St James CE Primary School



Pupil Premium Strategy Statement

2024-2027

Pupil premium strategy statement

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 effect that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

School overview:

Detail	Data
School name	St James CE Primary School
Number of pupils in school	175
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	39.1%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers **(3 year plans are recommended)**	2024-25 2025-26 2026-27
Date this statement was published	December 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2027
Statement authorised by	Mrs Jennifer Young Executive Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Miss Lauren McDonald Inclusion and Intervention Lead
Governor / Trustee lead	Mr Joe Heavey, lead for disadvantaged pupils

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£115,750
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	
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	£115,750

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

St James C.E. Primary School is a one-form-entry school, with nursery provision from the age of two, located in the heart of Haydock, St Helens. We serve a diverse community where many families experience socio-economic challenges. St Helens is ranked as the 26th most deprived local authority in England, while 71.1% of our pupils live within IDACI bands A-F and 9.6% speak English as an additional language. Our school plays an important role in ensuring that all children, regardless of their circumstances or starting points, receive the high-quality education and support they need to thrive.

We have identified that a substantial proportion of children enter school with limited language development. In response, we prioritise early identification and timely intervention, placing a strong emphasis on communication and language throughout the early years and beyond. We recognise that secure foundations in communication, language, literacy, numeracy and personal development are essential for future learning and success. We are therefore committed to building these strong foundations from the earliest opportunity, enabling every child to access the curriculum, develop confidence and make sustained progress.

Our intention is for all pupils, regardless of their background or the challenges they may face, to have equitable access to a high-quality education that enables them to thrive academically, socially and emotionally. We are committed to identifying and addressing the needs of disadvantaged pupils swiftly and effectively, ensuring that every child receives the support they need to make strong progress and achieve their potential.
Our pupil premium strategy is underpinned by high expectations, a graduated approach to support and evidence-informed practice. We aim to address gaps in attainment through high-quality teaching, targeted academic interventions, pastoral support and meaningful enrichment opportunities. Our strategy also considers the challenges faced by other vulnerable pupils, including those known to children's social care, looked-after children, pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who enter school with low starting points in communication and language.

Our bespoke and engaging Journey Curriculum nurtures curiosity and supports all pupils in becoming confident, articulate learners with high aspirations. It provides a carefully sequenced and well-structured pathway for learning, enabling pupils to develop secure foundations, deepen their understanding of key concepts, work towards clearly defined end points and make purposeful progress across subjects and year groups.
Our approach is responsive to both common challenges and individual needs. It is rooted in robust diagnostic assessment rather than assumptions about the impact of disadvantage. The approaches we have adopted are designed to complement one another and provide a coherent programme of support that enables pupils to excel.
To ensure that our strategy is effective, we will:

- adopt a whole-school approach in which all staff take responsibility for disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and maintain high expectations of what they can achieve;
- ensure that our actions are informed by national research and a strong evidence base;
- provide high-quality training and support focused on an effective curriculum, teaching and learning;
- establish clear and measurable success criteria; and
- remain flexible and responsive to changing local and national needs.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Early language development: Our Reception baseline data highlights that pupils often enter school with underdeveloped oral language skills and gaps in their vocabulary. In 2025, 23.3% of pupils met the expected standard in the Reception Baseline Assessment. By the end of the academic year, 66.7% had achieved their Early Learning Goals, reflecting the positive impact of targeted support. End-of-year data showed a small difference in outcomes between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils, with 62.5% of disadvantaged children achieving their Early Learning Goals compared with 68.2% of their peers. While this gap is relatively narrow, the data reinforces the importance of early language development as a foundation for success in the early years and for continued progress across Key Stages 1 and 2.
2	Securing Foundational Knowledge: Internal data, national assessments, and teacher observations show that a significant proportion of disadvantaged pupils do not achieve the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths by the end of Key Stage 2. Reading: At the end of KS2, 69.2% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard or higher, compared with 71.4% of non-disadvantaged pupils. Although the gap has narrowed to 2.2%, it remains important to continue identifying and addressing the barriers experienced by disadvantaged pupils to ensure that their outcomes are fully in line with those of their peers. Writing: Similarly to reading, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils at the end of KS2 were closely aligned with those of their non-disadvantaged peers. Overall, 69.2% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard or higher, compared with 71.4% of non-disadvantaged pupils. While the remaining gap is small, continued monitoring and targeted support will help to secure consistently strong outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Maths: At the end of KS2, 69.2% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard or higher, compared with 85.7% of non-disadvantaged pupils. The difference of 16.5% highlights the need to continue identifying and addressing

