

# Pupil premium strategy statement – Cardinal Pole Catholic School

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	829
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	64%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers ( <b>3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year</b> )	Current year 2024 - 2025
Date this statement was published	11 <sup>th</sup> December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2026
Statement authorised by	Adam Hall Executive Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Ellie Connolly Lead Deputy Headteacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Fr David Evans

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£571,900
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£0
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b>	<b>£571,900</b>

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

Cardinal Pole Catholic School serves a community with a high proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged, and our strategy is shaped by the firm belief that disadvantage must never define a child's life chances. This echoes the school's mission statement that is rooted in the Catholic Church's social teaching. Our intent is to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve strongly, attend well, participate fully in school life and leave us equipped for further study, employment and active citizenship.

Our approach begins with high-quality teaching for every pupil, rooted in a broad and well-sequenced curriculum, strong disciplinary literacy, and clear, consistent routines in every classroom. This provides the foundation on which disadvantaged pupils can thrive. Alongside this, we use assessment, pastoral insight and safeguarding information to identify individual barriers and implement targeted academic support where pupils need additional help, particularly in reading, mathematics and the EBacc subjects.

We recognise that many disadvantaged pupils experience wider challenges beyond the classroom. Therefore, our intent includes providing high-quality pastoral, wellbeing and attendance support, ensuring early identification of need and coordinated intervention. This includes work on self-regulation, emotional literacy, and removal of barriers that may prevent pupils from engaging fully with learning or enrichment. In this particular area, we work closely with a number of external providers.

Overall, our intent is to create the conditions in which disadvantaged pupils can flourish:

- Strong progress and attainment across the curriculum.
- Improved attendance, ensuring pupils are present, safe and ready to learn.
- High-quality behaviour and attitudes, enabling pupils to access and engage fully with our ambitious curriculum.
- Positive wellbeing and participation, ensuring that every pupil feels known, supported and able to succeed.

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p>Assessments, observations and discussion with KS3 pupils indicate that disadvantaged pupils generally have <b><u>lower levels of reading comprehension skills</u></b> than their peers which impacts their progress across the curriculum.</p> <p>This school tests all pupils for foundational knowledge on entry to Year 7. This September, 73% of those students identified as performing below</p>

	age-related expectations were disadvantaged. This underperforming cohort equates broadly to one third of all disadvantaged pupils in Year 7.
2	Our <b><u>inclusion</u></b> data suggests that disadvantaged pupils are being more frequently removed from lessons and suspended than their non-disadvantaged peers. Although suspension figures are low, 77% of the suspensions issued so far this academic year were for disadvantaged students. This pattern is reflected in lesson removal data and suggests that there is work to be done in self-regulation strategies for these students so that their attendance to lessons, and subsequent achievement, is not disproportionately affected.
3	Although <b><u>attendance</u></b> data for disadvantaged pupils compared favourably with national indicators, last year there was an internal attendance data gap of 0.6% between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students, which the school wants to eradicate.  26.8% of disadvantaged pupils have been 'persistently absent' compared to 24.7% of their peers during that period. Our assessments and observations indicate that absenteeism is negatively impacting disadvantaged pupil's achievement.
4	Our assessments (including wellbeing surveys, observations and discussions with pupil and families) have identified <b><u>social, emotional and safeguarding issues</u></b> for many pupils, such as anxiety, depression (diagnosed by medical professionals) and low self-esteem. These challenges particularly affect disadvantaged pupils, with repercussions on their achievement.  Teacher referrals for support remain high. This year, there have been 89 safeguarding referrals (62% of which are for disadvantaged pupils) and 61% of students who currently require additional support with social and emotional needs as identified by a safeguarding and wellbeing flag are also disadvantaged. 75 students currently receive support from external agencies (66% of them are disadvantaged).
5	The <b><u>achievement</u></b> of disadvantaged pupils is generally lower than that of their peers and teacher diagnostic assessments suggest that many pupils particularly struggle with the longer worded questions, including problem solving tasks, especially in Mathematics.  The IDSR for the last academic year shows that, while close to national average, grade 5+ in Mathematics and attainment in the EBacc for disadvantaged students need to improve so that they can align with English and Open Element outcomes.

