

Pupil premium strategy statement

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium funding to help improve the attainment of our disadvantaged pupils, and forms part of a 3-year strategy plan 2024 - 2027.

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	The Holy Cross School
Number of pupils in school	771 (Years 7-11)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	11%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	3
Date this statement was published	December '25
Date on which it will be reviewed	December '26
Statement authorised by	Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Tracy Newman Supported by: Lisa Peirce, Helen Kay and Kristin Santoo

Funding overview 2021-2026

Detail	Amount 2022-23	Amount 2023-24	Amount 2024-25	Amount 2025-26
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£122,419	£120,000	£106,096	£114,000
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£17,110	£28,290	£0	£0
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£0	£0	£0	£0
School-led tutoring	£18,225	£7,200	£0	£0
Total budget for this academic year	£157,754	£155,490	£106,096	£114,000

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

The Holy Cross School is deeply committed to closing the gap between disadvantaged students and their peers. At the heart of our strategy is the clear aim of our founders, the Sisters of the Holy Cross, whose Mission is to “joyfully share this life with others, especially those who are in any way disadvantaged.”

Our pupil premium strategy is embedded within the objectives of our School Development Plan. The approaches adopted are carefully selected based on strong educational evidence, drawing from the research and resources provided by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).

Using Our Pupil Premium Funding Effectively

The Holy Cross School understands the complexities of closing the achievement gap and the multifaceted impact of economic deprivation on academic outcomes. We acknowledge that students eligible for free school meals typically make less progress than their peers.

Recognising the ongoing challenges faced by children from disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly in light of the current cost of living crisis, we are committed to providing a secure and supportive environment to mitigate these effects. Our strategy includes a sustained response, ensuring that interventions are impactful and responsive to evolving needs.

Our Key Aims

1. High-Quality Teaching for All: We prioritise the development of teaching strategies that support all learners, with an emphasis on closing attainment gaps.
2. Targeted Academic Support: Evidence-based interventions are implemented to address specific barriers to learning for disadvantaged students.
3. Wider Strategies: We address non-academic barriers such as attendance, mental health, and access to enrichment opportunities, ensuring that all students can thrive both academically and personally.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Holy Cross School is dedicated to rigorous monitoring and evaluation of our pupil premium strategy. This ensures that interventions and funding are consistently directed toward the areas of greatest need and achieve measurable, positive outcomes.

By maintaining this commitment, we aim to uphold our Mission Statement and provide all students with the opportunities they need to succeed, regardless of their background.

Challenges

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

	Detail of challenge
1	Attainment and progress gap between high prior attaining disadvantaged students and their non-disadvantaged peers at KS4
2	The impact of the cost of living crisis on families and access to trips and opportunities
3	Poor mental health of a growing number of students, and high need for therapy.
4	A higher proportion of disadvantaged students with persistent absence (under 90%) in comparison to their non-disadvantaged peers.
5	A growing number of SEND students on roll.

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
Academic Achievement Narrow the attainment and progress gap between high prior attaining disadvantaged students and their non-disadvantaged peers at KS4	KS4 results, post-16 destinations. Evidence of targeted interventions, with regular monitoring showing sustained improvement in performance.
Attendance and Engagement Improved attendance to school and in particular reduce the number of disadvantaged students with persistent absence	Narrow the gap in persistent absence between disadvantaged students and their non-disadvantaged peers.
Wider Learning and Cultural Capital PP students actively engage in extracurricular activities, building cultural capital and leadership skills.	At least 70% of PP students participate in one or more school-organised extracurricular activities. Targeted leadership opportunities are provided, with 40% of positions (e.g., assembly readers, house captains) filled by PP students.
Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) Support PP students receive timely and effective SEMH support, reducing emotional barriers to learning.	All staff trained in trauma-informed practices by the end of the academic year, with evidence of implementation in classrooms. Student surveys, safeguarding monitoring, student views, attendance, and progress.
Parental Engagement Enhanced engagement and communication with the parents/carers of PP students to	90% of PP parents attend at least one parents' evening.