	barriers to learning so that disadvantaged pupils can achieve outcomes more closely aligned with those of their peers.
3	<u>Social, Emotional and Mental Health:</u> Evidence from observations, assessments, and pupil voice highlights that many of our disadvantaged pupils face social and emotional barriers that can hinder their engagement with learning. These barriers may include challenges with emotional regulation, building and sustaining positive relationships, maintaining focus, and developing effective self-management skills. The EEF reports that children from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to have, on average, *weaker social and emotional learning (SEL) skills at all ages* compared to their more affluent peers.
4	<u>Limited understanding and experience of the Wider World:</u> Through conversations and classroom discussions, it has become evident that many of our disadvantaged pupils have limited exposure to life beyond their immediate local environment. This lack of experience can impact their cultural capital, aspirations, and understanding of the opportunities available to them in the wider world. It also affects their ability to relate to broader curriculum content, particularly in subjects that draw on diverse global contexts.
5	<u>Attendance:</u> Data for the 2025/26 academic year indicates that overall school attendance remained broadly in line with the national average at 94.96% (95% nationally). While attendance was affected by the significant absence of a small number of pupils with SEND due to medical needs, there was a substantial reduction in persistent absence, which fell from 11.6% in 2024/25 to 3.82% in 2025/26. This reflects the positive impact of the school's attendance strategy, targeted family support and close monitoring of attendance. The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) highlights that poor attendance is a significant barrier to attainment, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, making continued focus on attendance an important factor in improving outcomes. As a result, attendance remains a key priority within the school, with ongoing monitoring, early intervention and targeted support to ensure all pupils are able to access learning consistently and achieve their full potential.

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
1. Improved oral language skills for children including oracy, vocabulary and knowledge for disadvantaged pupils.	• Disadvantaged pupils develop improved basic literacy skills including oracy, vocabulary and knowledge skills across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well, closing the gap between them and their peers. • We see clear evidence of impact in the early years, with Reception baseline data showing strong progress in communication and language. This provides a solid foundation for future learning and improved long-term outcomes. • Children identified through the Language screen in Reception will make accelerated progress with their language skills following Neli intervention. • Pupils will be able to articulately talk about their learning and share their knowledge. • Increased proportion of disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 achieving the Expected Standard or above across the curriculum.
2. Improved foundational knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics.	• Outcomes indicate that disadvantaged pupils are making sustained progress, narrowing the attainment gap. • Pupil progress meetings demonstrate that support is regularly reviewed and adapted in response to individual need. • Disadvantaged pupils retain and apply previously taught knowledge across different subjects and contexts.
3. To improve the well-being of pupils and reduce the barriers disadvantaged pupils face with social and	• Pupil questionnaires, pupil voice and staff observations demonstrate improved well-being and an increased ability to self-regulate. • Pupils can identify and use appropriate strategies to manage their emotions with increasing independence.