## 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
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<p>Improved reading comprehension among disadvantaged pupils across KS3.</p>	<p>Termly reading comprehension tests demonstrate a 75% improvement in comprehension skills among disadvantaged pupils and a smaller disparity between the scores of disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers. Teachers should also recognise this improvement through engagement in lessons and books scrutiny. This impacts the attainment in the reading section of formal English assessments, where higher scores would consequently be expected.</p>
<p>Improved self-regulatory skills among disadvantaged pupils across all subjects and outside of the classroom.</p>	<p>Teacher reports, class observations and removals data suggest that disadvantaged pupils are better able to monitor and regulate their behaviour. This finding is supported by a drop in removal rate across all classes and subjects and a reduction in both internal inclusion figures and suspension rates for disadvantaged pupils.</p>
<p>To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.</p>	<p>Sustained high attendance by 2025/26 demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The overall unauthorised absence rate for all pupils being no more than 3% and the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers being eradicated or negligible.</li> <li>• The percentage of pupils who are persistently absent being well below the tracked national indicators and the figure among disadvantaged pupils being no more than 1.5% higher than their peers.</li> </ul>
<p>To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.</p>	<p>Sustained high levels of wellbeing by 2026/2027 demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data from student voice, student and parent surveys and teacher observations.</li> <li>• A significant increase in participation in enrichment activities, particularly among disadvantaged pupils.</li> </ul>
<p>Improved outcomes among disadvantaged pupils across the curriculum at the end of KS4, particularly in Mathematics and the EBacc suite.</p>	<p>KS4 performance measures in 2025/26 demonstrate that disadvantaged pupils achieve an average A8 score of at least 40.5 and at least 50% pass GCSE Maths at a grade 5 or above.</p>

## 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: £285,950

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Improving literacy in all subject areas in line with recommendations in the EEF <i>Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools</i> guidance.</p> <p>Upskilling of middle leaders in carrying out learning walks and implementing instructional coaching to drive improvements in subject areas.</p>	<p>Literacy is key to learning across all subjects in secondary school and a strong predictor of outcomes in later life; disciplinary literacy is an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum that emphasises the importance of subject specific support.</p> <p><b>EEF <i>Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools</i></b></p>	<p>1, 5</p>
<p>‘Catch up’ classes for students in KS3 who are currently graded as <i>emerging</i> or <i>developing</i> in Maths (internal assessment terms to highlight students working below or well below expectations).</p> <p>Adoption of a new KS3 Maths curriculum which allows students to problem solve by ‘doing’ Maths in real life based on mathematical theory they have learned in lessons.</p>	<p>There is a large dip in mathematical attainment and attitudes towards maths as children move from primary to secondary school. Interventions should start early, be evidence-based and be carefully planned; selection should be guided by pupil assessment.</p> <p><b>EEF <i>Improving Mathematics in key stages 2 and 3</i></b></p>	<p>1, 5</p>

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

Budgeted cost: £171,570

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
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<p>Literacy interventions for pupils that require additional support delivered by teaching assistants specifically trained for this purpose.</p>	<p><u>Reading Recovery</u> EEF found that Reading Recovery had a positive and statistically significant impact on the literacy skills of the lowest-achieving pupils. The evaluation found a positive effect size of +3 months of additional progress compared to the control group. <b>EEF Teacher Toolkit</b></p> <p><u>PowerUp by Lexia</u> Students showed significantly greater progress in reading age over the academic year compared to matched control groups who did not use the program. The analysis suggested the program was particularly effective for the weakest readers. <b>GL Assessment Study (2021-2022)</b></p> <p><u>Flash Academy</u> Currently the focus of an EEF trial and listed by the DfE, which requires demonstration of a secure evidence base of improving pupil outcomes. <b>DfE list of validated programmes for NTP</b></p>	<p>1</p>
<p>One to one and small group tuition for pupils in need of additional support in Y7 and Y11, delivered in addition to, and linked with, normal lessons focusing on English, Maths and Science. In Year 7, this aims to enable students to catch up and keep up by addressing gaps in foundational knowledge.</p>	<p>Tuition targeted at specific needs and knowledge gaps can be an effective method to support low attaining pupils or those falling behind. <b>EEF One to One Tuition</b></p>	<p>1, 5</p>
<p>Online tuition to support the achievement of our looked after children and also for children unavoidably absent from school for a long time due to adverse circumstances. Many of these students are also disadvantaged.</p>	<p>Evidence indicates that one to one tuition can be effective, providing approximately five additional months' progress on average. <b>EEF One to One Tuition</b></p>	<p>5</p>

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

Budgeted cost: £114,380

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
School Counselling through an A-Space counsellor on site every day	<p>Long-term implementation of counselling in schools, integration into wider school mental health provision is crucial, including increasing contact between counsellors and students to instil trust, familiarity and encourage attendance for those who need it. Research shows that school based humanistic counselling led to significant reductions in pupils' psychological distress over the long-term, compared to pupils who only received pastoral care.</p> <p><b>BACP, <i>Counselling changes lives</i></b></p>	2, 3, 4, 5
Daily free, universal breakfast club from 7.30am	<p>A simple strategy, with good evidence behind it, is offering free, universal breakfast clubs before school starts, which has been found to prepare pupils well for learning.</p> <p><b>EEF <i>Magic Breakfast – trial</i> and EEF <i>Improving behaviour in schools</i></b></p>	2, 3
The use of the St Monica Programme (a small KS3 group selected based on behaviour data who are given an alternative curriculum for a defined period up to 2 weeks) to target issues related to self-esteem and self-regulation	<p><u>Changing Youth</u> A programme that gives students a pathway to success, focusing on how big ideas like aspiration, identity, purpose and success look in context.</p> <p><u>Mission Excel</u> An outside agency specifically focused on targeting areas identified as causing removals including emotional regulation and belonging (in Year 7); identity and resilience (in Year 8) and stress and relationship management (in Year 9).</p> <p><u>Rise 365</u> Community groups supporting young people through judicial interventions, community outreach and supporting relationships within school and home and parenting support.</p> <p><u>Sporting Souls</u></p>	2, 4

