

Saint Aidan's Church of England High School 'Pupil Premium Strategy' statement 2025-26

This statement details a review of the 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 effect that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	Saint Aidan's Church of England High School
Number of pupils in school	824
Proportion (%) of Pupil Premium Eligible Students	21.7% (179)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3-year plans are recommended)	2025 - 2028
Date this statement was published	1/12/25
Date on which it will be reviewed	1 st October 2026
Statement authorised by	Katie Benter
Pupil premium lead	Kate Bray
Governor / Trustee lead	Mr Ray Hart

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£194,315
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
Total budget for this academic year If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year	£194,315

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

This strategy is designed to enhance the progress already made in “narrowing the gap” for socially disadvantaged pupils, and to ensure that all students achieve as well as they can, irrespective of their social background or other external factors.

Our aim is to raise the attainment of disadvantaged students of all abilities, enabling them to make progress. This includes the students for whom we receive pupil premium but is not exclusive to them.

We will:

- Ensure that all students have high quality teaching. This will have the greatest impact on disadvantaged students as well as improving the attainment of all students.
- Address potential inequalities in our curricular and extra-curricular provision to ensure equity of access.
- Engage with families and the wider community.
- Assess progress regularly enough to ensure that gaps in attainment are identified and can be addressed.
- Use targeted interventions to address gaps in learning as needed.
- Work to ensure students attend regularly.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	The literacy level of disadvantaged students across all year groups is lower on average than for other students. Reading has been the number one focus and the necessity to focus on this continues. Sparx Reader provides excellent insight into students' reading age, reading speed and their accuracy so that targeted support and intervention can be put in place. It also ensures all students are involved in weekly reading at home.
2	The quality of teaching is even more important for disadvantaged students than for other students. Research suggests that this is the single biggest determiner of student progress. We know that teaching quality is high, but we need to continue to work on this area. We generally have a low staff turnover which means we must ensure new ideas are still brought in via good quality CPD. We also have 1 new ECT this year.

3	<p>The attendance of disadvantaged students at Saint Aidan’s is better than that of similar students nationally, but it is not as high on average as that of other students.</p> <p>Research has shown that regular attendance may be the greatest factor influencing an individual students’ academic success. If a student is not engaging in school, they will not make the progress of which they are capable. Last year the attendance of PP students was 88.4% while the whole school average was 93.07%. As it stands currently, the gap this year is narrowing but there is still work to do. Increased focus on praise and reward for good attendance has been a focus and our dedicated attendance officer has a real focus on PP and disadvantaged students.</p>
4	<p>An increased number of students are in need of support for their mental health and wellbeing. In particular, students who are disadvantaged may require this more regularly than other students.</p> <p>Of the students currently accessing support at our Tier 2 or Tier 3 level (see the school Wellbeing Provision Map) 40% of students are disadvantaged students. The need for support continues to increase and external services are stretched so this remains a priority within school.</p>
5	<p>High Quality CPD focused on ‘Quality First Teaching’ and ‘Oracy’.</p> <p>CPD in 2024-35 continued to develop metacognitive approaches in order to support students’ progress and understanding of their learning. CPD continues to focus on high quality teaching strategies that are evidence informed. We will also begin to explore the importance of ‘oracy’ which is a key concept for disadvantaged students who may usually have a deficiency in language skills. A focus on oracy will help to narrow this gap and will also aim to support students’ confidence in communicating.</p>

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
<p>Improve Whole School Literacy with a primary focus on Reading.</p>	<p>Continued use of Sparx Reader across all classes in English (Y7-Y11). This is used as homework but also completed in class to support more accurate reading. Y11 benefit from availability of set texts read via Sparx Reader.</p> <p>Whole school CPD training in literacy continues to be a priority with faculties being given time to focus on their own action plans and development of literacy as well as beginning a focus on oracy.</p> <p>To further develop the students Literacy skills, Lexonik Leap will</p>

