

St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Academy



Pupil Premium Strategy

2025-2026

Pupil premium strategy statement

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery premium for the 2025 to 2026 academic year) 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	St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Voluntary Academy
Number of pupils in school	228
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils Number as of December 2025	F1 = 3 (12%) F2 = 4 (21%) Y1=6 (20%) Y2=4 (13%) Y3=6 (20%) Y4=8 (25%) Y5=7 (23%) Y6=6 (19%) Total = 46 (20%)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	December 2024-2025 December 2025-2026 December 2026-2027
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	Mrs S Sweeney-McGinty
Pupil premium lead	Miss A Butt
Governor / Trustee lead	Patricia Bradley

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£68,080
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£68,080
If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year	

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Voluntary Academy, our mission—rooted in our Catholic ethos—is to ensure that every child, especially those who are disadvantaged, achieves their full academic and personal potential. We strive to develop children who are aspirational, resilient, respectful, and tolerant global citizens who have a life-long love of learning.

We are passionate about promoting ambition and equality for all our pupils and supporting their mental wellbeing, physical health, and social skill development. We understand and acknowledge the challenges faced by some of our families and recognise that a large proportion of our pupil premium children do not build their cultural capital outside of school. We strive to provide enrichment opportunities that inspire and motivate children to engage in their learning. These include providing support with funding residential trips; establishing a comprehensive extra-curricular programme for all children and ensuring high quality teaching for all.

A key lever within the pupil premium strategy is to increase the attendance of a few pupil premium children who are persistently absent. By implementing a clear Attendance policy and Trust wide target of 97%; establishing a systematic monitoring system to identify persistent absence and offering targeted challenge and support to these families to improve attendance.

High-quality 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.

We face specific challenges: a high proportion of pupils with low starting points in communication and language, writing outcomes that lag behind reading and maths, a cohort-specific need to sustain strong phonics, an attendance gap for a small number of disadvantaged pupils, and increased need for social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) support.

Our three-year strategy emphasises early oral language development, consistent high-quality teaching in reading and writing, precise identification and closing of gaps, and strong home–school partnerships.

We will:

- Prioritise high-quality, language-rich interactions and specialist speech & language input in EYFS to secure foundations for reading and writing.
- Raise writing outcomes through a consistent whole-school approach to transcription, sentence construction and composition, accompanied by practical guidance for parents.
- Sustain strong phonics through fidelity to Little Wandle, book-matching and staff training.
- Improve reading outcomes by investing in whole-school reading resources (decodables, whole class reading sets, diverse class libraries), increasing children's reading habits and

reading-for-pleasure opportunities, and strengthening teacher assessment of reading (Testbase MERIT Question Level Assessment for all classes) to identify and address gaps quickly.

- Strengthen SEMH, confidence and resilience through ELSA/MHFA and OPAL play, alongside an explicit behaviour policy and behaviour curriculum ('The St Margaret Clitherow Way').
- Improve attendance through a systematic, data-led and relationship-centred approach aligned with DfE best practice, with regular tracking and targeted family support.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Writing – Pupils' writing outcomes are significantly below those for reading and maths. Many children struggle to grasp basic spelling and grammar principles due to low starting points in language, underdeveloped vocabulary and reduced reading habits. These weaknesses limit sentence construction, cohesion and transcription accuracy. Parents report that writing is particularly difficult to support at home, as they are unsure how to help with spelling, grammar and composition, which contributes to widening gaps for disadvantaged pupils.
2	Communication & Language – High levels of EAL; children enter with C&L significantly below national; EYFS GLD 57.8% vs 68.3% national. Children enter F1/F2 with significantly low communication and language skills. This is an increasing concern year on year. Under-developed language and vocabulary gaps are apparent particularly amongst disadvantaged pupils. These under-developed skills are prevalent with our disadvantaged children from EYFS through to KS2.
3	Phonics/Reading – previously strong PP outcomes for phonics; current cohort requires support to sustain performance from low EYFS baseline. Assessments, observations and discussions with pupils suggest that disadvantaged children have greater difficulties with learning phonics in comparison to their peers. This is part to do with their lack of speech clarity and experience of language. This negatively impacts on their development as a reader, which also effects their learning across all subject areas.
4	Attendance – Attendance across the school is good; however, maintaining consistently high levels of attendance for some disadvantaged families requires sustained, proactive communication and ongoing relationship-building. A small number of disadvantaged pupils experience frequent or recurring barriers to regular attendance, which increases the risk of persistent absence. Ensuring strong attendance therefore demands continual monitoring, supportive dialogue with families, and early intervention to prevent small issues from becoming entrenched patterns. Disadvantaged pupils 92.61% vs 95.46% non-PP (-2.85%) (Advent 2 2025); 7/43 R-Y6 =16.2% PP persistently absent; 33% PP below 95%. Reasons for PP absence include illness, medical appointments and unauthorised holidays in term time.
5	Emotional, Mental & Physical Health – Disadvantaged pupils are disproportionately affected by external challenges that can limit their access to school and wider learning, particularly social and emotional difficulties. Increasing numbers of pupils are experiencing anxiety

