

Pupil premium strategy statement – Our Lady’s Catholic High School

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	906
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	20.0
Years applicable	2023-2026
Date this statement was published	October 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	October 2026
Statement authorised by	Richard Charnock Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Matt Power Assistant Headteacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Lisa Pearl Link Governor

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£185975
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>	£185975

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our curriculum is designed to develop literate, numerate, confident speakers; pupils who are solvers of problems by negotiation; true to their faith; caring of others and for their environment; pupils who are creative and appreciative of the arts; ambitious pupils who are motivated and believe in their abilities; who understand the impact of previous generations both locally and on our world and can use their skills, knowledge and values to create a better world for all.

Our curriculum develops our pupils in ways that go far beyond the academic. It is enriched by numerous opportunities for, spiritual growth, personal and moral development, living safely, cultural awareness and personal challenge. This intention is for all our pupils irrespective of their background or the challenges they face. They should make good progress and achieve high attainment across the curriculum, particularly in English and mathematics.

The focus of our pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve that goal, including progress for those who are already high attainers. We also consider the challenges faced by all our vulnerable pupils whether disadvantaged or not.

High-quality first teaching is at the heart of our approach, with a focus on areas in which disadvantaged pupils require the most support. This is proven to have the greatest impact on closing the disadvantage attainment gap and at the same time will benefit the non-disadvantaged pupils in our school.

Implicit in the intended outcomes detailed below, is the intention that non-disadvantaged pupils' attainment will be sustained and improved alongside progress for their disadvantaged peers.

Our approach will be responsive to common challenges and individual needs, rooted in robust diagnostic assessment, not assumptions about the impact of disadvantage. Core to this is our belief in the importance of reading and the eradication of illiteracy. The approaches we have adopted complement each other to help pupils achieve their potential.

To ensure they are effective we will:

- ensure disadvantaged pupils are challenged in the work that they're set
- adopt a whole school approach in which all staff take responsibility for disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and raise expectations of what they can achieve
- pursue our highest expectations of behaviour and relationships for all of our pupils.

- ensure a robust careers programme with specific support for the most vulnerable.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p>Reading</p> <p>Reading Assessments, observations and discussion with KS3 pupils indicate that disadvantaged pupils generally have lower levels of reading fluency (accuracy, automaticity, prosody) than their peers. This impacts their progress in all subjects. Our internal assessments show that disadvantaged pupils in Year 7 are below age expected entry for reading compared with their peers.</p>
2	<p>Attendance</p> <p>Attendance of our disadvantaged pupils is generally lower than that of their peers. A lower attendance impacts on their progress across all subjects. The gap in attendance since September 2024 for our disadvantaged pupils compared with their peers is 6%.</p>
3	<p>Mathematics</p> <p>The maths attainment of disadvantaged pupils is generally lower than that of their peers and teacher diagnostic assessments suggest that many pupils particularly struggle with problem solving tasks. Assessments on entry to year 7 indicate that our disadvantaged pupils arrive below age-related expectations compared to their peers.</p>
4	<p>Ambition</p> <p>Our observations and discussions with pupils and families have identified a lack of ambition on entry to our school to achieve well and a desire not to move on to further education and training amongst our disadvantaged pupils when compared to their peers.</p>
5	<p>Well-being</p> <p>Our assessments, observations and discussions with pupils and families have identified social and emotional issues for many pupils, such as anxiety, depression (diagnosed by medical professionals) and low self-</p>

	esteem. This is partly driven by concern about catching up lost learning (following extended absence) and exams/prospects, and the lack of enrichment opportunities available due to them. These challenges particularly affect disadvantaged pupils, including their progress and attainment.
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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
Improved attainment among disadvantaged pupils across the curriculum at the end of KS4, with a focus on EBacc subjects. .	By the end of our current plan in 2025/26, the progress of disadvantaged pupils will show consistent improvement on 2023 across a number of metrics. There will also be a greater proportion of disadvantaged pupils entered for English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects (22% in 2023)
Improved reading comprehension among disadvantaged pupils across KS3.	Reading comprehension tests demonstrate improved comprehension skills among disadvantaged pupils and a smaller disparity between the scores of disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers. Teachers should also have recognised this improvement through engagement in lessons and book scrutiny.
Improved metacognitive and self-regulatory skills among disadvantaged pupils across all subjects.	Teacher reports and class observations suggest disadvantaged pupils are more able to monitor and regulate their own learning. This finding is supported by homework completion rates across all classes and subjects and further supported by book scrutiny.
To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.	Sustained high levels of wellbeing from 2025/26 demonstrated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> qualitative data from student voice, student and parent surveys and teacher observations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a significant increase in participation in enrichment activities, particularly among disadvantaged pupils.
To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	<p>Sustained high attendance from 2025/26 demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the overall absence rate for all pupils being no more than 3.5%, and the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers being reduced. the percentage of all pupils who are persistently absent being below 6% and the figure among disadvantaged pupils being no more than 6% greater than their peers.

