St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy

Pupil Premium Strategy



Let us remember we are in the presence of God

Adopted	Next Review	Author
December 2024	December 2027	O Warman / R
		Munden





Pupil premium strategy statement – St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy

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 outcomes for disadvantaged pupils last academic year.

School overview

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school	1174
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	38%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2024/2025 to 2026/2027
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	Dominic McKenna, Principal
Pupil premium lead	Rebecca Munden, Assistant Principal
Governor / Trustee lead	Roisin Maguire, Chair of Governors

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£434,024
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£434,024

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At St. Margaret Ward Catholic Academy, we are committed to ensuring that every pupil, regardless of their background, flourishes in an environment rooted in faith, inclusion, and aspiration. Guided by our mission to nurture a community "where all belong and are loved," our Pupil Premium strategy is focused on addressing the barriers that disadvantaged pupils face, supporting them to achieve their full potential both academically and personally.

We recognise the different challenges that impact disadvantaged pupils, including attendance, literacy, resilience, wellbeing, and engagement in co-curricular activities. By prioritising high-quality teaching, fostering resilience and positive behaviour, and closing attainment gaps in core subjects, we aim to provide targeted, evidence-based interventions that create meaningful change. Our strategy reflects our commitment to high expectations and inclusivity, aiming to uplift every pupil and empower them to thrive.

We believe that regular attendance and engagement in a supportive school environment are foundational to success. Through a positive attendance culture and strong pastoral support, we will reduce persistent absenteeism and foster a sense of belonging. Our commitment to academic excellence is underscored by equipping teachers with the tools to deliver consistent, high-quality teaching, ensuring all pupils, especially the disadvantaged, benefit from an appropriate, challenging and rigorous curriculum.

Our approach is guided by the five core values of a Lasallian education:

- Faith in the presence of God Supporting the spiritual and personal development of all pupils.
- Respect for all persons Cultivating positive behaviour and attitudes.
- Inclusive community Ensuring all pupils feel valued and included in every aspect of school life.
- Quality education Providing a challenging and engaging curriculum that touches both minds and hearts.
- Concern for the poor and social justice Addressing barriers to learning and promoting equity through education.

Through our collaborative efforts, informed by data and assessment and the latest educational research, we will measure success not only by academic outcomes but also by the sustained improvements in attendance, behaviour, and personal development among our disadvantaged pupils. As a community, we are united in our ambition to ensure that every pupil at St. Margaret Ward Catholic Academy can fulfil their God-given potential.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Attendance
	Attendance data indicates that attendance among disadvantaged pupils has been lower than for non-disadvantaged pupils.
	Proportionally more disadvantaged pupils have been persistently absent compared to their non-disadvantaged peers during the same periods.
	Assessments and observations show that persistent absenteeism is negatively impacting disadvantaged pupils' attainment and progress.
2	High Quality Teaching
	Non-disadvantaged students consistently outperform disadvantaged students in attainment and progress measures upon entry and when leaving St Margaret Ward.
	Observations and discussions with staff highlight inconsistencies in areas such as checking for understanding, managing cognitive load, encouraging deeper thinking, and fostering positive engagement in lessons.
	These issues disproportionately affect disadvantaged pupils, as evidenced by gaps in attainment and suspension data.
3	Pupil Resilience and Wellbeing
	Internal suspension and behaviour data suggest that many disadvantaged pupils struggle with self-regulation.
	Although not statistically significant compared to local and regional data, suspension rates for disadvantaged pupils remain too high, particularly for repeat suspensions related to persistent disruption.
	As a Lasallian community, the school is committed to inclusion and minimising permanent exclusions wherever possible.
	Assessments, observations, and feedback from staff, pupils, and families highlight increasingly complex contextual factors, including safeguarding concerns and social-emotional issues such as anxiety, depression (medically diagnosed), and low self-esteem.
4	Literacy
	Assessments, classroom observations, and discussions with Key Stage 3 pupils reveal that disadvantaged pupils often enter secondary school

	with reading levels significantly below their peers. This disparity impacts their ability to access the curriculum, engage with complex texts, and develop critical comprehension skills. The challenge extends beyond English lessons, affecting progress across all subjects where reading is integral, such as science, humanities, and maths, further widening the attainment gap. Addressing this requires targeted interventions and a whole-school approach and ownership of improving literacy.
5	Personal Development/ co-curricular Extra-curricular attendance data, observations, and discussions with staff and pupils suggest that disadvantaged pupils have lower levels of involvement in extra-curricular activities compared to their peers. This limited participation impacts their wider personal development, reducing opportunities for building confidence, resilience, and social skills.
6	Closing Gaps in Core Subjects Disadvantaged pupils exhibit attainment gaps in core subjects, upon entry in KS2, especially in Maths and Reading. The gap in core attainment continues at KS4. This has a cross curricular impact in science, humanities, and other subjects where literacy and numeracy are foundational.

