform the schools so that eligibility can be checked and your child can receive any support to which they are entitled.

More information

For more information about Pupil Premium, please visit our school website, which contains details of how Pupil Premium has been spent in the past academic year and how it will be spent in the coming year.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss Pupil Premium further, please contact the school office to arrange a conversation with the Pupil Premium Leader.