



THE CATHOLIC HIGH
SCHOOL, CHESTER

CHRISTO FIDELIS

Pupil Premium Strategy

Year 1 2024/25

Year 2 2025/26

Year 3 2026/27

Pupil premium strategy statement – The Catholic High School, Chester

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	648 (Year 7-11) 806 (Year 7-13)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	22.22% (Year 7-11) 19.73% (Year 7-13)
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)	2024/25 – Year 1 2025/26 – Year 2 2026/27 – Year 3
Date this statement was published	December 2024
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2025
Statement authorised by	Mrs C. McKeagney
Pupil premium lead	Mr T. Wilson
Governor / Trustee lead	Mrs L. Liddiard

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£159,600
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£14,033
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>	£173,633

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At The Catholic High School, Chester, we are deeply committed to ensuring that students in receipt of the pupil premium achieve at least as well as their peers. Our mission is to provide every student with the opportunity to excel academically, develop personally, and thrive within our supportive and inclusive community.

The pupil premium we receive is used strategically to implement initiatives that address barriers to learning and work to further close the attainment gap that currently exists. These initiatives are carefully designed to support students both academically and pastorally, ensuring that they receive the help they need both inside and outside of the classroom.

Our approach to tackling educational disadvantage is grounded in an evidence-informed strategy, with a strong focus on improving outcomes in the classroom. This aligns with the Educational Endowment Foundation (EEF) guidance outlined in '*Putting Evidence to Work – A School's Guide to Implementation*'. By taking a long-term perspective, we ensure that planned activities are implemented effectively, evaluated rigorously, and embedded to create, sustainable, positive outcomes for disadvantaged learners.

Informed by key research, including the Sutton Trust's '*School Funding and Pupil Premium 2021*' report, the EEF's *Teaching and Learning Toolkit* and *Guide to the Pupil Premium*, and studies on disadvantaged students and the vocabulary gap, our strategy is further strengthened by the combined professional experience of our staff. These insights help us adopt practices that are proven to work, ensuring the greatest possible impact for our students.

To support holistic development and provide opportunities beyond the classroom, we subsidise educational visits, workshops, and residential experiences for every year group. This ensures all students, regardless of their financial background, can participate in enriching activities that foster personal growth, build aspirations, and enhance cultural capital.

By weaving research, evidence-based practices, and professional expertise into our strategy, we are committed to overcoming barriers to learning and achieving sustained success for disadvantaged students.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge																
1	<p><u>Attendance</u> Despite a significant improvement in attendance, the attendance of pupil premium students is below that of non-pupil premium students</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Non-PP Students Attendance</th> <th>PP Students Attendance</th> <th>Gap between Non-PP and PP Students</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2021/22</td> <td>89.51%</td> <td>77.75%</td> <td>11.76%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022/23</td> <td>86.49%</td> <td>76.74%</td> <td>9.75%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2023/24</td> <td>94.40%</td> <td>85.60%</td> <td>8.80%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Non-PP Students Attendance	PP Students Attendance	Gap between Non-PP and PP Students	2021/22	89.51%	77.75%	11.76%	2022/23	86.49%	76.74%	9.75%	2023/24	94.40%	85.60%	8.80%
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2	<p><u>Progress of Pupil Premium Students</u> There is a significant gap in Attainment 8 data between pupil premium and non-pupil premium students, indicating lower academic outcomes for pupil premium students.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Attainment 8 of Non-PP Students</th> <th>Attainment 8 of PP Students</th> <th>Gap between Non-PP and PP Students</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2021/22</td> <td>51.30</td> <td>40.27</td> <td>11.03</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022/23</td> <td>47.22</td> <td>31.37</td> <td>15.85</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2023/24</td> <td>48.92</td> <td>30.74</td> <td>18.18</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Attainment 8 of Non-PP Students	Attainment 8 of PP Students	Gap between Non-PP and PP Students	2021/22	51.30	40.27	11.03	2022/23	47.22	31.37	15.85	2023/24	48.92	30.74	18.18
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3	<p><u>Social, Emotional and Mental Health</u> Social, emotional and mental health challenges significantly affect disadvantaged students, impacting their ability to engage fully in learning and school life.</p>																
4	<p><u>Suspensions</u> The number of fixed term exclusions (now suspensions) is disproportionately higher amongst pupil premium students.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Total Number of Suspensions</th> <th>% of Non-PP</th> <th>% of PP</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2021/22</td> <td>39</td> <td>79.00</td> <td>21.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022/23</td> <td>39</td> <td>54.00</td> <td>46.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2023/24</td> <td>36</td> <td>61.11</td> <td>38.39</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Total Number of Suspensions	% of Non-PP	% of PP	2021/22	39	79.00	21.00	2022/23	39	54.00	46.00	2023/24	36	61.11	38.39
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5	<p><u>Literacy</u> There is a disparity in the literacy levels of pupil premium and non-pupil premium students, including gaps in vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing skills, which hinder progress across the curriculum.</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>The attendance of PP students continues to improve and there are less incidences of missed learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a reduction in the difference between the attendance of pupil premium students and their peers. • Attendance data shows gap reduced to 0% (both above 95%) by July 2027.
<p>To narrow the attainment gap between PP and non-PP students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve national average for attainment 8 for all pupils. The target for this to be achieved is Summer 2027. This will be reviewed annually. • Narrow the gap in attainment between PP and non-PP students achieving a Grade 4 or above in English and Maths. The target for this to be achieved is Summer 2027. This will be reviewed annually. • Greater evidence of quality first teaching through learning walks and book reviews.
<p>Improved social, emotional and mental health amongst students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved engagement in lessons and school life, as measured by student surveys, staff observations and attitude to learning data. • Reduction in social, emotional and mental health related referrals and an increase in participation in social, emotional and mental health interventions.
<p>There are not disproportionate amounts of suspensions for pupil premium students.</p>	<p>A reduction in the difference between the suspension data of pupil premium students and non-pupil premium students.</p>
<p>PP students can apply their literacy skills across their curriculum so there is no difference in the literacy levels of pupil premium and non-pupil premium students in all subjects but especially those with an increased literacy content.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning walks and work sampling will evidence literacy skills. • Call the COPS embedded across all subjects. • Improved student performance in internal and external assessments in all subjects but, in particular, those with an increased literacy content e.g., English, RE, History. • Additional literacy interventions will demonstrate impact and improvements in the literacy of our students.