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 achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils,	The overall attendance rate for all pupils is above national, with the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers reduced.
particularly disadvantaged pupils.	The percentage of all pupils who are persistently absent is below national, and the figure among disadvantaged pupils is no higher than their peers.
Improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils through consistent	KS4 performance measures increase year-on-year and show disadvantaged pupils achieve an above national average Progress 8 score.
implementation of high-quality teaching strategies.	Teacher observations and reviews indicate improved use of strategies such as checking for understanding, managing cognitive load, and promoting engagement in lessons.
To achieve and sustain improved behaviour and attitudes among all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils.	There is a reduction in the number of suspensions among disadvantaged pupils, with repeat suspensions reduced.
Improved literacy levels among disadvantaged pupils	Reading assessments show improvement among disadvantaged pupils, with the gap between their reading ages and their chronological ages reduced in line with non-disadvantaged students.
To achieve and sustain increased participation in enrichment activities, particularly among disadvantaged pupils.	To achieve and sustain increased participation in enrichment activities, particularly among disadvantaged pupils, ensuring that the percentage of disadvantaged pupils involved in extracurricular activities and school leadership roles is representative of the overall school population.
To significantly reduce the disadvantaged attainment gap in core subjects, disadvantaged pupils by the end of KS4.	The academic performance of disadvantaged students in core subjects is equal or above national averages for similar disadvantaged pupils.

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)

Budgeted cost: £73,746.00

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Embed the literacy CPD focus from last year into classroom practice, through the lesson study model, to ensure regular opportunities for structured talk, writing and reading in every subject	The EEF's guidance on improving literacy in secondary schools emphasises the importance of disciplinary literacy, structured talk, and explicit reading and writing strategies to improve subject-specific outcomes: Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools .	1, 4, 6
Create more time for departments to focus on literacy and building on the next recommendations of the EEF guidance.	Structured talk and writing activities align with metacognitive strategies for improving comprehension and engagement.	
Continue to use GL Reading assessments to inform Teaching and Learning in all subjects and identify the most appropriate interventions for students where required	Evidence suggests that data-driven diagnostic assessments like GL assessments support targeted intervention and teaching strategies by identifying specific student needs: <u>Diagnostic Assessment Evidence Insights.</u>	
A specific emphasis on active engagement, checking for understanding, high expectations (behaviour) and adaptive teaching is at the core of the lesson study model Continue to promote awareness and management of cognitive load in all aspects of	The EEF report on Metacognition and Self-regulation underscores how explicit strategies for monitoring and evaluating learning improve teaching practices. Embedding active engagement and cognitive load management aligns with evidence-based approaches to instructional improvement: Metacognition and Self-regulation.	1, 2, 3, 6
teaching practice, particularly for students experiencing barriers to their learning	Strong leadership practices, aligned with teaching priorities, ensure consistent implementation of evidence-	

based strategies. The EEF's Guidance Continue to support staff on Implementation highlights the training and professional importance of building leadership development through capacity to improve accountability and specialist NPQ programmes, alignment with whole-school priorities: including NPQ Leading A School's Guide to Implementation. Teacher Development, NPQ Leading Behaviour and Culture, NPQ Leading Literacy, NPQ Senior Leadership, and NPQ Special **Educational Needs** High-quality professional development Coordinator (SENCO). improves teaching and raises pupil outcomes, especially for disadvantaged students. The EEF's Line management practices **Effective Professional Development** across departments have Guidance highlights mechanisms such been strengthened and as building teacher knowledge, leaders have been motivating change, and embedding empowered to lead teaching practice. When aligned with school and learning in their subject priorities and sustained over time, areas. Develop the lesson Professional Development significantly study model to further develop impacts teaching quality and pupil accountability, leadership attainment. capacity, and alignment with Teaching and Learning priorities. 2 Further develop metacognitive and self-regulation skills in all The EEF's Metacognition and selfpupils. regulated learning strategies support teachers to develop students as owners of their own learning. This will Roll out the lesson study contribute to improved attitudes to coaching model for all learning for all students including teaching staff including, disadvantaged learners. allowing departments to proactively and positively respond to professional development needs. Share the practice and learning of the early adopter departments with the remaining departments This will involve ongoing teacher training and support and release time.

