

Pupil premium strategy statement – Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery premium) funding to help improve the attainment of our disadvantaged pupils.

It outlines our pupil premium strategy, how we intend to spend the funding in this academic year and the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils last academic year.

School overview

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school	421
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	31%
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	04/11/2024
Date on which it will be reviewed	June 2025
Statement authorised by	Hazel Boyce
Pupil premium lead	John Flynn
Governor / Trustee lead	Leonida Bandura

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£406,920
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year <i>Recovery premium received in academic year 2023/24 cannot be carried forward beyond August 31, 2024.</i>	£0
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (<i>enter £0 if not applicable</i>)	£0
Total budget for this academic year <i>If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year</i>	£406,920

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Saint Benedict is a diverse, Catholic school, which serves families from across the city of Derby and beyond. Pupils come to us from areas of significant deprivation, areas of affluence and everything in between.

We have a clear mission to educate all – indeed, Catholic education is here to serve all but especially those whose educational achievement is at risk because of the impact of their social and economic circumstances. All pupils are entitled to an ambitious curriculum which contains life-enhancing opportunities to develop their interests and talents. We see educational disadvantage as incorporating all students who are vulnerable, including those with a social worker, those who are young carers and those who may be new to the country, irrespective of whether they are in receipt of any pupil premium funding. Our aim is to remove personal and communal barriers for students so they can fulfil their potential and be who God meant them to be.

It is essential that all our teaching, pastoral and support staff understand the challenges of educational disadvantage and they recognise their responsibility in addressing them with confidence. These responsibilities are not limited to but include quality first teaching as well as thousands of daily interactions with pupils each day both in and out of lessons. Focussing all we do through the lens of educational disadvantage allows us to be clear about the impact of our actions on all pupils but especially our most vulnerable. As a school and as a staff body, we take collective responsibility for removing barriers to achievement that are brought about by circumstances beyond our pupils' control. In doing so, we are enabling all our pupils to be successful at school and ready for the next stage of their lives.

We will direct our limited resources to where they will have the biggest impact on the greatest number. Significant improvements will be made because of our focus on reading. Our Tutor Time Reading Programme ensures all pupils are read to, at pace, several times a week., covering different genres and a wide range of cultures. It is vital all our pupils see themselves in our curriculum. Reading is not just a skill for educational success but as skill which is necessary to succeed in all aspects of life and one which bring with it a sense of confidence.

To ensure all pupils receive the best possible education, we remain committed to teaching professional development. Knowing how to support all pupils in the classroom and how to meet the needs of pupils on a pastoral level are key foci for all our staff. We are committed to providing a safe and loving environment with a strong commitment to whole school routines which create a consistent environment for all.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1. Literacy	Our reading assessments and observations of KS3 pupils indicate that a significant proportion of disadvantaged pupils have lower levels of reading comprehension than their peers.
2. Attainment	The GCSE attainment of disadvantaged pupils at GCSE is lower than non-disadvantaged pupils. Pupil premium students in 2024 achieved a progress 8 score of -0.38 and were on average working just under a grade below their non-pupil premium peers.
3. Attendance	Our attendance data indicates that attendance among disadvantaged pupils is on average about 4% lower than the figure for all pupils across Year 7-11. Whilst our attendance for all pupils and disadvantaged pupils and disadvantaged pupils is significantly higher than the national average, we are passionate to close our internal gap in attendance rates, including persistent absence, where there is the same discrepancy between pupil groups.
4. SEMH need	Our data on behaviour, including safeguarding reports, and external suspensions rate, shows a disproportionate representation of disadvantaged students. Suspension rates for disadvantaged students are higher with over half the school's suspensions coming from our disadvantaged students. Observations and data suggest that many of these students lack the self-regulation strategies to cope with challenging tasks and situations, which has a negative impact on their learning.

