

Pupil premium strategy statement: St Matthew's RC High School

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	1291
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	61.1%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2024-2027
Date this statement was published	1.9.26
Date on which it will be reviewed	1.9.27
Statement authorised by	Mr A Nightingale
Pupil premium lead	Mrs K Callison
Governor / Trustee lead	Ms J Meredith

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£905,054
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£0
Pupil premium (and recovery premium*) funding carried forward from previous years (<i>enter £0 if not applicable</i>) *Recovery premium received in academic year 2021 to 2022 can be carried forward to academic year 2022 to 2023. Recovery premium received in academic year 2022 to 2023 cannot be carried forward to 2023 to 2024.	£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>	£905,054

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At St Matthew's our ultimate objectives for disadvantaged students are that:

- all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, have consistently high-quality teaching as research shows that the most important factor that impacts on the outcomes of students is the quality of teaching they receive.
- disadvantaged pupils are given support to ensure they are reading at their chronological age or higher. This is a key life skill which impacts directly on life chances.
- where students have gaps in their learning, these are recognised and there is planned intervention/support to close the gaps.
- where students struggle with social/welfare/mental health issues because of their disadvantage, we take every reasonable step to support them.
- we identify what other barriers to success our students are experiencing, and work hard to remove them or, at least, to minimise their impact.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	The need to provide consistent high-quality teaching in a school that has been subject to high turnover of staff in last five years. This includes recruiting experienced staff with a proven track record of positive impact, and also ensuring that teachers new to the school and the profession are effectively trained.
2	To improve the reading ability of our disadvantaged students. NGRT testing shows that the average Standard Age Score of our disadvantaged students is below that of other students in all year groups.
3	Assessments indicate that attainment is low in Maths, English and Science for our disadvantaged students.
4	Referrals to our pastoral team for SEMH are high for disadvantaged students.
5	The attendance of disadvantaged students is lower than that of other students. PA for disadvantaged is also higher than that of other students.

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
1a. Teaching vacancies to attract experienced, high-quality candidates via competitive salaries and strategic use of TLR payments for extra responsibilities.	Increase in the % of vacancies filled by teachers with more than 2 years' experience in academic years 2024-27.
1b. In core subjects, recruit more staff than in last year's budget. Specialised teachers with surplus on timetable can cover for absent colleagues and provide extra support to disadvantaged students.	This will result in a lower % of lessons being taken by non-specialist teachers or supply.
1c. All teaching staff, especially Early Careers Teachers, to be effectively trained and supported via a strong CPD programme.	All ECTs to successfully complete their programmes. Decrease in teaching staff turnover in 2024-27 compared to average of last 5 years.
2. The reading intervention programme enables disadvantaged students below their chronological reading age to make more than 12 months progress in a year to close this gap.	NGRT results in Summer Term 2026 show average improvement of more than 12 months for disadvantaged students in Years 7-10.
3. Improved Maths, English & Science attainment in both KS3 and KS4 for disadvantaged students.	% pass rates at Grades 4/5/7 improves for disadvantaged students in GCSE results in August 2027 compared to 2026. Year group average % attainment scores in Y7-10 increases for disadvantaged students in EoY exams in Summer 2027.
4. Disadvantaged students with SEMH needs are provided with appropriate intervention.	Behaviour incident logs for disadvantaged students show a decrease in 2026-27 compared to previous years.
5. The attendance team to prioritise disadvantaged students and provide them with targeted support to improve their attendance.	Overall attendance for disadvantaged pupils improves to be in line with or closer to national averages.
6. Ensure all disadvantaged students have full access to our full school curriculum offer.	Attendance lists show that all extra-curricular opportunities for students are well attended by disadvantaged students.

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: £ 390,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
All teaching vacancies to include recruitment incentive for highly skilled candidates.	‘Good teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils’. EEF 2019 Sutton Trust research states that the difference between the effect of poor teaching and that of highly effective teaching is just under half a year’s extra progress for most pupils.	1a
Recruitment of experienced core teachers.		1b
ECT Year 1 & 2 teachers to have extra planning time factored into their timetables. ECT mentors to have extra free time in timetables to enable them to meet frequently with their mentees.		1c
Full CPD programme for all staff, with bespoke packages for ECT. Leadership development promoted via the appraisal programme including access to NPQs as appropriate		1c
Regular CPD for staff focuses on adaptive teaching to ensure all students (at KS3 especially) can access the curriculum.		1c

