

Pupil premium strategy statement – St. Joseph’s Catholic High School, Workington

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
School Name	St Joseph’s Catholic High School
Number of pupils in school	543
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	44%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2024-2027
Date this statement was published	31/11/2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	31/11/2026
Statement authorised by	Mr Nevitt (Headteacher)
Pupil premium lead	Anna Dove Accelerated Progress Coordinator Gareth Hughes Assistant Headteacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Jonathan Rush

Funding overview

Detail	Funding Value 2025/26
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£228,975
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	N/A
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£228,975

If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year	
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Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intention is to offer a broad and balanced curriculum which is stimulating and challenging, meets the needs of the full ability range of our pupils and prepares them to be successful and ready for the next stage of their lives and flourish. Disadvantaged students have access to the full curriculum and are encouraged to partake fully in all aspects of school life.

Leadership in St Joseph's School challenges and supports academic and pastoral leaders systematically to focus on improving outcomes for disadvantaged students. We intend to promote an ethos of belonging and success for all pupils, rather than stereotyping disadvantaged pupils as a group with less potential to succeed, with a focus on high quality first teaching.

The focus of our pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve that goal. Our pupil premium strategy sets out how to use our pupil premium funding to secure academic excellence for our most disadvantaged pupils and promote and achieve equity. We identify students who require help and support (academic, personal or family support), whilst removing barriers to learning and engaging the wider community to engage in this to move closer to equity.

At St Joseph's, high-quality teaching has always been our priority, and this continues to be at the heart of this plan, with a focus on areas in which disadvantaged students require the most support. Extensive research has proven that this has the greatest impact on closing the disadvantage attainment gap, whilst also benefitting the non-disadvantaged students in our school – as The Education Endowment Foundation state, "The best available evidence indicates that great teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve pupil attainment". Implicit in the intended outcomes detailed below, is the intention that disadvantaged pupils' attainment will be sustained and improved alongside progress for their non-disadvantaged peers.

As a Catholic School we have a clear mission statement that places Christ at the centre of our school and permeates our Catholic values into all aspects of our school life. We are a school that provides students with the opportunity to learn expected behaviours and be successful in their learning so that we can deliver our Mission and Aims. Disadvantaged students contribute to this by supporting other students and having a positive attitude to learning.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	All pupils need the highest quality teaching in every classroom.
2	A proportion of disadvantaged students are reading at below their chronological age, meaning they struggle to access subjects across the curriculum and their confidence is affected. This is further compounded by weaker oracy skills and verbal reasoning skills.
3	Some disadvantaged students have poor attendance compared to their peers. Reasons for this are complex, ranging from significant challenges in their life to social, emotional and mental health needs. Parental engagement with school is lower amongst some parents of disadvantaged pupils and, with those hardest to reach, education is sometimes not valued, and aspirations can be low.
4	Some disadvantaged pupils face financial barriers in relation to uniform, equipment (including IT equipment and access) and wider educational experiences which prevents them from accessing the core and wider curriculum: a wealth of enrichment is needed to widen their horizons, unlock potential and remove potential barriers.
5	A small proportion of disadvantaged students find it difficult adjusting to the expectations in a large school environment and can struggle to manage their behaviour.

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 reading ability	Increase the number of disadvantaged students reading in line with their chronological age by the end of KS3.
Improved progress	Disadvantaged pupils close the gap with their non-disadvantaged peers so that grades in 7s, 5s, and 4s are equitable and headline figures show continued improvement or Disadvantaged pupils close the Progress 8 gap incrementally so that it moves closer to 0
Improved attainment	Disadvantaged pupils close the Attainment gap incrementally in English and Maths.
Improved attendance	Attendance of disadvantaged students moves to be in line with national average
Reduction in fixed term exclusions	Proportion of internal and fixed term exclusions for disadvantaged students reduces incrementally

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: **£82,020**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Highest Quality Teaching.</p> <p>High quality professional development for all staff to secure quality-first teaching across the curriculum in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum (T&L) • Disciplinary literacy and numeracy across the curriculum • High-quality curriculum implementation (T&L) <p>Disadvantaged pupils' attainment will be sustained and improved alongside progress for their non-disadvantaged peers.</p>	<p><i>EEF Closing the Attainment Gap, 2019</i> <i>'Good teaching for all pupils has a particular benefit for disadvantaged pupils.'</i></p> <p>Closing the attainment gap EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p> <p>EEF: T&L Toolkit Teaching and Learning Toolkit EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback +6 months progress Feedback EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) • Metacognitive approaches +7 months progress Metacognition and self-regulation EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) <p>EEF: Effective Professional Development Effective Professional Development EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p> <p>EEF: Teaching and Learning Toolkit The Great Teaching Toolkit: Leaders - Evidence Based Education</p> <p>Ofsted: Subject Curriculum research Reviews. Curriculum research reviews - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>Retrieval practice strategies that enable students to remember better and support the consolidation of learning. Assessment as learning: The role of retrieval practice in the classroom (chartered.college)</p> <p>Closing the attainment gap EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p>	<p>1</p>

