

Pupil premium strategy statement

St Nicolas C of E Academy

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	425
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	12.9%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2024-2027
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	Ian Meikle Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Martyn Yeo Deputy Headteacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Nicola Hoare Pupil Premium Lead

Funding overview (2025-2026)

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£83,325
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years <i>(enter £0 if not applicable)</i>	£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>	£83,325

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At St Nicolas we have high expectations and ambitions for all of our pupils, including those eligible for pupil premium funding. Our intention is that all pupils, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, make good progress and achieve high attainment across all subject areas. The focus of our pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve that goal and flourish.

We use a variety of tools to assess secure learning, from commercially bought packages, such as Language Screens, Wellcomm Speech and Language Toolkit, GL Dyslexia Screener, York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension and GL Maths assessments to our own internally developed assessment tools. These focus staff not on what we have covered, but on what has been retained and can be applied by our pupils. Comprehensive use of these assessments has allowed us to identify the challenges that some pupils are facing, particularly in reading, writing and maths.

High-quality teaching is at the heart of our approach, with a focus on areas in which disadvantaged pupils require the most support. Research has shown that this has the greatest impact on closing the disadvantage attainment gap and at the same time will benefit the non-disadvantaged pupils in our school. Therefore, 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 strategy will continue to consider where additional support is required for pupils whose education and wellbeing were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have identified some learning behaviours that have been impacted by the pandemic, mainly resilience, stamina and independent learning. As a result, wider strategies have been implemented to support the social and emotional wellbeing of our pupils.

Our approach will be responsive to common challenges and individual needs, rooted in robust diagnostic assessment, not assumptions about the impact of disadvantage. The approaches we have adopted complement each other to help pupils excel. To ensure they are effective we will:

- ensure disadvantaged pupils are challenged in the work that they're set
- act early to intervene at the point need is identified
- adopt a whole school approach in which all staff take responsibility for disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and raise expectations of what they can achieve

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Oral language skills and vocabulary in EYFS & Year 1 – Observations and assessments indicate that the vocabulary gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are significantly wide.
2	Writing – internal data indicates that disadvantaged pupils have made less progress than non-disadvantaged pupils.
3	Maths – internal data indicates that disadvantaged pupils have made less progress than non-disadvantaged pupils.
4	Wellbeing- observations indicate that children (especially disadvantaged) need further support with their mental health and well-being.
5	Attendance - our attendance data indicates that attendance among disadvantaged pupils has been lower than for non-disadvantaged pupils.

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 in EYFS & Key Stage 1	At the end of EYFS & KS1 assessments and observations indicate that the gap has narrowed between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils. Disadvantaged pupils achieving a good level of development at the end of the EYFS in communication and language
Improved writing attainment outcomes	Observations and internal data indicate that disadvantaged pupils are above the national statistics for disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard by the end of KS2
Improved Maths attainment outcomes	Observations and internal data indicate that disadvantaged pupils are above the national statistics for disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard by the end of KS2
To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	Sustained high levels of wellbeing demonstrated by qualitative data from student voice, student and parent surveys and teacher observations
To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	Sustained high attendance that disadvantaged pupils are above the national statistics for disadvantaged pupils and the gap is narrowing between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils

Activity in this academic year (2025-2026)

This details how we intend to spend our pupil premium funding **this academic year** to address the challenges listed above.

Teaching

Budgeted cost: £20,576

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenges addressed
<p>Purchase of standardised diagnostic assessments.</p> <p>Training for staff to ensure assessments are interpreted and administered correctly.</p>	<p>Gathering feedback on how well pupils have learned a topic is important in enabling teachers to address any misunderstanding and provide the right level of challenge in future lessons.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/guidance-for-teachers/assessment-feedback</p>	1,2,3
<p>Staff CPD on Oracy, Writing and Spelling</p> <p>Pupils' writing can be improved by teaching them to plan and monitor their writing.</p>	<p>Producing quality writing is a complex process but a number of different strategies are likely to help, depending on the current skills of the writer. These include: pre-writing activities; drafting, editing and revising; and sharing.</p> <p>Research indicates that children must develop fluency in these skills to the point that they have become automated. If children have to concentrate to ensure their transcription is accurate, they will be less able to think about the content of their writing.</p> <p>Furthermore, research suggests that spelling should be explicitly taught. Teaching should focus on spellings that are relevant to the topic or genre being studied.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/literacy-ks-1</p>	1,2
<p>Staff CPD on supportive strategies for all children including those accessing Pupil Premium and SEND</p>	<p>Research indicates that children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) have the greatest need for excellent teaching and are entitled to provision that supports achievement at, and enjoyment of, school. The attainment gap between pupils with SEND and their peers is twice as big as the gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers. However, pupils with SEND are also more than twice as likely to be eligible for free school meals.</p> <p>These quality first teaching strategies will ensure that all our pupils including those accessing pupil premium and SEND will make progress</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/send</p>	1,2,3,4

