

Pupil premium strategy statement – St Mark’s CE Primary 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	159
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	58.4%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year)	December 2025- December 2026
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	Claire Roberts Head Teacher
Pupil premium lead	Natalie McKenzie Deputy Head Teacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Josephine Dunlop & Allistare Smedley Co- chairs of Governors

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£138 043
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£ 0
Total budget for this academic year <i>If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year</i>	£138 043

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At St Mark's, our mission is to ensure that all children, irrespective of their backgrounds or personal challenges, reach their full potential through the provision of a high quality of education. We are dedicated to developing children's aspirations, self-esteem and academic achievement within a safe, stimulating learning environment.

We believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the idea that both adults and children learn new things every day. We conduct all our teaching in an atmosphere of trust and respect for all, in line with our distinctive Christian ethos and pride ourselves on being a family school.

Our Pupil Premium Strategy considers what is needed to ensure that all pupils make progress towards their personal targets. High-quality, first-class teaching in every classroom is our foundation, supplemented by targeted interventions for those who need extra support. To ensure teachers are well- equipped to support all learners, Pupil Premium funding will be used to support subject leaders in enhancing their curriculum areas across the school, through the continued implementation and monitoring of practise. This will ensure that our curriculum is coherent and purposeful, with a global outlook that reflects our cohorts and their life experiences. The continued development of our curriculum aims to provide the skills and knowledge necessary for our pupils to become successful learners now and ensure that they have the best foundations for future learning. The initiatives we have prioritised will ensure gaps in learning are identified and addressed through targeted Phonics, Mathematics and Reading interventions. Robust diagnostic assessment and analyses will ensure that funding is used effectively to meet the needs of prioritised pupils or classes.

Learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone and it is of the upmost importance that disadvantaged pupils have access to the same experiences as their peers. To bridge the gap, we will use Pupil Premium funds to facilitate enrichment activities such as school trips, holiday clubs and free breakfast sessions. Through our trauma- informed approach, we will also provide mentoring and nurture groups to address the emotional needs of disadvantaged children with adverse childhood experiences.

Our approach will be responsive to common challenges and individual needs, rooted in the knowledge and understanding of our children, in order to equitably support and help them to succeed. Our approach will:

- develop emotional literacy and regulation to ensure the right attitude for learning
- act early to intervene at the point need is identified
- raise expectations of what children can achieve by ensuring all children are challenged in the work that they're set in all subjects
- create stimulating experiences for learners to raise personal aspirations

Through our HERO Learning Powers of Hope, Energy, Resilience and Optimism, we will prepare our children for life-long learning that goes beyond the classroom. We want all of our children to believe in themselves and rise to any challenge they may face.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Attendance Attendance and punctuality rates vary, but rarely meet national figures month on month. There is a concern with absence and persistent absence above local and national figures and there has been a marked increase in penalty fines related to unauthorised absence.
2	Wellbeing & Pastoral Care CPOMS/Arbor and staff observations show that maintaining positive behaviour and positive relationships is challenging for some children and can provide further challenge to accessing the curriculum. Teacher referrals, safeguarding referrals and welfare checks have remained significantly high in 2024/2025, indicating a need to provide further access to Family and SEMH support both externally and within school.
3	Attainment Close the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in Reading, Writing and Maths, particularly at the end of KS1 and KS2. Children across the school do not have the resilience to work independently for sustained amounts of time. Our ongoing assessment procedures suggest that our most disadvantaged pupils are at a greater risk of not meeting age-related expectations or are falling behind their peers in class.
4	Oracy Pupils generally have weaker oracy, language and communication skills on entry to our EYFS. The language deficit across the school is an identified barrier to learning, which also impacts participation in class discussion and social interactions.
5	Cultural Capital Our disadvantaged children have limited life experiences and opportunities beyond those provided within the local community. Many families have much less access to clubs and other opportunities to develop physical, mental and social skills. Our discussions and observations have identified that our disadvantaged pupils lack background knowledge of the world around them and this impacts their understanding and engagement with learning. As a result, our disadvantaged pupils have limited aspirations or an understanding of how to achieve them, compared to non-disadvantaged pupils.

