



ST JAMES'
CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Disadvantaged Pupils Strategy

2025-26

Date of Adoption	December 2025
Date of Review	December 2026

St James' Mission Statement:

*To ensure everyone within our school **family** achieves their full potential,
to encourage learning and development through **faith**,
and to strive for **excellence***

Rationale:

The Department for Education (DfE) continues to provide additional funding to schools to help disadvantaged children of all abilities perform better, and close the gap between them and their peers. We believe that all children within our school family should be given equal opportunity to reach their full potential. This statement details our school's use of Pupil Premium (PP) funding to help improve the attainment and progress of our disadvantaged children. It outlines our Disadvantaged 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.

Aims:

Rooted in the principles of compassion, justice and solidarity, this strategy draws inspiration from the Catholic faith's teachings, which emphasise the inherent dignity of every human being and the obligation to care for the most vulnerable. We aim to address the disparities that affect individuals and families, allowing us to bring about positive change and create a more just and equitable society. This strategy stands as a testament to the enduring influence of faith in fostering social harmony and justice for all, irrespective of their socio-economic circumstances.



ST JAMES'

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

School Overview

School Name	St James' Catholic High School, Cheadle Hulme
Number of pupils in school	824
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible students	143 (17%)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2025-26
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	Stephen Guscott (Deputy Headteacher)
Pupil Premium Lead	Laura Moss (Assistant Headteacher)

Funding Overview

Pupil Premium funding allocation this academic year	£141,620
Pupil Premium funding carried forward from previous years	0
Total budget for this academic year	£141,620

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

In line with the aims of this policy, we strive to ensure disadvantaged children make the same or better academic progress in comparison to their non-disadvantaged peers within school and nationally. The Disadvantaged Pupils Strategy should remove or alleviate as many barriers as possible for our disadvantaged learners giving them the best possibility of success. It should also support their pastoral wellbeing including behaviour, attendance and mental health. All children should be given the opportunity to achieve success and where there are factors affecting these chances, we will aim to resolve them and support the child.

Challenges

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

Challenge Number	Detail of Challenge
1	Progress and Attainment Disadvantaged children enter St James' with generally lower KS2 attainment levels than their non-disadvantaged peers. Our disadvantaged children do not tend to make as much progress or achieve as high attainment as their non-disadvantaged peers.
2	Attendance Attendance of disadvantaged children (including persistent absence) is below that of non-disadvantaged children, particularly in Y9 and Y11 where there is a larger gap. Low attendance reduces the positive impact of all the measures put in place to improve attainment and progress.
3	Social and Emotional Challenges A number of children's mental health and social and emotional wellbeing may prove to be a barrier to learning and progress. There is an increasing number of students, both disadvantaged and not, who are struggling with poor mental health which is affecting their concentration, attendance, progress and academic performance.
4	High Expectations and Aspirations Through Literacy Our quality assurance measures have demonstrated that many lower-attaining disadvantaged pupils are not sufficiently equipped to complete challenging tasks with low resilience and a lack of perseverance. In line with the national picture, this is fundamentally linked to poor literacy skills, including weak reading comprehension and limited vocabulary, which severely impede the quality of their written work.
5	Access to Educational Equipment, Resources and Experiences Limited home access to resources: ICT equipment, educational materials, uniform, and cultural experiences may impact children's potential for learning, progress and attainment.