support their academic and personal development.	Follow-up calls ensure contact is made with 100% of PP parents who miss scheduled meetings.
Use of Data Effective use of data to track, evaluate, and adjust interventions for PP students across all year groups.	Analysis of PP student progress post-data drops informs adjustments in interventions within four weeks. Departmental reviews demonstrate a clear link between data analysis and successful interventions for underperforming PP students.
Post-16 Progression and Career Guidance PP students have enhanced access to post-16 opportunities and are fully supported in achieving aspirational destinations.	100% of PP students receive tailored career interviews and guidance by Year 9. Increase in applications from PP students to aspirational institutions, including Oxbridge and competitive apprenticeships.

Activity in this academic year (2025-2026)

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: £1,124

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<i>CPD: using devices and digital tools for personalised in-class learning and to support pupils with additional needs</i>	Technology can enable teachers to adapt practice effectively, for example increasing the challenge of questions as pupils succeed or by providing new contexts in which students are required to apply new skills. Using technology to support retrieval practice and self-quizzing can increase the retention of key ideas and knowledge. Technology also enables personalisation of the curriculum and offers opportunities for independent learning and development, Lexia is an example of this. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/digital	1
<i>High quality online training resources</i>	Bluesky, National College, TES training resources offer high quality professional development for	1, 3, 5

	staff which can be personalised, targeted, and is constantly updated in line with	
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £49,600

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<i>Year 11 targeted interventions in all subject areas</i>	Research evidence suggests that small group tuition which is targeted at pupils' specific needs is effective and has an average impact of four months' additional progress over the course of a year. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition	1
<i>(JM, KW) Smaller KS3 class sizes in English and Maths</i>	Research evidence suggests that reducing class size can have positive impacts on pupil outcomes when implemented with socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils. It provides more opportunities for feedback and high-quality interaction between the teacher and pupils. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reducing-class-size	1, 2, 3, 5
<i>SJ and CT One to one support and tuition</i>	One to one tuition offers greater levels of feedback and intervention compared to whole class teaching. This can support pupils overcome barriers to learning and enable pupils to make effective progress by providing intensive, targeted academic support. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/one-to-one-tuition	1, 3, 5
<i>OZ to monitor data at all key stages in order to diagnose challenges and target intervention/support</i>	Monitoring data provides an understanding of any challenges disadvantaged pupils are facing. An analysis of attendance, teacher feedback, behaviour, wellbeing and access to technology provides opportunity to identify challenges and target support. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/guidance-for-teachers/using-pupil-premium	1, 4

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

Budgeted cost: £63,276

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<i>1:1 devices for all</i> <i>(school provides PP students with Ready to Learn Scheme, this does not come from the PP funding)</i>	Technology can be used as a motivational tool and connects students to teachers. Devices can also increase the quality and quantity of practice pupils undertake both inside and outside of the classroom. It provides the opportunity for improved assessment and feedback. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/digital	1, 2, 5
<i>Mental health tracking and support. KS with the mental health first aid team to provide intervention.</i> <i>School wide attachment aware and trauma informed training.</i>	Lockdowns have had a significant impact on the mental health of many children, this in turn has impacted attendance and progress. https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/supporting-others/childrens-mental-health/	3, 4, 5
<i>SE provides attendance monitoring, reporting and targeting across the school.</i>	Attendance monitoring and identifying persistent absence is an important diagnostic tool that helps identify challenges. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/guidance-for-teachers/using-pupil-premium Following good practice set out by the DfE https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/framework-for-securing-full-attendance-actions-for-schools-and-local-authorities	1, 3, 4
<i>Music tuition provides opportunities for enrichment activities and increased cultural capital.</i>	Offering enrichment activities provides equality and increased cultural capital enabling increased social mobility. https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Life-Lessons-Report_FINAL.pdf	2, 3
<i>Additional targeted welfare support (meals, uniform, trips and general support)</i>	General support provided so students can focus on learning. Providing meals without charge to students with lower socio-economic status can reduce health inequalities. Providing financial support for trips creates equality and increases cultural capital. General financial support	2

