

Pupil premium strategy statement

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 effect that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	St Mary's RC High School
Number of pupils in school	750
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	16.5%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2026-2029
Date this statement was published	January 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	January 2027
Statement authorised by	Mr Stuart Wetson Head teacher
Pupil premium lead	Mrs Angela Leslie Deputy Head
Governor / Trustee lead	Mrs Lynn Johnson Link Governor for PP

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation last academic year	£145,335
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£105,870 (total see below)
PP	£81,700
PLACC	£10,520
Service	£13,650
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£105,870

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 well across the curriculum.

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 have a social worker and young carers. The activity we have outlined in this statement is also intended to support their needs, regardless of whether they are disadvantaged or not.

High-quality teaching is at the heart of our approach, 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 strategy is also integral to wider school plans for education recovery, notably in its targeted support through for pupils whose education has been worst affected, including non-disadvantaged pupils.

Our approach will be responsive to common challenges and individual needs, rooted in robust diagnostic assessment, not assumptions about the impact of disadvantage. The approaches we have adopted complement each other to help pupils excel.

To ensure they are effective we will:

- ensure disadvantaged pupils are challenged in the work that they're set
- act early to intervene at the point need is identified
- adopt a whole school approach in which all staff take responsibility for disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and raise expectations of what they can achieve
- Use additional training to support teachers dealing with differentiation and behaviour support
- Ensure that disadvantaged pupils are able to participate in all activities
- Ensure that good attendance remains a focus for all pupils but especially for those who may be disadvantaged.
- Ensure we identify when families are facing more challenging circumstances irrespective of whether they are disadvantaged.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p>Increasing numbers of pupils entering St. Mary's with low literacy levels. This gap has proved challenging to close.</p> <p>Diagnostic assessments, observations and discussions with teachers and support staff and the pupils indicate that the disadvantaged pupils have lower levels of reading and reading comprehension.</p> <p>This impacts all areas of learning both in and out of the classroom.</p> <p>Year 7 15% PP Year 8 18% PP Year 9 16% PP Year 10 15%PP Year 11 22% PP</p>
2	<p>Numeracy skills especially at key Stage 3</p> <p>Diagnostic assessments, observations and discussions with teachers and support staff indicate that the maths attainment of disadvantaged pupils is generally lower than that of their non-disadvantaged peers and suggest that many struggle with problem solving skills.</p> <p>Quantitative CATS Assessments on entry show that disadvantaged students score lower than non-disadvantaged students</p>
3	<p>Our assessments (including wellbeing survey), observations and discussions with pupils and their families have identified social and emotional issues for many pupils, such as anxiety, depression (diagnosed by medical professionals) and low self-esteem. This is partly driven by concern about exams/future prospects, following the pandemic and their lack of engagement in enrichment opportunities offered. They also include concerns about the health and welfare of their families. These challenges particularly affect disadvantaged pupils, including their attainment.</p> <p>During the pandemic, teacher referrals for support for all pupils markedly increased. This increase was greater for those who were disadvantaged and needing social and emotional support. This is in line with other parts of the country, but the level of need continues to rise.</p> <p>Increased provision for mental health support – PP pupils prioritised where practicable</p> <p>Additional workshops to support additional needs due to health and wellbeing</p>
4	<p>Attendance of students in receipt of PP funding, especially FSM/Ever6 students continues to be below that of their non-disadvantaged peers.</p>

	Additional work is needed to improve levels towards 95% (non-disadvantaged figure). This will require significant input from a number of members of school staff.
5	<p>Since the pandemic, increasing numbers of students have struggled with the demands of school full-time. They have found interactions with larger numbers of pupils and staff challenging and this has impacted their behaviours both in class, travelling to school, and around the school site.</p> <p>Our data suggests: A higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils have struggled with and are still struggling with both their behaviour and their mental health.</p>
6	<p>Academic achievement</p> <p>Our detailed evaluation of our on-line provision suggests that our disadvantaged pupils engaged less well with the on-line provision during school closures and when isolating. This is still impacting pupils at both Key stage 3 and key stage 4.</p> <p>The number of interventions has increased and are starting as soon as the pupils arrive in the school. This will help to close the gap earlier in their school career.</p>
7	<p>Parental engagement is often lower with our disadvantaged pupils. Increasing this by prioritising contact with these parents may help support the families.</p> <p>Mentoring programme to be established at KS3.</p>