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenges addressed
<p>Staff CPD on Mathematics using the Mastery learning approach utilising support from local Maths Hub</p>	<p>Like “mastery learning”, “teaching for mastery” aims to support all pupils to achieve deep understanding and competence in the relevant topic. However, “teaching for mastery” is characterised by teacher-led, whole-class teaching; common lesson content for all pupils; and use of manipulatives and representations</p> <p>Excellent maths teaching requires good content knowledge, but this is not sufficient. Excellent teachers also know the ways in which pupils learn mathematics and the difficulties they are likely to encounter, and how mathematics can be most effectively taught</p> <p>Continuing Professional Development (CPD) will be an important component of implementation and is key to raising the quality of teaching and teacher knowledge</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/mastery-learning</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/maths-ks-2-3</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>CPD time for all curriculum leaders to develop own knowledge.</p> <p>CPD sessions and support delivered to all teachers by curriculum leaders</p>	<p>The best available evidence indicates that great teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve pupil attainment. Ensuring every teacher is supported in delivering high-quality teaching is essential to achieving the best outcomes for all pupils, particularly the most disadvantaged among them.</p> <p>Teaching approaches that ensure long-term retention of knowledge, fluency in key skills, and confident use of metacognitive strategies are crucial. These are fundamental to learning and are the ‘bread and butter’ of effective teaching:</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/effective-professional-development</p>	<p>1,2,3,4</p>

Targeted academic support

Budgeted cost: £29,583

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenges addressed
Use of resources purchased for Early Language Intervention programmes focusing on EYFS and KS1	<p>The attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their peers opens early and continues throughout schooling. There is a wealth of evidence to show that early intervention has great potential to narrow the gap, but few nursery and reception year programmes have been rigorously tested for impact. This is why the EEF funded the Nuffield Early Language Intervention.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/nuffield-early-language-intervention</p>	1
Staff to ensure phonics assessments and interventions are interpreted and administered correctly including use of Read Write Inc and Fresh Start.	<p>Fresh Start is a systematic synthetic phonics programme for struggling readers aged 9 – 13+. Pupils are taught at their challenge point, so they learn to read accurately and fluently in just 25 minutes a day.</p> <p>Fresh Start shows considerable promise as an effective catch-up intervention for low-attaining readers at the transition phase from primary to secondary school.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/fresh-start</p>	1
Targeted Maths Interventions which focus upon pre-teaching Mathematical concepts prior to learning and ‘Mop-up’ sessions to address misconceptions subsequent to learning	<p>Targeted Maths interventions increase enjoyment, resilience, the deepening of understanding of mathematical concepts and attainment in maths.</p> <p>Research shows that use high quality targeted support to help all children learn mathematics. High quality, targeted support can provide effective extra support for children.</p> <p>Small-group support is more likely to be effective when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children with the greatest needs are supported by the most experienced staff; • training, support, and resources are provided for staff using targeted activities; • sessions are brief and regular; and explicit connections are made between targeted support and everyday activities or teaching. <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/early-maths</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/teaching-assistant-interventions</p>	3

Wider strategies (e.g. related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £33,166

