



St Mary's Catholic Academy

Pupil Premium Strategy

2025 - 2026

St Mary's Pupil Premium Strategy Statement (2025/26)

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium and recovery premium for the 2025 to 2026 academic year 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 effect that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	St Mary's Catholic Academy
Number of pupils in school	239
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	24%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2025-26 2026-27 2027-28
Date this statement was published	November 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2026
Statement authorised by	Susan McDonald
Pupil premium lead	Kerry O'Neill
Governor / Trustee lead	Olusegun Oluwole

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£89,415.18
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£0
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£89,415.18
If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year	NA

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

St Mary's school is dedicated to providing an inclusive and supportive learning environment where every pupil, regardless of their socio-economic background, has the opportunity to succeed. Situated in a deprived area with increasing pupil mobility, we face significant challenges, particularly as many of our children enter school with low communication and interaction skills, low social and emotional regulation, as well as a lack of confidence and resilience.

Our Pupil Premium strategy is designed to address these challenges by focusing on three key areas:

- academic support
- social and emotional development
- family engagement.

We recognise that early intervention is crucial, especially in developing communication and language skills. To this end, we invest in specialised speech and language programs, as well as targeted small group interventions to boost pupils' verbal and social skills.

In addition to academic support, we prioritise the emotional well-being of our pupils. Many of our children lack the confidence and resilience needed to thrive in a school setting. To address this, we provide pastoral care and implement programs that build self-esteem, promote positive relationships, and enhance emotional literacy. Our staff receive ongoing professional development to ensure they can support the complex needs of our pupils effectively.

We also believe in the power of strong home-school partnerships. By working closely with families and external agencies, we aim to create a supportive network that reinforces the work done in school, helping to remove barriers to learning.

Through this comprehensive approach, our goal is to close the attainment gap and ensure all our pupils receiving Pupil Premium funding develop the skills, confidence, and resilience they need to succeed in their future education and beyond.

Our key principles for the next 3 years:

- To offer **high quality speech, language and communication support** and early interventions when children join St Mary's, followed by oracy and vocabulary rich teaching across the whole school.

- To ensure disadvantaged **children feel challenged** in the work they are set and are supported at the point at which the need is identified.
- All children, especially those receiving funding, know the **importance of good disciplines** and habits that prepare them well for their future (punctuality, attitude, appearance).
- **Teachers and staff are confident and have the necessary tools** to support children through high-quality learning, teaching and assessment.
- To ensure that regular formative assessment **identifies gaps / misconceptions** and ensure these are addressed at the earliest opportunity.
- To demand a culture where **staff believe in all children**. We will strive to overcome barriers to learning for pupils and give every individual the best possible chance of success
- **To overcome financial barriers**, to ensure those receiving funding can access the rich experiences the school offers.
- Providing **emotional-resilience support** for children, particular the disadvantaged, to ensure they are in the best mindset and positive health, ready to learn.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p>Language and communication skills</p> <p>Children enter F1/F2 with significantly low communication and language skills. This is an increasing concern year on year. Under-developed language and vocabulary gaps are apparent particularly amongst disadvantaged pupils. These under-developed skills are prevalent with our disadvantaged children from EYFS through to KS2.</p>
2	<p>Phonics progression</p> <p>Assessments, observations and discussions with pupils suggest that disadvantaged children have greater difficulties with learning phonics in comparison to their peers. This is part to do with their lack of speech clarity and experience of language. This negatively impacts on their development as a reader, which also effects their learning across all subject areas.</p>
3	<p>Academic confidence and resilience</p> <p>Parents and families are challenged financially. Our disadvantaged children have limited experiences beyond school and their ability to engage in different settings and to resolve everyday issues is lower. Children struggle to work beyond their comfort zone.</p> <p>Assessments have identified the need for teachers to start teaching, in some aspects of the curriculum, much below children's usual age-related starting points. Scaffolding, adaptations and additional resourcing are useful to support learning and this requires additional adult support to nurture these methods and encourage independence in the children's learning.</p> <p>In some cases, social and emotional issues, in particular anxiety, have risen for pupils, particularly affected disadvantaged pupils.</p>
4	<p>Attitude to learning</p> <p>Presentation of their work can reflect a lower level of motivation which prevents pupils from progressing within a lesson and accessing work they could achieve, given the right attitude. Poor handwriting, lack of simple grammar accuracy and careless number skills can be signs of insufficient effort and concentration.</p>
5	<p>Attendance</p> <p>Attendance of our Disadvantaged children is good. Lateness and punctuality is a concern for some families. This is a life-skill which children must learn to value as it reflects significantly on a person's attitude as an employee in a work place.</p>
6	<p>Aspirations and ambition</p> <p>Through discussions with families, children and observations, it appears that aspirations are lower for disadvantaged children, most notably where parents are at home and do not work (though this is not the case for all families in this situation). In some cases, pupils display a shorter concentration span in comparison to their peers, they use avoidance and disruption tactics to avoid work, and this is having an impact on their attainment and outcomes.</p>