emotional issues.	• Disadvantaged pupils demonstrate greater resilience, confidence and readiness to learn. • Lesson observations show improved engagement, participation and perseverance when pupils encounter challenges. • Behaviour information indicates a reduction in incidents that disrupt pupils' learning. • Assessments of targeted pastoral and social and emotional interventions demonstrate progress from pupils' individual starting points.
4. Pupils develop a secure understanding of the wider world and are able to articulate their knowledge with confidence and clarity.	• Pupil voice demonstrates that pupils can confidently articulate their knowledge of the history and geography topics they are studying. • Pupils use appropriate subject-specific vocabulary when discussing their learning. • Pupils recall prior learning and make meaningful connections between previous and current topics. • Book monitoring demonstrates that pupils are building upon their prior knowledge and developing a secure understanding of key concepts. • Retrieval activities show that pupils remember and apply important knowledge over time.
5. To continue to close the gap in attendance for disadvantaged pupils.	• Attendance data demonstrates an improvement in attendance for disadvantaged pupils and a narrowing of the gap with their non-disadvantaged peers. • The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently or severely absent is reduced. • Punctuality records show a reduction in lateness among identified pupils. • Regular communication with families supports the early identification and reduction of barriers to attendance. • The attendance team and Education Welfare Officer provide timely, targeted support to pupils and families where concerns are identified. • Individual attendance plans are regularly reviewed and show improved outcomes for targeted pupils.

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, professional learning, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £57,875

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
On going staff professional learning, coaching and curriculum refinement to continue to ensure Oracy remains at the heart of the curriculum to develop 'articulate learners'	Moss and Washbrook (2016) found that pupils receiving FSM are 1.6 times more likely to be below language expectations at age 5 compared to their non-FSM peers/ This gap grows to be twice as likely to be below language expectations by the age of 11. Further research from EEF evidences that oral language interventions have a high impact on average (+6 months for primary age and +7 months during early years) Oral language interventions are based on the idea that comprehension and reading skills benefit from explicit discussion of either content or processes of learning, or both, oral language interventions aim to support learners' use of vocabulary, articulation of ideas and spoken expression. Training can support adults to ensure they model and develop pupils' oral language skills and vocabulary development. Approaches that focus on speaking,	1,2

	listening and a combination of the two all show positive impacts on attainment. There is evidence to suggest that pupils from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to be behind their more advantaged counterparts in developing early language and speech skills, which may affect their school experience and learning later in their school lives. Given that Oral language approached can be used to provide additional support to pupils who are behind their peers in oral language development, the targeted use of these approaches may support some disadvantaged pupils to catch up with peers. Early Years Communication | EEF Toolkit Gender Gap Literacy and Language Development | University of Bristol Oral language interventions | EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk -)	

To continue to embed and develop RWI and Fresh start including ongoing consultancy support and professional learning primarily through the Trust RWI support package.	The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has conducted multiple evaluations of **Read Write Inc. (RWI) Phonics**, and the findings show that it can support **foundational reading knowledge**, particularly for **disadvantaged pupils.** https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/eef-publishes-independent-evaluation-of-read-write-inc-phonics-and-fresh-start	2

To implement the enhanced English Scheme in from EYFS – Year 6 with clear vocabulary progression to support children's language progression and writing skills in both English and across the curriculum.	The National Curriculum states: 'Pupils' acquisition and command of vocabulary are key to their learning and progress across the whole curriculum. Teachers should therefore develop vocabulary actively, building systematically on pupils' current knowledge.' This course guides participants through that systematic approach, in a fun and effective manner. By the end of the Reception year, children who are eligible for the Pupil Premium are on average 4.6 months behind other children in their learning, according to this analysis https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/early-years/its-called-the-foundation-stage-for-a-reason-the-crucial-importance-of-the-early-years Spoken vocabulary at five impacts on reading comprehension at fifteen years of age. Yet children from the poorest 20% are already a year behind with spo- ken vocabulary by 5. There are many children in our classrooms who need support, and also so many words to learn. Thus, a year-on-year approach is called for. 'Ready, Steady, Write' is a comprehen- sive and evidence-based English scheme. It provides a sequenced, ambitious curriculum, that places quality literature at its core and has a strong focus on vocabulary development. Vocabulary and Oral Language | Teaching and Learning Toolkit | EEF	1,2