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: £ 35,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Purchase of standardised diagnostic assessments.	Training will be provided for staff to ensure assessments are interpreted correctly. Standardised tests can provide reliable insights into the specific strengths and weaknesses of each pupil to help ensure they receive the correct additional support through interventions or teacher instruction.	1,2,3

<p>Enhancement of our maths teaching and curriculum planning in line with DfE KS3 and EEF guidance.</p> <p>We will fund teacher release time to embed key elements of the guidance in school, and to access Maths Hub resources and CPD offers (including Teaching for Mastery training).</p>	<p>The DfE non-statutory KS3 guidance has been produced in conjunction with the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics, drawing on evidence-based approaches.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-mathematics-at-key-stage-3</p> <p>To teach maths well, teachers need to assess pupils' prior knowledge and understanding effectively, employ manipulatives and representations, teach problem solving strategies, and help pupils to develop more complex mental models.</p>	<p>1,3,4</p>
<p>Improving Teaching and Learning strategies amongst staff to build better metacognitive and self-regulation skills in all pupils.</p> <p>This will involve ongoing teacher training and support and release time.</p>	<p>We will train our teachers using strategies from the SSAT Embedding Formative Assessment programme to ensure that high quality teaching is a standard in our classrooms. In addition, teaching metacognitive strategies to pupils can be an inexpensive method to help pupils become more independent learners. There is particularly strong evidence that it can have a positive impact on maths attainment:</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/meta-cognition-and-self-regulation/</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>Improving literacy in all subject areas in line with recommendations in the EEF Improving</p>	<p>Acquiring disciplinary literacy is key for students as they learn new, more complex concepts in each subject:</p> <p>Improving Literacy In Secondary Schools</p>	<p>2</p>

<p>Literacy In Secondary Schools guidance. We will fund professional development and instructional coaching focussed on each teacher's subject area. Whole school CPD is taking place around literacy and teaching strategies are being introduced to support pupils development of literacy across the curriculum.</p>	<p>Reading comprehension, vocabulary and other literacy skills are heavily linked with attainment in maths and English: word-gap.pdf (oup.com.cn)</p>	
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support, structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £ 68,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Adopting a targeted reciprocal teaching programme as a reading intervention for disadvantaged pupils who need additional help to comprehend texts and address vocabulary gaps</p>	<p>Reading comprehension strategies can have a positive impact on pupils' ability to understand a text, and this is particularly the case when interventions are delivered over a shorter timespan: Reading comprehension strategies - Toolkit Strand - EEF</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Targeted Maths and English intervention aimed directly at PP</p>	<p>An in-house short term targeted approach of intervention is taking place being delivered by existing staff</p>	<p>1,2,3</p>

<p>pupils with specialist teachers.</p>	<p>in the two core subjects. These sessions are aimed at low attaining disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>Tuition targeted at specific needs and knowledge gaps can be an effective method to support low attaining pupils or those falling behind in small groups.</p> <p>Small Group Tuition</p>	
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Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £ 82,975

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Adoption of a cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) intervention for specific pupils who require support with regulating their behaviour and emotions.</p> <p>This includes training for school staff, collaboration with our local behaviour hub and release time for dedicated pastoral assistants.</p>	<p>There is evidence to suggest that CBT can have a high impact on risk behaviours and behavioural difficulties:</p> <p>Cognitive Behavioural Therapy - Youth Endowment Fund</p> <p>EIF's report on adolescent mental health found good evidence that CBT interventions support young people's social and emotional skills and can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression: Adolescent mental health: A systematic review on the effectiveness of schoolbased interventions Early Intervention Foundation (eif.org.uk)</p>	5
<p>Embedding principles of good practice set out in DfE's Improving</p>	<p>The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that</p>	6

