

PUPIL PREMIUM STRATEGY STATEMENT

This statement details our **academy's** use of pupil premium (and recovery premium for the 2023-2024 academic year) funding to help improve the attainment of our disadvantaged **students**.

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 **academy**.

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	The Palmer Catholic Academy
Number of pupils in school	1157
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	291 (25.2%)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3-year plans are recommended)	2024-2027
Date this statement was published	November 2024
Date on which it will be reviewed	November 2025
Statement authorised by	Mr P Downey
Pupil premium lead	Mrs T Pascoe-Matthews
Governor / Trustee lead	Mrs M Leslie-Povoas

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£264,600
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£0
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	To be confirmed by

Part A: Pupil Premium Strategy Plan

Statement of intent

The aim of the funding allocated to The Palmer Catholic Academy for 2024-2025 will be used to bridge gaps between disadvantaged students and their peers. As an academy, we aim to embed our strategies within the broader school practices to foster an ethos of high aspirations and achievement for all students.

We recognise that the needs of disadvantaged students are diverse and require tailored support. Drawing on our academy's experiences and current research on effective practices, we have developed a new model that emphasises the importance of quality first teaching, which significantly impacts the learning of all students.

Last academic year, attendance for our disadvantaged pupils fell below the expected level of 96%. The academy is eager to implement recent national strategies aligned with best practices and research to ensure that all students are in school, receiving the education they deserve, an education that can positively impact their life chances

Our academy is dedicated to a long-term, collaborative approach to tackling the challenges faced by our disadvantaged students. We ensure that all staff recognize their individual and collective responsibilities in supporting students to make meaningful progress and achieve high standards, regardless of their backgrounds or the obstacles they may face.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p>The attainment of disadvantaged students is currently not in line with non-disadvantaged students across some of the GCSE subjects resulting in lower progress scores for disadvantaged students especially in the Open Bucket subjects and High Prior Attainers (Boys) - 2023-2024</p> <p>There have been some challenges specific to open bucket subjects where the academy experienced difficulty with short term supply to cover illnesses or to replace staff.</p>
2	<p>Persistent absence for some our disadvantaged students puts them at risk of underperforming affecting their life chances. Some of our disadvantage students are carers and in the past two years, there have been an increase in the number of students experiencing change in circumstances as it relates to housing, resulting in students missing school or having to travel long distances to get to school. Year 8 is emerging as a group that will need further targeted support at a higher level than disadvantaged students in other year groups.</p>
3	<p>There is an increasing need for access to mental health and pastoral support, since the pandemic. The challenges currently being faced by some of our disadvantaged students have risen, negatively affecting their academic progress and well-being in some cases.</p>

4	Literacy/Comprehension levels of disadvantaged students who also have SEN needs are currently below non-disadvantaged students as reported by our annual reading assessments.
5	Reduced cultural capital and exposure to experiences Our discussions with students and families suggest that the cultural capital of many of our disadvantaged students is significantly less than their peers. This included exposure and access to knowledge, such as by visiting museums, libraries, theatre, large cities and so on.

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 attainment among disadvantaged students across the curriculum at the end of KS4, progress 8 score on par with non-disadvantaged students.	By the end of 2024/2025 there will be a maximum of a 5% gap between the progress of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students. 2024/25 KS4 outcomes for disadvantaged students: an average Attainment 8 score of 52.0 and Progress 8 score of 0.50
To improve the attendance of persistent absence for some of our disadvantaged students who are at risk of underperforming affecting their life chances	Sustained high attendance from 2024/25 demonstrated by: The overall absence rate for all students being no more than 3 %, and removing the attendance gap between disadvantaged students and their non-disadvantaged peers in current years 8 and 10. The percentage of all students who are persistently absent being below the 2023 to 2024 data and the figure among disadvantaged students being no more than 2% lower than their peers
Improved reading ages/reading comprehension among disadvantaged students across KS3.	Reading comprehension tests show a 5% improvement in the comprehension skills of disadvantaged students, along with a reduced gap between their scores and those of their non-disadvantaged peers. This will be reflected in progress reports at least twice per year, Teachers should have also observed this progress through active participation in lessons and through book scrutiny and students' ability to complete tasks with very little support.
To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all students, including those who are disadvantaged.	All students seeking pastoral support will be seen by one of our mentors. Where necessary, students will also be seen by our school counsellor or referral made to external specialist services.