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
Improvement in the reading skills of our disadvantaged students	<p>2026/2027 evidence to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a small disparity between the attainment of disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged students sitting the New Group Reading Tests (NGRT) at the end of each school term. Success in the tests through these tests will show incremental gains which mean they will eventually be able to access the full curriculum. progress for disadvantaged students in literacy-based subjects to be above the national average for disadvantaged students
Improvement in the GCSE outcomes of our disadvantaged students	<p>2026/27 KS4 outcomes demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> progress significantly above the national average for the attainment of all pupils i.e. +0.1 or above Positive progress 8 score for disadvantaged students in English and Maths Internal tracking demonstrates pupil premium students engage with homework in line with their non-pupil premium peers
High attendance levels to school and to lessons	<p>2026/27 evidence on high attendance to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attendance gap between disadvantage pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils to be narrowed to no more than 2% Pupil Premium attendance to be 3% better than the National Average of all pupils. Persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils no more than 20%
High levels of wellbeing amongst all students, especially our disadvantaged	<p>2026/27 evidence on wellbeing to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> qualitative data such as pupil voice, as well as parental and staff surveys to show students feel safe, nurtured and able to learn small disparity in internal isolations and suspension rates between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students a significant increase in the participation of disadvantaged students in enrichment activities (Beyond the Classroom)

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: £100,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
To continue ensuring that all students receive high quality lessons, which are focused through the lens of educational disadvantage. This will be monitored and reviewed by regular and rigorous quality assurance and pupil voice activities.	The impact of high-quality teaching EEF-Effective-Professional-Development-Guidance-Report.pdf	2
To continue ensuring teaching and pastoral staff understand the challenges of educational disadvantage and how to meet them in their role. We will hold training, so all staff understand the challenges and the school's strategy.	A School's Guide to Implementation EEF <i>Jackson (2018) found that "teachers' impact on motivation, behaviour and self-control was ten times more likely to impact on students' long-term success than test scores"</i> Education Next	2
To continue to prioritise teachers' professional development, ensuring that staff receive high quality training within a career stage related and choice-driven programme.	<i>"Investing more in teachers' professional expertise would impact positively on inequality and social mobility, as our study shows that disadvantaged children are more likely to be taught by less experienced teachers".</i> Frontier Economics	2
To review and update the homework policy that has significant challenge for all students and will allow our disadvantaged students to engage in independent learning which will consolidate their learning and raise their attainment	"planned and focused activities are more beneficial than homework which is more regular but routine or not linked with what is being learned in class." (The Sutton Trust, 2014) Homework EEF	2
To continue Identifying best practice and positive examples of teaching methods and strategies that are working for Pupil Premium students and showcasing these to members of staff.	Creating a Culture of Appreciation & Recognition EEF blog: Supporting self-knowledge through modelling EEF	2
To introduce regular Pupil Premium briefings will be given to maintain a high profile for these students and ensure all teaching is approached within the lens of disadvantage	Government Events	2
Pupil Premium students' attainment to be a key focus point in every results analysis and action plan across the school. This should then be monitored by line managers to ensure effective action has taken place.	The Effective use of data for improvement in education	2
Disadvantaged and SEN students and their progress to be the first agenda item in every pastoral and departmental meetings across the school	Raising the bar with the pupil premium Croner	2
Modelling to be a key strategy deployed extensively across the curriculum to improve the quality of teaching and learning	EEF blog: 'Five-a-day' to improve outcomes EEF	2

To continue to encourage staff to attend external CPD sessions which push them towards progression, strengthen their practice and broaden their understanding	Maximising the impact of external CPD How to maximise the impact of NPQs in your school – The National Institute of Teaching	2
To continue to provide staff with an allocated amount of time during the school calendar and staff training days to focus on their own personal development	<i>“We know that teachers engage in professional development activities whilst balancing multiple and, at times, competing commitments and time pressures.”</i> EEF-Effective-Professional-Development-Guidance-Report.pdf	2
To implement a whole school literacy programme which focuses on the significant challenges for our students. This will develop their ability to utilise key vocabulary and enable them to comprehend key texts with confidence.	Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools EEF	1 & 2
Develop opportunities to read within the school day e.g. Reading at Pace in form time. This will mean all pupils in Years 7-10 experience high quality reading to develop their vocabulary and improve their reading ability.	Improving reading comprehension, vocabulary development and fluent reading are strongly correlated to attainment outcomes at GCSE.	1 & 2