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

Budgeted cost: £60,446

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Reading. Deploy a range of strategies to identify and intervene to increase the number of students at their chronological reading age</p>	<p>Ofsted reading document- “struggling readers” https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/now-the-whole-school-is-reading-supporting-struggling-readers-in-secondary-school/now-the-whole-school-is-reading-supporting-struggling-readers-in-secondary-school Reading comprehension strategies +6months progress Reading comprehension strategies EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral language Oral language interventions EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) <p><i>EEF T&L Toolkit –</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Peer tutoring +5 months progress.</i> • <i>Small group tuition +4months progress.</i> • <i>Reading comprehension strategies +6months progress.</i> <p><i>EEF Secondary Literacy Guidance Report –</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘High quality teaching across the curriculum will reduce the need for extra literacy support. Nevertheless, it is likely that a small number of students will require additional support – in the form of high-quality structured interventions...increasing intensity with need’ p30.</i> 	2
<p>Reading. Reading intervention and diagnosis of needs for readers who are below their chronological age (fluency or comprehension/ reciprocal reading)</p>	<p><i>“Without identification of their reading needs and targeted additional teaching, pupils who arrive in secondary school as poor readers are likely to continue to struggle. As the secondary curriculum places increasing demands on reading comprehension, older pupils who struggle with reading comprehension do not catch up. Each year, only 10% of disadvantaged children who leave primary school with their reading below the expected standard get passes in English and mathematics at GCSE”</i></p> <p><i>“They invested in additional, bespoke help for struggling readers and training for staff who taught reading. Leaders made sure that this help was part of a well-thought-out curriculum and a wider school reading strategy for all pupils to become proficient readers.”</i></p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/now-the-whole-school-is-reading-supporting-struggling-readers-in-secondary-school/now-the-whole-school-is-reading-supporting-struggling-readers-in-secondary-school</p>	2

	school/now-the-whole-school-is-reading-supporting-struggling-readers-in-secondary-school Reading comprehension strategies EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	
Highest Quality Teaching To identify students in need of intervention in Key Stage 3 and key Stage 4, and act to support their progress	EEF: Gaining a thorough knowledge of your disadvantaged pupils' levels of attainment is the first step in developing an effective Pupil Premium strategy. Diagnostic Assessment Tool.pdf (d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net)	1
Removing barriers <i>Lead Learning Mentors inc. Heads of Year support most vulnerable learners and those who are disadvantaged.</i>	<i>EEF Guide to Pupil Premium –</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mentoring +2 months progress.</i> • <i>1-2-1 tuition +5 months progress.</i> 	4

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

Budgeted cost: **£86,510**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Attendance. Monitoring, support and intervention for our disadvantaged students, led by the attendance officer to seek a sustained	DFE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced persistent absence levels. www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/framework-for-securing-full-attendance-actions-for-schools-and-local-authorities Supporting School Attendance (belonging) 2. Build a culture of community and belonging for pupils EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) Attendance Summary of Evidence Summary of evidence EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	3

improvement in attendance.		
Removing barriers. To explore each disadvantaged student and remove/address potential barriers they may have (uniform, equipment, wider experiences) to unlock their potential.	EEF says “All students including those from disadvantaged background deserve a well-rounded, culturally rich, education”, and “it can directly improve pupils’ attainment”. Life skills and enrichment EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	4
Expectations. Maintain the highest expectations for all students.	Evidence from the EEF demonstrates that it is clear that reducing challenging behaviour in schools can have a lasting effect on students’ learning. Improving Behaviour in Schools EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	5
Removing barriers. Ensure disadvantaged students are able to access enrichment opportunities such as cultural trips and	Whilst research into this area is being undertaken by the EEF, we recognise that at St Joseph’s our students’ experiences and engagement with school when they are able to partake in enrichment opportunities, and we place great value on them. Protocol-review-of-socioeconomic-disadvantage-and-the-attainment-gap.pdf (d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net)	4
Removing barriers. Support students in their wellbeing, resilience and mental health.	<i>EEF- Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)</i> “SEL interventions in education are shown to improve SEL skills and are therefore likely to support disadvantaged pupils to understand and engage in healthy relationships with peers and emotional self-regulation, both of which may subsequently increase academic attainment.”	4
Removing barriers. Year 7/ KS4 guidance and information	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/supporting-parents?utm_source=/education-evidence/guidance-reports/supporting-parents&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=site_search&search_term=parent	4

evening and tailored school communication for parents		
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Total budgeted cost: £ 228,975

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Review of previous Pupil Premium Strategy on school website

Part 1- Targeted Academic Support

This details the impact that our Pupil Premium activity had on pupils in the 2024-2025 academic year.

