Pupil premium strategy statement – St Cuthbert's CE Primary School, Darwen.

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	164
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	32%
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	December 2024
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2027
Statement authorised by	Victoria Weddle
Pupil premium lead	Emily Coolican
Governor / Trustee lead	Jackie Stokes

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£ £108,040
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*	£108,040

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

As a Christian school we nurture an understanding that we are all of equal value and infinite worth. This very much underpins our objectives for disadvantaged pupils at St Cuthbert's. We aim for every child to make the level of progress necessary for them to attain their optimum outcomes across the curriculum. We aim to not only develop children's academic skills but to ensure they receive a holistic educational experience, which enhances their Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development, enabling them to make firm steps towards being global citizens and courageous advocates.

Our current strategy ensures that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the needs of our disadvantaged pupils, this is achieved through regular monitoring of their progress and the impact of interventions that are put in place. As a staff, we carefully consider the areas disadvantaged children need support in and use this to inform our actions. We strongly believe in the vital role our ELSA trained staff play in supporting our disadvantaged pupils and have heavily invested in our Forest School programme which breaks down the barriers to learning that many of our disadvantaged children experience. Our Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator plays a vital role in supporting our children and their families to overcome a range of barriers including attendance.

We aim to overcome these barriers through ensuring consistent quality first teaching across all year groups, supporting children in broadening their vocabulary and expressive language, developing children's cultural capital to provide them with experiences on which they can draw and implementing focused, research-based interventions for targeted children.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Assessments, observations, and discussions with pupils indicate underdeveloped oral language skills and vocabulary gaps among many disadvantaged pupils. These are evident from Reception through to KS2 and in general, are more prevalent among our disadvantaged pupils than their peers. Of our current Year 1 cohort, only 48% of children were working at age related expectations for communication and language on entry, this was reflected in our disadvantaged pupils too.

2	Assessments, observations, and discussions with pupils suggest disadvantaged pupils generally have greater difficulties with reading than their peers. On entry to Reception class in 2024, 25% of all children were age related for Literacy with 75% of disadvantaged pupils arriving below age-related expectations. This gap narrows but remains significant to the end of KS2.
3	Internal and external assessments indicate that maths attainment among disadvantaged pupils is significantly below that of non-disadvantaged pupils. On entry to Reception class in 2024, 100% of our disadvantaged pupils arrived below age-related expectations compared to 75% of other pupils. This gap narrows but remains significant to the end of KS2.
4	Our assessments, observations and discussions with pupils and families indicate that the education and wellbeing of many of our disadvantaged pupils continues to be affected by issues such as the cost of living, anxiety around social issues and maintaining good levels of attendance. This has resulted in significant knowledge gaps leading to pupils falling further behind age-related expectations.
5	Our assessments, observations and discussions with pupils and families have identified social and emotional issues for many pupils, in particular self-regulation. These challenges particularly affect disadvantaged pupils, impacting on their attainment. We continue to have a number of children requiring emotional support. 36 pupils (19 of whom are disadvantaged) currently require additional support with social and emotional needs and are receiving small group interventions. A further 30 children, 18 of these are in receipt of PPG, access our Breakfast club provision which is offered to those children who require a check in and time to regulate before the start of the school day.
6	Our attendance data over the last three years indicates that attendance among disadvantaged pupils has been between 2 and 4% lower than for non-disadvantaged pupils. 23-25% of disadvantaged pupils have been ‘persistently absent’ compared to 16-20% of their peers during that period. Our assessments and observations indicate that absenteeism is negatively impacting disadvantaged pupils’ progress.