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

Budgeted cost: £100,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
To maintain and invest in our reading team who plan and deliver targeted intervention sessions.	The-relationship-between-reading-age-education-and-life-outcomes	1& 2
To improve targeted students spelling, use of vocabulary and blending/segmenting of words through the Abigail Steel phonic programme. This will enable students to apply this vocabulary into the wider curriculum.	The reading framework Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools EEF ABIGAIL STEEL TRAINING - Blog	1& 2
To create an expertise in reading amongst the targeted students through guided prosody. This will allow students to read with fluency and confidence.	The reading framework Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools EEF	1& 2
To enhance student understanding of a variety of texts so they can establish its meaning and intent. This will provide them with the necessary skills to access and comprehend reading materials they will encounter as part of the curriculum.	The reading framework Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools EEF	1& 2
To offer a bespoke reading diet for our most vulnerable and disadvantaged students through 1:1 intervention. This enables them to feel comfortable and confident within a secure environment which breeds a positive outlook for them towards reading.	The reading framework Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools EEF	1, 2 & 3
Review and develop targeted Sixth Form mentoring programme. This will look at both academic and pastoral needs.	Peer tutoring EEF <i>Adds 5 months progress to student and mentor when they meet regularly. Lower attaining pupils tend to benefit more (+6 months) than higher attaining pupils.</i>	1, 2 & 3
To maintain and embed the Scholars Programme into our offer for disadvantaged students. This will continue to raise their aspirations and improve their GCSE outcomes by expanding their understanding of further education.	The-Scholars-Programme-and-Raising-Attainment.pdf	2

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

Budgeted cost: £206,920

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>To review and develop our Alternate Pathway Provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a bespoke package of support for each student identified to access the pathway • Identify and meet the reading needs to students to bring them in line with their peers • Provide Thrive intervention • Provide access to a therapy dog and other therapeutic interventions • Provide a curriculum as good or better than mainstream to ensure students leave with appropriate qualifications and are prepared for the next stage • Dedicated Learning Support in lessons • 1-2-1 interventions focused on wellbeing and resilience 	<p>“strong relationships between teachers and pupils underpin effective pedagogies in AP. <i>Alternative Provision: Effective Practice and Post 16 Transition January 2017</i></p> <p>Additional health needs guidance</p> <p>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan</p>	2, 3 & 4
<p>To recruit an experienced Family Liaison Officer to improve parental engagement and improve student well-being. This role will be key in developing individualised holistic packages for families which support them with accessing external support e.g. Housing and benefits</p>	<p><i>Approaches where a parent works directly with their child one-to-one typically show greater impact (+5 months). Lower attaining pupils appear to particularly benefit.</i></p>	3 & 4
<p>Supported Homework club afterschool with free transport home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to teachers and Learning Support Assistants • Access to online platforms 	<p><i>“Homework clubs can help to overcome these barriers by offering pupils the resources and support needed to undertake homework and revision.”</i> Education Endowment Fund</p>	2
<p>To continue investing in the upgrading of our library facility and resources to ensure it can be a learning hub and provide opportunities to read for all key stages</p>	<p><i>Reading for pleasure is the bigger indicator of a child’s educational success, more so than their parent’s socio-economic status (OECD, 2011)</i> <i>School librarians are an underutilised and untapped resource who can supercharge a school’s results and children’s success at school and beyond (Williams et al, 2013).</i></p>	1 & 2
<p>To introduce and establish a grab-and-go breakfast programme for disadvantaged students</p>	<p><i>Leeds University found that students who ate a regular breakfast scored two grades higher in their GCSE’s.</i></p>	3 & 4
<p>To review and develop Uniform and Equipment relief fund which aims to remove barriers for our disadvantaged students</p>	<p><i>Secondary schools only have around 70% of the necessary equipment they require for each upcoming academic year. The other 30% will come from the students and disadvantage students struggle to fulfil this the most.</i></p>	3 & 4