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

Budgeted cost: £ 164,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Implementation of the Literacy Strategy, including: Retention of a dedicated Teacher of Reading, ideally primary-trained with QTS. NGRT testing package to continue to enable all year groups to be tested twice per year. Purchase of 'Little Wandle' reading intervention package (secondary school version). Purchase of new reading books that are appropriate to the Little Wandle programme. Increased numbers of staff trained on the delivery of Little Wandle and staff time made available to deliver intervention to targeted groups of students. TLR for Literacy Lead Teacher Purchase of appropriate texts for each year group for Guided Reading during Form Time and also to ensure the library is fully stocked with a wide range of age-appropriate texts. Continued upgrade/refurbishment of library to improve its appeal to students, especially during extra-curricular hours	The development of reading comprehension strategies and oral language interventions are EEF suggested strategies for maximum impact (very high impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence: impact +6). <i>"Literacy is the gateway to the curriculum"</i> EEF Toolkit: The average impact of reading comprehension strategies is an additional six months' progress over the course of a year.	2

Subscription to Sparx Maths Holiday Schools/revision sessions out of term time to focus on Y11 Maths & English exam preparation	Regular and sustained 1 hour per week use of Sparx maths leads to increase of 20% on GCSE grade (Sonia Ilie, University of Cambridge, 2021). “Maths interventions should start early, be guided by assessment and be carefully planned.” (EEF, 2017) “When pupils arrive in Y7...structured intervention support may be required for Y7 pupils who are struggling to make progress.” (EEF, 2017)	3
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Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £ 351,054

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Dedicated SEMH-trained intervention tutors work with the students with the highest needs. Their caseload is regularly reviewed to assess impact. Increased pastoral teams in each year group organise appropriate interventions for all students causing concern due to behaviour. Appropriate interventions are implemented and monitored for effectiveness.	“Some pupils will require more specialist support to help manage their self-regulation or social and emotional skills.” “Targeted approaches that are tailored to pupils’ needs...may be appropriate where pupils are struggling with behaviour.” EEF ‘Closing the disadvantage gap’ 2021.	4
Attendance strategy to be implemented, with particular	“Make sure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced,	5

focus on disadvantaged students: Increased staffing to the pastoral and attendance teams allows quicker response to non-attendance, including: - first day phone calls all completed before 10am - more staff enables higher number of parental meetings to take place - increased number of home visits for PA and SA students - free uniform items for new Y7 students and spare uniform items purchased to ensure this is not a barrier to any family - budgeted allowance for attendance incentives and rewards - rental cost of attendance car to ensure daily home visits can be completed	including where applicable through effective use of pupil premium funding.” DfE Working together to improve school attendance 2022	
All students who wish to study a musical instrument to receive free peripatetic lessons delivered by a specialist teacher. Staff to be able to bid for funding to enable disadvantaged students to access all extra-curricular trips and other such activities. Free breakfast items to ensure students have a healthy, nutritious start to the day.	Our mission as a Catholic school is to ensure that all our students can appreciate the wonder of God’s creation in all its facets. It is therefore of vital importance to us that we ensure our disadvantaged students have full access to everything on offer at our school. If students are happy and engaged with school and school life, they are more likely to attend.	5

Total budgeted cost: £ £905054

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

We have analysed the performance of our school's disadvantaged pupils during the 2025-26 academic year using key stage 4 performance data and our own internal assessments.

For 2025, the Attainment 8 figure (which is a measure of GCSE attainment across 8 subjects) for our disadvantaged pupils was 32.71 whilst the figure for non-disadvantaged pupils was 43.85 a gap of 11.14 points. In 2026, the equivalent gap was 11.75 (32.92 disadvantaged average attainment versus 44.67 non-disadvantaged average attainment).

Although this is a slightly wider gap than 2025, the factors for this include a wider gap between disadvantaged pupils' prior attainment compared to their non-disadvantaged peers, as well as an increase in the cohort proportion of disadvantaged pupils from 55.9% in 2025 to 60% in 2026.

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving a 4+ in English and Maths increased from 35.3% in 2025 to 41.4% in 2026.

See [DfE guidance](#) for more information about KS4 performance measures.

The most recent national Attainment 8 score gap between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils was 15.5 points. Our results indicate that for Attainment 8 our gap was significantly smaller than the national average.

Absence among disadvantaged pupils was 8.0% higher than their peers in 2025/26 and persistent absence 19.7% higher. We recognise this gap is too large which is why raising the attendance of our disadvantaged pupils is a focus of our current plan.

Our internal data showed that the percentage of incidents of significant negative behaviour (spent time in internal isolation, suspended or permanently excluded) involving disadvantaged students was 66%, whereas only 34% of these incidents involved non-disadvantaged students. This shows why reducing this number is part of our current plan.

Externally provided programmes

Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you used your pupil premium (or recovery premium) to fund in the previous academic year.

Programme	Provider
Sparx Maths	Sparx Learning

Little Wandle	Wandle Learning Trust
Seneca Learning – various subjects	Seneca
Sentence Builders	The Language Gym
Kerboodle	
Educake	
Tassomai	