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: £44,563

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p><u>Ambitious Curriculum Design</u> The curriculum is designed to ensure that every student, including disadvantaged learners, gains the knowledge and skills required for lifelong success.</p>	<p>According to research by the Department of Education and the Education Endowment Foundation, a well-sequenced and coherently planned curriculum fosters cumulative knowledge, which is critical for maximising student progress.</p>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
<p><u>Enhancing Literacy across the curriculum</u> Improving literacy skills across all subjects to support students accessing and mastering complex concepts</p>	<p>The EEF's <i>Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools</i> guidance underscores the critical role of reading comprehension, vocabulary, and literacy skills. These are strongly linked to attainment in core subjects such as English and Mathematics, enabling students to access and master challenging content.</p>	2, 5
<p><u>Attitude to Learning and Behaviour Monitoring</u> The school behaviour strategy establishes clear expectations, promotes positive behaviour, and reduces classroom disruptions. Enhanced logging and tracking systems allow staff to monitor trends, identify areas for improvement, and intervene early to support students effectively.</p>	<p>According to the EEF, behaviour interventions are effective in creating a positive school ethos and improving discipline. Such approaches lead to better student engagement, fewer disruptions, and improved learning outcomes. Behaviour strategies implemented in classrooms help contribute to a productive and supportive learning environment.</p>	2, 4
<p><u>Bespoke CPD for Teachers</u> The CPD programme is tailored to meet the</p>	<p>The EEF emphasises that effective professional development must build knowledge, motivate staff, refine</p>	2, 5

<p>specific needs of teachers, focusing on the core elements of Teaching, Learning and Behaviour. The programme includes resources from Teacher WalkThrus and additional tools are available through BlueSky Education, enabling teachers to track and reflect on their professional growth. The goal is to ensure high-quality, consistent teaching across the school, driving better outcomes for all students.</p>	<p>teaching techniques, and embed good practices.</p> <p>Enser (2021), advocates for targeted CPD, noting that bespoke training has a more substantial impact than generic programmes.</p> <p>William (2010) asserts that improving teacher quality is the most critical factor in enhancing student outcomes.</p> <p>Didau (2019) highlights the importance of quality-first teaching in closing attainment gaps, which requires comprehensive CPD.</p> <p>The EEF (2017, 2019) identifies quality teaching as fundamental to reducing disparities between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students.</p>	
<p><u>Coaching Programme for Professional Growth</u></p> <p>The coaching programme provides ongoing, personalised support for teachers, focusing on practical strategies to enhance classroom practice. Using frameworks from Teacher WalkThrus and BlueSky Education, the programme aims to build knowledge, refine teaching methods, and embed effective practices, ensuring professional development is meaningful and impactful.</p>	<p>The EEF identifies four mechanisms essential for effective professional development; building knowledge, motivating staff, refining techniques, and embedding practice. This coaching programme incorporates these mechanisms, ensuring sustained improvement in teaching quality and, consequently, student outcomes.</p>	<p>2, 3, 5</p>