	EEF's recent evaluations of early years programmes show that **building strong foundations in language and communication** leads to measurable improvements in children's outcomes. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/what-weve-learned-from-findings-from-seven-early-years-evaluations	

Implement the Ready Steady Read Together programme across Key Stage 2 to strengthen reading fluency, comprehension and engagement through structured, regular reading opportunities.	The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) highlights that **reading comprehension strategies** are among the most effective approaches for improving reading outcomes, with pupils making an average of **7 months' additional progress.** These approaches support pupils to develop understanding, discuss texts and apply strategies used by skilled readers. They are particularly beneficial in helping disadvantaged pupils access the wider curriculum through improved reading skills. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies The Department for Education's The Reading Framework emphasises the importance of developing **reading fluency and comprehension** throughout Key Stage 2 and recognises the value of	2, 4

	schools working in partnership with parents to support reading development. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-reading-framework-teaching-the-foundations-of-literacy	

Staff professional learning and curriculum enhancement through embedding the 2024-2025 History, Geography, Reading and Spelling Scheme.	EEF research shows that teaching reading comprehension strategies can have a high impact on pupil progress https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies Children from disadvantaged backgrounds often begin school with a **19-month gap** in vocabulary compared to their more affluent peers. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/early-years/literacy/developing-vocabulary-in-early-years-education	1, 2, 4

Continue to embed and develop the use of the Maths No Problem scheme and resources to ensure it is used to support the needs of all learners including further staff professional learning and staff coaching.	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 including the use of manipulatives and visual representations to support pupils who are struggling with maths: Improving Mathematics in Key Stages 2 and 3 https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/early-maths	1, 2, 4

To build foundational knowledge in EYFS and KS1 by implementing the NCEMT Mastering Number program including professional learning for staff and implementing Mastering Number across Key Stage 2.	**Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)** has funded and is currently evaluating the **NCETM Mastering Number programme** in EYFS and KS1 Early findings and rationale suggest: • Develop **fluency and flexibility with number** through short, focused sessions. • Build **strong foundational number sense** in Reception, Year 1, and Year 2 https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/mastering-number-trial	

Staff professional learning (including NPQLPM and Flourishing Leaders) to continue to support improvement of foundational knowledge across reading, writing and mathematics.	Evidence from the EEF suggests that **well-designed professional development** (PD) has a **positive impact on pupil achievement.** https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/pages/Teacher-professional-development.pdf?v=1759654796	1,2

Reading leaders (Heads of Department Early Years & KS1) and RWI coordinator provide weekly coaching and training for staff at all levels.	Evidence shows that early literacy approaches have an average impact of four months additional progress. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/early-years/toolkit/early-literacy-approaches?utm_source=chatgpt.com	

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

Budgeted cost: £34,725

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Continue to Engage in Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) program, ensuring it is robustly implemented. Screening using the Language screen check and targeted support using NELI in EYFS	There is evidence to suggest that pupils from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to be behind their more advantaged counterparts in developing early language and speech skills, which may affect their school experience and learning later in their school lives. The average impact of oral language interventions, including dialogic activities such as high-quality classroom discussion, is approximately an additional six months' progress over the course of a year. Approaches that focus on speaking, listening and a combination of the two all show positive impacts on attainment. NELI Language Intervention | EEF	1

Additional phonics sessions targeted at disadvantaged pupils who require further phonics support.	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	1, 2,

Fresh Start pupils in for Upper KS2 requiring phonics/reading support.	Pupils in the intervention group made +3 months of additional progress in reading age compared to the control group after 22 weeks. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/fresh-start	2

Comprehension fluency groups to provide additional opportunities to practice applying reading strategies taught in whole class reading lessons.	Research shows that reading comprehension strategies are high impact on average (+6 months). Alongside phonics it is a crucial component of early reading instruction. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies	2