assessment cycle and review practices to better identify learning gaps and strengthen the effectiveness of communication with parents. Improve Pupil Learning Guidance highlights that well-designed assessment cycles with clear, actionable feedback address learning gaps effectively. Combining formative assessment practices with strong parent communication ensures alignment between home and school, enhancing pupil progress and fostering sustained improvements in learning.	practices to better identify learning gaps and strengthen the effectiveness of	highlights that well-designed assessment cycles with clear, actionable feedback address learning gaps effectively. Combining formative assessment practices with strong parent communication ensures alignment between home and school, enhancing pupil progress and fostering sustained improvements in	2, 5
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support structured interventions)
Budgeted cost: £214,058

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Continue to deliver well- evidenced and targeted numeracy (Numicon) teaching assistant interventions for pupils that require additional support.	Numicon interventions align with EEF's guidance on using manipulatives and representations to enhance foundational numeracy skills: Improving Mathematics in Key Stages 2 and 3.	6
Continue to deliver well- evidenced and targeted SEMH and therapeutic (small group and Lego Therapy) teaching assistant interventions for pupils that require additional support.	Social and emotional learning interventions improve emotional self-regulation and mental well-being, as noted in EEF's guidance on Social and Emotional Learning.	1, 3
Continue to provide dedicated specialist support (TESOL) for EAL students using Flash academy to support those students who are new to English	Effective English Learning Strategies: Practical Methods and Insights Learning Science	1,3,4,6
Specialist teachers deliver targeted small group catch-up curriculum lessons for adapted for students in our in-house inclusion provision, The De La Salle Centre.	Evidence indicates that small group and teacher-led interventions are highly effective for addressing academic gaps in alternative provision settings: Improving Behaviour in Schools.	1, 2, 3

Refine our tiered approach to literacy interventions to so that students requiring interventions are appropriately supported. Continue to deliver well-	A tiered intervention model, including evidence-based programmes like Lexonik, and Lexonic Leap supports the diverse needs of struggling readers, as outlined in EEF's Literacy Guidance: Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools.	4
evidenced and targeted literacy (Lexonik) teaching assistant interventions for pupils that require additional support.		

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

Budgeted cost: £203,703

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Provision of targeted specialist support for student wellbeing through the involvement of Educational Psychologists.	Targeted support provided by specialists improves attendance, behaviour, and well-being, aligning with EEF's recommendations on social-emotional learning	1, 3, 5
Collaboration with the RAIE and MHST teams to support positive mental health. One to one counselling provision provided by Younger Minds.	Government report on raising attainment for disadvantaged students, highlighting the importance of early intervention. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-the-attainment-of-disadvantaged-pupils	
Group mentoring sessions provided by Pro-Level Academy, delivered through a blended approach of classroom-based activities and Football. Sixth Form peer mentoring with Key Stage 3 students to improve confidence and resilience.	Transforming Children's mental health provision green paper, evidences the importance of talking therapies. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b583d30ed915d0b6985cc21/government-response-to-consultation-ontransforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health.pdf	
One to one ELSA support to enhance a variety of skills including regulation and independence. A whole school focus on rewards through staff CPD, standing assemblies and rewards events.	ARC Attachment Theory research highlights the importance of collaboration with external agencies https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1 https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/ful	
Appropriate and timely interventions provided by safeguarding, pastoral and SEND teams to improve progress academically and emotionally.		

Collaboration with external agencies, such as New Era and Scdas, to provide targeted interventions to those in need.	
Funding of uniform, equipment and learning resources to ensure that students are prepared and ready to learn.	
Behaviour 360 platform available to all staff to provide CPD on all aspects of behavior in school and implementation strategies for positive behaviour.	

CMAT Educational Welfare
Officer to oversee interventions
regarding persistently absent
students and to make LA
Educational Welfare referrals
where appropriate.