	<p>continue to be used in school (an intervention to support lower ability students decode words) to support the weakest readers with a primary focus on Y7 and 8 students. Lexonik Advance will be delivered by 2 key staff with a focus on Y9 students and preparing them for the challenges of KS4.</p>
<p>Ensure disadvantaged students have equal opportunities to learn in the classroom</p>	<p>Effective curriculum planning allied with a comprehensive CPD programme will ensure that all teaching is at least good.</p> <p>This will be monitored through a programme of faculty reviews, as well as by individual subject leaders.</p> <p>Coaching will be available to staff who would benefit from it, especially for those who are less experienced, including Early Career Teachers.</p>
<p>Moving the PP overall attendance as close as possible to the national secondary average attendance</p>	<p>Attendance within our setting has been similar (although slightly above) national average with attendance figures remaining lower than pre-covid figures in 2023-24. Our Attendance and Family Liaison Officer continues to develop their role and understanding of a wide variety of strategies to support student attendance and also has a wider understanding of our students' needs and situations. Significant CPD has been utilised in this area as well as the use of a new 'Attend' programme via Synergy.</p>
<p>Ensure pastoral support and support around wellbeing is effective continues to meet need.</p>	<p>Students will have access to a range of support options within school and staff will have manageable 'case loads' of students whom they work with regularly. We will continue to build positive relationships with external agencies and work closely to support our young people where we can.</p> <p>We will continue to employ a Life Coach who will enhance the support offered weekly.</p>
<p>Support students' oracy and communication skills.</p>	<p>Students will be provided with more time and support in lessons to focus on oracy and to develop skills to help build confidence in communicating; this will then feed in to their written work too. Staff will receive CPD around oracy and will begin to create departmental action plans to develop this within classrooms.</p>

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: £94,315

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Enhancement of our provision to support literacy in our curriculum and teaching.</p> <p>All staff will participate in CPD in this area, and time has been allocated to faculties to ensure that appropriate changes are made to the curriculum</p>	<p>Improving Literacy in all subject areas in line with recommendations in the EEF; https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/literacy-ks3-ks4</p> <p>The research team, based at the UCL Institute of Education, found that teenagers who read often, and those who had access to plenty of books, were more likely to develop a better vocabulary than their peers.</p> <p>Even considering other factors, like parents' qualifications and profession, and cognitive tests taken by the teenagers when they were aged 5, teenagers who read for pleasure still got 12 per cent more words right, while those from book-rich homes scored 9 per cent more. https://cls.ucl.ac.uk/reading-improves-teenagers-vocab-whatever-their-background-say-researchers/</p>	<p>1, 2 and 5</p>
<p>CPD and dedicated time will be provided to allow subjects to develop effective teaching strategies and to focus on the development of oracy within the classroom.</p>	<p>CPD will be focussed on quality first teaching and principles of effective classroom practice. EEF Blog: Five evidence-based strategies to support... EEF</p> <p>The principles of Rosenshine, and similar evidence based teaching advice, links with our school T&L standards</p>	<p>2 and 5</p>
<p>We will support teachers in accessing high quality CPD.</p> <p>We will provide an SLT or external coach for teachers as necessary.</p>	<p>The best available evidence indicates that great teaching is the most important lever schools must develop and use to improve pupil attainment.</p> <p>Ensuring every teacher is supported in delivering high-quality teaching is essential to achieving the</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4 and 5</p>

<p>We will support ECTs through their first two years of teaching.</p> <p>We will ensure that high quality teaching is targeted as appropriate.</p> <p>A robust system of quality assurance will be in place across the school.</p>	<p>best outcomes for all pupils, particularly the most disadvantaged among them.</p> <p>This is very time consuming and therefore expensive.</p> <p>High quality teaching can only be developed over a period through a focussed CPD strategy and individual mentoring.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/support-for-schools/school-improvement-planning/1-high-quality-teaching</p>	
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £35,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Lexonik Leap/Lexonik Advance/Sparx Reader	The EEF's Guidance 'Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools' Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) specifically highlights high-quality literacy interventions as a way to support student development in this area.	1