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 Outcomes	Success Criteria
1. Raised achievement of disadvantaged children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced gap between outcomes of disadvantaged children and non-disadvantaged to be broadly in line with national averages Reduction in disadvantaged pupils who remain below expected performance Implementation of SSAT Embedding Formative Assessment Programme to ensure all pupils access the curriculum with adaptations being made swiftly as required
2. To continue to improve the attendance (especially persistent absence) of disadvantaged children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved attendance figures amongst disadvantaged children to be a minimum of 96%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in persistent absence of disadvantaged children • Improved communication and engagement with families of disadvantaged learners
3. Effective and sustained mental health and wellbeing provision for all children, especially disadvantaged children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing and sustaining high levels of wellbeing through the use of Thrive Mental Wellbeing service • Sustained access to mental health support within school through the Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator • Mental health and wellbeing focus in the PSHCE curriculum
4. To raise and sustain high expectations and aspirations through literacy skills for all children, particularly disadvantaged pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased exposure to, and engagement in, literacy activities across the curriculum • Greater opportunities for extended reading through the St James' Literary Canon • Progress of disadvantaged lower prior attainers tracked to identify the impact of literacy strategies
5. Ensuring equitable home access to equipment and educational materials, resources and experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a Chromebook to each disadvantaged child • Ensuring all disadvantaged children have access to all resources and experiences that are required to provide full access to the curriculum

Activity in this academic year

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

Teaching (for example CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £70,625

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge numbers addressed
<p>Implementation of SSAT Embedding Formative Assessment Programme across all subject areas to ensure consistent and effective use of teaching strategies and effective feedback to facilitate improved pupil outcomes.</p> <p>Monthly teaching and learning CPD sessions in Teacher Learning Communities (TLCs) to consider formative assessment strategies that staff will focus on and trial in the classroom through Personal Action Plans.</p> <p>Monthly TLC workshops to review and evaluate successes/areas for improvement through professional discussions and peer observations.</p> <p>Provision of resources to support high quality teaching and learning such as CPD texts and educational equipment such as visualisers.</p>	<p>EEF: 'Building on over 20 years of research by Dylan Wiliam and Siobhan Leahy, this programme has shown to make a positive impact on student achievement and teacher behaviours.'</p> <p>EEF: Providing feedback is well-evidenced and has a high impact on learning outcomes.</p> <p>EEF: 'Achieves positive impact on learner outcomes showing two additional months' progress in GCSE Attainment 8 scores for learners in EFA schools'</p> <p>SSAT: Teachers felt the Teacher Learning Communities (TLCs) improved their practice by allowing valuable dialogue between teachers and encouraged collaboration.</p> <p>EEF: Evidence indicates that high quality teaching is the most powerful way for schools to improve pupil attainment, particularly for socio-economically</p>	1, 4

