Pupil Premium Strategy Statement

St James Academy

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery 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 outcomes for disadvantaged pupils last academic year.

School overview

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school	232
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	122 (52%)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers **(3 year plans are recommended)**	2026/2027 2027/2028 2028/2029
Date this statement was published	September 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2027
Statement authorised by	Claire MacInnes – Headteacher
Pupil Premium Lead	Claire MacInnes – Headteacher Sarah Lines – Deputy Head of Academy
Governing Body Lead	Lynne Hodson - Lead for disadvantaged pupils

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£158,050.00
Pupil premium (and recovery premium) funding carried forward from previous years	None
Total budget for this academic year	**£158,050.00**

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intention is for all pupils in our academy, irrespective of their background, to make good progress and achieve their very best possible outcomes in all areas of the curriculum. The Pupil Premium Strategy aims to support all disadvantaged children in our school, to achieve this goal.

We have carefully analysed the challenges faced by our disadvantaged pupils and have identified all additional vulnerabilities including whether there have been safeguarding concerns and support from Children's Services etc.

Our academy will:

- aim to provide consistently high-quality teaching for all pupils with targeted support in English and mathematics as this is proven to have the greatest impact on closing the disadvantaged attainment gap. Our intent is for disadvantaged pupils to attain in line with, or above, their non-disadvantaged peers;
- use robust diagnostic assessments to identify and respond to 'gaps' in the knowledge, skills and understanding of our pupils. Interventions are carefully planned, delivered and evaluated to ensure their success;
- monitor the attendance, punctuality and behaviour of all pupils and provide additional support where necessary;
- provide a wide range of inspirational experiences for all pupils (extra-curricular activities, educational visits, residential trips etc), ensuring that disadvantaged pupils are given financial support to access these where required.

All staff in our academy recognise their responsibility for the outcomes of our disadvantaged pupils and the need to have high expectations of their achievement.

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 that the oral language skills of disadvantaged pupils in our school are not as advanced as their non-disadvantaged peers. This is very evident on entry to school (baseline data). The **areas of greatest need are identified as C&L, PSED and Literacy.** It is apparent that the knowledge and use of vocabulary by disadvantaged pupils is not as strong/advanced – evident from both oral and written work.
2	Assessment data shows that **early reading (including phonics) in EYFS and KS1 and indeed, reading across KS2, is not as developed for disadvantaged pupils.** This has an impact on achievement across the whole curriculum as reading is a critical skill for learning.

3	Internal and external assessments (SATs) indicate that **maths and writing attainment among disadvantaged pupils is significantly below that of non-disadvantaged pupils.** On entry to Reception class in the last 2 years, between 50 - 75% of our disadvantaged pupils arrive below age-related expectations; this is higher than the % of non-disadvantaged pupils. This gap remains steady to the end of KS2. 2026 end of KS2 mathematics results saw a **49% 'achievement gap'** between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.
4	Internal and external assessments (SATs) indicate that **writing attainment among disadvantaged pupils is significantly below that of non-disadvantaged pupils.** On entry to Reception class in the last 2 years, between 67 - 69% of our disadvantaged pupils arrive below age-related expectations; this is higher than the % of non-disadvantaged pupils. 2026 end of KS2 writing results saw a **10.5% 'achievement gap'** between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.
5	Our assessments, observations and discussions with pupils and families have identified **social and emotional issues for many pupils, also concerns relating to behaviour.** Teacher referrals for support remain relatively high. 47 pupils (38 of whom are disadvantaged) currently require additional support with social and emotional needs, receiving small group interventions e.g. ELSA or well-being group work. The number of pupils receiving support through behaviour plans was 13 last year, 11 (85%) of these were disadvantaged pupils.
6	Our attendance data over the last 2 years indicates that **attendance among disadvantaged pupils** has been lower than for non-disadvantaged pupils: 2024-2025: 91.4% (disadvantaged) compared with 94.5% (non-disadvantaged) pupils. 2025 – 2026: 92.3% (disadvantaged) compared with 93.8% (non-disadvantaged) pupils In 2025-2026, 23.7% disadvantaged pupils were 'persistently absent' compared to 15.5% of non-disadvantaged pupils. Our assessments and observations indicate that absenteeism is negatively impacting disadvantaged pupils' progress.
7	Our observations and discussions with pupils and their families evidence **the negative impact that the current cost-of-living crisis is having on them (post-Covid 19).** There is an increased number of families requesting support from school for services such as housing, local food banks, debt crisis, energy bills etc.

