Pupil premium strategy statement – St Thomas More

Before completing this template, read the Education Endowment Foundation's guide to the pupil premium and DfE's pupil premium guidance for school leaders, which includes the 'menu of approaches'. It is for school leaders to decide what activity to spend their pupil premium on, within the framework set out by the menu.

All schools that receive pupil premium are required to use this template to complete and publish a pupil premium statement on their school website by 31 December every academic year.

If you are starting a new pupil premium strategy plan, use this blank template. If you are continuing a strategy plan from last academic year, you may prefer to edit your existing statement, if that version was published using the template.

Before publishing your completed statement, delete the instructions (text in italics) in this template, and this text box.

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	14
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	8.3%
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)**	2025-2026 2026-2027 2027-2028
Date this statement was published	1/12/25
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2026
Statement authorised by	Alex Sallis
Pupil premium lead	Alex Sallis / Caroline Manning
Governor / Trustee lead	Marie Capes (LAC)

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£27,270
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*	£27,270

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At St Thomas More, our ambition for disadvantaged pupils is that they flourish academically, socially and spiritually, and leave us as confident, curious and compassionate young people. We want every disadvantaged child - including those with SEND and those who fall outside the formal PPG category but face vulnerability - to access the full curriculum, make strong progress, and feel known, valued and supported. Our aim is that they move into the next phase of their education ready, secure in the fundamentals, and equipped with the habits, knowledge and confidence they need to thrive.

Although our numbers are small, the complexity of need is significant. Many pupils begin from lower starting points, half have SEND, and only a small number are currently working at the expected standard across the core subjects. This strategy therefore focuses on removing barriers early, strengthening teaching and curriculum access, and building the conditions for sustained improvement over time.

Over the next three years, in line with guidance our approach will centre on:

- Quality First Teaching as the driver of attainment: strengthening adaptive teaching, subject knowledge, language development, and consistent classroom routines.
- Targeted academic support rooted in evidence: reading fluency and comprehension, early phonics, language development, fine motor skills, and pre-teaching/post-teaching to secure foundational knowledge.
- Wider pastoral and therapeutic support for pupils with social, emotional, faith-based or behavioural barriers, ensuring every child feels safe and ready to learn.

We recognise that disadvantage in an affluent context can be hidden, and that vulnerability is not confined to PPG status. Our strategy therefore supports a wider group of pupils whose needs align with our mission as a Catholic school: to serve those who need us most, irrespective of label.

Given the constraints of our budget, our plan prioritises creative and sustainable use of expertise we already have, with investment directed toward staff development, strengthening teaching, and improving the consistency of adult practice across the school.

Ultimately, this strategy aims to deliver:

- Excellent teaching for all, with disadvantaged pupils benefiting most.
- Improved progress and outcomes, particularly in reading, writing and maths.
- Stronger attendance, engagement and confidence, so pupils are ready to learn.
- A school culture where every child experiences dignity, belonging and hope.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	**Low prior attainment and gaps in foundational knowledge:** Many disadvantaged pupils - particularly those with SEND - enter year groups with significant gaps in reading, writing, language and number. These gaps limit access to the full curriculum and slow progress towards age-related expectations.
2	**High level of SEND complexity within the PPG cohort:** Half of our disadvantaged pupils have additional needs, often linked to communication, language, cognition or SEMH. This significantly increases the need for adaptive teaching, targeted intervention, and consistent adult practice.
3	**Variability in reading fluency, comprehension and language:** A number of pupils struggle with decoding, vocabulary and confidence as readers. This limits their ability to learn effectively across subjects and hinders independence.
4	**Attendance patterns affecting continuity of learning:** While overall attendance concerns are low, a notable number of PPG pupils fall below 95%. Small dips or irregular patterns have a disproportionate impact on progress for pupils who already have fragile learning.
5	**Social, emotional and confidence-related barriers:** Several pupils require support with emotional regulation, self-belief and resilience. This affects engagement, classroom participation and readiness to learn.
6	**Hidden disadvantage in an affluent context:** Some needs are less visible and harder to identify early, particularly in families where vulnerability sits outside formal PPG criteria. This increases the need for proactive identification and relationship-based support.
7	**Limited budget restricting intervention capacity:** Financial constraints mean that additional adult support, interventions and specialist programmes must be delivered creatively and sustainably, with quality first teaching and targeted CPD playing a central role.

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
Disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEND, make sustained and accelerated progress from their individual starting points, closing gaps with non-disadvantaged peers.	Increasing number of pupils achieving expected standard in reading, writing and maths by Y6. Assessment shows upward trajectory for each pupil.

