

# Pupil premium strategy statement – St Benedict’s Catholic College

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	906
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	15.7% 0.03% SPP
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers ( <b>3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year</b> )	2024-5 2025-6 2026-7
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	J Santinelli
Pupil premium lead	M. Davis
Governor / Trustee lead	D Micklewright

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£134035
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£19932
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b> <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>	£153967

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

It is our intention that all pupils, irrespective of their background or the barriers they face, make good progress and achieve their potential across the curriculum and with the extra-curricular opportunities provided by the college.

The focus of our pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve their potential academically, spiritually, culturally and socially. We will work to break down the barriers that prevent this and focus on the challenges faced by our most vulnerable pupils who have social workers or who are young carers. The strategies we employ will be for the benefit of all of our students, regardless of whether they are disadvantaged or not, but we will be guided by our ethos on the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, particularly the preferential offer for those who are poor or disadvantaged, in whatever way that may be.

Quality first teaching is central to any strategy of closing the gap and our teachers are the integral cog in accelerating achievement. Teachers will be supported to prepare and deliver engaging and challenging lessons that excite and engender curiosity in all our students. Thus, the rising tide of achievement will raise all ships, disadvantaged or not.

Our strategy will also focus on gaps in learning that are cultural. With recent challenges around the cost of living, many families are being forced to prioritise food and heating rather than family trips, educational visits and cultural capital. We will therefore work with our families to help our students develop a love of learning which goes beyond the boundaries of the classroom and the college campus.

We will respond to common challenges and individual needs, but we will ensure that our response is rooted in pedagogical excellence and robust research. Our teachers and our community will be encouraged to come together to support each other, breaking down educational, cultural and financial barriers to continue to build the strong community we are, and support our most disadvantaged students and families.

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p><b><i>Supporting positive mental health</i></b></p> <p>The mental health of young people has become a major concern since the pandemic. The Mental Health Foundation reports “20% of adolescents may experience a mental health problem in any given year. 50% of mental health problems are established by age 14 and 75% by age 24”. As such it is vital that we can support our students when they experience mental health concerns and help them to develop resilience to make the most of their education particularly those whose absence is affected by sustained “emotional based school avoidance” (EBSA). Disadvantaged students are unable to access mental health support often because of the financial barriers and the stigma that this still carries.</p>
2	<p><b><i>Supporting cultural learning in and beyond the classroom</i></b></p> <p>For a prolonged period at a pivotal time in their development, the pandemic put paid to school trips, working together and building connections due to enforced isolation and restrictions. Many disadvantaged students have not had opportunities to visit places of cultural importance in the UK or abroad or develop connections within our local community. Church attendance locally has reduced and many of our students and their families have not returned to regular church attendance since the pandemic finished. Furthermore, because many school events have moved online or been reduced in number more recently, the opportunities to build community are fewer. Financial barriers have also compounded this as families have had less disposable income in recent years due to inflation.</p>
3	<p><b><i>Supporting parents to engage with the school community</i></b></p> <p>The opportunities for parents to engage with the school community has been reduced due to the advent of online parents’ evenings, and the working patterns of our parent body. Students who are successful are generally well supported by their parents, and those who experience difficulties in college are often from families who find it difficult to engage because of constraints on their time, their level of education and understanding or their mental health. Many of our students live a significant distance from college and this also has an impact on parental engagement.</p>
4	<p><b><i>Supporting our service families</i></b></p> <p>Colchester is a proud military town and community, and many of our students have one or more parents who are connected to the army. This</p>

	brings its own challenges however: many students who have a military background have moved often and experience the absence of a parent for significant periods of time due to their working commitments. These absences can have implications for mental health and wellbeing of pupils, but families who regularly experience the absence of a parent can also face different kinds of hardship in terms of social and financial concerns and difficulties.
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## 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To achieve and sustain improved mental health and wellbeing for all pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>College engaged counsellors to support students</li> <li>College operates a waiting list with preferential support offered to disadvantaged students</li> <li>Pre and post counselling surveys undertaken to measure efficacy of provision</li> <li>Mental health concerns are referred swiftly to in house or external providers of support.</li> <li>Referrals have a positive outcome with support given and resilience strategies learned.</li> <li>Stigma around mental health is reduced</li> <li>Pupils are supported in managing their mental health</li> <li>PSHE has lessons in each year group to help students understand and support their own mental health</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive mental health events are supported by the college (Hello Yellow, Children's Mental Health Week, World Mental Health Day)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To achieve and sustain opportunities for learning beyond the classroom environment or campus of the college for all students, including those who are disadvantaged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing number of school trips – a well-developed programme developed across all subject areas</li> <li>Family Learning – Christmas Wreath Making / Food Tech.</li> <li>Support from D of E for Pupil Premium students</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tailored transitions linked to our CIP with particular focus on disadvantaged students (Year 6-7 / 10-11 / NIBS / Mid-year transfers / Post-16)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bespoke and personalised support along with behaviour for learning curriculum and closer monitoring of alternative curriculum budget and getting value for money</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parental/Carer Buy-in – explore how we can build stronger more meaningful connections with disadvantaged families to enhance opportunities for students and greater equity in outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tracking parents evening attendance data with standardised follow up if appointments missed</li> <li>First Five – pastoral leads to have a list of vulnerable/high priority families who need more personalised communication – trips / parents &amp; info evenings / events / resources</li> </ul>

