

# Pupil premium strategy statement

## ST MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery 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	1103
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	10.6% of which 9% FSM
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2024-2027
Date this statement was published	SEPT 25 (updated from 9/24)
Date on which it will be next reviewed	DEC 25
Statement authorised by	D MCHUGH
Pupil premium lead	C WILKIN
Governor / Trustee lead	P CARROLL

### Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£106000
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£0
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£0
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b>	<b>£106000</b>

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

Our goal is for all students at St Mary's regardless of background, to fulfil their potential and be ready socially, emotionally, and spiritually, as well as academically, for the next stages in their education when they leave us.

Students in receipt of the Pupil Premium, eligible for Free School Meals, without recourse to public funds, with SEND, or known to staff as vulnerable irrespective of whether we can tick a box for them, are our priorities in spending this funding.

Our intention is to provide for students based on individual needs and for every member of staff to take responsibility for, and indeed joy in, the opportunities to support those most in need. High Quality Adaptive Teaching in every lesson is the base from which we build further. Academic support is always based on assessment data, though we are as ambitious for our most able to achieve top grades as we are for others to achieve pass grades, so a disadvantaged student may be receiving additional academic support, perhaps to help them exceed their target and be able to continue onto A level.

Pastoral support, including strategies to improve attendance, or Attitude to Learning score, may be data driven or initiated through conversations with students, staff, or parents. Disadvantaged students with SEND are monitored especially closely and there is regular communication with the SENDCO.

To develop the full person, we aim to provide all disadvantaged students with opportunities not only to participate fully in the wider life of the school, but also to lead others. A curriculum rich in extra- and super-curricular opportunities and with reading, vocabulary, oracy, and cultural capital around every corner, ensures a high minimum level of engagement from even the most 'hard to reach'.

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Many of our Disadvantaged students come from homes where there are few books and regular reading is neither a habit nor an expectation. Reading neither widely nor often leads to a narrow vocabulary, a lack of variety in sentence structure, lower comprehension skills and lower levels of cultural capital; negatively impacting life chances and attainment in school across all subject areas. There is no significant difference between Disadvantaged students and their peers in the average RA on entry, but as the secondary curriculum starts to step up steeply in difficulty, the differences in reading ability, in the wider sense, become more apparent. These students also need the school to support them with electronic devices and revision guides to that they can access all the different learning styles used at school.
2	Attendance is typically 15.-3 % lower for Disadvantaged students. This is for a variety of reasons: SEMH, behavioural, physical health or systemic, but low attendance

	reduces the positive impact of all the measures put in place to improve attainment and progress and as such presents a key barrier to achievement.
3	Many Disadvantaged students lack resilience and metacognition. This leads them to give up easily on challenging homework tasks and not only to spend less time on private study, but also to study less effectively. This can lead to slower progress in all subjects and can especially have a marked effect on outcomes in Maths and Science, due to the challenging nature of the questions and the 'Right or Wrong' nature of some of the answers! The evidence of this is often first seen in Attitude to Learning data and where there is an A2L gap a progress gap will surely follow.
4	Many of our Disadvantaged students do not have lessons in music or drama or hobbies out of school and have not had the benefit of travelling nor visiting museums, theatres, or galleries. Their cultural capital and both group 2 and 3 vocabularies are sufficiently low as to be disadvantaging them as adults if not addressed. As a result of low self-esteem, they are often reluctant to join in or take on a leadership role.
5	SEMH concerns: In recent years increasing numbers, both Disadvantaged and not, are struggling with anxiety and depression which is affecting their concentration, attendance, progress and academic performance.

## 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
Sustained excellent academic outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in Year 11, plus a sustained narrowing of the in-school gap, especially for Core subjects.	Internal data shows strong progress figures, and in 2025 and 2026 strong % attaining 4+ and 5+ in Maths and English. Students achieve or exceed their target grades. Students progress into St Mary's 6 <sup>th</sup> form or another suitable and ambitious destination, with no students being NEET at 18 or 16.
All students enjoy reading and read widely and fluently, including students with SEND and disadvantaged backgrounds.	Library usage continues to show greater usage amongst disadvantaged than their peers. Reading age tests show excellent progress and interventions where this is not the case are timely and effective.
All students are continually expanding their vocabulary, gaining confidence in speaking, and gaining in cultural capital.	There is a sustained take up for clubs, trips, and other enrichment opportunities regardless of pupil group and there are no gaps by pupil group. All teachers continually seek out opportunities for enrichment and super curricular challenge for all students and opportunities are mainly open to all.
Sustained improvement in attendance amongst Disadvantaged students	Reduction in the number of persistent non-attenders and reduction in the Disadvantaged gap in average attendance to 1% regardless of year group or individual circumstances.
Improved metacognition and self-regulation amongst Disadvantaged students	Behavioural data shows no gap or decreasing gap when comparing PP students with peers. There is no gap in Homework completion and there is a thriving and beneficial Homework Club in operation to support students who need this. Work scrutiny shows an improvement in the

	quality of student response to feedback where this has previously been an issue.
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## 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)