Additional staffing of Attendance Team to ensure that key families are targeted and communicated with regularly.

Staff CPD to ensure that Arbor is utilised so inform children and parents of attendance percentages.

Funding of the school bus for vulnerable students to ensure that they have a method of transport and are punctual.

Continue to run targeted
Attendance Clinics/ Coffee
Mornings to positively support
attendance.

Attendance letters sent out where necessary to inform families of poor attendance and the impact that this has on attendance.

Funding of Merit Alternative
Provision for students with
severe mental and physical
illness who are unable to attend
mainstream education.

Daily phone calls and regular home visits for students who are absent to promote good attendance and to encourage students to attend school.

The EEF Pupil Premium Guidance emphasises the impact of attendance on outcomes and. Working Together to Improve School Attendance – evidence supports our approach to reducing persistent absenteeism.

Positive reinforcement strategies improve engagement and attendance, reducing persistent absenteeism: Improving Behaviour in Schools.

A sense of school belonging is a key driver of attendance across all contexts. Developing peer leadership and a positive, whole-school culture around attendance is likely to be more sustainable in the long-term.

ImpactEd Evaluation Attendance
Record Report Jan24 - Google Drive

Daily morning breakfast club for vulnerable students to ensure that they are prepared and ready to learn. Reward good attendance through attendance rewards and incentives.		
Staff CPD to ensure analysis and tracking of extracurricular activities through Arbor. Offer of additional school funded activities which have been identified by students. Funding of residential trips and educational visits for vulnerable students. Funding of peripatetic music lessons for vulnerable students. Student leadership opportunities during extracurricular activities and events. Additional careers and	Extracurricular and leadership opportunities develop key life skills and personal growth, as highlighted in EEF's wider strategy recommendations: Collaborative Learning Toolkit. This study indicates that students who participate in extra-curricular activities have improved confidence and social interaction https://www.gov.uk/government/news/extra-curricular-activities-soft-skills-and-social-mobility	Ф
Post-16 guidance with bespoke consultations and college visits.		
Safeguarding and pastoral teams providing support to families through Early Help.	Tailored parental engagement strategies enhance home learning environments, as evidenced in EEF's Parental Engagement Guidance.	3, 5
Additional staff and student transition visits to gain information for the most vulnerable students, ensuring that there transition to secondary school is seamless.		

1	Based on our experiences and those of similar schools to ours, 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
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Total budgeted cost: £491,506.52

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Analysis of results

Contextually, of the 2024/25 cohort, 128 students were identified as non-PP and 77 students were PP. This represents a PP rate of 37.6%. EBacc entry rate was significantly above the national and local averages at 75.8% and 61% (PP), with the highest entry rate within the local authority for similar non-selective schools. This is reflective of the academy's academic and curriculum ambition for all students. In addition, the rate of students achieving a strong pass in English and Maths GCSE was 40.4% and 31.2% (PP), this remains too low, however the national average for a strong pass for English and Maths for disadvantaged students was 25.6%.

Attainment 8 is 42.9 and 36.3 for disadvantaged students, this has narrowed the gap since last year and is higher than the national average for disadvantaged students (34.9). There is no Progress 8 data as this cohort do not have SATs data, however, based on baseline data on entry the progress for disadvantaged students is 0.05.

Analysis of departmental data shows that in comparison with the 2023/24 cohort, gaps between PP and non-PP students closed in 15 out of 20 subject last year. Whilst we appreciate that there are still gaps between the groupings, this indicates that the strategies put into place during the previous Academic Year have had an impact.

We have explored the causes of this underperformance and identified a core group disadvantaged students that have impacted on results. Our analysis shows a clear link between student attendance, behaviour, special educational needs, contextual factors, and academic progress.

Of the 205 students evaluated, those with attendance above 90% (167 students) achieved an average Attainment 8 score of 46.61. In contrast, students with attendance of 80%(192 students) and above achieved an average Attainment 8 score of 45.13.

For students with special educational needs, there was a notable difference in progress: students with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) (7 students) achieved an average Attainment 8 score of 26.86, compared with SEN K students who achieved an average Attainment 8 score of 19.91.

Additionally, 21 students were identified as having significant external contextual factors, including safeguarding concerns and social, emotional, and mental health challenges. Without this group, the overall average Attainment 8 score would

increase to 46.69 highlighting the substantial impact of these contextual factors on student performance.