Group Maths sessions targeted at disadvantaged pupils who require further Maths support to address gaps in understanding and developing Maths fluency.	Evidence indicates that small group interventions can be a powerful tool for supporting some pupils who require additional support alongside high quality teaching. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/support-for-schools/school-planning-support/2-targeted-academic-support?utm_source=chatgpt.com	2

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

Budgeted cost: £23,150

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Individual pupils will receive SEMH support through regular pastoral check-ins and targeted interventions to develop emotional regulation skills, all delivered by trained and experienced staff to provide personalised, high-quality support.	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) https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/metacognition-and-self-regulation	1,2,3,4,5,
Staff and the school attendance team, including the EWO, will work to improve the attendance and punctuality of disadvantaged pupils by strengthening partnerships with parents. This will include meetings with parents,	Evidence shows that parental engagement can have positive impact on learning outcomes. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching- learning-toolkit/parental-engagement There is a strong link between attendance and attainment: "in general, the higher the overall absence rate across the KS, the lower the likely level of attainment at the end of KS2." DfE's Improving School Attendance: "There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic	1,2,3,4,5,

organising coffee mornings, and, where appropriate, conducting home visits to increase parental engagement.	achievement." Education data lab research (October 2020): Found a relationship between absence rates and disadvantage rates. Within the north-west of England, there is a very strong relationship between school attendance and disadvantage, with school attendance lower in LAs with higher disadvantage. Advice from the National Strategies (hosted on the National Archives) says that: • The links between attendance and achievement are strong Pupils with persistent absence are less likely to attain at school and stay in education after the age of 16 years	

My Happy Mind	The evidence shows that SEL interventions can lead to an average of **+3 months' additional progress** in academic outcomes over the course of a year and enhance pupils' self-management of emotions, decision-making skills, and interactions with others, contributing to improved mental health and well-being. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/social-and-emotional-learning?utm_source=chatgpt.com	1,2,3,4,5,

Total budgeted cost: £115,750

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the 2025 to 2026 academic year.

Our pupil premium strategy has continued to have a positive impact on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils across the school. The approaches implemented have supported improvements in attainment, attendance, and wider opportunities, whilst helping to reduce gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

Early Language Development

The school's focus on developing communication and language skills from the early years has contributed to improved outcomes in Reception. In 2025/26, **71.4%** of pupils achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD), an increase from **60.0%** in 2024/25. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils also improved significantly, rising from **37.5%** in 2024/25 to **62.5%** in 2025/26.

Securing Foundational Knowledge

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 demonstrate that the strategies used to support reading, writing and mathematics have enabled many pupils to achieve the expected standard.

- **Reading:** 69.2% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard, compared to 71.4% of non-disadvantaged pupils, representing a gap of just **2.2 percentage.**
- **Writing:** 69.2% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard, compared to 71.4% of their non-disadvantaged peers, again resulting in a gap of **2.2 percentage.**
- **Mathematics:** 69.2% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard, compared to 85.7% of non-disadvantaged pupils. Whilst a gap remains, disadvantaged pupils demonstrated secure attainment with over two-thirds meeting age-related expectations.
- **Reading, Writing and Mathematics Combined (RWM):** 61.5% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard compared with 71.4% of non-disadvantaged pupils. This represents a notable improvement from **50.0%** of disadvantaged pupils achieving the combined measure in 2024/25.

In Key Stage 1, investment in the school's phonics provision continued to secure strong outcomes. In 2025/26, **80%** of disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard in the Phonics Screening Check, compared to **90%** of pupils overall.

Attendance remained a key priority throughout 2025/26. Whole-school attendance was 94.96%, broadly in line with the national average of 95%. A significant success was the reduction in persistent absence from 11.6% in 2024/25 to 3.82% in 2025/26, with only five pupils meeting the persistent absence threshold. This reflects the positive impact of effective attendance procedures, strong partnership working with families and targeted support, enabling more pupils to access learning consistently.

Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider
NA	

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

Measure	Details
How did you spend your service pupil premium allocation last academic year?	N/A
What was the impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils?	N/A