Intended outcomes – 3-year plan

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
Language and communication / oracy - plan and develop the teaching and learning of communication and language development, including progression of oracy, across all key stages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching staff receive and apply oracy/vocabulary CPD in planning and lessons. Explicit oracy activities extend pupils knowledge and confidence in what they are learning and pupils, particularly those disadvantaged, use vocabulary meaningfully in all curriculum subjects. Accurate use of tier 2 subject specific vocabulary is used by pupils in lessons and this is retained. Simple activities like 'Word of the Week' are embedded and children are encouraged to use this in writing. Pupils listen and respond to what others say, building on or challenging a view, respectfully. Assessment (lesson observations, pupil voice, pupil book study and formative assessment) reflect progression of disadvantaged children's communication and language skills, in line with their peers.
Enrichment PP children to enjoy the wide range of enrichment activities that we offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wide range of extra-curricular activities will be offered to develop our children's interests, social and communication and resilience. Enrichment opportunities to include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> educational visits, residentials and after school clubs, music tuition, broader subject offers.
Improved reading attainment amongst disadvantaged pupils and increased interest in reading for pleasure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phonics attainment in 2025 show 80% (4/5) of disadvantaged children achieved a pass in Y1 compared with 70% of the cohort achieving a pass. 71% (5/7) DA achieve Reading ARE in Y2 (Y2 cohort 81%). 81% (13/16) DA achieved ARE in reading in Y6. 2/3 of the children who did not achieve ARE were on SEND register. Discussions, questionnaires and observations reflect children have an increased level of enjoyment in reading.
Academic confidence and resilience Children have greater confidence in their academic ability, recognise their own strengths and areas for development. Where pupils find knowledge and understanding hard to	Children engage actively with all school activities and; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are responsive when faced with challenges, seeking to find solutions Speak about their own resilience and recognise when their resilience is low Have strategies to support them when facing challenges.

grasp, they respond in a positive, determined way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate regularly in recall and retention activities that promote long term memory
To demonstrate positive attitudes to learning .	<p>Teachers are trained to be responsive to the needs of children, employing teaching strategies that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote positive behaviour management • Aim to increase children's attention span • Experience assessment tasks that provide quality feedback • Seek all pupils to care about the presentation of themselves and how their work is presented • Pupils are challenged to an appropriate level, increasing their growth of confidence and resilience overtime. • Use of R2i supports the identification of needs and strategies are implemented to support vulnerable children.
To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	<p>Sustained high attendance 2025/26 by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having built positive relationships with families who once were an attendance concern – barriers are reduced. • The overall absence rate for all pupils being no less than 97%, and the attendance gap between non-disadvantaged and their disadvantage peers being reduced. • The percentage of persistent absence remaining low and the data for disadvantaged being no more than 3% lower than their peers.
To raise aspirations and ambition of all pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of experiences is gained by all children by the time they leave St Mary's to go to secondary school, ensuring disadvantaged pupils have gained first hand experiences they haven't engaged with before. Experiences will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Professional roles /careers ▪ The Arts ▪ Religious and cultural beliefs ▪ Awareness of skills/knowledge roles in society ▪ Knowledge of technological and ecological advances effecting their day-to-day and future.

Activity in this academic year

This details how we intend to spend our pupil premium (and recovery premium funding) **this academic year** to address the challenges listed above.

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £6000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed						
Embed Routes 2 inclusion (R2i) training into the school	<p>Nottingham City Routes 2 Inclusion (R2i) has been formed based on evidence-based research. It allows children’s additional needs to be explored, monitored and resolved where possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitor teachers use of R2i and ensure active involvement with the process.• Hypothesise should be tested and reviewed, with suitable strategies applied to attempt to meet children’s needs.• CPD in-house, sharing strategies and good practice – case studies draw out highlights.• 1:1 SENDCo / teacher support ensures problem solving is effective and the correct strategies are applied to ensure DA children achieve well in class• Referrals are made where strategies are ineffective, after a careful planning and monitoring cycle.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5						
Reading CPD Maintain phonics CPD/ coaching and develop reading programme and monitoring further, with a strong focus on KS2.	<p>EEF: Phonics has a positive impact overall (+5 months) with very extensive evidence and is an important component in the development of early reading skills, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/phonics</p> <p>Reading programme is based on Pupil Book Study author Alex Bedford. His book, written by Lauren Meadows, is an evidence informed guide to help quality assure the reading curriculum.</p>	2 , 3						
CPD and coaching regarding adaptive teaching to meet specific needs. Includes consideration of whole school CPD	<p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/moving-from-differentiation-to-adaptive-teaching</p> <p>Staff need to be skilled to adapt their strategies to meet the needs of individual children. Training in key areas will enable staff to use adaptive teaching approaches including:</p> <table><tr><td>EAL</td><td>Dyspraxia</td></tr><tr><td>Dyslexia</td><td>Trauma and Attachment</td></tr><tr><td>Fine Motor & Handwriting</td><td>Emotion Coaching</td></tr></table>	EAL	Dyspraxia	Dyslexia	Trauma and Attachment	Fine Motor & Handwriting	Emotion Coaching	3
EAL	Dyspraxia							
Dyslexia	Trauma and Attachment							
Fine Motor & Handwriting	Emotion Coaching							