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 attendance, punctuality and engagement with learning.	• Greater communication and partnership with families to ensure an understanding of the importance of daily attendance. • Improved attendance and punctuality of children, in line with national average of 95% • Percentage of Persistent Absence to decrease to less than 10% for disadvantaged pupils showing that clear strategies are effective. • Improved behaviour for learning. • Clear implementation of re-integration processes. • Successful re-integration within specified timescale following period of prolonged absence. • Formative and summative assessment, book scrutiny, pupil voice all indicate improvement in progress, attainment, engagement, confidence and enjoyment.
Attainment and progress in core subjects are increased for all disadvantaged children with a secure focus on assessment to drive improvement.	• Children are able to remember more of what they learn • Children are able to discuss their learning with increasing depth of understanding • Children are able to apply their learning in differing contexts • Implementation of robust assessment practises • Early identification of need with swift action • Intervention mapping is clear and consistent to ensure all children have equitable support • Intervention mapped against agreed outcomes to accurately measure progress • Summative assessment shows all children are making personal progress against targets • Formative and summative assessment, book scrutiny, pupil voice all indicate improvement in progress, attainment, engagement, confidence and enjoyment of core subjects. • Implementation and continued development of curriculum enables more learners to be challenged with independent learning activities.
Oracy skills and communication are improved for disadvantaged pupils from EYFS to year 6.	• Children are able to articulate their thoughts coherently • All children identified with need are able to access timely assessment • Language interventions are comprehensive, targeted and effective. • Individual impact is monitored on EduKey. Vocabulary is embedded in all teaching slides, to expose children to tier 2 & 3 vocabulary in context. • Use of stem sentences in all subjects provide models to support children with using grammatically accurate speech patterns. • Social groups and nurture groups promote oracy skills for conversation. • Early Years language programme runs for all children, against agreed

	outcomes to accurately measure impact.
To enhance and enrich the curriculum with cultural capital to ensure that all pupils have a balanced and enjoyable curriculum offer that raises aspirations for all.	• Children make good personal progress from starting points • Children are able to link learning to real life experience, further embedding knowledge and skills • Use subject leads and members of subject teams to support creative approaches • Develop the process of assessing foundation subjects to include pupil voice to measure the impact of cultural capital • Seeking opportunities for pupils to engage with opportunities in their local environment • Developing sustainability strands into topic subjects • Trips are free or subsidised to ensure all children can attend
To equip children with the tools that they need to manage challenging situations and develop self-regulation. To increase everyday resilience, thereby increasing access to learning.	• Children are more able to self- regulate through challenging moments with minimal adult intervention • Just Right regulation strategies are embedded into class practise across the school • Children are resilient in their learning • Playtimes are calm and enjoyable for all, through the implementation of break and lunch time groups • Learning walks and lesson observations show that there is consistently good behaviour for learning across the school. • Transitions in and around school are calm and effectively managed by all staff • Behaviour for identified pupils is supported through attachment strategies, liaison with parents, helping hands and achievement cards. • Nurture sessions are used effectively to support children with emotional and social wellbeing. • The behaviour system is used consistently and transparently for all children • Fixed term suspensions are reduced.

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: £66 260.64

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
A leadership focus on high expectations and high quality teaching for all children	Leaders at all levels, supported by clear vision from SLT, will drive forward Pupil Premium provision and ensure high expectations for all children. Monitoring cycles, (including external assessors such as SPA/ RWI) will inform direction of evolving school direction. Deputy Head teacher will continue role as LA Writing Moderator and use this knowledge to inform school direction.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