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
<i>To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils</i>	<p>Sustained high attendance from 2025-2026 demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall absence rate for all pupils being no more than 5%, and the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers being reduced by 5%. • The percentage of all pupils who are persistently absent being below 10% and the figure among disadvantaged pupils being no more than 2% lower than their non disadvantaged peers. • Continued strong protocols in place to increase attendance. • Part time timetables, soft landings and phased integration methods used to achieve full time attendance • Earlier interventions from the pastoral staff (form tutors, HOY, pastoral team) to support when

	attendance drops before it becomes an embedded pattern.
<i>Improved attainment among disadvantaged pupils across the curriculum at the end of KS4.</i>	2025/26 KS4 outcomes to demonstrate that disadvantaged pupils narrow the gap towards their FfT20 targets in line with their non-disadvantaged peers. This is a very ambitious target, but we need to build on the progress from the last academic year.
<i>Improved reading comprehension among disadvantaged pupils across KS3</i>	<p>Reading comprehension tests demonstrate improved comprehension skills among disadvantaged pupils and a smaller disparity between scores of disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers.</p> <p>Evidenced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading plus scores • Improved engagement in lessons • Improved work during book scrutiny • Reduction in reliance on additional support in class • Increased focus on literacy in all subject areas for 2025 onwards • Increased progress shown by those receiving targeted interventions for literacy
<i>To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged</i>	<p>Sustained high levels of well-being from 2025/26 demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative data from student voice, student and parent surveys and teacher observations/concerns • An increase in participation in enrichment activities, particularly among disadvantaged pupils • Targeted opportunities in enrichment activities for disadvantaged pupils • Continue to hold a well-being fayre so that all pupils are aware of where to go for support but especially those who are disadvantaged. • Early intervention using 1:1, group and workshops targeted at individuals who have been identified as having additional needs around their mental health and well-being
<i>Improved meta-cognitive and self-regulatory skills among disadvantaged pupils across all subjects</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher reports, class observations and SIMS entries will suggest that disadvantaged pupils are more able to monitor and regulate their own learning. This finding will be supported by homework completion rates across all subjects and classes. • High proportion of attendees at homework clubs, particularly targeted at those who are disadvantaged

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High proportion of attendees at revision classes both within school time and out of school time, particularly those who are disadvantaged. • Pupil premium progress sheets will evidence these. • More effective use of PPP reviews within departments. As shown in their SDP's
<i>Increased parental engagement to support families</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact with families on entry to St. Mary's if they have been in receipt of PP • Parents evening appointments are opened early for parents of PP pupils, to help ensure they are able to attend. • Referrals to outside agencies including foodbank where appropriate.

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: £ 75000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<i>Purchase of standardised diagnostic assessments. Training will be provided for staff to ensure assessments are interpreted correctly</i>	Standardised tests can provide reliable insights into the specific strengths and weaknesses of each to ensure they receive the correct additional support through interventions or teacher instruction Standardised tests Assessing and Monitoring Progress Education Endowment Foundation EEF	1,2
<i>Whole school INSET on teaching and learning – related to Adaptive teaching. Teaching and learning focus on disadvantaged /PP. This to include work on feedback, adaptive</i>	Our own observations have shown that there is an increasing need for more adaptive teaching and learning across all subject areas. This has an impact on both attitudes and behaviour within the classroom setting. As the 'Teacher feedback to improve learning' guidance report explains, ensuring that the principles of effective	1,2,3,6