Budgeted cost: £ 36300

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<i>Dedicated PP manager on SLT to lead whole school with this pupil group.</i>	<p>Having a dedicated lead whose portfolio ensures this key pupil group is kept at the forefront of all teachers' minds is money well spent. This also includes PP manager spending time in training, cascading that training down and delivering INSET to all staff or ensuring that PP students are a focus within training delivered</p> <p>PP students are prioritised for all our enrichment and cultural capital opportunities such as attending local author visits at BSC Literacy Festival, visiting museums, art galleries and the theatre. They are given free copies of books as well as vouchers to spend at Scholastic Book Fair.</p> <p>Lexia can be effective in supporting the vocabulary development of disadvantaged and students with SEND  <a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/lexia">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/lexia</a>.</p>	ALL

<p><i>Various Literacy initiatives including Oracy events such as Talk the Talk, whole school Oracy days, Literacy Coordinator role and Author visits to encourage inspiration to read. We also fund Lexia, NFER Reading tests and English revision webinars. All teaching staff receive regular inset on Teaching and Learning to ensure High Quality Teaching is at the forefront of all that we do.</i></p>	<p>Strong literacy and oracy skills are a strong start to life, helping students to interview well and be able to lead and make a difference in the world. Research shows that typically, Disadvantaged students also have a hugely reduced vocabulary in comparison with their peers and so we have a wide range of opportunities and initiatives, some big and some small, to address this on a daily basis.</p> <p>Provision of effective feedback is one of the most important roles of a teacher  <a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/feedback">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/feedback</a></p> <p>Teaching metacognitive strategies is a cheap and effective way to help students become independent learners.  <a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/metacognition-and-self-regulation">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/metacognition-and-self-regulation</a>.</p> <p>The school has Inset days devoted entirely to the development of Teaching and Learning with a focus on challenge and adaptation.</p>	<p>1,4</p>
<p><i>Numeracy Initiatives: Pupil Premium Manager is also lead for Whole School Numeracy. This will include an off-timetable half day for KS3 and a variety of cross-curricular activities. We also fund online Maths revision webinars, and maths platforms such as sumdog. and mymaths.</i></p>	<p>Students need the best possible grade for GCSE Maths, as alongside GCSE English this will open many doors to them; but they also need financial awareness and good numeracy skills to prepare them for life beyond school.</p>	<p>1,3</p>

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

Budgeted cost: £ 36000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Maths Boosters for Years 7 to 11</p>	<p>Lessons in groups of 2-6 with a subject specialist can increase progress significantly.  <a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition</a></p>	<p>1,3</p>

<i>English Boosters for Years 7 to 11</i>	As above plus one to one reading sessions which include comprehension mean that individual gaps can be quickly identified and closed. <a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies</a>	1
<i>Science Boosters for Years 7 to 11</i>	As above	1,3
<i>Revision materials, equipment, one to one support in non-Core subjects when required</i>	We provide these to ensure that students are not further disadvantaged in comparison to their peers. In PSHEE and through dedicated information evenings, students are taught how to make the most of their resources and revise efficiently. We also have dedicated sessions to inspire year 11s such as The Man with the Orange Tie	1

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

Budgeted cost: £33000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Dedicated attendance officer who alerts PP manager on a weekly basis about a fall in attendance of a vulnerable student.	Early follow-up, communication with parents, and consistently applying the school's absence policy are likely to improve attendance. We supplement this with a dedicated pastoral team who work closely with key families and build good working relationships with them. <a href="https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/2945/3/110308section3en.pdf">https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/2945/3/110308section3en.pdf</a>	2
Careers Lead gives 1:1 careers guidance to all disadvantaged students	Good career guidance is a necessity for social mobility: those young people without significant social capital or home support to draw upon have the most to gain from a strong career guidance system. <a href="https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance">https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance</a>	4
Mentoring and counselling is provided for students who need e.g. MH support, motivational guidance or bereavement counselling. PP manager has regular 1:1 meetings with all Year 11 and many other disadvantaged students.	Targeted programmes supplement whole school ethos and one to one mentoring. <a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/social-and-emotional-learning">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/social-and-emotional-learning</a> Many students find the school library as safe haven. They enjoy Books and Biscuits on a Friday after school, and come to the library to do homework before and after school. PP students and SEND students are prioritised for trips to careers fairs	5