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

Budgeted cost: £54,592

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p><u>English and Maths Intervention</u></p> <p>Targeted small group intervention sessions are offered to students who require additional support. A dedicated Teaching Assistant conducts these sessions, which take place before school and during lunchtimes. Students are referred by their class teachers, although self-referral options are also available for those seeking extra help.</p>	<p>M. Rowland (2021) emphasizes that effective deployment of support staff is essential for maximizing their impact on student outcomes.</p> <p>The EEF <i>Maths Report</i> (2017) recommends structured interventions, such as 1-to-1 sessions, as an effective strategy to support disadvantaged students and close gaps in maths attainment.</p> <p>The EEF's <i>Teacher Toolkit</i> highlights that small group tutoring can yield an average of five additional months of progress for students.</p>	<p>2, 5</p>
<p><u>Literacy Intervention</u></p> <p>Students complete reading assessments to evaluate their literacy levels. Students identified as performing below age-expected levels attend targeted literacy intervention sessions. These sessions are conducted in small groups and overseen by a dedicated Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) who also coordinates wider school literacy strategies.</p>	<p>M. Rowland (2021) highlights that small-group reading interventions effectively address specific literacy challenges, particularly for disadvantaged students.</p> <p>Hirsch Jr (2013) points out a strong correlation between vocabulary size and academic attainment, suggesting that improving vocabulary is crucial for educational success.</p> <p>Alex Quigley (2018) underscores that addressing the vocabulary gap is a critical step toward achieving long-term academic success, with comprehensive evidence supporting its importance.</p>	<p>2, 5</p>
<p><u>Subsidised Revision Guides</u></p> <p>Subsidised revision guides are provided to disadvantaged students to support their learning outside the classroom. This initiative addresses challenges such as homework completion and resource</p>	<p>Subsidising the cost of revision guides helps remove barriers to accessing essential learning materials, ensuring that disadvantaged pupils can fully engage in homework and revision tasks.</p> <p>This approach aligns with strategies for promoting meta-cognition and self-regulation, as outlined by the EEF. By teaching students how to use these guides effectively, teachers help them</p>	<p>2</p>

<p>accessibility, ensuring that all students have the necessary materials to prepare effectively for exams. Teachers also provide guidance on how to use these resources effectively, fostering skills in meta-cognition and self-regulation.</p>	<p>develop independence and take ownership of their learning.</p>	
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Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £74,478

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p><u>Beacon Provision</u> The Beacon Provision offers an onsite alternative provision programme designed to support students with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. This initiative focuses on improving access to learning, fostering engagement, and facilitating reintegration into full-time education. It provides tailored support for students facing behavioural challenges to ensure they remain on track academically and personally.</p>	<p>M. Rowland (2021) highlights the importance of schools building positive relationships with students and their families in order for them to engage and have success.</p> <p>D. Sobel (2019) provides details of how to support students with behavioural issues in order to reduce Fixed Term Exclusions and return them to the classroom. Providing ‘support in order to return to the classroom’ is one of these effective strategies.</p> <p>M. Pinkett and M. Roberts (2019) consider the need for ‘effective strategies to deal with behavioural issues before they enter the classroom.’</p> <p>T. Bennett (2020) states the importance of ensuring students understand how they are expected to behave. In some cases, students may need teaching about what is acceptable within a classroom environment. Until this is achieved, the student is not ready to learn.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4</p>
<p><u>Trinity Provision</u> Provide emotional and social support to students through the use of Trinity.</p> <p>Students can be referred by YLLs for support and intervention.</p>	<p>M. Rowland (2021) states that it is vital that schools ensure that the social, emotional and mental health of pupils is prioritised.</p> <p>D. Sobel (2019) states that pastoral best practice is preventative, not reactive.</p> <p>M. Pinkett and M. Roberts (2019) highlight the need for dedicated, trained members of staff whose job it is to care for children experiencing emotional and mental health difficulties.</p> <p>There is an increasing number of students in school who require</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4</p>

