

# 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	1474
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	32.6%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers ( <b>3 year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year</b> )	2024-2027
Date this statement was published	04/11/2024
Date on which it will be reviewed	June 2026
Statement authorised by	Hazel Boyce
Pupil premium lead	John Flynn
Governor / Trustee lead	Jonathon Ralphs

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£464040 (PP Recipients Apr 25-Mar26)
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
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b> <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 pupils 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 pupils 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 brings with it a sense of confidence.

To ensure all pupils receive the best possible education, we remain committed to continuous 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 strive to provide a safe and loving environment with a strong commitment to whole school routines which create a consistent community 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	<p>Our reading assessments and observations of KS3 pupils indicate that a significant proportion of <b>disadvantaged pupils have lower levels of reading comprehension than their peers</b>. Gaps in vocabulary are evident among our Pupil Premium cohort.</p> <p>It seems that, on average, the vocabulary, background knowledge and ability of pupils to draw inferences from texts is a significant issue for a large proportion of our disadvantaged cohort. This conclusion talks to the attainment of disadvantage pupils in GCSE language, which measures much of the same reading construct.</p>
2. Attainment	<p><b>The GCSE attainment of disadvantaged pupils at GCSE is lower than non-disadvantaged pupils</b>. Pupil premium pupils in 2024 and 2025 achieved, on average, a grade below their non-pupil premium peers. Observational data suggests these gaps in learning are compounded by low motivation, which leads to lesson avoidance. There is a need for targeted academic intervention for some pupils.</p>
3. Attendance	<p>Our attendance data indicates that <b>attendance among disadvantaged pupils remains at 4% lower than the figure for all pupils across Years 7-11</b>. Whilst our attendance for all pupils and disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national average, and we have improved attendance for all pupils including PP, we remain committed to closing any gaps in attendance rates, including persistent absence. An increased number of Pupil Premium learners report feelings of high anxiety as a reason for sporadic absences. There is a need to implement the EBSNA framework to support these pupils.</p>
4. SEMH need	<p>Internal behaviour and attendance data, data on exclusion rates, wellbeing survey data and the numbers referrals to school health, counselling services and other agencies, point <b>to a rise in social and emotional wellbeing issues</b> for a growing of pupils. These challenges around anxiety and mental health particularly affect disadvantaged pupils and are having an impact on their levels of academic attainment which results in lesson avoidance (on-site truancy) and further disruptions to their learning.</p>
5. Homework	<p>Homework completion rates across all year groups show a <b>significant number of PP learners do not complete their homework regularly or in sufficient detail</b>. This figure is disproportionately represented by pupils from a disadvantaged background. Challenges of physical space, cognitive ability, caring for siblings and independent study habits are just some of the barriers which prevent pupils from completing homework on a regular basis and to a standard which will benefit and improve their learning.</p>
6. Attitudes to school and learning	<p>Our data on behaviour, including <b>safeguarding reports, and external suspensions rate, shows disadvantaged pupils are more likely to be suspended</b>. Suspension rates for disadvantaged pupils are higher with approximately half of all suspensions coming from our disadvantaged pupils. Speech, Language and Communication screening data identifies many of these pupils lack the self-regulation strategies to cope with challenging situations, which has a negative impact on their learning.</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
Improvement in the reading skills of our disadvantaged pupils	<p>2026/2027 evidence to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a small disparity between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils sitting the New Group Reading Tests (NGRT) at the end of each school term. Success through these tests will show incremental gains which means pupils will be better able to access the full curriculum.</li> <li>progress for disadvantaged pupils in literacy-based subjects to show clear signs of the PP gap closing, reducing to half a grade difference by 2026 and a third of a grade by 2027.</li> </ul>
Improvement in the GCSE outcomes of our disadvantaged pupils	<p>2026/27 KS4 outcomes demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment data shows diminishing progress gaps compared with non-disadvantaged pupils.</li> <li>Internal tracking demonstrates pupil premium pupils engage with homework in line with their non-pupil premium peers</li> </ul>
High attendance levels to school and to lessons	<p>2026/27 evidence on high attendance to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attendance gap between disadvantage pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils to be narrowed to no more than 2%</li> <li>Pupil Premium attendance to be in line with non-PP national attendance data</li> <li>Persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils no more than 20%</li> </ul>
High levels of wellbeing amongst all pupils, especially our disadvantaged	<p>2026/27 evidence on wellbeing to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>qualitative data such as pupil voice, as well as parental and staff surveys to show pupils feel safe, nurtured and able to learn</li> <li>a significant increase in the participation of disadvantaged pupils in enrichment activities (Beyond the Classroom)</li> </ul>
Increase levels of homework engagement and completion	<p>2026/27 data and evidence from Arbor regarding homework completion will show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at least 80% of all PP learners complete their homework regularly</li> <li>pupil voice and survey will show most pupils know at least two independent learning strategies they can use.</li> </ul>
Improved attitude to learning from our disadvantaged pupils	<p>2026/27 evidence on behaviour and attitudes to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attitude to learning scores in pupil reports</li> <li>Daily behaviour data will show no difference in the number of negatives for PP and non-PP</li> </ul>