	Deputy Head Teacher and SENDCo will continue to provide coaching sessions for all teachers to improve standards across the school. Pont et al, 2008, Day et al, 2010 and Barber et al, 2010, state effective leadership is: -Defining a vision which raises expectations and acts as a basis for developing a strategy, building trust and applying management processes (e.g. data tracking) to realise aims -Reshape the conditions for teaching and learning by improving the physical learning environment and ensuring that effective behaviour management avoids classroom teaching being disrupted -Redesign leadership roles and responsibilities to promote a focus on and commitment to improved teaching and learning and student outcomes -Enrich the curriculum in order to deepen pupil engagement and improve achievement	
Durrington Research Literacy- The Key to Social Equity	Continued involvement in project (2024- 2026) This partnership project will support schools to develop and embed an evidence-informed and consistent approach across schools to tackling disadvantage through language and communication and vocabulary instruction, through a specific focus on: • Spoken language and communication: Developing students' speaking and listening skills and wider use of language so that they develop competent and confident verbal communication, reading and writing skills • Vocabulary: Developing students' secure knowledge of the tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary needed to access the curriculum at different phases so they are able to access reading material and apply the new terms in both writing and verbal communication.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Investment in DfE approved Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme	Phonics approaches have strong evidence base that indicates a positive impact on the accuracy and fluency of word reading particularly for disadvantaged pupils. All teachers and support staff trained to deliver Read Write Inc to increase capacity across school and develop KS2 staff understanding of early reading approach. Training delivered by Phonics Lead to TA's to ensure 1:1 catch up programmes run effectively. Deployment of TAs to deliver RWI in streamed phonics groups, thereby accelerating progress. Children assessed half termly which informs groupings, individual targets and classroom practise. Development days, led by external RWI consultants, address current school implementation, staff training opportunities and areas for development. Access to RWI online portal provides further training for all staff. Access to RWI assessment portal provides accurate half- termly assessment that feeds directly into teaching and learning opportunities; highlights children in need of intervention; maps patterns of attainment and progress. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/phonics	3, 4

CPD opportunity for all staff, (including NPQ's, BHISS support, LA writing moderations) to ensure teachers are equip to deliver quality first teaching in line with agreed school approaches	CPD focused on QFT and curriculum pedagogy. Deepen staff understanding of the Rosenshine principles. Adaptable teaching approaches will be supplemented with subject specific input on SEND/diagnostic assessment/ marking and feedback/sustainability/ curriculum development. Staff will be supported with behaviour approaches, (alongside external agencies such as BHISS), necessary to creating positive behaviours for learning. SLT will oversee subject leaders to develop high-quality planning guidance and support teachers with consistent approaches to teaching and learning in their subjects across the school. All staff will take part in LA moderations to quality assure judgements and develop understanding of assessing writing. EEF Quality First Teaching: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/support-for-schools/school-planning-support/1-high-quality-teaching	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Investment in curriculum subscriptions to aid teaching including Purple Mash and Nelson Handwriting	Handwriting, as outlined in The Writing Framework, states 'fluent handwriting is a significant predictor of positive writing outcomes, while a lack of such fluency can constrain pupils. Pupils should be taught handwriting precisely, in a clearly sequenced progression, starting from reception, to support their gradual acquisition of skills.' Nelson Handwriting is a consistent whole-school handwriting scheme for Reception–Year 6/P1–7. It introduces cursive handwriting in step-by-step stages in line with the latest UK curricula. • Provides clear guidance on developing a whole-school handwriting policy as required by Ofsted • Develops children's personal handwriting style to ensure they meet the 'expected standard' in the end of key stage writing teacher assessments • Introduces letters in line with Letters and Sounds and includes pattern practice and motor skills work with three levels of differentiation • Includes an online subscription with online teaching resources and photocopiable handwriting worksheets Purple Mash curriculum suite allows the ICT curriculum to be embedded within the school, complete with all necessary programmes to run effective and engaging lessons and increase teachers competence with delivering a purposeful ICT curriculum. Purple Mash allows children to be taught fundamental ICT skills needed to ensure equal access and success through further education. Purple Mash Spelling curriculum is used to inform spelling lessons, using teaching sequence from National Strategy Support for Spelling: https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/687/7/01109-2009PDF-EN_01_Redacted.pdf	1, 2, 3

