

Pupil premium strategy statement

St. James' CE Academy 2025 - 2026

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	194 (inc Nursery)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	38%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year)	2024 - 2027
Date this statement was published	September 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2026
Statement authorised by	
Pupil premium lead	Julia Strickland
Governor / Trustee lead	Patricia O'Brien

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£101 505
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
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>	£101 505

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

As a fully inclusive academy, our intention is to provide an inspirational learning environment with high quality teaching and learning for all. Our Trust ethos is 'life in all its fullness, a place to thrive' and our goal is that all children within our schools will receive outstanding teaching and support throughout their time with us. Our aim is that no child is left behind socially or academically and we work continuously to remove low expectations, raise lifelong aspirations and focus on removing barriers to learning.

We want all of our disadvantaged students to receive an equitable education in which we recognise that one size does not fit all and that we need to focus resources where they are most needed. We do this through rigorous tracking, careful planning, evaluation, targeted support and intervention. Providing all our children with the access and opportunities to enjoy success and maximise their life opportunities. We focus extensively on times of transition to ensure that we understand the needs of the incoming students and that we communicate effectively with the next provider.

We focus extensively on 'quality first teaching', as this will have the most beneficial impact on all students. We have highlighted Rosenshine's principles of instruction to all staff throughout our CPD and in September (2024) are embedding 'Independent Learning Zone' tasks to develop resilience and determination in all our learners at all stages. We have focussed on the development of questioning techniques, including cold calling, think pair share and directed questioning in which questioning is pre-planned and carefully targeted. We have worked on strategies to improve to Wave 1 teaching and explicit instruction.

We appreciate that we may need to remove barriers to education in order for disadvantaged students to achieve equity with their peers and so we focus carefully on the costs of the curriculum and extended opportunities to ensure that all children have equitable access. We also recognise the importance of shared routines in school and have focused on simple routines in every lesson and at social times. All lessons follow the 'I do, We do, You do' learning cycles and this repetition of simple structures benefits the learning of all.

In order for students to have access to the high quality teaching and support that we provide, children need to be present in school and therefore we have focussed on raising the attendance of all of our students. This will directly benefit disadvantaged students the most as we are focussing our initiatives on these students first, through our disadvantaged first approaches.

Through our assessment processes, we have identified that there are students for whom literacy and numeracy levels are a concern, a high proportion of these are disadvantaged students. We have put in place specific intervention for these students to ensure they improve and are able to fully access the curriculum.

In order for all students to be able to fully access the curriculum and to achieve the outcomes they are capable of, they need to be able to read fluently and to find it a pleasurable experience. As a school we have invested heavily in ensuring that reading is placed at the centre of our provision both as a wider strategy but also in terms of specific interventions to improve reading proficiency for readers at all levels.

We intend for all students to feel involved both within our school and local community and we have focussed aspects of our provision in ensuring access to wide ranging enrichment activities and that disadvantaged students are well represented in all aspects of school life.

We appreciate that the pandemic has had a more significant impact on children from disadvantaged backgrounds and we aim to continue to ensure that we identify and close any academic or social gaps, when they arise.

Our strategies are spread across all year groups, as disadvantage is spread across all year groups, which helps us to avoid 'initiative overload' on specific year groups.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Academic Outcomes - Internal and external (where available) assessments indicate that progress and attainment among disadvantaged pupils is significantly below that of non-disadvantaged pupils.
2	Attendance for disadvantaged students is lower than that of their non-disadvantaged peers. We are working to improve attendance for all cohorts. Some of our disadvantaged students experienced significant difficulties during the Covid-19 pandemic and we continue to deal with the impact of this on attendance.
3	Access to enrichment activities . Nationally disadvantaged students have been less likely to go on trips/visits where there is a cost involved and subsequently miss out on a range of opportunities to widen their cultural capital.
4	High levels of social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
5	Lower literacy levels for many disadvantaged students compared to their non-disadvantaged peers. Assessments, observations and discussions with pupils suggest disadvantaged pupils generally have greater difficulties with phonics than their peers. This negatively impacts their development as readers and enjoyment of reading.
6.	Speech and language - Assessments, observations and discussions with pupils indicate underdeveloped oral language skills and gaps in vocabulary and their understanding of new vocabulary among many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. These are evident from Reception through to KS2.

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
<i>Improved attainment for disadvantaged students across the curriculum.</i>	We intend to see an improvement year on year in both literacy and numeracy and a reduction in the gap between age related expectations for disadvantaged students compared to their non-disadvantaged peers.
<i>Attendance for disadvantaged students to be in line with national average and gap narrowed significantly between them and their peers</i>	Improved attendance year on year and reaching national average by July 2026.
<i>Disadvantaged students have improved participation in extracurricular events and trips</i>	All disadvantaged students, who wish to, participate in external trips and visits. Similar proportions attending extra-curricular sessions when compared to non-disadvantaged students. Disadvantaged students well represented on student council and other leadership/ambassador roles for the school.
<i>Social, Emotional and Mental health difficulties are identified early and relevant support (internal and/or external) in place when appropriate</i>	All students identified as needing support with their SEMH have a care plan in place and is shared with teaching staff via seating plan software and consistently with learning passports for SEND students. Improved dialogue between school and parents. Positive data from student voice, student and parent surveys and teacher observations.
<i>Higher percentage of students reading at or above expected levels due to effective testing and highly effective literacy strategy embedded throughout the school</i>	Disadvantaged students have similar reading ages to non-disadvantaged students. KS2 reading outcomes in 2025/2026 show that more than 65% of disadvantaged students met the expected standard. Students tested regularly and results actioned by placing on correct interventions. Improvements seen in book scrutinies and engagement in lessons.
<i>Improved oral language skills and vocabulary</i>	Assessment and observations indicate significantly improved oral language among all pupils. This is evident when triangulated with other sources of evidence, including engagement in lessons, book scrutinies and ongoing formative assessment.