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

Budgeted cost: £ 42 000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Maths tuition (1:1 across KS2) and small group reading comprehension – breaking down the barriers to reading comprehension.	<p>One to one: One to one tuition EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p> <p>Small groups: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition</p>	1, 3, 4, 6
Additional phonics sessions targeted at disadvantaged pupils who require further catch-up support.	<p>Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base indicating a positive impact on pupils, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds. Targeted interventions have been shown to be more effective when delivered as regular sessions over a 12-week period.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/phonics</p>	1, 3, 4, 6
Developing high quality teaching, assessment and a broad and balanced, knowledge based curriculum that responds to the needs of pupils	<p>Continue to develop the feedback process within school to ensure it has the greatest impact, especially for our most vulnerable learners.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/eef-scales-up-feedback-programme</p>	1, 3, 4, 6
Use TAs to help pupils develop independent learning skills and manage their own learning	<p>In class and targeted support across all year groups. This support is additional to teacher support and not used to replace QfT and adaptive teaching approaches / strategies.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/teaching-assistants</p>	1, 2, 3, 4, 6

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

Budgeted cost: £ 45 871

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
To offer Forest School	Outdoor Adventure Learning will provide opportunities for disadvantaged pupils to participate in activities that they otherwise might not be able to access. Through participation in these challenging physical and emotional	1, 3, 4, 5, 6

<p>Provision for EYFS and Y1.</p> <p>This provision will also be extended to SEND</p>	<p>activities, outdoor adventure learning interventions can support pupils to develop non-cognitive skills such as resilience, self-confidence and motivation.</p> <p>The application of these non-cognitive skills in the classroom are likely to, in turn, have a positive effect on academic outcomes.</p> <p>Children look forward to the forest school sessions and we aim for this to promote good attendance.</p> <p>https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/documents/805/fr0112forestschooolsreport.pdf</p>	
<p>Embed principles of good practice set out in the DfE's Improving School Attendance advice, particularly targeting families with persistent attendance and lateness.</p>	<p>The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced levels of absence and persistent absence. This school practice will be used to help lower our rate of persistent absence further.</p> <p>Aim to reduce persistent absence for PP to be less than 4%.</p> <p>Local work and support:</p> <p>Office staff monitor attendance and punctuality - ongoing</p> <p>Attend training from Nottingham City</p>	5
<p>ELSA provision – ELSA out of class a day a week</p> <p>Pupil well-being and emotional health drop-in sessions</p>	<p>ELSA offers emotional, literacy support to vulnerable children. This specialist support is open to supporting any child in need, but disadvantaged are monitored closely and receive intervention as required. EEF mentions more specialised programmes, like ELSA, which use elements of SEL and are targeted at students with particular social or emotional needs.</p> <p>Social and emotional learning EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p>	1, 4, 5, 6
<p>Aspirations and enrichment opportunities</p>	<p>We aim to raise aspirations to incentivise improved attainment through enrichment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - interventions that focus on parents and families; - interventions that focus on teaching practice; and - out-of-school interventions or extra-curricular activities, <p>The approaches used in these interventions are diverse. Some aim to change aspirations directly by exposing children to new opportunities and others aim to raise aspirations by developing general self-esteem, motivation, or self-efficacy</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/aspiration-interventions</p>	3, 4, 6

Total budgeted cost: £ 87 871

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 2020 to 2021 academic year.

Assessment over time suggests that the performance of disadvantaged children has improved in key areas of the curriculum.

In most classes, DA children are either close behind their peers or achieving better.

Attendance remains higher than the national average for 2023-24 and 2024 - 25.

Children's well-being and mental health were significantly affected by COVID related issues. Even now, a significant number of children continue to say they are struggling with how they feel and lack the emotional literacy and skills to talk to their parents. This ranges from low mood, to anxiety. As a school, we must reflect on whether this is due to the pandemic or a long-term pattern of how children are feeling and presenting, beyond their home.

Our ELSAs role continues to be more important than ever and we must ensure a substantial level of emotional literacy support is maintained in the classroom – through staff CPD, rather than showing reliance to the ELSA. Two further staff members have been trained as MHFAs for young people.

Externally provided programmes

Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you purchased in the previous academic year. This will help the Department for Education identify which ones are popular in England

Programme	Provider