<p>School Attendance advice.</p> <p>Staff will get training and release time to develop and implement new procedures.</p> <p>Attendance/support officers have been appointed to improve attendance and an associate assistant headteacher has been appointed with a remit to improve attendance.</p>	<p>have significantly reduced persistent absence levels.</p>	
<p>Contingency fund for acute issues.</p>	<p>Based on our experiences and those of similar schools to ours, we have identified a need to set a small amount of All 8 funding aside to respond quickly to needs that have not yet been identified.</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>One-to-one careers advice given to disadvantaged pupils to enhance their choice of future careers.</p> <p>Careers trips specifically targetting disadvantaged pupils to highlight the apprenticeships routes available alongside higher education routes.</p>	<p>The Gatsby Foundation highlights that careers guidance is an important factor in raising pupil aspirations and future plans. By using trained careers officers and planning specific Futures Days, Careers Cafes, and employer visits focussed on raising aspirations and future pathways for disadvantaged pupils we hope to drive achievement up.</p>	<p>4</p>

Total budgeted cost: £ 185,975

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Our internal assessments during 2024/25 suggested that the performance of disadvantaged pupils was in line with previous years at GCSE and in line at KS3. Our assessment of the reasons for these outcomes points to weaker KS2 prior scores on entry to school with a gap of 8 points on the previous year. This impact could have been larger, however the training the school has been putting in to Teaching & Learning is just starting to show positive effects, combined with an extra focus on revision strategies and pupils showing an extra thirst to consider alternative pathways upon leaving school (due to the careers strategy that was put in place), results showed a pleasing amount of progress gained.

Overall attendance continued to rise and whilst it is still lower than in pre-Covid years, there is a pleasing upward trend with PA pupils decreasing and the attendance amongst disadvantaged pupils increasing. The school attendance amongst disadvantaged pupils is consistently higher than the national average and shows that the strategies being employed are working. The gap between the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged has been decreasing slowly and shows that work still needs to be done to narrow this gap further. Disadvantaged pupils who had become PA pupils were targeted with intervention in the core subjects through alternative provisions such as Oak Academy, with the aim of allowing them phased returns into the curriculum.

Our assessments demonstrated that pupil behaviour, wellbeing and mental health were significantly impacted, following the legacy of COVID-19. However, using pupil premium funding to provide wellbeing support for all pupils, allowing disadvantaged pupils access to a dedicated pastoral worker and targeted interventions where required, has seen significant improvements in the number of pupils who are attending lessons without the need for removal. We have also seen a reduction in the number of pupils being removed from lessons due to poor behaviour. In addition, we have funded a number of places on college courses for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils that take this pathway have frequently acquired jobs or apprenticeships once leaving Our Lady's, often with the employer whose work placement was arranged through the college placement.

Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider

Further information (optional)

Additional activity

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

- embedding more effective practice around feedback. EEF evidence demonstrates this has significant benefits for pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils.
- utilising support from our local Mental Health Support Team and local behaviour hub, plus funding for CPD from the local authority's Wellbeing for Education Recovery budget, to support pupils with mild to moderate mental health and wellbeing issues, many of whom are disadvantaged.
- offering a wide range of high-quality extracurricular activities to boost wellbeing, behaviour, attendance, and aspiration. Activities (e.g., The Duke of Edinburgh's Award), will focus on building life skills such as confidence, resilience, and socialising. Disadvantaged pupils will be encouraged and supported to participate.

Planning, implementation, and evaluation

In planning our pupil premium strategy, we evaluated why activity undertaken in previous years had not had the degree of impact that we had expected.

We triangulated evidence from multiple sources of data including assessments, engagement in class book scrutiny, conversations with parents, students and teachers in order to identify the challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils. We also used the EEF's families of schools database to view the performance of disadvantaged pupils in school similar to ours and contacted schools with high-performing disadvantaged pupils to learn from their approach.

We looked at a number of 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 also looked at a number of studies about the impact of the pandemic on disadvantaged pupils.

We used the [EEF's implementation guidance](#) to help us develop our strategy and will continue to use it through the implementation of our activities. We have put a robust evaluation framework in place for the duration of our three-year approach and will adjust our plan over time to secure better outcomes for pupils.