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**	Assessments and observations indicate significantly improved oral language among disadvantaged pupils. This is evident when

among disadvantaged pupils.	triangulated with other sources of evidence, including engagement in lessons, book scrutiny and ongoing formative assessment. The 2026/2027 EYFS C&L outcomes will show that **at least 65% of disadvantaged pupils meet the expected standard.** Internal data will evidence improved/accelerated achievement (progress and attainment) for disadvantaged pupils in the development of their oracy skills (evidenced by teacher judgements on Arbor).
Improved **reading** attainment among disadvantaged pupils.	2026/2027 Year 1 phonics screening outcomes will show equalised attainment for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils; **at least 70% passing the screening check.** 2026/2027 KS2 reading outcomes will show equalised attainment for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils; **at least 70% meeting the expected standard.** Internal data will evidence improved/accelerated achievement (progress and attainment) for disadvantaged pupils.
Improved **mathematics** attainment for disadvantaged pupils at the end of KS2.	2026/2027 KS2 mathematics outcomes will show equalised attainment for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils; **at least 70% meeting the expected standard.** Internal data will evidence improved/accelerated achievement (progress and attainment) for disadvantaged pupils.
Improved **writing** attainment for disadvantaged pupils at the end of KS2.	2026/2027 KS2 writing outcomes will show equalised attainment for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils; **at least 70% meeting the expected standard.** Internal data will evidence improved/accelerated achievement (progress and attainment) for disadvantaged pupils.
To achieve and sustain **improved wellbeing** for all pupils in our academy, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	**Sustained high levels of wellbeing** by 2026/27 demonstrated by: • qualitative data from pupil voice, pupil and parent surveys and teacher observations • ELSA outcomes. • a significant increase in participation in enrichment activities, particularly among disadvantaged pupils e.g. after-school clubs • improved behaviour evidenced by a reduction in the number of pupils requiring the support of a behaviour plan
To achieve and sustain **improved attendance and punctuality** 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 5%, and the attendance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers being reduced by 1%. • the percentage of all pupils who are persistently absent being below 10% and the figure among disadvantaged pupils being no more than 3% lower than their peers.

	• The number of 'late marks' for all pupils being reduced by 15% and the figure among disadvantaged pupils being no more than 3% lower than their peers.

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: £23,478

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Purchase of standardised diagnostic assessments – NTS. **Training for staff** to ensure assessments are interpreted and administered correctly.	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: Standardised tests | Assessing and Monitoring Pupil Progress | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF	1, 2, 3, 4 NTS test papers: **£2,500.00**
Embedding dialogic activities across the school curriculum. These can support pupils to articulate key ideas, consolidate understanding and extend vocabulary. We will purchase resources and fund ongoing **teacher training** and release time, including Poetry Basket, Helicopter Stories, Wellcomm, Talk Boost, Snack and Chat/Circle Time (EYFS).	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 | Toolkit Strand | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF	1 Resources: **£350.00** Staffing (TA S&L support): **£7,800.00** (10 hours per week x 39 weeks)
Continue to enhance the DfE validated Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme (RWI) to secure stronger phonics teaching for all pupils, including the purchase of 'take home' books and the introduction of 'challenge tasks' in sessions. The 'Reading	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: Phonics | Toolkit Strand | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF	2 RWI B&W 'take home' books **£638.00**