<p>Continue to develop effective quality assurance strategies to monitor, evaluate and improve the consistency of Quality First Teaching.</p>	<p>disadvantaged students.</p> <p>EEF: ‘The best available evidence indicates that great teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve pupil attainment. Ensuring that every teacher is supported in delivering high quality teaching is essential for achieving the best outcomes for all pupils, particularly the most disadvantaged amongst them.’</p>	
<p>Progress and attainment of disadvantaged children will be tracked at each termly data point and also be a focus in Faculty, Line Management and Raising Standards Meetings. There will be regular progress meetings between academic and pastoral senior and middle leaders to monitor attendance, punctuality, progress, attainment and attitude to learning with targeted actions implemented swiftly.</p> <p>Robust monitoring and evaluation of disadvantaged children through analysis of termly data in addition to Faculty progress and attainment tracking throughout the term. Faculties to focus on children identified as below track, adopting a range of suitable strategies to support their academic and pastoral progress.</p> <p>Focus children and disadvantaged children added as standing agenda items to Faculty meetings and department development CPD time to discuss and monitor progress, impact and areas to develop.</p> <p>Raising Standards meetings to highlight focus children (including disadvantaged children) to Head of Faculty and ensure suitable actions are being taken to support them, as well as monitored to measure the impact.</p> <p>Development of personal pupil profiles of disadvantaged children, informed by pupil voice, detailing how to best support specific children with their learning.</p> <p>Sharing of best practice across faculties and pastoral leaders to ensure a range of strategies are being used to support and challenge disadvantaged children.</p>	<p>DfE: Academic progress and attainment of disadvantaged children has been below that of non-disadvantaged children for a number of years.</p> <p>EEF: research shows positive impact of parental engagement, behaviour interventions and social and emotional language interventions.</p> <p>EEF: Assessment – particularly teacher assessment – is one of the great unclaimed prizes of learning. EEF resources... put a heavy emphasis on the value of identifying pupils in need of additional support.</p> <p>EEF: To create an environment that is genuinely positive and supportive for all pupils, without exception, school leaders and teachers should seek to understand the activities and interactions driving pupil development in each ‘microsystem’ within the school – the classes that pupils attend as well as the corridors and outside areas.</p> <p>NFER: ‘More successful schools have an ethos of high attainment for all pupils. They view each pupil as an individual and consciously avoid stereotyping disadvantaged pupils by referring to them as a group – they never assume that all disadvantaged pupils face similar barriers or have less potential to succeed.’</p>	<p>1, 3, 4, 5</p>
<p>Develop and implement targeted exam support for KS4 children including: revision sessions, mentoring, study skills support and guidance with disadvantaged children prioritised to ensure they have the appropriate support in place for internal and external examinations.</p> <p>Ensure support staff are suitably trained to support those disadvantaged children with exam access arrangements.</p>	<p>EEF: Extending school time can improve progress by 3+ months.</p> <p>The Exams Office: To ensure the best support is provided in assessments, staff delivering this support should be suitably trained.</p>	<p>1,3, 4, 5</p>
<p>Implement an increased focus and profile of whole school disciplinary literacy to support disadvantaged children for whom literacy is a barrier.</p>	<p>Alex Quigley, ‘Closing the Vocabulary Gap’: Assessment of disadvantaged children’s work highlights that vocabulary is a key area for development, in line with national themes. Richer vocabulary leads to better quality exam responses and therefore attainment in literacy-based subjects.</p>	<p>1, 4, 5</p>

<p>Continued development of the St James' Literary Canon to allow disadvantaged children access to quality reading materials.</p> <p>Year 7 children to partake in the Book Trust's BookBuzz initiative, ensuring all disadvantaged children experience choosing and receiving a book of their own.</p>	<p>EEF: (2018) schools must 'prioritise disciplinary literacy across the curriculum' to support progress of all children, including disadvantaged children.</p> <p>EEF: Three quarters of schools in England say poor attendance and low-reading levels are the biggest challenges affecting their socio-economically disadvantaged pupils' academic achievement.</p> <p>Book Trust: This programme, which helps secondary schools to encourage 11–13-year-olds to keep reading for pleasure, gives students choice and ownership of what they read – important factors in independent reading.</p> <p>DfE: 'Children who become engaged in reading can make huge progress in their literacy development simply through their independent reading'</p> <p>DfE: 'Wide recreational reading expands pupils' knowledge about the world and about language, as well as their understanding of subject-specific academic and technical vocabulary. Such knowledge eases their access to the whole curriculum. Higher performance in mathematics has also been found.'</p>	
<p>Continued focus on quality first teaching including appropriate adaptation and planning for disadvantaged children.</p> <p>Use of Faculty department development time to focus on CPD to enrich pedagogy and apply relevant strategies to specific areas for development.</p>	<p>EEF: The best available evidence indicates that great teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve outcomes for their pupils.</p> <p>The Sutton Trust (2011): The effects of high-quality teaching are especially significant for children from disadvantaged backgrounds: over a school year, these children gain 1.5 years' worth of learning with very effective teachers, compared with 0.5 years with poorly performing teachers.</p>	1, 4

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

Budgeted cost: £32,470

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge numbers addressed
<p>NGRT Reading age tests to be carried out for all Year 7 children to identify those children for whom literacy intervention will be necessary to support their overall academic progress. These tests will be carried out twice a year to ensure the correct children are being targeted and progress can be measured.</p>	<p>EEF: NGRT is used in trials to provide an objective measure of pupils' reading skills to evaluate the effectiveness of different interventions.</p> <p>EEF report (2021) suggests that, 'Schools should expect and proactively plan to support students with the weakest levels of literacy, particularly in Year 7'. It also states that, 'Assessment should be used to match students to appropriate types of intervention, and to monitor the impact of</p>	1, 4, 5