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 oral language skills and vocabulary among disadvantaged pupils.	Assessments and observations indicate significantly improved oral language among disadvantaged pupils. This is evident when triangulated with other sources of evidence, including engagement in lessons, book scrutiny and ongoing formative assessment.
Improved reading attainment among disadvantaged pupils.	KS2 reading outcomes in 2026/27 show that more than 62% of disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard.
Improved maths attainment for disadvantaged pupils at the end of KS2.	KS2 maths outcomes in 2026/27 show that more than 66% of disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard.
To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils in our school, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	Sustained high levels of wellbeing by 2026/27 demonstrated by: • qualitative data from student voice, student and parent surveys and teacher observations • a significant increase in participation in enrichment activities, particularly among disadvantaged pupils. • Pre and post intervention assessments demonstrate positive outcomes and increased wellbeing.
To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	Sustained high attendance by 2026/27 demonstrated by: • The overall unauthorised absence rate for all pupils being no more than 1%, and the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers being reduced to less than 2% • The percentage of all pupils who are persistently absent being below 14% and the figure among disadvantaged pupils being no lower 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: £54,020

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Purchase of standardised diagnostic assessments. Training for staff to ensure assessments are interpreted and administered correctly.	When used effectively, diagnostic assessments can indicate areas for development for individual pupils, or across classes and year groups: Diagnostic assessment | EEF	1, 2, 3,
Embedding Wellcomm within EYFS and into KS1 where appropriate. Implementing dialogic activities across the school curriculum to support pupils to articulate key ideas, consolidate understanding and extend vocabulary. Purchase resources and fund ongoing teacher training and release time.	There is a strong evidence base that suggests oral language interventions, including dialogic activities such as high-quality classroom discussion, are inexpensive to implement with high impacts on reading: Oral language interventions | Teaching and Learning Toolkit | EEF	1
Purchase of a DfE validated Systematic Synthetic Phonics	Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base that indicates a positive impact on the accuracy of word reading, particularly for disadvantaged pupils: Phonics | Teaching and Learning Toolkit | EEF	2

programme to secure stronger phonics teaching for all pupils. Fund teacher release time to access training and resources through Essential Letters and Sounds		
Enhancement of our maths teaching and curriculum planning in line with DfE and EEF guidance. Funding teacher release time to embed key elements of guidance in school and to access Maths Hub resources and CPD (including Teaching for Mastery training).	The DfE non-statutory guidance has been produced in conjunction with the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics, drawing on evidence-based approaches: Mathematics_guidance: key stages 1_and 2 The EEF guidance is based on a range of the best available evidence: Improving Mathematics in Key Stages 2 and 3	3
Reviewing and training all staff around behaviour for learning. Develop a behaviour curriculum to explicitly teach desired behaviour and teach children about metacognition in order to develop	Evidence suggests the use of 'metacognitive strategies' – which get pupils to think about their own learning – can be worth the equivalent of an additional +7 months' progress when used well. The potential impact of these approaches is very high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/eef-guidance-reports/metacognition/EEF_Metacognition_and_self-regulated_learning.pdf?v=1730378798	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

their own learning.		
Improve the quality of social and emotional (SEL) learning. SEL approaches will be embedded into routine educational practices and supported by professional development and training for staff.	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): Improving_Social_and_Emotional_Learning in Primary Schools | EEF	4

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

Budgeted cost: £27,010

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Additional phonics sessions targeted at disadvantaged pupils who require further phonics support. This will be delivered in collaboration with our local English hub.	Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base indicating a positive impact on pupils, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds. Targeted phonics interventions have been shown to be more effective when delivered as regular sessions over a period up to 12 weeks: Phonics | Teaching and Learning Toolkit | EEF	2
Trained TAs to deliver targeted interventions eg Building Firm Foundations, Precision Teaching	Mathematics_guidance: key stages 1_and 2	3, 4
Trained TAs to support targeted children with home reading books regularly within the school day.	Phonics | Teaching and Learning Toolkit | EEF	2

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

Budgeted cost: £27,010

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Embedding principles of good practice set out in the DfE's guidance on working together to improve school attendance. This will involve training and release time for staff to develop and implement new procedures and appointing attendance/support officers to improve attendance.	The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced levels of absence and persistent absence.	5
Forest schools for all classes, enhancing opportunities for group working, collaborative working and teambuilding.	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): Improving_Social_and_Emotional_Learning in Primary Schools | EEF	1, 5
Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator employed to support disadvantaged children and their families through Early help.	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): Improving_Social_and_Emotional_Learning in Primary Schools | EEF	4

Total budgeted cost: £108,040

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

We have analysed the performance of our school's disadvantaged pupils during the previous academic year, drawing on national assessment data and our own internal summative and formative assessments.