Leader' will be **non-contact** during RWI sessions to carry out duties such as **coaching, mentoring, monitoring and assessment** etc.		Reading Leader non-contact time: **£5,200.00** (3.75 hours per week x 39 weeks)
Enhancement of our maths teaching and curriculum planning in line with DfE and EEF guidance. We will fund teacher release time for the mathematics lead to review the provision for teaching and learning in mathematics and how can further enhance the current mastery programme. The mathematics lead will also attend **CPD network meetings** within our MAT focusing on developing 'best practice models.	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: Maths_guidance_KS_1_and_2.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk) The EEF guidance is based on a range of the best available evidence: Improving Mathematics in Key Stages 2 and 3	3 Network mtgs: **£405.00** (3 hours per term x 3 terms) Monitoring & release time for review: **£540.00** (2 hours per half-term x 6 half-terms)
Further improve the quality of social and emotional support and learning. Approaches will be embedded into routine educational practices and supported by **professional development and training for staff** e.g. ELSA.	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): EEF_Social_and_Emotional_Learning.pdf(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	5 ELSA: **£4,680.00** (6 hours per week x 39 weeks) SEMHS: **£1,365.00** (1.75 hours per week x 39 weeks)

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

Budgeted cost: £111,150.00

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Provide in-class, teaching assistant support during English and mathematics lessons e.g. 'live marking' to	Feedback during lessons has a highly positive impact on pupil achievement. Feedback | EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	In-lesson support/feedback: **£81,900.00**

address misconceptions etc as they occur.		(6 x TAs 17.5 hours per week x 39 weeks)
Deployment of a **speech and language specialist** to deliver and advise on high quality communication and language sessions for identified pupils.	Oral language interventions can have a positive impact on pupils' language skills. Approaches that focus on speaking, listening and a combination of the two show positive impacts on attainment: Oral language interventions | EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	1, 4 TA led speech and language intervention – already costed and included under 'Teaching ' section above
Additional phonics sessions targeted at disadvantaged pupils who require further phonics support. These will be delivered by fully trained teaching assistants and monitored by the school's Reading Leader.	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 | Toolkit Strand | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF	2 Phonics catch-up: **£12,480.00** (16 hours per week x 39 weeks)
Small group tutoring/catch-up sessions/interventions for reading comprehension, writing (SPAG) and mathematics (pre-teaching and review tasks) – planned for by teaching staff and delivered by trained teaching assistants. Monitored by DHT/SENDCo and HoS.	Tuition targeted at specific needs and knowledge gaps can be an effective method to support low attaining pupils or those falling behind, both one-to-one: One to one tuition | EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) And in small groups: Small group tuition | Toolkit Strand | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF	2, 3, 4 Small group catch-up: **£16,770.00** (21.5 hours per week x 39 weeks)

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

Budgeted cost: £47,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Behaviour interventions include: restorative practices (inc whole staff training), well-being groups, mentoring, social skills, friendships, transitions, nurture provision (specialist trained staff), l.time support, ELSA programme to develop self-esteem, resilience and confidence (specialist trained staff), **GtbG half-termly**	Both targeted interventions and universal approaches can have positive overall effects: Behaviour interventions | EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	5 GtbG rewards and St James shop prizes: **£1,000.00**

rewards, shop/bank rewards system for pupils (Sept 2026).		
Embedding principles of good practice to improve **attendance and punctuality** set out in the DfE's Improving School Attendance advice: • Policy and practice review in line with the 'inclusive Attendance' programme/approach • Expectations shared with parents/carers • Attendance and punctuality rewards • First-day calling • A system of letters and meetings to address and reduce persistent absenteeism	The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced levels of absence and persistent absence.	6 Office admin for attendance duties: **£3,510.00** (1 hour per day x 39 weeks)
Support for **families experiencing financial hardship** as a result of the cost-of-living crisis will be provide by the school's Family Liaison Co-ordinator – support, welfare, safeguarding etc.	Parental engagement refers to teachers and schools involving parents in supporting their children's academic learning. It includes more intensive programmes for families in crisis: Parental engagement | EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	7 Family Liaison Co-ordinator salary: £42,490

Total budgeted cost: £181,628

TA hourly rate inc oncosts to school: £20.00

Teacher hourly rate inc oncosts to school: £45.00

Office admin hourly rate inc oncosts to school: £18.00

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 2024/25 academic year using key stage 1 and 2 performance data, phonics check results and our own internal assessments.