	Purple Mash supports wider curriculum learning in topic subjects, oracy, grammar skills to support writing and SATS skills. Purple Mash is used to set homework, effectively levelled to children's attainment. Paperless homework activities make learning more independent and accessible to all pupils. Teachers track children's engagement with learning at home and feedback effectively.	
Investment in supplementary revision program for Maths-Times Tables Rock Stars & Accelerated Reader for English	Times Tables Rock Stars is used in KS2 to help revision of key multiplication skills and support home learning for MTC. Whole school competitions and regional competitions ensure engagement is high, supporting recall of times tables. Accelerated Reader is used in KS2. The program motivates students to read more through engaging quizzes, goal setting, and personalized recommendations. As students increase their reading volume, they develop greater reading stamina, word recognition, and language comprehension skills. Children are able to read widely to build word recognition and language comprehension skills. Reading quizzes monitor overall comprehension, while literacy skills and vocabulary quizzes connect to skill-based classroom instruction.	2, 3, 4
Development of language acquisition through explicit teaching of vocabulary and adoption of Drawing Club in 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. Children that are able to communicate their learning and experiences are more engaged with peers and learning. Oral language interventions: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/oral-language-interventions	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Investment in robust diagnostic assessment tool to inform classroom practise and raise standards in line with national expectation	Diagnostic assessment can provide insights and illuminate opportunities to build upon academic successes and tackle challenges head on. It can inform intervention needs, monitor the impact of interventions, and be used to tailor the curriculum to ensure optimal outcomes for students. Pupils able to access the curriculum will feel a greater sense of belonging and confidence in their abilities to succeed. This in turn, will make children more likely to engage with school.	1, 2, 3

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

Budgeted cost: £51 075.91

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
1:1 or small group support from Learning Mentor/ Inclusion Assistant to	Our mentors provide support for our vulnerable children, either on a regular basis or in response to need. Strong relationships with the mentors enables further 1:1 support in classes with specific children to allow pupils to develop their confidence	1, 2, 3

support children with behaviour for learning.	and independence.	
Early Intervention Screening	Undertaken by Inclusion Assistant, who works alongside BHISS and LSS to screen children highlighted for early intervention and complete referral processes/ support teachers to implement necessary strategies.	1, 2, 3, 4
Just Right Coaching	Support staff help key disadvantaged pupils with SEMH and attachment needs, Just Right Coaching and with attention and listening skills.	1, 2, 3
Reading interventions & associated resources, including 1:1 support for the lowest 20% of readers (RWI/ Talisman)	Additional adult intervention to provide bespoke lessons on specific sounds, diagraphs and phonemes. Ongoing, repetitive daily support to improve fluency in rapid decoding, blending and segmenting. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies	1, 2, 3, 4
Use of Same Day Intervention Maths strategy to address misconception in Maths	SDI delivered by the Teacher/TA is a responsible intervention, with participation determined by understanding of daily lessons. SDI is conducted 3 times per week to address misconceptions or pre-teach associated vocabulary or next steps of learning.	1, 2, 3, 4
Targeted Reading and Math intervention	Shine Reading and Math intervention aims to address gaps in learning as identified by diagnostic assessment. Teaching assistants are trained to deliver structured intervention plan outside of core sessions.	1, 2, 3, 4
Speech and Language groups for all children in EYFS	Communication and language approaches involve intentionally acting to develop young children's understanding of language and their ability and confidence to use language, and other strategies, to communicate effectively. They are based on the idea that children's language development benefits from approaches that support communication through talking and non-verbal expression. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/early-years/toolkit/communication-and-language-approaches All children in the early years take part in structured speech and language intervention to boost communication skills/ confidence and support all children in reaching early learning goals in Communication & Language.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

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

Budgeted cost: £20 706.45

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<i>To support parents and carers with removing barriers to coming to school.</i>	Early identification of children at risk of poor attendance. Early engagement with parents to support children into being in school on time each day.	1, 2, 3