	By 2024/25 it will be fully embedded in our practice with disadvantaged students receiving pastoral support as part of early intervention relating to wellbeing and also maintained when needed.
Increased cultural capital for all disadvantaged students in from KS3-KS5	Teacher reports and class observations suggest disadvantaged students have access to more knowledge associated with cultural capital and engage more actively in lessons. All disadvantaged students are given the opportunity to attend at least one cultural enhancement activity, such as a visit to a theatre, library, large city, annual year group trips, overseas trips for GCSE options

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: £140,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
The academy will recruit good to outstanding teachers to ensure quality first teaching.	<p>Teaching and learning – Research conducted by the EEF found that “Good teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils”. Quality first teaching, recruitment, retention and professional development will be part of our key focus.</p> <p>High standard of teaching benefits all students including pupil premium (Education Endowment Fund). DFE research 2015 – Leaders in schools that were more successful “focus on high quality teaching first rather than on bolt-on strategies and activities outside school hours”.</p>	1
The academy will invest in top quality CPD for whole staff training needs and will also support colleagues in external training for example the NPQ programmes. The academy will cover the cost for daily cover for staff participating	<p>Teaching is a lifelong learning profession and it is imperative that teachers and teaching assistants are aware of current policies, strategies and research.</p> <p>https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/guidance/Quality Assurance of Teachers Continuing Professional Development.pdf</p>	1, 2

<p>The academy will carry out subject reviews with internal staff as well as external consultants/experts</p>	<p>Reflecting on current practices will help schools to recognise what is working in the best interest of children and staff for excellent progress.</p> <p>https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/guidance/Quality Assurance of Teachers Continuing Professional Development.pdf</p>	<p>1, 2</p>
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £39,600

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Appoint two trained teaching assistants to lead on Fresh Start and other Literacy intervention for Years 7 to 9.</p>	<p>Young people who leave school without good literacy skills are held back at every stage of life. (EEF 2019) The EEF further asserted “by attending to the literary demands of their subjects, teachers increase their pupil’s chance of success in their subjects”</p> <p>Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools Reading comprehension, vocabulary and other literacy skills are heavily linked with attainment in maths and English: word-gap.pdf (oup.com.cn)</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Pupil Premium Lead / Progress and Outcomes Lead Practitioner and other key staff to all plan and implement a school-led tutoring similar to the offerings under the previously successful National Tuition Programme that ended summer 2024, for pupils are working below expected levels at KS4. Disadvantaged and SEN children will be prioritised as progress dipped for both groups in the 2024 GCSE exams.</p>	<p>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)</p> <p>And in small groups: Small group tuition Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Our progress and Outcomes -Lead Practitioner to collaborate with HOD to ensure disadvantaged students in years 11 & 13 are included in master classes</p>	<p>Targeted support, guided by teacher assessments and tailored implementation, has consistently helped students address smaller gaps in their learning. Master classes will focus on preparing students with exam-style questions. Research suggests that when students are selected based on specific needs, rather than through broad group interventions, they tend to make significant progress.</p>	<p>1</p>

	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition	
Students to be assessed and allocated appropriate intervention groups for reading comprehension using Accelerated Reading, Fresh Start, Lexia or Language for Thinking.	<p>The academy has invested in Accelerated Reader, Fresh Start and Lexia and they have been known to help students progress with reading comprehension.</p> <p><i>Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools</i> <i>Reading comprehension, vocabulary and other literacy skills are heavily linked with attainment in maths and English:</i> word-gap.pdf (oup.com.cn)</p> <p>Small group interventions have a positive impact on students' language skills and reading comprehension.</p> <p>https://www.campbellcollaboration.org/2022/01/small-group-interventions-vive/#:~:text=A%20Campbell%20systematic%20review%20shows,often%20only%20limited%20positive%20effects.</p>	2

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

Budgeted cost: £70,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Provide additional training for our pastoral team and ensure all Key Stages have staff members with non-teaching commitments to support students.</p> <p>The academy will maintain the current provision of 3 fulltime mentors and 3 pastoral assistants.</p>	<p>Pastoral needs – There is a strong pastoral team and we will look to use this as a strategy to support students who show signs of social and emotional mental health concerns. The pastoral team will be vital in our parental engagement strategies with early and regular communication between home and the academy.</p> <p>As a Catholic academy, we recognise the needs of the individual and the care for those most vulnerable. Catholic social teaching promotes the 'preferential option for the disadvantaged' and the attention to put the needs of others first. The clear focus on the overall care and development of our disadvantaged students is integral to the ethos of the academy.</p>	3