<p><i>teaching and learning strategies.</i></p>	<p>feedback are followed is more important than the method opted for; however, evidently, teachers in the review of practice identified that verbal feedback provides opportunities to fulfil these principles, particularly as it may be more easily understood by pupils. This needs to be in conjunction with written feedback that students can act upon.</p>	
<p><i>Mental health support for staff well being</i></p>	<p>Our own discussions and feedback highlighted a need to provide additional support for staff well-being. This will enable all staff to support the pupils in their care.</p>	<p>3</p>
<p><i>Pastoral support managers and mental health lead</i></p>	<p>Our own observations and discussions highlighted an increased need for pupils to be able to go to a non-teaching member of staff for support outside of the classroom.</p> <p>This meant that pupils could be supported more quickly and signposted to the relevant places. Communication with parents also improves</p> <p>Mental health Lead co-ordinates the provision for School Nurse, WEST and other in-school professionals as well as referrals to outside agencies including CAMHS and Strong Young Minds as well as support with self-referrals and signposting pupils and parents to where support is available.</p>	<p>3,4,5,7</p>
<p><i>Further training for intervention manager</i></p> <p><i>TA training to support Disadvantaged/PP/SEND pupils</i></p>	<p>High quality interventions are needed to support all pupils but especially the disadvantaged and those with SEND. These will be organised by the intervention manager following discussions with the SENDco</p> <p>Ongoing training means that the intervention manager will be better equipped to meet the needs of those pupils. They will also be able to provide and deliver appropriate interventions that are quality assured.</p> <p>Intervention manager will be able to support other members of the SEN team to provide appropriate interventions that are quality assured.</p>	<p>1,2,6,7</p>

	SLT support (and SLT SEND link) in place to support interventions	
<p><i>Improving literacy in all subject areas in line with the recommendations in the EEF guidance</i></p> <p>Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools</p> <p><i>This is to be included in all subject development plans (SDP) as well as the whole school development plan</i></p>	<p>Acquiring disciplinary literacy is key for students as they learn new, more complex concepts in each subject:</p> <p>This is a continuing need across all department areas of the school</p> <p>Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools</p> <p>Reading comprehension, vocabulary and other literacy skills are heavily linked with attainment in maths and English:</p> <p>word-gap.pdf (oup.com.cn)</p>	1,3,4,6

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

Budgeted cost: £ 90000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<i>Teacher feedback and PPP reviews</i>	<p>Teachers recognised the benefits of verbal feedback, particularly because it tends to be highly valued by pupils. It was felt that a combination of written and verbal feedback was helpful in creating understanding, strengthening relationships, and maximising the value of the feedback.</p> <p>As the 'Teacher feedback to improve learning' guidance report explains, ensuring that the principles of effective feedback are followed is more important than the method opted for; however, evidently, teachers in the review of practice identified that verbal feedback provides opportunities to fulfil these principles, particularly as it may be more easily understood by pupils</p>	3,6

	Continued evaluation of this through classroom observations and pupil voice. Written feedback to continue to provide pupils with the opportunity to improve.	
<i>Revision sessions after-school</i>	Our data shows that targeted pupils who engage in this provision make more progress than those who do not attend. Disadvantaged pupils to be targeted as a priority. Transport provided into town is also prioritised for our disadvantaged pupils where practicable.	6,7
<i>Study skills sessions weekly</i>	Our data shows that the year 11 pupils who attend these sessions regularly are better equipped to cope with the rigours of exam revision.	3,6
<i>Homework support. To provide a daily supported facility for targeted students to complete homework</i>	Our data has shown that disadvantaged students can find it difficult to complete homework without a quiet place and may need additional support	3,5,6,7
<i>Reading plus programme and interventions extended into Year 7, 8 and 9.</i>	Reading is an integral part of all lessons, and this is intended to raise literacy levels at Key Stage 3. Reading Plus	1,7
<i>Members of staff including SLT to act as mentors to PP students in years 10 and 11</i>	Individual mentoring has been shown to focus pupils on their aspirations as well as allowing them time and space to articulate where they are struggling, so that appropriate and timely support can be put in place. Individual mentoring of identified pupils who are disadvantaged in KS3	3,6,4,7
<i>Adopting a targeted reciprocal teaching programme as a reading intervention for disadvantaged pupils who need additional help to comprehend texts and address vocabulary gaps.</i>	Reading comprehension strategies can have a positive impact on pupils' ability to understand a text, and this is particularly the case when interventions are delivered over a shorter timespan: Reading comprehension strategies Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF Use of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading pens • Literacy leaders • HSFC student readers • Targeted rapid reading 	1,6,7

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular contact with home 	
<p><i>Use targeted 1:1 on line maths tuition with a specialist teacher where possible.</i></p> <p><i>PP/Disadvantaged will be prioritised for this where possible</i></p> <p><i>Use targeted small group additional maths tuition with a specialist teacher in school (outside of usual lesson times)</i></p>	<p>Tuition targeted at specific needs and knowledge gaps can be an effective method to support low attaining pupils or those falling behind, both one-to-one:</p> <p>One to one tuition EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p> <p>And in small groups:</p> <p>Small group tuition Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF</p> <p>Continued use of a 1:1 Specialist online maths provision for CiC</p>	2,6
<p><i>LSA targeted support</i></p> <p><i>In class and with small groups.</i></p> <p><i>Additional TA's recruited.</i></p>		