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenges addressed
<p>Practitioner trained to lead and deliver Thrive across the school, providing support for children's wellbeing and behaviour.</p> <p>Whole staff training on delivering the Thrive approach across the school to support children's wellbeing and behaviour</p>	<p>Schools that have adopted the Thrive Approach have reported many benefits. These include improved mental health and wellbeing, fewer disruptions in class, reduced exclusions and improved academic results. The impact of Thrive has been picked up by Ofsted and Estyn during school inspections. Inspectors have commented on the use of Thrive to help manage behaviour more effectively, in particular when used for early intervention, helping students to become more open to learning.</p> <p>The Department for Education is focused on supporting schools to build whole school environments and develop approaches within which all students can achieve their full potential.</p> <p>A 2018 review of published policies and information - Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools - was commissioned in response to the Green Paper 'Transforming children and young people's mental health provision'. This review included Thrive as an initiative that supports and promotes positive mental health. (DfE 2018).</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-provision-a-green-paper</p>	4
<p>Opportunities to participate in a range of outdoor & off-site learning opportunities across the school including a range of extra-curricular clubs to promote pupil's skills & talents</p>	<p>Outdoor Adventure Learning might provide opportunities for disadvantaged pupils to participate in activities that they otherwise might not be able to access. Through participation in these challenging physical and emotional activities, outdoor adventure learning interventions can support pupils to develop non-cognitive skills such as resilience, self-confidence and motivation.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/outdoor-adventure-learning</p>	4
<p>Embedding principles of good practice set out in the DfE's guidance</p> <p>Training and time for staff to develop and implement new procedures to improve attendance</p>	<p>The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced levels of absence and persistent absence.</p> <p>Poor attendance at school is linked to poor academic attainment across all stages. Parental communication approaches and targeted parental engagement interventions show promise in supporting pupil attendance.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/leadership-and-planning/supporting-attendance</p>	5

Total budgeted cost: £20,576 + £29,583 + £33,166 = £83,325

Part B: Review of the previous academic year (2024-25)

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

We have analysed the performance of our school's disadvantaged pupils during the 2024-2025 academic year, drawing on national assessment data and our own internal summative and formative assessments.

To help us gauge the performance of our disadvantaged pupils we compared their results to those for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils at national level.

The end of Key stage 2 data demonstrated that our disadvantaged pupils are working well above the national statistics in Reading and Writing, whilst are below for Mathematics and combined. This does not seem to be the case for all cohorts within school, so we intend to consider other opportunities to secure knowledge in all subjects. Our non-disadvantaged pupils are performing better as a school, which is to be expected, however the gap has been proven to be narrowing, especially in writing.

Further exploration of this data has been made drilling down into individual pupils and identifying barriers to learning and recognising any additional needs including special education needs. This analysis has been shared with staff and a concerted effort with transition has been made to ensure there is a deep understanding of each disadvantaged pupil and spotlighting pupils within the cohort who would benefit from further support.

We have also drawn on school data and observations to assess wider issues impacting disadvantaged pupils' performance, including attendance, behaviour and wellbeing.

The attendance data demonstrated there is a gap between disadvantaged pupils compared to non-disadvantaged, but we are above national averages and continue to diminish the difference by working together with families to understand individual barriers.

All pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum which is enriched by school visits, residentials, theme days, subject-specific trips and after-school clubs.

Disadvantaged pupils have free priority access to these life-enriching experiences and we have seen a high take up and an improvement in their well-being.

Based on all the information above, the performance of our disadvantaged pupils *met* expectations, and we are at present *on course* to achieve the outcomes we set out to achieve as stated in the Intended Outcomes section above.

Our evaluation of the approaches delivered last academic year indicates that individualised interventions had the greatest impact on disadvantaged pupils with a deeper knowledge of their barriers to learning being identified earlier. Working in close partnership with parents and carers was also highly effective to ensure there was consistency and transparency between school and home.

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

Programme	Provider
None	

Service pupil premium funding 2024-2025

How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year
<p>Utilising Teaching Assistants who have been service children themselves, and so have a deep understanding of the challenges faced, time was given to support the emotional wellbeing and academic achievement of service children within our school.</p> <p>We identified gaps in service children's education, which we addressed with targeted support. Furthermore, service pupils were encouraged to join our extra-curricular activities and curriculum enrichment opportunities at no additional cost to the family.</p>
The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils
<p>Teachers observed improvements in wellbeing amongst service children. Assessments demonstrated progress in subject areas where extra support classes were provided with 83% of service pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of the year in Reading, Writing and Mathematics.</p> <p>It should be noted there were 6 children identified as service children and as such each pupil carries a heavy weighting.</p>

Further Information

Planning, implementation, and evaluation
<p>In planning our new pupil premium strategy, we evaluated why activity undertaken in previous years had not had the degree of impact that we had expected.</p> <p>We triangulated evidence from multiple sources of data including assessments, engagement in class book scrutiny, and conversations with parents, students and teachers, in order to identify the challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>We looked at several reports, studies and research papers 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.</p> <p>We used the EEF's implementation guidance to help us develop our strategy, particularly the 'explore' phase to help us diagnose specific pupil needs and work out which activities and approaches are likely to work in our school. We will continue to use it through the implementation of activities.</p> <p>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.</p>