	% 4 EM non-PP	% 4 EM PP	% 5 EM non-PP	% 5 EM PP
2024-25	62.3%	30.0%	39.6%	20.05%
2023-24	46.2%	30.0%	25.6%	13.3%
2022-23	63.5%	36.4%	40%	15.2%

SJCHS has strived to ensure that our students receive the highest quality teaching and learning. The school has introduced The St Joseph's Way, a clear framework for teaching and learning as well as behaviour expectations in our school. This has included greater instruction and guidance on certain teaching and learning activities to support our students. This includes guidance on "do now tasks" to activate learning and revisit prior knowledge, use of mini white boards for greater student participation, in the moment feedback to address misconceptions immediately, and the use of "I do, we do, you do" for modelling work. This has also been supported by use of the Greater Teacher Toolkit (GTT) as a CPD resources for staff in school to develop their own practice. Initially we have used the GTT to have a whole school focus on questioning, and developing questioning strategies in school. In addition, our own and external quality assurance has shown a development and improvement in these areas for the benefit of our students and their learning.

The impact of this work saw improvements in the summer GCSE results for a number of subjects, and an increase in the percentage of students achieving a 4+ in English in maths from 47.4% in 2024 to 48.4% in 2025. The number of disadvantaged students achieving a 4+ in English and maths remained at 30%, but there was a larger percentage of students achieving a 5+ from 13.3% in 2024 to 20% in 2025. There were not enough improvements in the attainment for disadvantaged students, where there remains a gap of 1.29 on the average attainment grade and the gap between the achievement of students remains. For disadvantaged students, St Joseph's We expect, and are working hard, to see greater improvements in the next set of GCSE results as

these strategies become more embedded amongst our teaching staff and students' knowledge and application of this knowledge improves.

Reading strategies

Reading strategies have evolved following from our work with the WELL Project in to literacy and reading. This has seen students engage in reading intervention in not just phonics but also in fluency in reading. There are a number of reading interventions currently taking place within school to guide and support students' skills in decoding, reading fluency and comprehension. The school has engaged with, form time reading using Picture News, GL Assessments, paired reading with other students or other adults in the school community such as teachers, leaders and governors. The school is developing its own literacy strategy as it continues its work with the WELL Project. Phonics intervention has had a significant impact on the decoding and reading progress in a number of our students in the 2022-2025 academic years and is an intervention programme which is highly valued by our students.

These interventions and work with our phonics and reading intervention teacher have meant that of the 55 disadvantaged students in Year 8 in 2024-2025 64% have shown an improvement from the previous academic year. However, 9 of these students made between 3- and 6-months progress and 8 students made between 6- and 11-months progress. 18 of the 55 students (33%) made quicker progress of 12 months or more.

This improvement was replicated in Year 9 for disadvantaged students 34 disadvantaged students, 22 have shown an improvement (65%) of students have shown an improvement in their reading age. 2 of these students made between 3- and 6-months progress and 4 students made between 6- and 11-months progress. 16 of the 34 students (47%) made quicker progress of 12 months or more. Exploration is now needed in to the nature and extent and speed of that improvement, as well as identifying support for the students not making improvements in their reading.

Mentoring

Mentoring of KS4 had some success with Year 11, with a number of students receiving support through targeted mentoring, as well as each disadvantaged student having a meeting with the headteacher to discuss their progress at the start of Year 11. This mentoring achieved success with 55% of disadvantaged students mentored achieving a 4+ in English and maths, as well as receiving support and advice in their post 16 choices and applications. This has led us to review the process of mentoring or the coming academic year to ensure that more students are involved in the mentoring process, and a large number of staff volunteer to help mentor our Year 11 students and engage in this intervention. We saw more students attending revision that in in previous years, 1447 by February 7th 2025, as well as attendance at the Year 11 progress evening at 69% which was the highest for that cohort it had been in any of their previous years.

The school has also begun to engage in the RADY project, which is aimed at a KS3 cohort of students that we are identify and mentor with the ambition of raising the achievement of disadvantaged youngsters (RADY). We identified a cohort in Year 8 and have begun the process of meeting those students, and identifying what they can do in each of their subjects to match the progress of their non disadvantaged peer. This RADY cohort will also receive mentoring and support to navigate their way through KS3 in order to help them be ready for KS4 and be more successful in their GCSEs.