Total budgeted cost: £406,920

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Attendance for Pupil Premium students in 23/24 was, 88%, which was 1% above National Average. Saint Benedict won 4 consecutive awards for attendance within the top 25% of similar FFT secondary schools in England. However, there is still much work to be done; there was a 4% gap between Pupil Premium attendance for the school year 2023/24 with the school average which reflects the challenges that exist surrounding attendance with the cohort. This has led to adapting our approach towards communicating attendance with parents to recognise the impact of days off on educational progress. Success in this approach has already been demonstrated in a 3% improvement in our disadvantaged students' attendance.

Pupil engagement in homework remained high at 91% across the school, with provisions such as Study Club and the late bus which had been put in place, however, there remains significant pockets of pupil premium students who regularly fail to complete their homework. Parental engagement with Satchel One reached just under 40% which was an improvement on previous levels but still highlighted the barrier for some students which we need to work to overcome. As a school we are reviewing our homework policy and are looking to relaunch a new model for homework which seeks to address these areas.

Our Year 11 cohorts' progress 8 score of -0.38 suggests more focus needs to be directed towards teaching and learning. The data demonstrates a significant gap in the outcomes for our disadvantaged students compared to their peers in the core subjects which equates to over 1 grades worth of progress. Consequently, the school has put forward a new CPD calendar to upskill our current staff body and train them on how to support their disadvantaged students to reach their full potential. Alongside this, leaders at the school will be looking to raise the profile of our Pupil Premium students so that they are championed and prioritised when it comes to creating, evaluating and reviewing practices.

Our literacy interventions have proved especially effective when supporting our Pupil Premium cohort. Various students have added over 5 years to their reading age in one academic year and are now able to access the full curriculum and be successful in a mainstream setting. The success of this programme has led to its expansion as we've recruited two additional reading teachers to allow for regular and targeted intervention.

The revamp of the library and recruitment of a librarian has led to a significant change in how regularly it is used and been a place where students can both escape and thrive. The library has been used as a hub for intervention sessions for our disadvantaged students. The success of this has allowed plans for more investment in library resources, especially within non-fiction, so it can be used as a tool for learning across our curriculum. Likewise, having a librarian means that we are making plans to start our own book club which we will further develop our schools reading culture and increase student engagement with their literacy skills.

Additional activity

Our pupil premium strategy will be supplemented by additional activity that is not being funded by pupil premium or recovery premium. That will include:

- embedding more effective practice around feedback. [EEF evidence on feedback](#) demonstrates it has significant benefits, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- utilising support from our trained Mental Health First Aiders, access to School Health, external agencies such as Building Sound Minds and Love4Life.
- offering a range of high-quality extra-curricular activities to boost wellbeing, behaviour, attendance, and aspiration. Activities (e.g., The Duke of Edinburgh's Award), will focus on life skills such as confidence, resilience, and socialising. Disadvantaged pupils will be encouraged and supported to participate.

Planning, implementation, and evaluation

In reviewing our current pupil premium strategy, we evaluated why activity undertaken in the previous year had not had the degree of impact that we had expected. We also commissioned a pupil premium review to get an external perspective.

We triangulated evidence from multiple sources of data including exams and assessments, engagement in class book scrutiny, and conversations with parents, students and teachers in order to identify the challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils.

We looked at several reports and studies about effective use of pupil premium, the impact of disadvantage on education outcomes and how to address challenges to learning presented by socio-economic disadvantage. We also looked at several studies about the impact of the pandemic on disadvantaged pupils.

We used the [EEF's implementation guidance](#) to help us develop our strategy and will continue to use it through the implementation of our activities.

We have implemented a robust evaluation framework for the duration of our three-year strategy and will adjust our plan over time to secure better outcomes for pupils.