Evaluation of strategy

Planned strategies are being implemented to tackle the fundamental long-term barriers of education for all students including those who are PP. This means that the benefits of developing high-quality education, targeted academic support and wider strategies are not exclusive for PP students.

Our evaluation of the approached delivered last academic year indicates that.

- Literacy levels All students complete NGRT testing during the first school
 week in September. This means that students who have a reading age which is
 lower than their chronological age are identified and appropriate interventions
 are put into place. There has been a whole school CPD focus on Oracy, which
 is being implemented, but requires time to be embedded.
- High-quality teaching A Teaching and Learning priority has been and continues to be Adaptive Teaching. SEN K students continue to be a focus and all staff have received training sessions with a focus on Adaptive Teaching and teaching through the lens of our most vulnerable students. The School SENCO has delivered CPD sessions the whole staff to make them aware of strategies that can should be adopted in the classroom. Pupil passports have also been condensed into A3 sheets to ensure that key teaching strategies for each teaching group are easily accessible to maximise usage. Colleagues from the Educational Psychology Team have provided bespoke training courses for staff to support them in understanding the needs of our students, particularly the needs of the most vulnerable.
- Behaviour Strategies have been put into place to support vulnerable students in various ways. This has included collaboration with the RAIE and MHST teams to support students with regulation and positive mental health. Pro Level Coaching have been providing mentoring opportunities for small groups of students alongside Sports sessions, with a focus on confidence and resilience building. The pastoral team have provided staff CPD on student rewards and rewards events; this has been successful and has switched student focus from thinking of sanctions to instead thinking of rewards. The school has worked with the ERT and MAMP to support the most vulnerable students in engaging with education at Alternative Provisions, where their needs can be met. There are a number of students with EHCP's whose needs cannot be met in mainstream education; tribunal cases are underway with regular communication between school and SENMAS to ensure that these students receive the Specialist Provision that they need.
- Extra-curricular Activities continue to be tracked through Arbor. Student voice
 has been collected through the School Council and all students during Fidei
 Time to establish where there are gaps in extra-curricular provision, particularly
 for the most vulnerable. Holiday enrichment programmes are offered to all
 Pupil Premium students with the opportunities for trips, with a focus on

- ensuring that the most vulnerable students are targeted to attend. All trips are part funded at 50% for Pupil Premium students the uptake in trips for PP students has increased as parents are now aware of this funding. Music lessons are funded for all Pupil Premium students. There are currently 27 Pupil Premium children receiving funded peripatetic lessons.
- Attendance Attendance is monitored regularly through weekly meetings between the VP, pastoral and attendance teams. The attendance team has a list of the most vulnerable children to check for attendance as a priority in the morning. All Pupil Premium children receive 50% funding towards the school transport service which has supported their attendance. The pastoral team, safeguarding and attendance teams conduct home visits to support students in attending school, transporting these students into school when appropriate. The attendance team invites parents/carers into school for Attendance Clinics if a child is persistently absent or late to school, where issues are addressed and action plans created.

Summary

Whilst the gaps between Pupil Premium and non-Pupil Premium students are closing, there is still work to be done to ensure that the gaps close completely. The strategies that have been recently introduced are starting to have an impact, with the aim that once these strategies are embedded, gaps will close at a significant rate. The Pupil Premium strategy continues to be aligned with our whole school improvement planning, with regular communication between all stakeholders.

foundation for addressing these challenges, but further work is required to fully meet the intended outcomes.

The new three-year Pupil Premium Strategy for 2024-2027 is in response to this evaluation and the latest available evidence. This revised strategy builds on the insights gained from previous approaches, addressing identified barriers more effectively and ensuring sustained improvements in outcomes for all disadvantaged pupils.

Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider
Lexonik	Sound Training for Reading Ltd
NGRT	GL Assessments

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year

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The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils

Further information (optional)

Additional activity

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

- Embedding more effective practice around feedback. <u>EEF evidence on feedback</u> demonstrates significant benefits, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Utilising support from our local <u>Mental Health Support Team</u> and local behaviour hub, to support pupils with mild to moderate mental health and wellbeing issues, many of whom are disadvantaged.
- 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 also contacted schools local to us with high-performing disadvantaged pupils to learn from their approach.

Working with our local Research School 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 used the <u>EEF's implementation guidance</u> 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.