<p>Literacy and reading intervention delivered by support staff for those children who score lowest on the aforementioned reading age tests, focusing on skills pertinent to current curriculum focus.</p> <p>Support and resources offered to disadvantaged children and their parents/carers to overcome barriers to learning/revising in the home and to focus on attainment and celebration of successes.</p>	<p>interventions’.</p> <p>EEF research (2021): ‘Improved literacy outcomes...Ensuring students have an opportunity to use skills from the intervention setting in the classroom and across different subjects.’</p> <p>EEF: Small group tuition can increase progress by 4+ months when targeted effectively.</p> <p>EEF (2021): ‘Well-designed school communications can be effective for improving attainment and a range of other outcomes, such as attendance.’</p>	
<p>AHT to monitor academic and pastoral progress of disadvantaged children after each termly data collection to evaluate provision and identify those who require additional support and/or intervention which is then supported through pupil voice.</p> <p>Identify literacy needs of disadvantaged children and ensure targeted intervention is available.</p> <p>Numeracy intervention for Year 7 low prior attaining children, supporting disadvantaged children to close gaps in attainment.</p>	<p>EEF: ‘Non-disadvantaged pupils, on average, progressed more than expected when compared to pupils in their prior attainment group, whereas disadvantaged pupils achieved over half a grade less than expected by the end of KS4.’</p> <p>EEF states that ‘interventions can have a significant impact on pupils’</p>	1, 4
<p>Support strategies in place to address any concerns with children’s home learning. Staff to monitor homework and liaise with Heads of Year where there are concerns, especially for disadvantaged children.</p> <p>Homework club to continue with staff available to support children. Prefects to support younger children with homework.</p> <p>Ensure all Year 7 disadvantaged children are supported in accessing the school’s Chromebook programme.</p> <p>Continue to offer Chromebook Club for Key Stage 3 children to ensure familiarity and confidence with IT to support learning.</p> <p>Excellence Prefects to support Y7 peers in reading aloud to develop oracy.</p>	<p>EEF report (2016) states, ‘Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to have a quiet working space, are less likely to have access to a device suitable for learning or a stable internet connection and may receive less parental support to complete homework and develop effective learning habits. These difficulties may increase the gap in attainment for disadvantaged children. Homework clubs can help to overcome these barriers by offering children the resources and support needed to undertake homework or revision.’</p> <p>EEF: ‘Technology has the potential to increase the quality and quantity of practice that pupils undertake, both inside and outside of the classroom.’</p> <p>DfE Reading Framework (2023): ‘Pupils should be able to choose books freely...and benefit from paired discussion’</p>	1, 3, 4, 5
<p>Focused mentoring of identified disadvantaged Year 11 children who are failing to make the necessary academic progress, or struggling with mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Heads of Year, Heads of Faculty, SENCO and AHT to</p>	<p>EEF: Interventions which target social and emotional learning seek to improve pupils’ interaction with others and self-management of emotions can have 4+ months’ impact on progress’.</p> <p>WHO (2023): The impact of Covid-19 lockdown on children’s mental health and wellbeing is significant,</p>	1, 3, 4, 5

<p>identify children who need such support.</p> <p>Subject-specific actions/intervention for targeted children through subject-specific resources, activities and targeted support as identified by teaching staff.</p>	<p>with 30% of young people reporting a negative impact on their mental health, and 16% of adolescents reporting low life satisfaction, with girls being more affected.'</p> <p>Children's Commissioner Report (April 2020): 'school closures are likely to have widened the gap further between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils'.</p> <p>EEF: Peer tutoring approaches have been shown to have a positive impact on learning, with an average positive effect equivalent to approximately six additional months' progress within one academic year.</p>	
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Wider strategies (for example related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £38,525