- Suspension data will show no difference in the number of negatives for PP and non-PP

## 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
<p>Ensure all staff understand the challenges of educational disadvantage, how they may manifest themselves in school and in the classroom and how to meet them in their role.</p> <p>We will provide regular training, so all staff understand the challenges and the school's strategy.</p>	<p>Evidence from the EEF <a href="#">Implementation Guidance Report</a> suggests underlying values and beliefs need changing to make sustained changes to human behaviour, in this case to teachers' practice in the classroom. <a href="#">A School's Guide to Implementation   EEF</a></p> <p><i>Jackson (2018) found that "teachers' impact on motivation, behaviour and self-control was ten times more likely to impact on pupils' long-term success than test scores"</i> <a href="#">Education Next</a></p>	1,2,3,4,5,6
Continue ensuring that all pupils 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.	<p><a href="#">The impact of high-quality teaching</a></p> <p><a href="#">EEF-Effective-Professional-Development-Guidance-Report.pdf</a></p>	2
Prioritise teachers' professional development, ensuring that staff receive high quality training within a career stage related and choice-driven programme.	<p><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> <a href="#">Frontier Economics</a></p>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6
Review and update the homework policy to include strategies to track and monitor completion and impact. All homework will focus on consolidation and no new learning.	<p>"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) <a href="#">Homework   EEF</a></p>	1, 2 & 5
To continue Identifying best practice and positive examples of teaching methods and pastoral strategies that are working for Pupil Premium pupils and showcasing these to members of staff.	<p><a href="#">Creating a Culture of Appreciation &amp; Recognition</a></p> <p><a href="#">EEF blog: Supporting self-knowledge through modelling   EEF</a></p>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6
To introduce regular Pupil Premium briefings will be given to maintain a high profile for these pupils and ensure all teaching is approached within	<p><a href="#">Government Events</a></p>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6

the lens of disadvantage and all pastoral needs are being met.		
Pupil Premium pupils' 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.	<a href="#">The Effective use of data for improvement in education</a>	1, 2 & 5
Disadvantaged and SEN pupils, their progress and attendance, to be the first agenda item in every pastoral and departmental meetings across the school	<a href="#">Raising the bar with the pupil premium   Croner</a>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6
Scaffolding to be a key strategy deployed extensively across the curriculum to improve the quality of teaching and learning	<a href="#">EEF blog: 'Five-a-day' to improve outcomes   EEF</a>	1, 2 & 5
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.	<p>Improving reading comprehension, vocabulary development and fluent reading are strongly correlated to attainment outcomes at GCSE.</p> <p><a href="#">Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools   EEF</a></p>	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.	<a href="#">The-relationship-between-reading-age-education-and-life-outcomes</a>	1& 2
To improve targeted pupils spelling, use of vocabulary and blending/segmenting of words through the Abigail Steel phonic programme. This will enable pupils to apply this vocabulary into the wider curriculum.	<a href="#">The reading framework</a> <a href="#">Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools   EEF</a> <a href="#">ABIGAIL STEEL TRAINING - Blog</a>	1& 2
To create an expertise in reading amongst the targeted pupils through guided prosody. This will allow pupils to read with fluency and confidence.	<a href="#">The reading framework</a> <a href="#">Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools   EEF</a>	1& 2
To enhance pupil 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.	<a href="#">The reading framework</a> <a href="#">Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools   EEF</a>	1& 2
To offer a bespoke reading diet for our most vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils 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.	<a href="#">The reading framework</a> <a href="#">Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools   EEF</a>	1, 2 & 3
Review and develop targeted Sixth Form mentoring programme. This will look at both academic and pastoral needs.	<a href="#">Peer tutoring   EEF</a> <i>Adds 5 months progress to pupil 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 pupils. This will continue to raise their aspirations and improve their GCSE outcomes by expanding their understanding of further education.	<a href="#">The-Scholars-Programme-and-Raising-Attainment.pdf</a>	2, 3 & 4

## 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"> <li>• Provide a bespoke package of support for each pupils identified to access the pathway</li> <li>• Identify and meet the reading needs to pupils to bring them in line with their peers</li> <li>• Provide Thrive intervention</li> <li>• Provide access to a therapy dog and other therapeutic interventions</li> <li>• Provide a curriculum as good or better than mainstream to ensure pupils leave with appropriate qualifications and are prepared for the next stage</li> <li>• Dedicated Learning Support in lessons</li> <li>• 1-2-1 interventions focused on wellbeing and resilience</li> </ul>	<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><a href="#">Additional health needs guidance</a></p> <p><a href="#">Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan</a></p>	1, 2, 3 4 & 6
To train all pastoral and safeguarding team members in use of the EBSNA pathway and completion of Early Help Assessments.	<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>	3, 4 & 6
<p>Supported Homework club afterschool with free transport home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to teachers and Learning Support Assistants</li> <li>• Access to online platforms</li> </ul>	<p>“Homework clubs can help to overcome these barriers by offering pupils the resources and support needed to undertake homework and revision.” Education Endowment Fund</p>	1, 2, 3 & 5
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><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></p> <p><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, 4 & 5
To review and develop Uniform and Equipment relief fund which aims to remove barriers for our disadvantaged pupils	<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 pupils and disadvantage pupils struggle to fulfil this the most.</i>	3, 4 & 6

**Total budgeted cost: £406,920**

## Part B: Review of the previous academic year 2024-25)

### Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils



Having analysed the school's performance data, coupled with the attainment 8 score of 35.7 for PP learners in 24/25, our PP cohort has performed below that which was expected – some 10 points lower than that of their non-PP peers. This is a significant gap in attainment and progress for our PP learners. The gaps in performance in some subjects is less than this and indicates a move towards narrowing the gap more quickly than other subject areas. We have much to learn from these subjects and PP champions have been created in each departmental area to identify what can be learned. Results for this cohort indicate PP learners score a whole grade lower than their non-PP peers. Much has been done with teachers and learning support assistants on scaffolding for learners and providing feedback to address misconceptions. A school wide focus on scaffolding has been launched.

Our evaluation of the approaches delivered last academic year indicates that a greater focus is still needed on disadvantaged pupils, including closer monitoring of performance throughout the school. This has been considered with the updated strategy for this year.

Attendance for Pupil Premium pupils in 24/25 was, 90.1%. This has increase by 2% since the previous academic year and which is 0.7% above National Average. Saint Benedict has continued to be awarded with FFT certificates for its attendance being within the top 25% of similar secondary schools in England. There is, however, further work to be done. There remains a 4% gap between Pupil Premium attendance for the school year 2024/25 compared with the attendance of non-PP learners. To address this, we have launched the EBSNA toolkit which is now in use by all pastoral teams and the attendance officers. Already we are seeing its impact. We are also working closely with the DfE attendance data AI toolkit and drilling into its data for patterns of absence previously not identified.

Engagement with homework remained high in 24/25. 75% of all homework completed by PP learners was deemed to be of a good or better quality. To aid with homework engagement, we have launched the Arbor App to pupils and parents. 93% of all PP families have downloaded and engaged with the app. This is just 1% less than non-PP families. Greater communication around homework has been enabled because of this app. Additional provisions to support completion of homework such as Study Club and the late bus remain in place and continue to yield positive impact. Nearly 40% of all PP learners accessed study club regularly in 24/25. Our reviewed homework policy and strategy seeks to continue to promote the benefits of engaging with and completing homework. This has been supported by CPD for all staff and forms part of our new Teaching and Learning Strategy **What Three Things**.

Interventions in reading for those learners who are PP continue to be effective. A total of 26 learners from Key Stage 3 who are eligible for the Pupil Premium, accessed reading intervention in 24/25, making an average of 43 months' progress in this area. This intervention focused on phonics, fluency and/or comprehension, depending on area of need.

A total of 18 PP learners accessed numeracy intervention, each averaging 27 months progress at the end of the course.

Our library continues to be used as a hub for intervention sessions for our disadvantaged pupils. It is also used for our new Year 7 library lessons where fortnightly all pupils in English enjoy the rich

variety of reading activities the library has to offer. The library is also home to the creative writing club - our most well attended after school club. Almost half of all attendees are PP learners.

After two terms of running the breakfast club in 24/25, we made the decision to stop paying for it. The data showed there was little to no impact for the pupils using it and the additional work required from staff was becoming unsustainable. Attendance for the cohort accessing the programme, remained broadly in line with the previous year's when there was no breakfast programme. Similarly, no evidence indicated an improvement in behaviour or progress towards academic outcomes.

Half of all pupils accessing our school counselling services are eligible for the Pupil Premium. In addition to this service, we offer access to ELSA, Thrive, Compass, Love for Life, Catharsis, School Health, EBSNA, Health Panels and Early Help for pupils and families. More of our PP learners access these services than their non-PP peers.

The positive impact of these services can be seen in the levels of engagement and attendance to school from this cohort.

We screened all pupils in the 24/25 cohort using The Language Link to identify those requiring speech and Language intervention. Almost 40% of those requiring intervention are PP learners. This intervention begins for 70 pupils in September 2025.

### **Additional activity**

Our pupil premium strategy will continue to 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.
- 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.
- Providing access to our on-site school counsellor.
- Termly RAAP meetings with Directors of Learning for each subject.