	<p>Mixed sports training and mentoring about individual areas such as emotional regulation and aspiration.</p> <p><b>DfE, <i>A compendium of evidence on ethnic minority resilience to the effects of deprivation on attainment June 2015.</i></b></p>	
<p>Behaviour passports focusing on disadvantaged students with barriers to learning</p>	<p>Teachers should know their pupils and their influences; teach learning behaviours alongside managing behaviour and use targeted approaches to meet the needs of individuals in our school</p> <p><b>EEF <i>Improving behaviour in schools</i></b></p>	2, 4
<p>Embedding good practice set out in the DfE's guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance.</p> <p>Staff training and directed time to develop and implement rapid intervention strategies in line with the banding approach to tackling poor attendance.</p> <p>Attendance officer will be appointed to monitor, support and track attendance, thus contributing to its improvement.</p>	<p>The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced persistent absence levels</p> <p><b>DfE, <i>Working Together to Improve School Attendance</i></b></p>	3
<p>Attendance Reward Lottery for 100% attendance and punctuality; smaller rewards for improved attendance for disadvantaged students and those with SEND.</p>	<p>Schools that combined rewards with sanctions reported seeing higher pupil engagement with attendance policies.</p> <p><b>NFER, <i>Why a one-size-fits-all approach to attendance isn't the way forward</i></b></p>	3

**Total budgeted cost: £571,900**

## 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 2024-2025 academic year, drawing on national assessment data and our own internal summative and formative assessments.

The IDSR for 2024-25 demonstrates that disadvantaged students at Cardinal Pole achieved significantly above national in their A8 scores in English (8.9 compared to 7.8), Open element (12.8 compared to 10.3) and overall A8 (40.3 compared to 34.9). Disadvantaged students were also significantly above national in grade 4+ measures in English and Mathematics (56.7% compared to 43.5%) and English at both grade 4 (73.2% compared to 56.2%) and 5+ (52.6% compared to 41.2%). Attainment in Mathematics at 4+ was also above national (58.8% compared to 49.5%). In all other measures, the IDSR confirmed that the school was close to national averages for disadvantaged students.

To help us gauge the performance of our disadvantaged pupils, we compared their results to those for disadvantaged pupils at national level. 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 indicates that the school has met, and in many cases exceeded, expectations relating to the national performance measures. Nonetheless, we are aspirational in our drive to ensure that our disadvantaged students' achievement is more in line with that of their non-disadvantaged peers and the further closing of this gap both within school and against national figures is a priority for the next academic year.

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

The data suggests that disadvantaged students enjoyed coming to school and overall attendance for disadvantaged pupils was above national when compared to other disadvantaged students (92.5% compared to 88.2%). When compared to their non-disadvantaged peers in school, the gap was only 0.2% and, when compared to national, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils at Cardinal Pole was 0.2% higher than that of their non-disadvantaged peers.

Similarly, student wellbeing surveys revealed that 94% of students felt safe at Cardinal Pole school and 88% felt there were opportunities for their successes to be celebrated. In terms of extracurricular engagement, 82% of students participated in an extra-curricular activity with 99% of students agreeing that there were many opportunities to experience the wider curriculum. Registers from extracurricular clubs show that, of the sessions attended, 57% were attended by disadvantaged students. This figure,

however, needs to improve in light of the very high proportion of disadvantaged pupils at Cardinal Pole in order for the offer to be fully inclusive.

The data shows that 68% of days spent in internal inclusion last year were for disadvantaged students. The FSM6 percentage of the school last year according to the IDSR was 65.78%. This data demonstrates that measures put in place to support disadvantaged students in being in school and in lessons were largely successful as the proportion of days in inclusion broadly mirrors the distribution of the school population. Nonetheless, we aim to continue work in this area to sustain and further reduce this number to be at least in line with school population figures.

Based on all the information above, the performance of our disadvantaged pupils largely met our expectations.

Whilst the data analysed shows a picture for disadvantaged pupils which is broadly in line with national indicators – when not exceeding them – and internal statistics, this school retains an ambitious outlook. This underpins the intended outcomes for 2025-2026.

## 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

## Further information (optional)

Our pupil premium strategy will be supplemented by additional activity that is not being funded by pupil premium. This will include:

- Embedding more effective practice around adaptive teaching and feedback based on Doug Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion*. EEF evidence on feedback demonstrates significant benefits, particularly for disadvantaged pupils
- Offering a range of high-quality extra-curricular activities to boost wellbeing, behaviour, attendance and aspiration. Activities (e.g. The Duke of Edinburgh Award), will focus on life skills such as confidence, resilience and socialising. Disadvantaged pupils will be encouraged and supported to participate.