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: £34324.44

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Teaching and learning focus on evidence based strategies to support Quality First Teaching. Development of shared approaches and routines using 'Walkthrus'.	<i>Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils (DFE, 2015)</i> suggests high quality teaching as a key aspect of successful schools. EEF toolkit : collaborative learning + 5 months Feedback: + 6 months Metacognition and self regulation: + 7 months	1
Trust Director support for English, Maths and Science To support disadvantaged students to make positive progress. To monitor and implement appropriate interventions. - Support for curriculum leaders - Cross Trust analysis of performance and sharing of good practice	EEF toolkit : Individualised instruction: + 4 months Small group tuition: + 4 months	1, 3
Train all middle leaders to enable them to empower their teams to support disadvantaged students. All middle leaders and senior links can clearly identify disadvantaged students and the support they require	Empowering middle leaders and increasing their responsibility for the progress of all cohorts has a positive impact on outcomes. EEF toolkit : individualised instruction: + 4 months Small group tuition: + 4 months Extending school time: + 3 months	1, 2, 4, 5

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

Budgeted cost: £36833.19

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Comprehensive literacy programme - Read, write, Inc. Reading Plus and Fresh start. To improve the reading ages of all learners so they can access the curriculum. Literacy tree	Reading comprehension, vocabulary and other literacy skills are heavily linked with overall attainment. EEF toolkit: Phonics: + 5 months Reading comprehension strategies: + 6 months TA interventions: + 4 months Acquiring disciplinary literacy is key for students as they learn new, more complex concepts in each subject: Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	1, 5
Underperforming students identified and regular meetings with students and parents. Progress and attitude closely monitored.	EEF toolkit: Mentoring: + 2 months Parental engagement: + 4 months	1, 2, 4, 5
All students able to access curriculum and enrichment trips regardless of cost.	EEF toolkit: Arts participation : + 3 months	1, 3
Engaging the services of a professional Speech & Language therapist to improve listening, narrative and vocabulary skills for pupils who have low spoken language skills.	Oral language interventions can have a positive impact on pupils' language skills. Approaches that focus on speaking, listening and a combination of the two show positive impacts on attainment: Oral language interventions EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	6
Develop a skilled Speech & Language practitioner to reinforce the programme developed by the professional therapist	Oral language interventions can have a positive impact on pupils' language skills. Targeted intervention delivered as regular sessions over a fixed term period. Oral language interventions EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) EEF Making Best Use of TAs	6

	Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants EEF	
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Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £30347.37

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Strong focus on attendance strategies and high level of support from school staff. Embedding principles of good practice as set out in DfE's Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)	EEF toolkit : Parental engagement + 4 months	2
Consistency through whole school behaviour and inclusion policy. Create a purposeful learning environment for all students. Clear expectations and boundaries for students.	EEF toolkit : Behaviour interventions + 4 months	1, 2, 4
Rewards and incentives for sustained attendance and achievement These include high profile attendance displays, class and individual certificates, raffle prizes and assemblies.	EEF toolkit : Behaviour interventions + 4 months	1, 2, 4
Parental engagement - staff work closely with parents through our 'open door' policy to respond to concerns, as well as additional support required as needed/appropriate through the SENCo or Emotional Wellbeing Worker.	EEF toolkit : Parental engagement: + 4 months	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Total budgeted cost: £101 505

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Pupil Premium Strategy Outcomes

EYFS - % Achieving Good Level of Development

All	PP
70%	100%

Y1 Phonics Screening - % Achieving Expected level

June 2025	
All	PP
89%	91%

Y6 SATs – May 2025

	Reading		GPS		Writing – Teacher Assessment		Maths		RWM	
	All	PP	All	PP	All	PP	All	PP	All	PP
ARE	77%	62%	67%	54%	70%	62%	73%	62%	63%	46%
GD	33%	23%	10%	8%	17%	8%	23%	23%	10%	8%

Our internal assessments during 2024/25 suggested that the performance across the school of disadvantaged pupils was generally below that of their non-disadvantaged peers in many areas of the curriculum.

Although overall attendance in 2024/25 was lower than in the preceding years, it was still inline with the national average at 93.7%. Absence among disadvantaged pupils was higher than their peers and persistent absence was also higher. These gaps are larger than in previous years, which is why attendance is a focus of our current plan.

Our assessments and observations indicated that speech and language, pupil behaviour, wellbeing and mental health were also significantly impacted last year, primarily due to the continuing aftereffects of COVID-19-related issues. The impact was particularly acute for disadvantaged pupils. We used pupil premium funding to provide speech and language and wellbeing support for all pupils, and targeted interventions where required. We are building on this approach with the activities detailed in this plan.