The data demonstrated that across all standard assessments, including EYFS, Phonics Screening check, KS1 SATs, Y4 MTP check and KS2 SATs, there is a gap between the attainment of PPG and non- PPG children.

To help us gauge the performance of our disadvantaged pupils we compared their results to those for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils at national and local level and to results achieved by our non-disadvantaged pupils (though we know that pupils included in the performance data will have experienced some disruption due to Covid-19 earlier in their schooling, which will have affected individual pupils and schools differently).

The data demonstrates that

- In EYFS there is a gap between the number of PPG and non PPG children who achieved GLD. This is most significant in Communication and Language and Physical Development.
- In PSED and Mathematics however, more PPG children achieved the ELG than Non-PPG The gap for PSED was 1.4% and the gap for Mathematics was 8.6% The difference between PPG and Non-PPG pupils in achieving GLD was -4.3%.
- The children in receipt of PPG at St Cuthbert's attained higher than those in receipt of PPG across the Local Authority. GLD (5.9% difference), PSED (9.2% higher), Literacy (3.6% higher), Mathematics (19.3% higher).
- Mathematics is developing as a strength of the school for EYFS PPG children demonstrating the impact of the school's work around Mastering Number.
- In the Year 1 phonics screening check, 67% of PPG children passed the screening check with 91% of Non PPG children passing the check. The percentage of School PPG children who passed the check was also lower than LA PPG. Of the three children in receipt of PPG, one child has SEND and did not pass the check, the two other children without SEND achieved the expected standard.
- In KS1 SATs, PPG children did not attain as well as non-PPG children with the gap in Reading and Maths being more significant than in Writing where attainment was generally lower. There remains a gap between the attainment of children in school and the attainment of children across the LA.
- In Year 4 MTP check, PPG children scored slightly lower than Non-PPG children although the gap between PPG and Non PPG is narrowing along with the gap between school and the LA.
- In KS2 SATs, PPG children did not attain as well as Non-PPG children, particularly in Reading and Mathematics. There continues to be a significant gap between school PPG and LA PPG pupils.

Using the IDACI index we can also conclude that the levels of deprivation are higher in St Cuthbert's than in other schools within both SIG 5 and the Local Authority. As a school overall, 86% of children are in the bottom half, compared with the LA average of 75%. 50% of the school are in the bottom 20%, compared to the LA average of 42%. This factor significantly impacts on our pupils.

We have also drawn on school data and observations to assess wider issues impacting disadvantaged pupils' performance, including attendance, behaviour and wellbeing. The data demonstrated that attendance for children in receipt of PPG continues to improve. 58% of persistent absentee are in receipt of PPG. Their attendance has however improved throughout the academic year 2025-2026.

Children's emotional regulation and the capacity of families to support children with this impacts on the behaviour of children in receipt of PPG. In addition, 38% of our PPG children are also on our SEN register. The needs of these children impacts on their ability to self-regulate and follow expectations of Non PPG/ Non SEND children.

Our family wellbeing coordinator continues to work closely with families and we maintain a high level of families accessing Early Help although a number of families at CAF level have now closed.

Based on all the information above, the performance of our disadvantaged pupils did not meet expectations, and we are at present reviewing our strategy to ensure we are able to meet the outcomes we set out to achieve by 2027, as stated in the Intended Outcomes section above.

Our evaluation of the approaches delivered last academic year indicates that the support pupil wellbeing and attendance has been particularly effective with strategies such at tutoring being less effective during our previous strategy.

We have reviewed our strategy plan and made changes to how we intend to use some of our budget this academic year. The Further Information section below provides more details about our planning, implementation, and evaluation processes.

Externally provided programmes

Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you used your pupil premium to fund in the previous academic year.

Programme	Provider

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information: **How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year**
N/A
The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils