

St Francis of Assisi Catholic College

‘Nil satis optimum’



Pupil Premium Strategy Statement 2025 - 2028

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
Number of pupils in school	1124 whole school 938 in Y7-11
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	Y7-11: 27.6% Y7: 34.1% Y8: 23.9% Y9: 26.5% Y10: 28.3% Y11: 30.7%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2025/26 – 2027/28
Date this statement was published	November 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	October 2026
Statement authorised by	Mr L Salkeld
Pupil premium lead	Mr A Grice
Governor / Trustee lead	Mr A Partington

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£270,925
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£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>	£270,925

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intention is that all students, irrespective of their background or the challenges that they face make good progress and maximise their attainment. We aim to equip students with the skills and qualifications that will allow them to progress to their desired outcome post-16.

Our strategy recognises that every disadvantaged student is an individual. We aim to offer tailored support according to their needs.

The focus of this pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged students to achieve their goals. We aim to support such pupils irrespective of their previous attainment.

Our Mission Statement reflects our commitment to living and developing our faith community. Our aim is to provide an excellent Catholic education to develop and fulfil the potential of all pupils in our care. The school ethos is based on faith, culture and learning. High quality teaching is central to everything that we offer. We aim to ensure that disadvantaged students enjoy the best possible level of teaching as we are aware that such teaching is even more vital for disadvantaged students than others. By focusing on disadvantaged learners in the classroom we aim to address the attainment gap and ensure that all students make the best possible progress – Nil Satis Optimum.

Our approach is responsive to the challenges that face our disadvantaged students. Challenges have been identified using robust data collection and analysis. Evaluation will be based on similar data. The approaches adopted aim to operate at three levels: whole school teaching and learning, academic interventions for disadvantaged students and other activities that support students outside of the taught curriculum.

To ensure that the strategy is effective we will:

- Provide excellent teaching through recruitment, retention and CPD for staff
- Adopt a whole school approach where all staff take responsibility for outcomes and raise expectations of what students can achieve
- Ensure that students are challenged in the work that they are set
- Ensure that students receive the correct support to allow them to succeed and ensure bespoke support is available to meet the needs of individuals
- Act early to intervene at the point the need is identified which includes strategies to improve attendance and punctuality, targeted academic support for disadvantaged students including intervention, small group tuition, as well as assessment and examination support
- Embed our Catholic Virtues so that students are aware of their wider responsibilities to Live and Learn in the right way

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Attendance data from previous academic years continues to show that disadvantaged students have lower attendance rates than their non-disadvantaged peers. For some, the resulting gaps in learning contribute to frustration and disengagement, manifesting as poor behaviour in the classroom.
2	Our assessments, wellbeing surveys, staff observations and conversations with pupils and their families, have highlighted a range of social and emotional challenges affecting many students. These include clinically diagnosed anxiety, and depression, as well as low self-esteem. Such issues are particularly prevalent among disadvantaged pupils and have a demonstrable impact on their academic attainment.
3	Disadvantaged pupils at SFA typically enter Year 7 with lower prior attainment in numeracy compared to their non-disadvantaged peers, as evidenced by baseline assessments. This gap continues into GCSE maths, where disadvantaged pupils generally achieve lower outcomes than their peers.
4	Disadvantaged pupils at SFA typically enter Year 7 with lower prior attainment in literacy compared to their non-disadvantaged peers, as shown by baseline literacy assessments. This gap persists through to GCSE English, where disadvantaged students generally achieve lower outcomes than their peers.
5	Disadvantaged students often harbour lower aspirations, which can limit their exposure to ambitious career pathways and reduce their perseverance with challenging tasks—particularly outside the classroom. Internal quality assurance indicates that these students are less likely to engage with aspirational opportunities, including high-quality information, advice, and guidance (IAG). Additionally, parental engagement can be a barrier, as many parents of Pupil Premium students have had negative experiences with education themselves, making them less likely to engage effectively with school initiatives.

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
To improve attendance for PP students so that it is more comparable with their peers.	Attendance figures for Pupil Premium students will be within 2% of those for non-Pupil Premium students. Assessments indicate that high absence correlates with lower attainment.
To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.	Improvement in attendance rates and behaviour scores. Improved participation rates of enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities. Positive student voice feedback.
Improved attainment among disadvantaged pupils across the curriculum at the end of KS4, with a focus on students that achieve standard and strong passes in English and maths.	Percentages of grades 4+ in Maths and English GCSEs for PP students will be higher. Standard pass in English and maths is within 5% of non-PP students (currently 9.4%).
PP students show an improvement in reading skills.	Test scores (Direct Instruction and Bedrock) will show that PP students have at least matched their chronological age by the end of Year 8. Lesson observations will show that students are able to engage with reading in lessons effectively.
Improved aspirations and engagement with future pathways among disadvantaged pupils.	All PP students will experience an aspirations programme that encompasses all year groups and ensures that they know the opportunities that exist once they leave school. No PP students will be NEET.

Activity in this academic year

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

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Setting and progress tracking at KS3 take account of PP characteristics and prior attainment, ensuring early identification of gaps and targeted intervention.	Research suggests that PP students are often placed in lower sets because of factors other than academic ability. Placing students in the right group ensures that they have the appropriate level of challenge and support. Early and responsive setting can have a significant impact on long-term attainment.	3,4
Standardised testing has been purchased for use with new Year 7 intake and provides a consistent, evidence-based measure of progress to identify learning gaps and inform targeted support.	Initial and ongoing assessment is vital if other strategies are to be effective throughout the Key Stages. The EEF highlights the importance of accurate diagnostic assessment to identify learning gaps and target support precisely.	3,4
All students in Y7 have access and time built in for Bedrock Learning. Those who come in with lower standardised scores may be on the DI programme for English and/or Maths	Students will have timetabled periods for Bedrock Learning as well as Direct Instruction. The EEF identifies "Reading Comprehension Strategies" (+6 months) and "Oral Language Interventions" (+6 months) as high-impact approaches for improving outcomes, especially for disadvantaged students.	4
Students in Y8 have been timetabled an additional lesson in Maths and English. The lesson is targeted at supporting skills that may have been missed during lockdowns.	Increased teaching will have the impact of extending the maths and English curriculum time and give students increased access to high quality teaching which will mean that gaps in learning are identified and addressed before they become a problem when pupils move on to GCSE study.	3,4
Ongoing CPD for teaching and learning with specific focus on disadvantaged students.	EEF identifies high-quality teaching as the single most important factor in improving outcomes for disadvantaged students. Research consistently shows that improving everyday classroom practice has a far greater long-term impact than bolt-on interventions.	All

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

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Learning Progression Coaches provide targeted in-class support in English and Maths to address gaps, build confidence, and improve progress for PP students.	The EEF reports that teaching assistant interventions, when implemented effectively, have an average impact of +4 months' additional progress. However, this rises substantially when support staff are trained and strategically directed, rather than being used for general classroom assistance.	2,3
Lexia PowerUp supports PP students with dyslexia or low reading ages through personalised, adaptive literacy intervention to improve reading fluency and comprehension.	The programme uses real-time data to tailor instruction to individual needs, helping students to raise their literacy levels, by way of word study, grammar and comprehension. The EEF identifies literacy interventions as one of the most effective ways to close attainment gaps, particularly for disadvantaged students, with an average impact of +4 to +6 months' progress.	4
Targeted one-to-one and small group interventions in Year 7 address foundational literacy and numeracy gaps identified through MIDYIS assessments.	Evidence from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Teaching and Learning Toolkit shows that small-group tuition has an average impact of +4 months' additional progress, and one-to-one tuition can add +5 months, particularly for pupils who have fallen significantly behind their peers.	3,4
Focused intervention for Year 10 and 11 PP students at risk of underachievement in English and Maths to improve GCSE outcomes and reduce the attainment gap.	Evidence from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Teaching and Learning Toolkit shows that small-group tuition has an average impact of +4 months' additional progress, and one-to-one tuition can add +5 months, particularly for pupils who have fallen significantly behind their peers.	3,4

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

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Attendance Officer to track, monitor, and improve the attendance of some of our most vulnerable students, working closely with parents and carers to identify barriers, strengthen communication, and promote a shared understanding of the importance of regular attendance.	Evidence from the DfE demonstrates a clear link between attendance and attainment: pupils who are persistently absent are less than half as likely to achieve expected grades in English and Maths GCSEs. Improving attendance is therefore central to closing the attainment gap for disadvantaged learners.	1
In-school Family Support Worker to prioritise PP students for targeted support in overcoming barriers to school attendance, working closely with parents and carers to improve engagement, routines, and wellbeing.	The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Menu of Approaches identifies attendance and parental engagement as essential components of effective Pupil Premium strategies. Persistent absence and low engagement from home are major contributors to underachievement among disadvantaged pupils. EEF research on “Parental Engagement” indicates that when schools build strong, trust-based relationships with families, pupils make on average +4 months’ additional progress. This is particularly effective when support focuses on practical barriers (e.g., routines, communication, and wellbeing).	1,2
Funding to ensure PP students have equal access to enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities, promoting engagement, confidence, and cultural capital.	The EEF Toolkit identifies participation in enrichment and extra-curricular activities as a key factor in building confidence, resilience, and engagement, which in turn contribute to improved academic outcomes.	2,3,4,5
Targeted IAG and careers support, including college visits and the BCU Accelerate programme, to raise aspirations and improve post-16 outcomes for PP students.	Targeted IAG support helps disadvantaged pupils to make informed choices about their futures and supports smoother transitions into further education, training, or employment. It enables students to have clear, aspirational post-16 goals and pathways.	5

Targeted pastoral and SEMH interventions, including in-school counsellor, to remove barriers to learning, improve wellbeing, and strengthen school engagement for PP students.	Well structured pastoral and SEMH interventions can lead to improvements in attendance, behaviour, and academic outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.	1,2,3,4
Contingency fund for acute issues	Based on our experiences, we have identified a need to set a small amount of funding aside to respond quickly to needs that have not yet been identified.	All

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

	Pupil Premium Students 2025			Non-Pupil Premium Students 2025		
	SFA	National	LA	SFA	National	LA
Average Point Score at GCSE	48.0	34.9	33.5	54.7	50.3	48.0
Attaining Grade 4 in English and Maths %	73.2	43.5	38.9	82.6	72.7	68.1
Estimated Progress 8	0.21			0.33		

Attendance 2024-25

	Pupil Premium Students		Non-Pupil Premium Students		PP – Non PP Gap	
	SFA	National	SFA	National	SFA	National
Attendance %	92.1	89.4	94.3	94.6	2.2 (intended outcome 2.0%)	5.2