<p>Academic trips and some of our clubs such as Cookery Skills, are subsidised to make it possible for more disadvantaged students to have this opportunity without additional cost</p>	<p><b>School trips</b> and educational visits are powerful, positive teaching tools that help enhance the social, personal and emotional development of all students ...</p> <p>Being abroad has been shown to develop students' independence, confidence, self-esteem, personal effectiveness and coping strategies</p> <p><a href="https://www.equity.co.uk/school-trips/benefits-of-a-school-trip/">https://www.equity.co.uk/school-trips/benefits-of-a-school-trip/</a></p>	<p>4</p>
<p>Cultural Capital Days including inspirational speakers, teambuilding activities supercurricular projects, for example</p>	<p>Preparing pupils for life in modern Britain by providing 'cultural capital' that celebrates all cultures, and reflects our community and the country's diversity.</p> <p><a href="https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com/school-evaluation-and-improvement/inspection/whole-school-inspection-criteria/how-to-avoid-narrow-definitions-of-cultural-capital/">https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com/school-evaluation-and-improvement/inspection/whole-school-inspection-criteria/how-to-avoid-narrow-definitions-of-cultural-capital/</a></p>	<p>4</p>
<p>Music lessons are subsidised for disadvantaged students as this is not always obtainable from HCC. This year we are also running group music lessons for Y8 for free and the Arts Award</p>	<p>Evidence shows that learning a musical instrument improves coordination and concentration as well as increasing cultural capital and the ability to work in a team in the case of orchestra instruments. Singing increases wellbeing.</p> <p><a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/arts-participation">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/arts-participation</a></p>	<p>4</p>
<p><i>Uniform and shoes etc when needed.</i></p>	<p>Ill-fitting or dirty uniform makes students uncomfortable and self conscious. Without a mouth-guard they cannot take part in certain sports. With leaking shoes they will get cold and wet and possibly ill. With only a carrier bag their books are now kept in good condition. We have ever increasing demands for support in these areas.</p>	<p>1</p>

**Total budgeted cost: £105300**

## Part B: Review of the previous academic year

### Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

#### Academic Outcomes for school year 24/25 (unvalidated)

**Progress 8 for Pupil Premium is estimated to be +0.68 which is higher than our previous best in 2024 of +0.44 grades**

**For the 3 Year 13 Disadvantaged students the A level VA was unfortunately estimated to be negative, in line with the A level results for the school as a whole.**

**The chart below shows the attainment results have also risen and the percentages at 4+ and 5+ outstrip the school as a whole. 10 of the 12 Pupil Premium students gained at least 5 grades at 4+ and 9 out of the 12 gained at least 5 at grade 5+.**

The chart below (unvalidated 2025 GCSE results) shows that in every measure the PP students did better than the previous year and in some measures outperformed the school as a whole.

ASPECT	ALL	DISADVANTAGED (PP)
ATTAINMENT 8	57.3	51.4 (50.3 in 2024)
9-4 E & M	90%	100%
9-4 English	97.2%	100%
9-4 Maths	90%	100%
9-5 English	85.5%	83.3 (best ever)
9-5 Maths	72.6%	66.7
9-4 Science	64.7	91.7%
9-5 Science	46.1%	58.3%
9-4 Languages	78.6%	75%
9-5 Languages	65.8%	75%
9-4 Humanities	78.8%	50%
9-5 Humanities	63.7%	40%

*There were 4 Assessment Points (APs) and after each of these the Pupil Premium Manager analysed the data, met with key staff, parents and students and reviewed and updated the interventions in place. As far as is possible, an individualised approach is put in place and all disadvantaged students meet individually with the Pupil Premium Manager during the school year. Most meet her on a regular basis. Year 11 PP performance at GCSE was extremely encouraging in 2023 with a progress 8 score of +0.19, +0.4 in 2024 and +0.68 in 2025*

our best ever. We are really in a strong position with our disadvantaged students, who expect to be successful and have high aspirations.