As a school we have begun to recognise that whilst many of our students facing one barrier are more likely to face another, and our school has seen a changing demographic of more students who are EAL, and also disadvantaged. This has led to the school investing time in CPD for staff to learn strategies to support these vulnerable learners, as well as recently appointing an EAL lead, as well as an EAL team in school, to support our 67 EAL students which makes up 12.5% of the school community. To address this the pastoral team have been developing a central record of wider disadvantaged students to acknowledge and begin to address students who face the many barriers that our students are facing, not just disadvantaged students. This has identified that there is 76% of our school community who will come under this category or wider disadvantaged, such as ACEs or family member with additional needs.

Part 2- Wider strategies

SJCHS has used a variety of strategies to engage with students and ensure that students feel part of the school community.

Our school community are very proud of the work that has been done to improve attendance of students in school. In 2023-24 the attendance of all students was a concern and was highlighted in a school inspection of needing improvement. The new attendance officer and the pastoral team used a variety of strategies and approaches to students whose attendance was a barrier to their attendance in school. By the end of the academic year 2024-25 our whole school attendance was 93.1%, which was significantly better than the national average of 91.4%. In addition, the attendance of disadvantaged students at the end of the academic year 2024-25 was 91.1%, which was 4.7% above the national average for disadvantaged students of 86.4%. All groups improved their attendance from the previous academic year which was a fantastic achievement.

SJCHS is also removing barriers to education by supporting students with equipment, uniform and resources to be successful in school. We also make efforts to poverty proof our curriculum, for example by providing cooking ingredients for all pupils in D&T food technology lessons and we subsidise peripatetic music lessons, or on occasion for disadvantaged students there is no cost. In addition, we also support students' mental health with access to external councillors such as Yellow Poppy Therapy, The Windmill Trist and the Mental Health Support Team, that can provide specific help to those students who need it, with over 102 students accessing this

support in the last academic year, 60% of whom were disadvantaged (61 of 102 students). We also have a mental health Ambassadors in Year 8 and mental health champions in Year 10, as well as well being groups they contribute to whole school events such as MacMillan coffee mornings and taking a leading role in whole school initiative such as the leading change project.

SJCHS has also worked to support students who struggle to meet our schools' expectations. Whilst launching the St Jospeh's Way not only as a teaching and learning tool, but also to understand better the behaviour we expect to see. Staff have also received support through additional training about ACEs, how teenagers brains develop, as well as work with Positive Regard to enhance our behaviour management strategies in school. These strategies, as well as other pastoral support and approaches, has seen the number of permanent exclusions and suspensions fall from 6 (5 PP) in 2023-24 to 0 in 2024-25. The number of pupil suspensions fell, and only slightly for disadvantaged students, from 34 (23 PP) to 28 (22 PP).

Suspensions		
	2023/24	2024/25
TOTAL PUPILS SUSPENDED	34	28
Pupil Premium	23	22
SEND Support	12	13
EHCP	1	2

Permanent Exclusions		
	2023/24	2024/25
TOTAL PUPILS PEX	6	0
Pupil Premium	5	0
SEND Support	3	0
EHCP	0	0

Disadvantaged students were also able to engage with school life through a number of additional opportunities such as clubs and experiences. For example, as well as extra-curricular clubs (chess, computing, sports), the school production of Sister Act, U Dance, and the Duke of

Edinburgh Award scheme, but the school also ran a school Halloween Disco. The disco was designed to be inclusive and poverty proofed, and 28/55 disadvantaged students attended (50.9%), which was a higher percentage attendance at the disco than non-disadvantaged students (48.8%). This was a similar pattern for the Year 8 students who also attended with 24/55 disadvantaged students attended (43.6%), which again was higher than their non-disadvantaged peer's attendance (40%). This is just one example of the work done to provide students with wider experiences of school and build a sense of belonging within the school. Disadvantaged students continue to participate in extra-curricular activities, for example in Year 7 60 students regularly attended clubs, 30 of which were disadvantaged students (50%), similarly 48% in Year 8 and 30% in Year 9.

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.

Programme	Provider
Football Refereeing Course	FA
Surveys	PASS (GL Education)
Goals and Aspirations	MADE, Hello Futures
Sports Leadership Awards	Youth Sports Trust
Free Summer Camps	CDEC
Careers Advice/Support	Inspira
Arts Award Council	Arts Award
CREST award bronze	CREST Awards

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

Measure	Details

Further information (optional)

Use this space to provide any further information about your pupil premium strategy. For example, about your strategy planning, or other activity that you are implementing to support disadvantaged pupils, that is not dependent on pupil premium or recovery premium funding.