	and struggling to manage and regulate their emotions independently. Many children find it difficult to play cooperatively at playtimes, often needing adult support to resolve conflict or problem-solve. These factors can affect relationships, engagement, readiness to learn and participation in school life. Ensuring that pupils receive timely emotional literacy support, and that staff are equipped to respond consistently, remains a significant priority.
6	Behaviour & Enrichment – Behaviour in school is good and reflects a carefully designed behaviour policy and behaviour curriculum that embed the SMC values, school rules and clear expectations. This consistent approach ensures pupils understand what good behaviour looks like and are positively rewarded for meeting expectations. However, maintaining these high standards requires continued financial investment in resources, systems and staff training. In addition, disadvantaged pupils can face greater barriers to accessing the wide range of enrichment experiences offered by the school (e.g., trips, music tuition, sports, clubs and residential). Ensuring that all PP pupils fully participate requires targeted support, monitoring and subsidised access to sustain equity and uphold high behavioural expectations across all school contexts.

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 improve writing outcomes for disadvantaged children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KS2 disadvantaged writing outcomes improve to meet or exceed national expectations. • Stamina, accuracy and independence in writing increase, evidenced through moderation, lesson visits and work scrutiny. • A consistent whole-school approach reduces cognitive load by providing familiar structures, routines and resources in every year group. • High-quality, coherent resourcing enables effective teaching and supports pupils to apply key writing skills with increasing confidence. • The school implements and adapts the Ready, Steady, Write scheme to ensure clear progression, coherence and high expectations across all phases. • Opportunities for writing in EYFS are increased.
To improve communication and language in EYFS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerated progress in Communication & Language for disadvantaged pupils in EYFS. • Increased attainment of ELGs in Listening, Attention & Understanding and Speaking. • Improved expressive and receptive vocabulary, enabling stronger foundations for early reading and writing. • All EYFS staff trained in high-quality interactions, informed by the DfE <i>Strong Foundations</i> report. • All EYFS staff confidently applying the SHREC approach, using skilled questioning, extending language, and identifying next steps through play.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disadvantaged pupils are strategically targeted through “Play Ninjas”, ensuring they receive high-quality interactions and purposeful play support to make progress towards their communication and language targets.
To improve phonics and reading outcomes for disadvantaged children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New staff are confident and secure in delivering the Little Wandle programme with fidelity. The current Year 1 cohort achieves in line with national expectations, despite starting from low EYFS baselines. Cohort-led differences in attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils are reduced, particularly in decoding, fluency and comprehension. Targeted intervention and “keep-up” support ensure disadvantaged pupils who fall behind receive rapid, precise, high-quality catch-up. Whole-class reading strengthens reading fluency for all pupils, including disadvantaged, through daily exposure to high-quality texts and consistent modelling. Whole-class reading also improves vocabulary and comprehension, giving disadvantaged pupils greater access to Tier 2/3 language and richer oral responses. Investment in high-quality home-reading resources increases reading habits at home, enabling disadvantaged families to support early reading more effectively.
For the gap to narrow in attendance between the Pupil Premium and Non-Pupil Premium groups. The number of Pupil Premium children with attendance below 97% to decrease.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the Advent 2025 Term, Whole school attendance was 95.97%. To narrow the whole school attendance gap between PP (94.26%) and Non-PP (96.4%). (-2.14%). To decrease the number of PP children who are persistently absent (Below 90%). Currently PP PA 7/43 (16.2%). To decrease the number of PP children who are being monitored (Below 95%). Currently PP <95% 15/46 (33%).
To ensure all pupil premium children have access to support to reduce SEMH barriers to learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children who experience social, emotional and mental health difficulties are identified quickly. ELSA support is provided where this is needed. (Currently, 11/46 (23.9%) of PP children are either receiving ELSA or on the waiting list. Mental health lead is a trained DSL. The school curriculum supports well-being particularly through a carefully planned PSHE curriculum. All staff are well-trained to support children who are experiencing SEMH difficulties. OPAL is fully embedded at St Margaret Clitherow and children are more active during playtimes.
To maintain high standards of behaviour and provide equal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils are taught explicitly what good behaviour looks like and where adults expect impeccable behaviour regardless of a pupils’ background. Where good habits are shaped and bad ones are challenged. “The St Margaret Clitherow Way” Behaviour Curriculum.