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge numbers addressed
<p>Targeted academic catch up and support for disadvantaged children who are persistently absent from school.</p> <p>Support given to aid access to revision or learning resources for specific KS4 disadvantaged children who are below target in internal assessment data.</p> <p>Pastoral support through Attendance Officer to address reasons for persistent absence of disadvantaged children.</p>	<p>DfE (2016): children with no absence are 1.3 times more likely to achieve grade 4 or above at GCSE, and 3.1 times more likely to achieve grade 5 or above, than children who missed 10-15% of all sessions.</p> <p>EEF: 'evidence consistently shows the impacts that targeted academic support can have' (2023)</p> <p>EEF: 'tackling persistent absence is an important priority for improving outcomes' (2024)</p>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
<p>Data analysis and staff feedback to identify both academic and pastoral concerns with a specific focus on disadvantaged children.</p> <p>Where concerns are identified, suitable support strategies are implemented to ensure these children make progress and have fewer barriers to their learning.</p> <p>A closer collaboration between pastoral and academic senior and middle leaders to provide support with well-being, which in turn aids readiness to learn as well as improved mental health of disadvantaged children.</p>	<p>Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition: disadvantaged children are, 'at greater risk of poor mental health' due to Covid-19.</p> <p>EEF: Social and emotional learning approaches have a positive impact, on average, of 3 months' additional progress in academic outcomes over the course of an academic year.</p> <p>EEF: 'Good communication across schools can help foster curriculum continuity, intelligent use of diagnostic assessment, along with specific planning to address pastoral needs and academic support.'</p>	1, 2, 3, 4
<p>Weekly attendance recording and monitoring for disadvantaged children and data shared with the school's Senior Leadership Team and HoYs so that relevant interventive actions can be implemented.</p> <p>Attendance Officer to identify and address attendance</p>	<p>EEF: 'With clear links between poor attendance and poor attainment and behaviour, tackling persistent absence is an important part of improving outcomes for all pupils.'</p> <p>EEF: Parental engagement can have a positive impact on pupil progress by 4+ months'.</p>	1, 2

concerns for disadvantaged children, Heads of Year to monitor and communicate with parents to support and improve attendance.		
Behaviour policy and framework updated to support the whole school drive for academic and pastoral excellence. Ensure whole school rewards reflect a fair balance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children (where appropriate). Behaviour of disadvantaged children (suspensions) monitored by AHT Behaviour and Attitudes to ensure support and actions are in place to prevent gaps in learning.	EEF: 'Some pupils will require more specialist support to help manage their self-regulation or social and emotional skills.' Centre for Social Justice: 'Children eligible for free school meals are significantly more likely to be excluded, with one report indicating they are five times more likely to be permanently excluded than their non-FSM peers.'	1, 2, 4
Encourage disadvantaged children to attend extracurricular clubs and activities. This will be tracked and monitored to identify whether disadvantaged children are accessing these further opportunities.	Social Mobility Commission: 'Children from the poorest families are 3 times more likely to not participate in any extra-curricular activities compared to those from wealthier families.'	2, 3, 5
AHT to monitor parental engagement with events such as Parents' Evening. Where disadvantaged children's parents do not attend these events it is followed up to ensure an effective home school partnership. We further strengthen partnerships with families by offering flexible opportunities for engagement and providing practical support to help parents feel confident and involved in their child's learning journey.	EEF: (2021) 'An effective home school partnership is integral in supporting children's academic and pastoral progress. Ensuring there is support from parents/carers can improve a child's progress and attainment.'	1, 4, 5
Facilitate visits from external employers to allow disadvantaged children to access information about a wide range of opportunities and careers.	DfE (2015): 'pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are: twice as likely to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) and at higher risk of ending up in poverty as adults.' GATSBY: 'Every young person needs high quality career guidance to make informed decisions about their future.'	1, 4, 5
Whole school/Year group literacy events to promote reading, literacy and language skills. Such events will also support skills such as teamwork and communication. Exposure to experiences such as author visits to build aspiration and develop understanding of how learning translates to the outside world.	Many disadvantaged children have low academic aspirations and can have a lack of motivation. Exposing them to further experiences and opportunities can develop these characteristics and support in their future successes.	1, 3, 4, 5
Monitoring of access to careers advice for disadvantaged children. All disadvantaged children at KS4 are offered access to careers guidance. Mock interviews completed for Year 11s with all disadvantaged children getting experience of a job interview. KS4 visits, guest speakers, assemblies and events linked to post-16 destinations to widen participation in higher education or apprenticeships.	EEF: Careers education can be crucial in developing the knowledge, confidence and skills young people need to make well informed, relevant choices and plans for their future. This is especially true of students from poorer backgrounds, who are less likely to have family or friends with the insight and expertise to offer advice. High quality careers education can help them progress smoothly into further learning and work.' These actions will address the Gatsby Benchmarks, specifically 1, 5, 6, 7 and 8.	1, 4, 5