	including help with uniform can help with school attendance.	
<i>Small group study skills workshops for Year 11 students</i>	Workshop focused on meta-cognition and self-regulation approaches is high (+7 months additional progress) https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/metacognition-and-self-regulation	1, 3, 5
<i>1:1 mentoring for year 11 PP students</i>	The impact of mentoring is likely to have a positive impact on attainment https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/mentoring	1,3
<i>Teaching Assistant Interventions</i>	A programme of targeted small group interventions every morning, including ELSA, social skills, touch typing, reading is offered to students on the SEND register. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/teaching-assistant-interventions	1, 5
<i>Careers interviews</i>	All disadvantaged students will receive a personalised careers interview with a trained careers advisor by year 9 with a focus on creating aspiration. Further interviews to increase applications from disadvantaged students to aspirational institutions, including Oxbridge and competitive apprenticeships. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/poorer-young-people-more-likely-to-have-career-aspirations-that-dont-match?utm_source=news/poorer-young-people-more-likely-to-have-career-aspirations-that-dont-match&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=site_search&search_term=careers	1, 2

Total budgeted cost: £114,000

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 2024 to 2025 academic year.

Individualised Learning Resources and Technology Access:

Providing every disadvantaged pupil with personal learning devices has effectively bridged the digital divide, enabling continuous and tailored learning experiences both in and out of the classroom. This initiative has ensured that all students can access quality education regardless of their circumstances.

Customised Online Curriculum and Support Tools:

The use of educational platforms such as Kerboodle, Activelearn, GCSEPod, Google Workspace for Education, Gemini and NotebookLM has created inclusive and accessible learning environments for disadvantaged pupils. These tools have supported personalised learning pathways, allowing teachers to offer differentiated and additional resources efficiently and discreetly. This targeted use of technology has been instrumental in fostering academic growth.

Targeted Academic Support:

Smaller class sizes in key subjects, alongside one-to-one support, have provided disadvantaged pupils with more personalised feedback and attention, leading to a number of academic outcomes above the national average.

This is reflected in the GCSE results, where the estimated (using CATS data) English progress score was 0.36 and Maths was 0.51. Attainment scores in English also surpassed national benchmarks, with English A8 at 5.6 (compared to the national average of 4.9 for all students, PP National 3.9) with Maths A8 at 4.9 (national average of 5.8 for all students, PP National 3.4).

Pastoral Support and Wellbeing:

To address the mental health challenges, the school has invested in targeted wellbeing initiatives, including external counselling and early mental health interventions. These efforts have been pivotal in supporting students' emotional and academic progress while also enhancing attendance and parental engagement. Last year, many students accessed counselling, with the most significant benefits observed among younger pupils.

Attendance and Engagement:

A multi-agency approach enabled the school to maintain strong attendance rates and high levels of engagement among disadvantaged pupils compared to the national average.

The attendance for disadvantaged students at Holy Cross last year was 90.8% where the national average for disadvantaged students was 86.2%.

Additionally, disadvantaged students achieved an overall Progress 8 score of 0.28, significantly exceeding the national average of 0.16.

Although students performed better than the national average there is a significant gap in progress and attainment, with disadvantaged students having an estimated progress gap of -0.33 and an attainment gap of -1.1 (based on FFT analysis).

Pupil Premium progress for high prior attainers is -0.73 achieving on average 1 grade below their non Pupil Premium peers. There needs to be a clear focus on higher attainers and this has informed our strategy for 2025-26.

*All attendance, progress and attainment data validated using FFT analysis.

Externally provided programmes

The vast majority of our additional interventions are provided by Holy Cross teaching staff.

Programme	Provider

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

Measure	Details
How did you spend your service pupil premium allocation last academic year?	Targeted well being initiatives e.g. Grow therapy and socially thinking offer
What was the impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils?	n/a