<p>opportunities for enrichment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disadvantaged children to enjoy the wide range of enrichment activities that we offer at St Margaret Clitherow Academy. • An Enrichment Schedule is established to return enrichment activities, including school trips, sports trips, music concerts, residential trips and child led charity fundraising return to pre-pandemic levels. • A wide range of extra-curricular activities will be offered to develop our children's interests. • Discounts will apply for disadvantaged children for all enrichment opportunities to include; educational visits and residential visits. • An increased number of PP children access the personal development opportunities offered at St Margaret Clitherow.
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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: **£10000**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
CPD for subject leaders and teaching staff – effective quality first teaching. Time for monitoring and coaching. (Tom Sherrington, Doug Lemov) <u>£2000</u>	High Quality Teaching EEF https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/support-for-schools/school-improvement-planning/1-high-quality-teaching EEF Using Pupil Premium effectively – https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/guidance-for-teachers/using-pupil-premium The Sutton Trust Report 2011	1, 2, 3
Subscription of a <u>DfE validated Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme</u> “Little Wandle” to secure stronger phonics teaching for all pupils. <u>£1500</u>	Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base that indicates a positive impact on the accuracy of word reading (though not necessarily comprehension), particularly for disadvantaged pupils: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/phonics-1	2
Reading CPD Maintain phonics CPD/ coaching and develop reading programme and monitoring further, with a strong focus on KS2. Invest in class books for Year 2-Year 6 whole class reading. <u>£5000</u>	EEF: Reading comprehension strategies show high impact (+6 months); increasing reading for pleasure and effective assessment practices are associated with improved attainment. Whole Class Reading programme is based on Pupil Book Study author Alex Bedford. His book, written by Lauren Meadows, is an evidence informed guide to help quality assure the reading curriculum.	3
Writing Scheme “Ready, Steady Write” to develop consistency in teaching and learning of writing.	RSW is explicitly aligned with the July 2025 DfE Writing Framework, which strengthens its suitability for meeting national expectations and ensuring that disadvantaged learners (including those eligible for Pupil Premium) receive high-quality curriculum provision.	

<u>£1500</u>	EEF emphasises that high-quality teaching has the greatest impact on disadvantaged pupils , making a structured, well-aligned curriculum a strong choice.	
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: **£31800**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Teaching Assistant directed time for provision of Reading interventions to increase knowledge and skills and improve attainment of all disadvantaged children. <u>£20000</u>	<p><u>EEF (+4 MONTHS) Small group tuition Education Endowment Fund Foundation.</u></p> <p>1. Small group tuition has an average impact of four months' additional progress over the course of a year.</p> <p>2. Small group tuition is most likely to be effective if it is targeted at pupils' specific needs. Diagnostic assessment can be used to assess the best way to target support.</p> <p>3. One to one tuition and small group tuition are both effective interventions. However, the cost effectiveness of teaching in small groups indicates that greater use of this approach may be worthwhile.</p> <p>4. Providing training to the staff that deliver small group support is likely to increase impact.</p> <p>5. Additional small group support can be effectively targeted at pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, and should be considered as part of a school's pupil premium strategy.</p>	1, 2, 3
Communication and Language in EYFS staff trained in. ShREK and Early Talk Boost. <u>£1000</u>	EEF: Early oral language development is linked to later literacy gains; targeted support improves outcomes when integrated with classroom practice.	
<u>Maths programme subscription</u> Enhancement of Maths curriculum through purchase of Mathletics and TTRS programmes to develop fluency skills at school and through homework. <u>£2000</u>	<p>EEF research suggests that disadvantaged pupils receive additional benefits from completing homework if this can be supported by the school.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/homework</p>	3