<p>Effective transition practices to support disadvantaged children through the transition process. Disadvantaged children from primary schools identified and encouraged to participate in additional transition events and opportunities. Engagement with primary partners to allow the early identification of barriers to the learning and progress of disadvantaged children.</p>	<p>EEF: Successful school transitions address the 'trio of challenges': curriculum continuity; school routines and expectations; healthy peer networks.</p> <p>The Centre for Education & Youth: There is 'a disproportionate impact of the transition between primary and secondary school on disadvantaged children's social and emotional learning and academic self-confidence' and 'Disproportionate rates of absence for disadvantaged pupils during KS3.'</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</p>
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Total Budgeted cost: £141,620

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 children in the 2024 to 2025 academic year.

The existing strategy aims to reduce the progress and attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children. In 2023, Progress 8 for disadvantaged children was -0.66. In 2024, Progress 8 for disadvantaged children increased significantly to -0.09. The progress and attainment of our disadvantaged children remains above national averages and the gap between disadvantaged children and non-disadvantaged children is significantly smaller than previous years and significantly smaller than the national gap.

During the 2024/25 academic year, there was no marked increase in the proportion of disadvantaged children being suspended from school in comparison to their disadvantaged peers.

Attendance remains a focus of our disadvantaged strategy as it continues to be a key barrier for some disadvantaged children. Children with above 95% attendance achieved an average grade greater than those whose attendance was below 90%.

A mental health practitioner was successfully recruited and trained in the THRIVE process, offering mental health and wellbeing support to disadvantaged pupils. This appointment, alongside the pastoral systems within the school and upskilling of existing staff, has resulted in the significantly increased access to mental health support in the school. Children are taught during PSHCE lessons about how to care for themselves and how to access support, should they need it.

All subjects across the school have a strategically designed curriculum, which builds in opportunities to revisit topics and interleave content and skills. All curricula are in line with National Curriculum guidance and/or GCSE requirements and there is a focus on establishing the 'Embedding Formative Assessment Programme' over the next two years through the implementation of the SSAT model. This focus is further supported by the introduction of knowledge organisers and vocabulary lists to underpin schemes of work. Curriculum progression maps are regularly quality assured and revised to ensure the curriculum remains current and appropriate. The curriculum design led to above average progress in the 2024 and above national attainment in the 2025 GCSE examinations.

All children in the school have had access to literary events, such as World Book Day, DEAR day and the St James' Literary Canon. Children are given time to read in school and supported in accessing suitable reading materials. Those children for whom reading is a barrier have been targeted and supported. Disadvantaged children are prioritised when identifying children to support through internal intervention, external tutoring or liaison with the SEND team.