## 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: £13697

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Parental engagement activities	Engagement with parents encourages better outcomes for students	3
Recruitment and Retention - TLRs	To retain good and experienced staff	All
CPD	To enhance skills of existing staff	All
Food tech ingredients	Allowing access to subjects	All

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

Budgeted cost: £ 58000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Revision aids	Requests from parents for support	2 & 3
Holiday revision	Past success	2 & 3
Trips (support and finance)	Uptake and requests	2
1-2-1 support	Past success and EEF data	2
Reading support	Past success and EEF data	2

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

Budgeted cost: £82000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
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<i>Renew counselling</i>	Uptake of counselling places and waiting list	1 & 4
<i>BCCS Counselling</i>	Uptake of counselling places and waiting list	1 & 4
<i>ICT monitoring software</i>	Early intervention	1
<i>Smart School Council software</i>	Enfranchisement of every child in school democracy	1
<i>Breakfast club</i>	Tackling food poverty	1
<i>Film book club</i>	Widening participation	2
<i>Free and Equal Ambassadors Programme</i>	Widening participation, tackling inequality	2 & 3
<i>Attendance and careers staffing</i>	Widening participation, tackling inequality	All

**Total budgeted cost: £153697**

## Part B: Review of the previous academic year

### Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

#### **Academic Outcomes:**

Disadvantaged students achieving 9-7 in English	23.8%
Disadvantaged students achieving 9-7 in Maths	19%
Disadvantaged students achieving 9-7 in English and Maths	4.8%
Disadvantaged students achieving 9-5 in English	76.2%
Disadvantaged students achieving 9-5 in Maths	42.9%
Disadvantaged students achieving 9-5 in English and Maths	38.1%
Disadvantaged students achieving 9-4 in English	81%
Disadvantaged students achieving 9-5 in Maths	71.4%
Disadvantaged students achieving 9-5 in English and Maths	61.9%
Average entries per Student	8.6
Pupils achieving at least 1 qualification	100%

#### **Supporting positive mental health and supporting our service families -**

We continue to use a significant proportion of the pupil premium grant to fund the 2 counselling services that we employ in college. We employ BCCS and Renew and this year have been able to offer the equivalent of 5 full days of counselling each week. These services have been taken up well throughout the course of the year and we have ensured that we have a full cohort for each round of counselling. We offer students a course of 10 sessions: sometimes this is extended should it be appropriate. We have made significant efforts this year to ensure that we support our students and families by helping them to find support from external providers in the local community when their allocation of sessions ends. Provision of counselling is particularly important for our service families who experience the absence of a parent at key times in a child's development.

#### **Supporting cultural learning in and beyond the classroom -**

We invited 30 of our Year 7 and Year 8 pupil premium students to visit the West End show 'Back to the Future' in London in March. Before the event, we took them out for pizza and for a quick walk around some of the sights near Trafalgar Square. It was wonderful to see students who had never attended a show experience the sights and sounds of the musical, and they thoroughly enjoyed it! The entire experience was offered to our pupil premium students free of charge.



In our commitment to diversity and inclusion, we have been engaging with the company 'Beyond This' to establish a programme called 'Free and Equal Ambassadors' across the college. This programme teaches young people about forms of prejudice and discrimination. We had 15 places for this programme and asked Year 9 students to apply, giving priority to those students who are in receipt of the pupil premium. Students will attend 6 online sessions throughout the course of the year, establish a campaign to change one aspect of school life that they feel passionate about (they have already chosen to focus on racist language) and then work to raise awareness and money for a charity connected to their campaign. This promises to be a really important step for students in developing their advocacy skills.

### ***Supporting parents to engage with the college community –***

In December 2024 we ran a Christmas Wreath Workshop for parents and children in receipt of the pupil premium to encourage engagement with the college and foster a positive relationship.

We have been looking at a number of barriers that exist with our community that may prevent parents and carers from supporting and tracking their children's progress across their time with us. We have supported a number of families with access to the internet, by purchasing dongles for them so that their children can access Class Charts, Sparx and other educational online platforms that we offer.

We recently ran a survey of pupil premium students who have a significant number of home learning concerns, trying to identify the barriers to learning, and establishing the way the pupil premium grant could be used to break down those barriers.

## **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.*

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Provider</b>
Free and Equal Ambassadors	Beyond This

## Service pupil premium funding (optional)

<i>For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information:</i> <b>How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year</b>
To provide counselling for students through RENEW and BCCS
<b>The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils</b>
Access to mental health and wellbeing support as needed

**Further information**