	<p>assistance for a variety of pastoral related issues. These include mental health support as well as assistance for emotional, self-esteem and motivational issues. A large proportion (53% in 2018/19) of these students are PP students. It is vitally important that the support network is there for students early in order to prevent long term and continuing problems.</p>	
<p>Attendance Employment of an Attendance Officer to oversee the attendance of students and close the attendance gap between PP and non-PP students.</p> <p>Alongside the employment of an attendance officer, individual interventions will be put into place to target specific groups who are at risk of being persistently absent from school.</p>	<p>M. Rowland (2021) need to build positive relationships with families to tackle the issue of poor attendance.</p> <p>Professor Sonia Blandford (2017) emphasises the importance in breaking down barriers and improving parent engagement. This develops a positive culture and success for disadvantaged students.'</p>	1, 2, 3, 4
<p>Purchase of Power BI to allow for more effective analysis of attendance data.</p>	<p>M. Rowland (2021) need to build positive relationships with families to tackle the issue of poor attendance.</p> <p>Professor Sonia Blandford (2017) emphasises the importance in breaking down barriers and improving parent engagement. This develops a positive culture and success for disadvantaged students.'</p>	1, 2
<p>Students to be offered financial support for curricular educational visits. Colleagues can apply for funding by completing a form which is then considered by AHT.</p>	<p>Sam Baars, Bart Shaw, Ellie Mulcahy and Loic Menzies (2018) in 'School Cultures and Practices: Supporting The Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils' discuss the importance of cultural capital in raising the attainment and broadening the experiences of disadvantaged students.</p> <p>When completing a PP review of the school it was found that there was a disparity between the number of educational visits attended by PP and non-PP students. Providing financial</p>	1, 3

	support removed a potential barrier for many students.	
Students in year 7 attend a residential visit. This works on resilience, teamwork and understanding the ethos of our school. PP students will have the cost of the visit subsidised.	We have seen from previous years that students who attend this residential feel part of our school community quicker. This has the impact of them settling within our school and feeling part of our school family. This has the knock-on effect of students becoming more resilient and engaged in their studies.	1, 3
<p>Alternative provision is provided for students who are finding school challenging and need support through an alternative programme of study. This is reviewed regularly with a view to the student returning to school full-time.</p> <p>If deemed appropriate, transport to the alternative provision is offered on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Equipment/uniform required for alternative provision will also be provided.</p>	The DfE document 'Alternative Provision: Effective Practice and Post-16 Transition' (2017) highlights the positive impact that alternative provision can have on students in terms of increasing engagement and building positive relationships.	1, 2, 3, 4

Total budgeted cost: £173,633

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

The academic year 2023/24 was the final year of our PP strategy. Unfortunately, the GCSE results in the summer of 2024 saw a decline in the performance of PP students. This was obviously disappointing for the school, but when looking at the data further, this decline in the results was caused by a number of PP students not attending and sitting their exams. This had a significant impact on the outcomes and led to the lower Progress 8 score. When looking at individual students, there are clear successes in relation to PP students and their performance with many responding well to the interventions in place and achieving significantly above their target grade.

Having previously having had difficulties appointing an attendance officer, the final year of our strategy benefitted from having an attendance officer in place. There has been a significant improvement with our attendance across the board, with our PP attendance (85.60%) being above the national average (85.60%). Despite this improvement, there is still a gap of 8.80% between PP and non-PP students in relation to attendance.

We have seen an increase in the use of our Trinity provision. The work that has been carried out in this area has seen students able to attend more lessons regularly which is having a positive impact on their progress. 40% of students who are receiving ELSA support in school are PP students. Ready to Learn continued to be a success, but as the year went on, there was less demand for students being removed from lessons. This was a real positive and has led to a change in approach with the school creating an internal alternative provision to support students getting back into the classroom.

We continued to support students with attending educational visits. This has had a positive impact on building confidence and enhancing students' cultural capital.

We have had an increase in parents asking for support with the purchasing of school uniform. This has been facilitated through the use of PP money where appropriate. We have also created a second-hand uniform shop which has been extremely popular in which parents make a donation for any uniform taken.