

# PUPIL PREMIUM STRATEGY REPORT



**NORTH EAST COMBINED AUTHORITY  
PUPIL PREMIUM STRATEGIES  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS 2024-2025**

# About this report

## Why this matters

The Pupil Premium is one of the most important tools schools have to reduce disadvantage and improve outcomes for pupils from lower income backgrounds. National guidance from the Department for Education and the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is clear that this funding should be used in an evidence informed way, linked to diagnosed need and reviewed regularly.

This focus is also reflected in the revised Ofsted Education Inspection Framework and Inspection Toolkit, which place greater emphasis on inclusion, understanding pupil need and the coherence of school improvement planning. Inspectors use publicly available information, including the Pupil Premium strategy, to understand how schools identify barriers for disadvantaged pupils and how leaders plan to address them.

This report draws on an analysis of Pupil Premium strategy statements published by primary schools across the North East Combined Authority region. It is designed to support teachers, Pupil Premium leads and senior leaders by explaining what we looked at, what schools are doing well, where there is scope to strengthen practice and how the latest EEF guidance can be used in practical, classroom-focused ways.

## What was analysed

We reviewed 552 Pupil Premium strategy statements published by primary schools across the North East Combined Authority region for the 2024-25 academic year. Only schools with complete and up-to-date statements available at the time of review were included.

### Key Areas Reviewed

- The main challenges schools identified for disadvantaged pupils
- Planned strategies and interventions
- Alignment with the EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit
- Spending

**This work focused on identifying patterns across the region rather than judging individual schools. It reflects what schools chose to publish in their Pupil Premium statements and does not capture every aspect of classroom practice.**

# Key Findings

94

percentage of Pupil Premium statements referenced the EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit

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strategies of the five high impact strategies identified in the EEF Toolkit were typically referenced by schools

16

percentage of schools (n=108) with missing or incorrect, out of date strategies

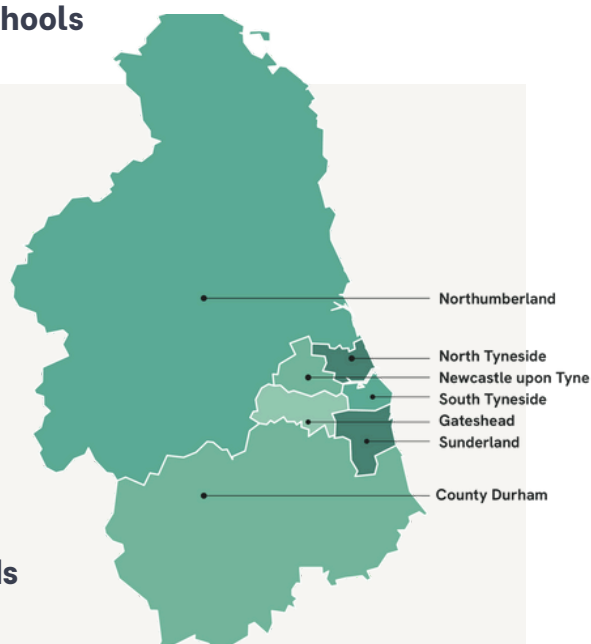
## Regional Challenges

Across the region, schools most frequently identified challenges relating to:

**Literacy and reading**

**Attendance**

**Social, emotional and mental health needs**



These challenges closely mirror national findings from the EEF’s Pupil Premium Statement Research 2024-2025. Mathematics was also identified as a challenge by a smaller but important group of schools, particularly where pupils struggled with foundational skills.



### Low-Use of Low Impact Approaches

Very few schools use low- or unclear-impact approaches, suggesting Pupil Premium plans are generally evidence-informed.



### Under-Use of High Impact Approaches

Despite strong evidence, high-impact strategies like peer tutoring (2%), metacognition (27%), and feedback (44%) appear in relatively few plans.

# High Impact Strategies



**What we looked for:** how often high-impact EEF Toolkit strategies appear in North East Combined Authority primary school Pupil Premium Statements, and where there may be opportunities to strengthen practice.



## Oral Language Interventions

Uptake: ●●●○○

High impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence (+6 months progress)

Schools most commonly reported using oral language interventions, which appeared in around six in ten Pupil Premium statements overall.



## Reading Comprehension Strategies

Uptake: ●●●○○

High impact for very low cost, based on moderate evidence (+7 months progress)

Widely used (52%), reflecting a strong focus on language development and reading as core priorities for disadvantaged pupils.



## Feedback

Uptake: ●●○○○

High impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence (+6 months progress)

Appeared in 44% of statements, highlighting an opportunity to strengthen practice by making greater use of this approach.



## Metacognition and Self-Regulation

Uptake: ●○○○○

High impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence (+8 months progress)

Infrequently used (27%), indicating a gap between the strength of the evidence base and current levels of adoption across schools.



## Peer Tutoring

Uptake: ○○○○○





High impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence (+6 months progress)

Rarely used (2%), suggesting that this approach may be under-explored despite strong evidence of effectiveness when carefully structured.

**What this tells us:** On average, schools referred to two of the five high-impact strategies in their Pupil Premium Statements, suggesting strong engagement with evidence. There is scope to use some of the most effective approaches more widely where they meet pupils' needs.

# Strong Statements

The strongest examples of Pupil Premium Statements share common features

	Use a range of evidence to identify pupil challenges
	Use standardised assessments in English and Mathematics to identify gaps in pupil understanding
	Align targeted support closely to pupils' identified needs
	Explain how staff will deliver and review selected approaches

These statements were clearer and more practical for staff and governors, setting out a shared understanding of priorities and actions, and were more closely aligned with the expectations and principles set out in the EEF guidance.

## EEF Pupil Premium Guidance

The updated EEF Pupil Premium Guidance emphasises four key principles:

1. Diagnose need accurately
2. Choose evidence informed approaches
3. Focus on strong implementation
4. Review impact and adapt

### A Note on using the EEF Toolkit

Referencing the Toolkit alone does not show engagement with the evidence. The Toolkit is intended to support professional judgement and help schools think carefully about which approaches are most likely to work for their pupils. Strong Pupil Premium Statements explain what will be done, how it will be delivered, and why it is appropriate.



# Recommendations for Schools



## **Recommendation 1: Update the Pupil Premium Statement**

Schools are required to publish an updated Pupil Premium strategy each year by 31 December. Keeping the statement current, clear and focused on pupils' present needs helps ensure compliance with statutory requirements and supports transparency for staff, governors and parents. Regular review also allows schools to reflect changes in pupil cohorts, emerging priorities and lessons learned from previous approaches.



## **Recommendation 2: Use EEF evidence meaningfully**

Rather than relying on a brief reference or link to the EEF Toolkit, strong strategies use the Toolkit alongside other relevant sources of evidence to explain why an approach has been chosen, how it will be delivered in practice, and how impact will be measured. This strengthens planning, supports professional judgement, and helps staff/governors understand how research is being translated into classroom action.



## **Recommendation 3: Greater use of high-impact strategies**

Where they align with identified needs, schools may wish to consider greater use of peer tutoring, structured feedback, and metacognition and self-regulation interventions. These approaches have a strong evidence base and are most effective when informed by diagnostic assessment, supported by appropriate staff training, and monitored over time to ensure they are having the intended impact.

# Explore the evidence. Strengthen your strategy.

Support and tools to help teachers, school leaders and local authorities make the most of the North East Combined Authority Pupil Premium Strategies evidence base.



## Explore the full report

Read the full regional analysis, with deeper breakdowns by local authority and level of disadvantage.

→ [View the full report](#)



## Planning tool for schools

Practical resources to support clear, evidence-informed Pupil Premium Planning. Download a traffic-light checklist to review your statement and staff/governor questions to support the review process.

→ [Download resources](#)



## Interactive gap map

See how EEF Toolkit approaches are being used across the North East Combined Authority. Filter by authority and disadvantage to explore patterns and gaps.

→ [Explore the gap map](#)



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## **Contact**

[support@whatworkedteachers.com](mailto:support@whatworkedteachers.com)  
[www.whatworked.education](http://www.whatworked.education)

**WhatWorked Education**  
**Harrison House**  
**Hawthorn Terrace**  
**Durham**  
**DH1 4EL**