<p>We will retain our current pastoral/ disadvantaged support assistant to work specifically with our disadvantaged students who are prior low attainers on areas of concerns around engagement in lessons and attendance.</p>	<p>As a non-teaching member of staff students have regular meetings with the named staff and a good partnership has been established with families.</p> <p>Attendance and attitude to learning are tracked and support provided.</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>The EWO will continue to meet with HOYs on a regular basis to support students and families where attendance is a cause for concern.</p>	<p>Attendance – This remains a whole school focus. There is no denying the link between good progress and attendance.</p> <p><i>Embedding principles of good practice set out in DfE's Improving School Attendance advice.</i></p> <p>The higher the overall absence rate across Key Stage (KS) 2 and KS4, the lower the likely level of attainment at the end of KS2 and KS4 (DFE 2016). The links between attendance and achievement are strong.</p> <p>Students with persistent absence are less likely to attain at school and stay in education after the age of 16 years (National Strategies)</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>Fund for trips, visits and extracurricular learning. Including university visits, external speakers and careers advice This will be supplemented with raising the pupil premium participation in wider school activities</p>	<p>Findings from EEF – Teacher Toolkit – art participation and aspiration interventions, reveals a moderate impact for low cost.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/aspiration-interventions</p> <p>https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Parent-Power-2018.pdf</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Contingency fund for acute issues. Such as uniform etc.</p>	<p>£15,000 has been set aside to support disadvantaged students in areas not identified above such as educational trips, uniform, laptops etc. This academic year we are supporting a Geography trip to Barcelona and a History trip to Berlin. There are a number of other local trips that we provide support for our disadvantage students.</p>	

Total budgeted cost: £ 354,000 + £25,000 contingency

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 students in the 2023 to 2024 academic year.

Our summer 2024 results indicated that disadvantaged students had a positive progress 8 score based on internal data as we are awaiting the official figures. While this is positive and should be celebrated it is below the progress of when compared to their non-disadvantaged peers. Our initial assessment has identified specific areas such as underperformance boys who had high prior attainment in specific subjects, attendance, mental health challenges and low performances in some open bucket subjects.

GCSE Analysis (2024) – Verified data

Category	P8
PP	+0.20 (to be verified)
Whole school	+0.49 (to be verified)
Redbridge	Awaiting official figures
National	Awaiting official figures

Objective 1

Improved attainment among disadvantaged students across the curriculum at the end of KS4, progress 8 score on par with non-disadvantaged students.

Update: Achieved for the 2023- 2024 Cohort

The year 11 cohort benefitted from the National Tuition Programme in various subjects where they were working at least one grade below expected levels. This has contributed to a positive progress 8 score for the cohort of disadvantaged students albeit lower than non-disadvantaged students. The National Tuition Programme has been discontinued but the academy will provide tuition for our disadvantaged and SEN students under a school-led programme as there are clear benefits to students having 1:1 or small group tuition.

Objective 2

Improved reading ages/reading comprehension among disadvantaged students across KS3.

Update: Achieved for the academic year 2023-2024.

Students in years 7, 8 and 9 benefitted from the Fresh Start Literacy intervention 2023-2024 and this has positively impacted their progress. A small group of students also had Lexia as part of the literacy support. All KS3 classes have 1 lesson every fortnight in the library. The entire 100 minutes is dedicated to reading and working on the accelerated reader programme. A literacy Coordinator was also appointed to support the whole school approach to literacy.

Objective 3

To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all students, including those who are disadvantaged.

Update: Achieved and will remain for current cohort

Students requiring pastoral support have been assigned a mentor, and those needing specialist assistance have been referred to the school counsellor. In cases where additional support was needed, the SEN department, in collaboration with the pastoral team, made referrals to external agencies such as CAMHS and other specialist services. During the 2023-2024 academic year, there was a notable increase in the demand for CAMHS support due to mental health challenges.

Objective 3

To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all students, particularly our disadvantaged students.

Update: Achieved and will remain for current cohort

Last academic year our attendance figure dropped below the expected level due many factors. Some were as a result of not having an EWO at the start of the academic year, mental health difficulties, school-based anxiety and other outside factors linked to housing issues and cost of living difficulties. **Our attendance continues to be better than the national average with the pastoral, SEND, EWO, parental engagement and other support mechanisms in place.**

Summary of key headline figures for the summer 2024 exams (awaiting verification for the figures)

Externally provided programmes

Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you purchased in the previous academic year. This will help the Department for Education identify which ones are popular in England.

Programme	Provider
Fresh Start	Ruth Miskin
Accelerated Reader	Renaissance Learning
Lexia	Lexia Learning Systems
Twinkl	Twinkl Education Company
Sparx	Sparx Learning
CPD Genie	Genie Suite

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information:

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 students?	N/A

Further information (optional)

The Pupil premium funding will also be used to support students for specific individual needs such as DofE (<https://www.dofe.org/>), uniform, equipment, trips, music lessons and other areas of needs. We will also be introducing a group of students to Stepladder (<http://thestepladder.org/>)

Parental engagement will be key to the successful implementation of the pupil premium policy especially in areas of attendance and extra tuition offered in the academy.

It might become necessary to fund private specialist assessments for students who are waiting on appointments from Child and Adolescence Mental Health Services (CAMHS).