To help us gauge the performance of our disadvantaged pupils we compared our results to those for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils at a national level. We also looked at these comparisons using pre-pandemic scores for 2019, in order to assess how the performance of our disadvantaged pupils has changed during this period.

Data from tests and assessments suggest that, despite some strong individual performances, the progress and attainment of the school's disadvantaged pupils in 2024/25 was below our expectations. Our analysis suggests that the reason for this is primarily the ongoing impact of COVID-19.

The attainment gap between our disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils has grown since the start of the pandemic. This is reflective of national figures and demonstrates the additional impact of COVID-19 on disadvantaged pupils.

EYFS

GLD	2022	2023	2024	2025 (13 dis;15 non)	2026 (10 dis; 19 non)
Non-disadvantaged	47%	65%	63%	88%	82%
Disadvantaged	50%	50%	40%	25%	58%
Gap	+3%	-15%	-23%	-63%	-24%

Year 1 Phonics Screening

% passing the test	2022	2023	2024	2025 (15 dis;15 non)	2026 (12 dis; 17 non)
Non-disadvantaged	56%	67%	63%	88%	88%

Disadvantaged	71%	35%	62%	56%	58%
Gap	-15%	-32%	-1%	-32%	-30%

End of KS2 outcomes

% expected standard	2023			2024			2025 (14 dis;1 non)			2026 (11 dis; 19 non)		
	Rdg	Wtg	Ma	Rdg	Wtg	Ma	Rdg	Wtg	Ma	Rdg	Wtg	Ma
Non-disadvantaged	63%	88%	75%	75%	69%	75%	67%	75%	58%	90%	84%	95%
Disadvantaged	56%	63%	63%	69%	69%	77%	67%	53%	67%	64%	55%	46%
Gap	-7%	-25%	-12%	-6%	0%	+2%	0%	-22%	+9%	-26%	-29%	-49%

2025-2026, attendance for disadvantaged pupils was 92.3% compared with 93.8% for non-disadvantaged pupils. Also, in 2025-2026, 23.7% disadvantaged pupils were 'persistently absent' compared to 15.5% non-disadvantaged pupils. We recognise this gap is too large which is why raising the attendance of our disadvantaged pupils is a focus of our current plan.

Our observations and assessments demonstrated that pupil behaviour improved last year, but challenges in relation to wellbeing and mental health remain significantly higher than before the pandemic. The impact on disadvantaged pupils has been particularly acute.

Other activity in our school to support all pupils:

- Effective practice around feedback – live marking in lessons to address misconceptions as they occur
- Full curriculum review
- Review of retention and retrieval practices so that pupils know more and can remember more
- Carefully planned interventions and pre-teach activities
- Training of a senior mental health lead in school
- ELSA provision and wellbeing programmes
- Providing high-quality extra-curricular activities

Further information (optional)

Additional activity

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

- embedding more effective practice around feedback. EEF evidence demonstrates this has significant benefits for pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils.
- mental health and wellbeing support
- rigorous attendance approaches and monitoring
- offering a wide range of high-quality extracurricular activities to boost wellbeing, behaviour, attendance, and aspiration. Activities will focus on building life skills such as confidence, resilience, and socialising. Disadvantaged pupils will be encouraged and supported to participate.

Planning, implementation, and evaluation

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. We also commissioned a pupil premium review to get an external perspective.

We triangulated evidence from multiple sources of data including assessments, engagement in class book scrutiny, conversations with parents, students and teachers in order to identify the challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils. We also used the EEF's families of schools database to view the performance of disadvantaged pupils in schools similar to ours and contacted schools with high-performing disadvantaged pupils to learn from their approach.

We looked at a number of 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. We also looked at studies about the impact of the pandemic on disadvantaged pupils.

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.

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.