	High expectations of children's attendance, with attendance officer following up all unreported/ unauthorised attendance. Robust and timely monitoring and reporting responses, including home visits and home school contracts, to ensure children are accounted for and encouraged into school. Working with outside agencies for those with persistent absence to create action plans to support children back into school. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/parental-engagement	
<i>Breakfast Club</i>	Breakfast club is provided free or subsidised to disadvantaged families to promote positive starts to the school day.	1, 2, 3
<i>Nurture Provision</i>	Our Nurture provision works with children across the school to reach the following objectives: • Improve and promote accessibility to their learning and improve attainment • Support students' self-esteem, resilience and self-confidence • Improve social skills and team work skills Children are assessed through SDQs and "graduate" from the provision. • Provide the tools for emotional regulation and positive communication • Meet the needs of and improve mental health • Build strong friendships between peers • Give children the opportunity for reflection, deeper discussion and tailored support	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
<i>Alternative Play Provision, including Lunch clubs, Circle of Friends, Quiet Club etc</i>	Some children whose needs and requirements makes it difficult for them to function effectively and happily on the playground without affecting themselves or others. By providing alternative and effective provision that is fun and educational for these children, it enables all members of the school community to have a happy and effective lunch-break, returning to class ready to learn.	1, 2, 3, 4
<i>Funded spaces provided and additional staff allocated to ensure that all children can access a range of enrichment opportunities.</i>	A range of enrichment opportunities are provided on site and off site. All trips are offered either free or at a subsidised cost to ensure finance is not a barrier to participation.	3, 4, 5
<i>Engagement with Schools Belonging Project</i>	Participation in University of Sussex's Schools Belonging Project, which aims to develop staff understanding on the psychology underlying student experiences in school and how we can build belonging among students cohorts. Data submitted by the school will feed into a discover report, which provides a diagnosis of how different groups of students—by pupil premium status, ethnicity, gender, special educational needs status, and English as an additional language status—experience school, and how differences in these experiences are associated with gaps in attendance (and, where the data is available, behaviour and attainment). From this report, an action plan will be made to underpin attendance policies	1, 2, 3

	and practise.	
--	---------------	--

Total budgeted cost: £ 138 403

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Attendance

Daily monitoring of absence and robust absence plan proved effective in ensuring children are in school, on time each day. Communication with parents is swift and concerns are escalated in line with school policy, writing and reviewing attendance contracts and fixed term penalties. The use of breakfast club places are offered free of charge to children with low attendance on a half termly basis to ensure that they are in school and ready for learning.

Whole school attendance as of December 2025 was 91.4%. By comparison, disadvantaged pupils attendance was 90.7%, showing that attendance across groups is largely in line. Unauthorised absence for disadvantaged children was 2.3% for the Autumn term (2025).

Ofsted Evidence of Teaching and Learning

The school fulfils its mission to 'let your light shine' in this joyful, inclusive and nurturing community. Expectations are high for all. Pupils proudly rise to meet high aspirations by behaving well and working hard. Many pupils are disadvantaged and have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school ensures equal opportunities for all through a deeply compassionate ethos. Pupils feel safe, valued, special and unique. Despite some low achievements in national tests last year, pupils are achieving well across the curriculum. Personal development and pastoral care are excellent. The school's work to support vulnerable families, refugees and pupils with protected characteristics reflect an incredible commitment to enrich lives. Pupils enjoy a rich offer of sport, music and performance opportunities. The take-up of opportunities by disadvantaged pupils is exceptional. The school overcomes obstacles to ensure that nobody misses out.

Children make a great start in early years. They are thriving together as they develop early language and number skills in a caring environment rich with learning opportunities. Phonics teaching is consistently effective. All staff use the same strategies to give children plenty of valuable practice. Catch-up activities match this high quality. As a result, pupils become fluent, confident and motivated readers as they move through the school. Early years is also where the school's impressive work to identify and support pupils' needs begins. Across classes, staff and leaders collaborate to work out where help is needed. The school designs adaptations and resources to make sure every pupil can access the curriculum and make progress with their learning.

Reported Outcomes

ELG

Of students meeting ELG at the end of Early Years, 50% were from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Phonics

Of 13 students met the national expectation for phonics, 9 were from disadvantaged backgrounds.

KS2

Of 11 students who were Working at Expected Standard for Writing, 8 were from disadvantaged backgrounds. .

Of 12 students who were Working at Expected Standard for Reading, 12 were from disadvantaged backgrounds. Of 10 students who were Working at Expected Standard for Maths, 10 were from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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
Read Write Inc	Ruth Miskin/ Oxford University Press
Nelson Handwriting	Oxford Owl
Accelerated Reader	Renaissance
Times Tables Rock Stars	Maths Circle Ltd