Pupil premium strategy statement – St. Mary's Catholic 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	184
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	25.5%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers **(3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year)**	2024-2027
Date this statement was published	3.12.2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	Susan Starkie
Pupil premium lead	Susan Starkie
Governor Lead	Nicola Pettitt

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£69,690
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years *(enter £0 if not applicable)*	£0
Total budget for this academic year *If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year*	£69,690

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intention is that all pupils, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, make good progress and achieve high attainment across all subject areas. The focus of our pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve that goal, including progress for those who are already high attainers.

We will consider the challenges faced by vulnerable pupils, such as those who require external support from a range of agencies and professionals. The outline we have in this statement is also intended to support needs, regardless of disadvantaged or not.

High-quality teaching is at the centre of our curriculum, with a focus on areas in which disadvantaged pupils require the most support. This is proven to have the greatest impact on closing the disadvantage attainment gap and at the same time will benefit the non-disadvantaged pupils in our school. Implicit in the intended outcomes detailed below, is the intention that non-disadvantaged pupils' attainment will be sustained and improved alongside progress for their disadvantaged peers.

Our approach is responsive to common challenges and individual needs and informed by robust diagnostic assessment. At St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, we primarily use evidence informed strategies, outlined by the Education Endowment Foundation to :

- adopt a whole school approach in which all staff take responsibility for disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and raise expectations of what they can achieve.
- ensure disadvantaged pupils are challenged in the work they are given
- act early to intervene at the point need is identified

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Assessments, observations, and discussions with pupils indicate under-developed oral language skills and vocabulary gaps among many

	disadvantaged pupils. These are evident from Reception through to KS2 and in general, are more prevalent among our disadvantaged pupils than their peers. On entry data to the Reception class in 2024 and 2025 indicates that, 100% of our disadvantaged pupils arrived below age-related expectations in communication and language compared to 80% of other pupils.
2	Regular assessments, observations, and discussions with pupils suggest disadvantaged pupils generally have greater difficulties acquiring the fluency required in reading to enable them to make progress once they have completed the Little Wandle phonics scheme. Specific focus is to be given to disadvantaged pupils, across the school, who require fluency practice.
3	Internal and external assessments indicate that the percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving a Good Level of Development (33% in 2024 and 0% in 2025 (only 1 disadvantaged child)) in the Early Years is below that of non- disadvantage pupils (85%)
4	Although the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils is narrowing, assessments suggest that writing attainment among disadvantaged pupils is below that of non-disadvantaged pupils.
5	Internal and external assessments indicate that the percentage of disadvantaged pupils, in Early Years and Key Stage 1, working at age related expectations, in maths, is lower than that of non-disadvantage pupils.
6	Our assessments and observations indicate that the education and well-being of many of our disadvantaged pupils remain impacted by previous partial school closures to a greater extent than for other pupils. These findings are supported by national studies. This has resulted in significant knowledge gaps leading to pupils falling further behind age-related expectations.
7	Our attendance data over the last academic year indicates that attendance among disadvantaged pupils has been above the attendance for non-disadvantaged pupils (96.5% compared to 94.3% (2023-2024) / 95.57% compared to 94.82% (2024-2025). However, 19.2% of disadvantaged pupils have been 'persistently absent' compared to 12.5% of non- disadvantaged during that period (2023-2024). 2024-2025, data indicates a slight decrease in the number of 'persistently absent' pupils. Our assessments and observations indicate that persistent absenteeism is negatively impacting on disadvantaged pupils' attainment.

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
Improved oral language skills and vocabulary among disadvantaged pupils.	Assessments and observations indicate significantly improved oral language among disadvantaged pupils. This is evident when triangulated with other sources of evidence, including engagement in lessons, book scrutiny and ongoing formative assessment.
Improved reading attainment among disadvantaged pupils.	KS2 reading outcomes in 2026-2027 indicate that more than 80% of disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard.
Increase in the number of disadvantaged children achieving a Good Level of Development at the end of the Foundation Stage (Reception)	Early Years data indicates that 67% of disadvantaged children achieve a Good Level of Development by 2026-27.
Improved writing attainment among disadvantaged pupils.	KS2 writing outcomes in 2026-2027show that more than 80% of disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard.
Improved maths attainment among disadvantaged pupils in Early Years and Key Stage 1.	Outcomes at the end of Key Stage 1, 2026-2027 indicate that at least 70% of disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard.
To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils in our school, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	Sustained high levels of wellbeing from 2026-2027 demonstrated by: • qualitative data from student voice, student and parent surveys and teacher observations • a significant reduction in number of children being referred for ELSA intervention a significant increase in participation in enrichment activities, particularly among disadvantaged pupils
To sustain the improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our persistent absence disadvantaged pupils.	Sustained high attendance by 2026-2027demonstrated by:

	• improved attendance for all pupils with persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils being reduced from 19.2% to below 10%.