<p><u>Phonics Interventions</u> Implementation of additional targeted phonics interventions led by staff to improve standards in phonics.</p> <p><u>£8000</u></p>	<p>Studies have shown that Phonics has a positive impact overall (+5 months) and is an important component in the development of early reading skills, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studies have shown that pupils eligible for free school meals typically receive similar or slightly greater benefit from phonics interventions and approaches. 	2
<p>Use of regular TestBase Assessments for Reading GPS and Maths and MERIT QLA to swiftly identify gaps and give feedback.</p> <p><u>£800</u></p>	<p>EEF: Targeted reading interventions are most effective when rooted in accurate assessment and aligned with classroom instruction</p>	

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

Budgeted cost: **£24500**

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Employment of an Attendance Officer - to support families and ensure all pupils achieve the school's attendance target.</p> <p><u>£12000</u></p>	<p>Research into how attendance can impact attainment – The Key for School Leaders</p> <p>The Department for Education (DfE) published research in 2016 that made a clear link between absence from school and lower attainment.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/framework-for-securing-full-attendance-actions-for-schools-and-local-authorities</p>	4
<p>Cultural Capital Experiences promoted in the curriculum. Essential experiences built in to the SMC curriculum eg Sports Events and after school club activities for disadvantaged</p>	<p>Language is contextualised in concrete experiences and language-rich environments.</p> <p>Ofsted research 2019 places emphasis on improving cultural capital, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>Enrichment activities offer children a context for learning and a stimulus to trigger their interest, which can be evidenced in pupil books and data.</p> <p>EEF – sports participation increases educational achievement and attainment.</p>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

children. £3000	EEF- outdoor adventure learning shows positive benefits on academic learning and self-confidence.	
Provision of one Mental Health First Aiders and three ELSA's as part of the school's wider tiered mental health system to ensure early support. £10000	There is extensive evidence associating childhood social and emotional skills with improved outcomes at school and in later life (e.g., improved academic performance, attitudes, behaviour and relationships with peers): Social and emotional learning EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	5
Behaviour CPD and Support. £1500	Tom Bennett Behaviour Training on Developing Behavioural Norms. Virtue Voucher Prizes	7

Total budgeted cost: £66300

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the 2024-2025 academic year.

Since adopting the DfE-accredited *Little Wandle* phonics programme in January 2022, the school has ensured staff across Key Stage 2 are fully trained to deliver targeted catch-up interventions. This has strengthened consistency and secured strong phonics outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. While outcomes for PP pupils in the 2024 Year 1 Phonics Check were strong, results dipped in 2025. To return to previous high standards, 2026 will see a renewed focus on precise, targeted support for disadvantaged pupils, ensuring early gaps are quickly identified and addressed.

A new Attendance Officer and enhanced monitoring systems have further strengthened the school's approach to attendance. Overall attendance continues to remain above national figures. However, attendance remains an ongoing challenge for some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. Continued rigorous monitoring, timely action, and consistent implementation of the attendance policy will remain a priority to ensure all pupils benefit from strong school attendance.

Behaviour at St Margaret Clitherow is good. Pupils feel a strong sense of belonging and pride in being part of the SMC community. The school values and the #SMCRespects rules are firmly embedded, contributing to a reduction in behaviour incidents over time. The introduction of OPAL has further improved the quality of play, with pupils reporting greater enjoyment of playtime and parents expressing strong positive feedback.

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing is now a central focus of the school's provision. The appointed Mental Health Lead, an experienced teacher, has strengthened whole-school wellbeing strategies, including the highly valued *Wellbeing Warriors* initiative. Pupils are increasingly confident in recognising and expressing their emotions and in seeking support when needed. ELSA sessions are positively received, with pupils reporting that the strategies they learn help them both in school and in their wider lives.

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
Times Table Rockstars	TT Rockstars
Mathletics	3P
Little Wandle Phonics	Little Wandle
Ready Steady Write	Literacy Counts
TestBase and MERIT	TestBase