	Lexonik Advance has been evaluated by the National Literacy Trust Lexonik Advance - NLT evaluation report 2022 - Final.pdf (cdn.ngo) which clearly identifies the progress students make using this intervention.	
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Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £70,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>We have appointed a new Attendance Officer to work with students and families. We have freed up some admin staff time to support the Attendance Officer Our enlarged pastoral team help to keep students in school. Continued employment of a life coach for one day/week to support the pastoral team.</p> <p>Continued development of our wellbeing provision including staffing (chaplain and two pastoral support)</p>	<p>The guidance states that to be effective in raising attendance schools should: Have a clear vision for attendance levels – leadership and management Interventions should be varied Relationships and communication must always remain open System and data analysis should inform all the above All of this takes an effective pastoral support team which is expensive.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/guidance-for-teachers/using-pupil-premium</p>	3 and 4

and also development of areas within the school that could be utilised to support wellbeing such as outside areas.	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/framework-for-securing-full-attendance-actions-for-schools-and-local-authorities	

Total budgeted cost: £199,590

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year 2024-2025

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the 2023-24 academic year.

Recent [Education Policy Institute research](#) has shown that there has been no progress since 2011 in closing the attainment gap between persistently disadvantaged children and their more affluent peers. Indeed, the pandemic has only made that gap worse.

Achievement/ Closing the Gap

GCSE results summary 2025 – 34 students 21% of cohort

Measure 2025	% English + Maths 5-9	EBacc 5+	Attainment 8	Progress 8	% English 5-9
All students	44%	19%	47.14		45%
Pupil Premium	15%	0%	35.62		15.2%

Teaching and Learning

We focussed on planning for high quality teaching across all subjects informed through their curriculum review documents.

Effective curriculum planning allied with a comprehensive CPD programme has aided us to ensure that most lessons are of at least a good standard.

Learning walks and formal observations with supportive one to one feedback and coaching have continued and become an essential part of the development and review process.

All staff have demonstrated high expectations for student's attitude to learning. The majority have been observed conveying this to all students through use of positive language and a reward driven culture that challenges them and prepares them to be-come confident, resilient, and independent learners.

Planning and delivery of lessons has reflected adaptive teaching through use of tracked data gleaned from regular in class formal testing regime.

The needs of the teaching staff as regards their staff development has been met through a carefully planned CPD programme.

The monitoring of all of this has been done via Walks/Faculty reflection time/Learning/Book inspections.

Attendance

Attendance rates were lower than normal for all students in 2021-22, because of the lingering effects of the COVID pandemic. Our attendance for disadvantaged students continues to be lower than for other students, following the national picture. However, our attendance overall remains above national averaged.

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Whole School	91.97	92.04	92.41	93.48
National	91.5% <i>(up to May 89.6%)</i>	90.8% <i>(up to May)</i>	90.8%	
Boys	92.59	92.92	92.57	94.18
Girls	91.40	91.24	92.27	92.77
PP	89.34	87.61	88.50	91.07
CLA	97.40	96.69	97.23	96.88
EAL	88.42	90.6	92.78	88.89

We will analyse the gap in attendance between disadvantaged and other students, to assess the impact of our work to improve attendance and minimise avoidable absence. Our Attendance and Family Liaison Officer will continue to develop new strategies to target attendance and to celebrate good and improved attendance. Increased home visits will be completed in order to work with families in order to improve attendance.

Literacy

Literacy continues to be a key focus within our school CPD offer so that all teachers and teaching assistants are continuing to develop their knowledge and understanding of effective ways to develop vocabulary and disciplinary literacy in particular. This CPD follows the evidence-based strategies explored in the EEF documentation referred to earlier.

Staff training has been given around Lexonik Advance and how this can be further supported in classrooms. Additional staff have received training for Lexonik Advance so that they can deliver this intervention within school.

We now use Sparx Reader Reading Test to identify students who need intervention and to track progress across reading throughout the school.

Externally provided programmes

Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you purchased in the previous academic year. This will help the Department for Education identify which ones are popular in England

Programme	Provider

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information:

Measure	Details