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: £38,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Purchase of standardised diagnostic assessments. Training for staff to ensure assessments are interpreted and administered correctly. Summative assessment and impact on learning	Standardised tests can provide reliable insights into the specific strengths and weaknesses of each pupil to help ensure they receive the correct additional support through interventions or teacher instruction: Standardised tests | Assessing and Monitoring Pupil Progress | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF	1, 2, 3, 4 ,5
Purchase of Voice21 consultancy and resources, continuing to embed dialogic activities, improving listening, narrative and vocabulary skills across the school curriculum (focus on disadvantaged pupils who have relatively weak spoken language). These can support pupils to articulate key	There is a strong evidence base that suggests oral language interventions, including dialogic activities such as high-quality classroom discussion, are inexpensive to implement with high impacts on reading: Oral language interventions | Toolkit Strand | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF Communication and language development in the Early Years https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/early-years/evidence-store/communication-and-language	1,2

ideas, consolidate understanding and extend vocabulary . We will purchase resources and fund ongoing teacher training and release time.		
We will fund release time for the Early Years Leader to deliver CPD and support staff in the delivery and assessment of the Early Years curriculum, ensuring high quality teaching and learning.	Research evidence suggests that good quality provision has a positive impact on children's development. Good quality early years provision (early education and childcare) can generate sustained and significant improvements on children's outcomes, reducing disparities in later life. (Local Government Association November 2023) EEF Evidence Store https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/early-years/evidence-store	3
Further embed the Little Wandle Fluency programme, and interventions such as ,Rapid Catch Up, ,to develop fluent readers. We will fund teacher release time for the reading leader to assist staff to effectively embed interven-tion programmes across school, providing release time for staff to share good practice, coach and men-tor one another.	Reading fluency is often described as a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Some pupils may be able to cross the bridge independently if they regularly read varied and appropriately challenging texts. However, this crossing is a difficult journey for those who don't. Scientific research has consistently recognized the critical nature of fluency as a bridge between effortful decoding and comprehension. A fluent reader is one who can accurately and automatically decode words. Endowment Foundation | EEF Improving Literacy in Key Stage 1 https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/literacy-ks-1 Endowment Foundation | EEF Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2 https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/literacy-ks2 https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/eef-guidance-reports/literacy-early-years/Reading_Fluency_Resource_1.0.pdf?v=1694513940 https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/why-focus-on-reading-fluency	2
Enhancement of our maths teaching, incorporating Mastering	The DfE non-statutory guidance has been produced in conjunction with the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathemat-ics, drawing on evidence-based approaches: Maths_guidance_KS_1_and_2.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)	5

Numbers into the Early Years and Key Stage 1 curriculum, developing maths planning in line with DfE and EEF guidance. We will fund teacher release time to: • support and train staff in teaching mastering numbers. • To embed key ele-ments of guidance in school and to access Maths Hub resources and CPD (including Teaching for Mastery training).	The EEF guidance is based on a range of the best available evidence: Improving Mathematics in Key Stages 2 and 3	
Further improve the quality of social and emotional (SEL) learning. SEL approaches will be embedded into routine educational practices and supported by professional development and training for staff.	There is extensive evidence associating childhood social and emotional skills with improved outcomes at school and in later life (e.g., improved academic performance, attitudes, behaviour and relationships with peers): EEF Social and Emotional Learning pdf. (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	6

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

Budgeted cost: £ *21,500*

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Purchase of oral language CPD/ support (Voice 21) to improve oral language skills including listening, narrative and vocabulary skills for disadvantaged pupils who have relatively low spoken language / oral skills. Whole staff training.	Oral language interventions can have a positive impact on pupils' language skills. Approaches that focus on speaking, listening and a combination of the two show positive impacts on attainment: Oral language interventions | EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	1,.3
Additional adult support, from teaching assistants, during whole class reading and reading fluency lessons to support identified pupils. Additional fluency intervention sessions implemented, targeted at disadvantaged pupils, across the school.	Reading fluency and reading comprehension approaches have a strong evidence base indicating a positive impact on pupils, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds. Reading Fluency | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF EEF – Best Use of Teaching Assistants	2,3

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

Budgeted cost: £ *10,190*

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Further develop whole staff training on understanding and supporting pupils' social and emotional learning approaches, having a consistent whole school approach to develop pupils' self-regulation, improving pupils' social and emotional learning across the school.	Both targeted interventions and universal approaches can have positive overall effects: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/social-and-emotional-learning	6

Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) deployment additional ELSA training and Mental Health and First Aid Worker training and implementation to support pupils who are experiencing mental health, well-being and emotional difficulties.	Cumbria ELSA report https://www.elsanetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/ELSA-Evaluation-Report-2018-19.pdf Research reports from Educational psychologists on ELSA Network website https://www.elsanetwork.org/elsa-network/other-research/	6
Continue to embed the principles of good practice set out in the DfE's guidance on working together to improve school attendance. Provide release time for staff to monitor and implement procedures in order to improve attendance.	The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced levels of absence and persistent absence.	7

Total budgeted cost: £ *69,690*

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

We have analysed the performance of our school's disadvantaged pupils during the 2024-2025 academic year using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile data, key stage performance data, phonics check results and our own internal assessments.

The data indicates that disadvantaged pupils make at least expected progress, from their individual starting points, across all areas of the curriculum.

Intended Outcome 1

- Improved oral language skills and vocabulary among disadvantaged pupils.

In the Early Years, children continued to access oral language and communication interventions (NELI whole class teaching).The NELI programme impacted positively on all pupils' oral language development. Pupils across the school accessed high quality speech and language modelling from staff. All disadvantaged pupils, in the Reception class, made at least expected progress in communication and language, although the percentage of disadvantaged pupils (only one disadvantage pupil in the class) achieving 'expected' was lower than that of non-disadvantaged pupils.

The implementation of Voice 21 is beginning to impact positively on developing pupils' oracy skills and a whole school approach to improving 'pupil talk' is being developed.. Age appropriate talk expectations are in place in all classrooms across the school and are understood by all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, and these are being used effectively to support oracy development.

Intended Outcome 2

- Improved reading attainment among disadvantaged pupils.

In 2024-2025 the attainment of pupils, in reading, by the end of each key stage was:

Early Years (Literacy): 0% of disadvantaged pupils (only 1 pupil) achieved the expected standard compared to 74% of non- disadvantaged pupils.

Key Stage 1 (in house teacher assessment): 86% of disadvantage pupils made expected progress, from their starting points, compared to 100% of non-disadvantaged pupils. 57% of disadvantaged achieved the expected standard in reading compared to 95% of non-disadvantage pupils.

Key Stage 2: In school data indicates that almost all of the disadvantaged pupils and all of the non-disadvantaged pupils made at least expected progress. In school, 89% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard in reading compared to 100% of non-disadvantage pupils. The percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard in reading (89%) was higher than the national percentage of disadvantage pupils achieving the expected standard (63%) and was higher than the percentage of national non- disadvantaged pupils (81%) achieving the expected standard.

Intended Outcome 3

- Improved maths attainment for disadvantaged pupils at the end of KS2.

Key Stage 2 : End of key stage data indicates that 67% of disadvantaged pupils in school achieved the expected standard, in maths, compared to 94% of non-disadvantage pupils. The percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard in maths (67%) was higher the percentage of disadvantaged pupils nationally achieving the expected standard (61%), although it was lower than the percentage on non-disadvantaged pupils nationally achieving the expected standard (79%).

Intended Outcome 4

- To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.

School attendance data, 2024-2025, indicates that school's overall absence was 4.9% compared to the national average of 5.2%, with persistent absentees being 8.8% compared to the national percentage of 13.31% (Autumn and Spring Terms). Absence of disadvantaged pupils of compulsory school age, 2024-2025,was 4.7%, with persistent absence being 6.8%.

Intended Outcome 5

- To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils in our school, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.

42% of disadvantaged pupils have accessed pastoral support, with 28% accessing Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) intervention. All pupils, in school, have accessed 'myHappymind' programme (a mental and emotional well-being package). Pupils are becoming much better at recognising and dealing with their emotions. The dedicated prayer room (quiet space), ELSA drop-in Breakfast Club. 'myHappymind' programme and other pastoral support has meant our children are happier, more relaxed and ready to learn. Evaluations of pastoral support sessions show an improvement in emotional literacy, resilience and emotional regulation.

To help us gauge the performance of our disadvantaged pupils we compared our results to those for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils at a national and regional level and to results achieved by our non-disadvantaged pupils.

The data from tests and assessments suggest that there are some strong individual performances and that the progress and attainment of the school's disadvantaged pupils in 2024-2025 continues to improve. By the end of Key Stage 2, the attainment gap between the percentage of pupil premium and non-pupil premium (nationally) achieving the expected standard is narrowing.

Our analysis, based on assessments and observations suggests that the impact of COVID-19 still remains present.

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
N/A	N/A