**Year 12 end of year progress exam results (A levels)**

	Target	CWG	Progress exam
Non pp	30.73	37.14	29.6 (C )
PP	31.11	30	20 (D)

( nb only 3 PP students)

**Year 10 end of year progress exam results**

Overall

	CWG-target =residual	Progress exam residual
Non pp	0.7	-0.28
PP	0.44	-0.51

Maths

	CWG-target	Progress exam residual
Non pp	0.6	-0.1
PP	0.3	-0.5

English

	CWG -target	Progress exam residual
Non pp	0.3	-2.4
PP	0	-2.4

A8

	CWG (APS)	Progress exam APS
Non pp	5.2	4.3
PP	4.9	3.9

Grade 5+ English and Maths

	CWG	Progress exam
Non pp	34%	55%
PP	38%	48%

Grade 4+ English and Maths

	CWG	Progress exam
Non pp	80%	76%
PP	85%	62%

AP4, our end of school year 24/25 data, based on internal exams, indicated that progress was encouraging for all the KS3 year groups. In years 7 and 8 there is a small gap in average progress. The larger of the gaps was in Year 8 and individual interventions will take place to close this in the next academic year.

*Literacy and Reading: NFER reading age tests were used twice during the year and peer reading and other interventions used to facilitate catch-up. Our award winning librarian offers a wide range of literacy clubs and opportunities including Books and Biscuits, Carnegie Reading, Creative writing, World Book day, Book Buzz, BSC Literature Festival Trips and more, designed to make reading engaging for even the most reluctant. Library usage by Disadvantaged students was good in 24/25 year, with 30% of PP students taking out books in comparison with 15% of the school as a whole. All KS3 Disadvantaged students are given vouchers and brand new free books to read.*

*Attendance: we finished the year 23/24 with a gap in favour of the non-PP of 2.4%. 2024/25 finished with a better whole school attendance AND a narrowing of the gap to 1.7% lower for disadvantaged students. We hope to get this below 1% in the next academic year. The narrowing of this gap is probably connected with the improvement in results.*

### Externally provided programmes

*Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you used your pupil premium (or recovery premium) to fund in the previous academic year.*

<b>Programmes 23/24</b>	<b>Provider</b>
Oracy and Public speaking	Talk the Talk
Ks3 reading comprehension	Lexia
Maths homework	Mymaths
Maths learning through games	Sumdog
GCSE and A level online revision courses	HertsforLearning
GCSE and A level online revision courses	MyEdSpace

## Further information (optional)

*At St Mary's Catholic School, the development of the individual is of equal importance to academic excellence. To that end all students participate in our St Mary's Award through which they can earn bronze, silver, or gold blazer badges. To achieve an award, (a certificate and blazer badge) students need to be able to demonstrate participation across a wide range of virtues. A sporty student might win sports colours, but this alone will not give them the St Mary's Award! This award is for students who have worked hard and had excellent attendance or demonstrated significant improvement in their attendance. They must be in school and participate in our inter-house events, sports day, whole school liturgies and cultural capital days. They must serve the community and support charity events. They are rewarded for taking on a leadership role, however minor and are encouraged to enter competitions and try a new club. It is about personal challenge and stepping out of your comfort zone, knowing that you are supported. Tutors monitor participation closely to ensure students are actively progressing towards the award. We work hard to ensure there are no gaps by pupil group. A special Summer St Mary's Award is offered each year to years 6 and 7 to undertake during the summer holidays.*

*A very active House system brings an increased sense of community for those students whose greatest stability is school not home. We have an exciting and challenging range of Inter-house events!*

*Participation in music and drama is key for development of the confidence to perform and to work as a team. Learning a musical instrument develops co-ordination, concentration and determination and is proven to lead to better academic outcomes. We therefore subsidise music lessons by 50% where needed, including the significant other costs such as exam entry fees or music theory lessons. Starting in 2025 we will be having Year 8 disadvantaged small group music lessons on drums and trumpets culminating in a performance in our 2026 Remembrance Day service. These students will also take part in the Bronze Arts Award. High attaining PP students have been encouraged to be ambitious and this summer we had year 10 students gain places on competitive summer schools at Imperial College London and Exeter University, and a year 12 gain a place on the Durham University Widening Access Summer school. We are incredibly proud of these students who are so determined to break the cycle of poverty!*