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

Budgeted cost: £ 75000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p><i>Close collaboration with the school attendance officer, Heads of year and the pastoral leads.</i></p> <p><i>Embedding principles of good practice set out in DfE's Improving School Attendance advice.</i></p>	<p>The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced persistent absence levels.</p> <p>This includes an increased use of the wider pastoral team to monitor behaviour before it becomes a concerning issue.</p> <p>More effective use of attendance plans, part time timetables, soft landing and re-integration strategies following much earlier attendance interventions</p>	4,5,6,7
<p><i>Pastoral support managers</i></p>	<p>There is evidence to suggest that the involvement of the pastoral support managers with pupils who may be experiencing difficulties, including the disadvantaged, has a positive impact on behaviour around school both in and out of lessons.</p>	3,5,7

<p><i>Mental health lead School counsellor, School nurse, Wellbeing mentors</i></p>	<p>There is evidence to support the need for Mental health interventions to avoid an escalation in symptoms</p> <p>This needs to be a co-ordinated approach from all involved so the mental health Lead continues to be best placed to liaise and co-ordinate the provision of mental health support.</p>	<p>3,5,7</p>
<p><i>WEST support</i></p>	<p>There is evidence to support the need for Mental health interventions to avoid an escalation in symptoms</p> <p>EIF's report on adolescent mental health found good evidence that CBT interventions support young people's social and emotional skills and can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression:</p> <p>Adolescent mental health: A systematic review on the effectiveness of school-based interventions Early Intervention Foundation (eif.org.uk)</p>	<p>3,5,7</p>
<p><i>School council / voice This should include appropriate representation from those who are disadvantaged</i></p>	<p>There is evidence to suggest that when pupils are given the opportunity to be involved in the processes in school – the changes may have a more significant impact on positive engagement.</p> <p>PP pupil voice is represented in all department reviews and in the work scrutiny.</p>	<p>3,5</p>
<p><i>Continued use of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) intervention for specific pupils who require support with regulating their behaviour and emotions.</i></p> <p><i>This includes ongoing training for staff especially the mental health leads and the pastoral teams</i></p> <p><i>Continued use of Counsellor, School Nurse, WEST, Onside, boxing and others to support the well-being of students, especially</i></p>	<p>There is evidence to suggest that CBT can have a high impact on risk behaviours and behavioural difficulties:</p> <p>Cognitive Behavioural Therapy - Youth Endowment Fund</p> <p>EIF's report on adolescent mental health found good evidence that CBT interventions support young people's social and emotional skills and can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression:</p> <p>Adolescent mental health: A systematic review on the effectiveness of school-based interventions Early Intervention Foundation (eif.org.uk)</p>	<p>3,5,7</p>

<i>those who are disadvantaged. Art therapy where possible</i>		
<i>Contingency fund for acute issues.</i>	Based on our experiences and those of similar schools to ours, we have identified a need to set a small amount of funding aside to respond quickly to needs that have not yet been identified.	1-7
<i>Increased use of pupil voice in PPP reviews</i>	This is an effective way of looking at what has been successful from the pupils' perspective. This adds insight to any further strategies that we might implement	

Total budgeted cost: £ 240,000

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

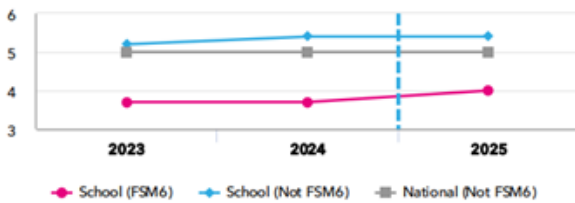
Pupil premium strategy outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the 2024 to 2025 academic year.

Disadvantaged pupils

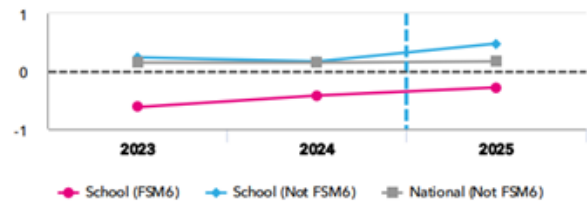
KS4 attainment for disadvantaged pupils 2025

Attainment 8 (Overall)



KS4 progress for disadvantaged pupils 2025

Progress 8 (Overall)



Disadvantaged pupils - Open P8

Year	Cohort	School disadvantaged compared to national disadvantaged			School disadvantaged compared to national non-disadvantaged		
		School	National	National distribution banding	National (non dis)	Gap	Gap Trend
2024	20	-0.50	-0.63	Close to average (non-sig)	0.17	-0.67	Narrowing
2023	18	-0.88	-0.62	Close to average (non-sig)	0.17	-1.05	Not applicable
2022	15	-0.59	-0.60	Close to average (non-sig)	0.15	-0.74	Not available

Disadvantaged pupils - Overall A8

Year	Cohort	School disadvantaged compared to national disadvantaged			School disadvantaged compared to national non-disadvantaged		
		School	National	National distribution banding	National (non dis)	Gap	Gap Trend
2025	20	39.9	34.9	Above (non-sig)	50.3	-10.4	Narrowing
2024	21	34.9	34.6	Close to average (non-sig)	50.0	-15.2	Widening
2023	19	35.6	35.0	Close to average (non-sig)	50.3	-14.7	Not available

Disadvantaged pupils - English and mathematics grade 4 plus

Year	Cohort	School disadvantaged compared to national disadvantaged			School disadvantaged compared to national non-disadvantaged		
		School	National	National distribution banding	National (non dis)	Gap	Gap Trend
2025	20	60.0%	43.5%	Above (non-sig)	72.7%	-12.7	Narrowing
2024	21	42.9%	43.4%	Close to average (non-sig)	72.8%	-29.9	Widening
2023	19	52.6%	43.4%	Close to average (non-sig)	72.8%	-20.2	Not available

Disadvantaged pupils - English and mathematics grade 5 plus

Year	Cohort	School disadvantaged compared to national disadvantaged			School disadvantaged compared to national non-disadvantaged		
		School	National	National distribution banding	National (non dis)	Gap	Gap Trend
2025	20	35.0%	25.6%	Above (non-sig)	52.8%	-17.8	Narrowing
2024	21	23.8%	25.8%	Close to average (non-sig)	53.1%	-29.3	Narrowing
2023	19	21.1%	25.2%	Close to average (non-sig)	52.4%	-31.4	Not available

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
<i>The national college Whole school subscription</i>	The National College
<i>Twenty First century Science AQA RE Allez – French RE source to Summit</i>	Kerboodle Oxford University Press
<i>Reading plus</i>	
<i>Spelling tutor</i>	Dyslexia Gold
<i>Engaging eyes</i>	Dyslexia Gold
<i>Rapid reader PLUS – literacy leader</i>	Pearson
<i>Rapid reader PLUS – TA led</i>	Pearson
<i>NGRT CATS4</i>	GLAssessment
<i>Dyslexia Portfolio</i>	
<i>WRAT testing</i>	
<i>Freckle</i>	Renaissance
<i>Timetable Rockstars</i>	
<i>White Rose maths</i>	
<i>Mymaths</i>	
<i>Nessy Phonics/ reading and spelling</i>	Nessy
<i>Nessy Fingers</i>	Nessy

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

Measure	Details
How did you spend your service premium allocation last academic year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSA support (in and out of class) • Travel costs • Counselling

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • Mentoring • Study skills sessions • 1:1 targeted intervention • 1:1 supervision • Home visits • Social and emotional support • After school revision sessions • Targeted feedback • Enrichment activities targeted at service pupils 	
<p>What was the impact of that spending on service premium eligible pupils?</p>	<p>No of Year 11</p>	<p>150</p>
	<p>Forces pupils</p>	<p>7</p>
	<p>9-5 E/M %</p>	<p>42.9</p>
	<p>9-4 E/M %</p>	<p>71.4</p>
	<p>Average A8 grade</p>	<p>4.34</p>
	<p>Average English A8 grade</p>	<p>4.43</p>
	<p>Average Maths A8 grade</p>	<p>4.43</p>
	<p>Average EBacc</p>	<p>4.19</p>

Further information (optional)

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