	Evidence from books, assessments and support walks demonstrating improved curriculum access.
Pupils read with increasing fluency, confidence and understanding, enabling full participation in the wider curriculum.	Reading age / fluency assessments Phonics screening outcomes Increased reading stamina and engagement (observations, pupil voice).
Pupils participate confidently in lessons, demonstrate improved self-regulation, and access learning with fewer barriers.	Support walks showing consistent use of adaptive teaching strategies. Reduced need for adult scaffolding. Pupil voice showing increased confidence, belonging and readiness to learn.
Disadvantaged pupils maintain strong attendance and the school reduces persistent absence, especially in year groups with historically lower attendance, ensuring that attendance does not limit progress.	Disadvantaged pupils' attendance maintained above 94%. Persistent absence reduced from 16.4% overall towards 10% or below for disadvantaged pupils. No disadvantaged pupils become persistently absent without a clear plan and robust follow-up. Weekly attendance tracking identifies dips early, with rapid relational intervention. Attendance improves in line with ABIE expectations (school-wide ABIE: 96.5%).
Pupils with social, emotional and additional needs receive timely and appropriate support, enabling them to access learning, develop positive relationships and participate fully in school life.	Staff confidently identify needs and implement the graduated response. The whole school provision map demonstrates a clear range of ordinarily available provision, targeted interventions and specialist support matched to pupil need. Pupils receive timely emotional, pastoral and SEND support that improves readiness to learn and engagement in school life. Pupil voice indicates that pupils feel safe, included, supported and able to access learning. Case studies demonstrate successful removal of barriers to attendance, participation, learning and wellbeing. Behaviour records showing fewer incidents linked to dysregulation. Pupil leadership involvement and engagement in wider school life.

High-quality teaching and support - particularly for our most vulnerable learners - is embedded and consistent across classrooms.	Assessment and work-sample reviews show disadvantaged pupils making stronger progress in areas targeted by staff professional development Over time, learning visits show that disadvantaged pupils know more, remember more and do more because teaching is responsive, well-scaffolded and consistent. Targeted interventions show measurable improvement for pupils through entry/exit assessments or case studies.

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: £9,091

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Strengthening adaptive teaching through ongoing staff development (focus on scaffolding, responsive teaching, task design, vocabulary, modelling)	EEF: High-quality teaching is the strongest lever to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Adaptive teaching recommended to close knowledge gaps.	1, 2, 3, 7
Developing consistent reading pedagogy (fluency instruction, echo reading, vocabulary strategies, comprehension modelling, targeted reading practice)	EEF Reading Guidance; explicit instruction + fluency interventions improve reading age and curriculum access.	1, 3
Language-rich classroom environments across all subjects (explicit vocabulary, oracy routines, pre-teaching key concepts)	Strong evidence linking language development to attainment; EEF oral language interventions = high impact for low cost.	1, 2, 3

Improving curriculum access for SEND and disadvantaged pupils (CPD on small-step progression, scaffolds, manipulatives, clear routines)	EEF: structured, consistent routines and scaffolds reduce cognitive load and increase success for disadvantaged/SEND pupils.	1, 2, 3
Coaching and peer support model (informal coaching cycles, shared planning, learning visits focused on pupil progress)	EEF: instructional coaching = high-impact, low-cost method for improving teacher practice.	1, 3, 7
Embedding a whole-school approach to positive relationships and emotional regulation (consistent expectations, predictable routines, relational practice)	Strong evidence that consistent relational practice improves engagement and reduces barriers for vulnerable pupils.	2, 5
Subject-specific CPD to strengthen sequencing and clarity in teaching (maths small steps, writing progression, developing clarity and consistency in reading materials)	High-quality subject knowledge improves teacher effectiveness and pupil outcomes; clear sequencing addresses gaps.	1, 3

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

Budgeted cost: £10,679

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Daily targeted phonics and early reading intervention (small-group/1:1 precision teaching, including IDL literacy for identified pupils)	EEF: Systematic phonics + targeted support have high impact on early literacy, especially for disadvantaged and SEND pupils.	1, 2, 3
Reading fluency and comprehension support (priority readers, echo reading, reading-for-pleasure	EEF: Targeted reading fluency programmes show strong gains in decoding, comprehension and confidence.	1, 3

sessions, bookmark strategies)		
Language development and vocabulary intervention (e.g., narrative skills, pre-teaching key language, WellComm-style routines)	Oral language interventions show consistently high impact for low cost, especially for children with communication and language needs.	1, 2, 3
Fine motor and handwriting intervention (small groups to support writing readiness, pencil control, stamina)	Strong correlation between fine motor skill development and writing fluency; early targeted support improves long-term writing outcomes.	1, 2
Small-group and 1:1 writing support (sentence construction, spelling, editing, Steps for Spelling, pre-teaching/key skills labs)	EEF: Structured writing interventions have positive impact when linked closely to class learning and modelling.	1, 3
Maths pre-teaching/post-teaching (to secure number sense, vocabulary and small steps before/after lessons)	EEF: Pre-teaching and structured scaffolding strengthen curriculum access for disadvantaged pupils.	1, 2, 3
LEGO Therapy and structured social communication groups	Supported by evidence for improving communication, collaborative problem-solving and confidence, especially for SEND pupils.	2, 5
Targeted emotional regulation support (Drawing and Talking, Friends in Faith, sensory circuits)	EEF: Social/emotional learning support improves engagement and readiness to learn, enabling academic progress.	2, 5

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

Budgeted cost: £7,500

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Strengthening attendance systems for disadvantaged pupils (early conversations,	EEF: Improving attendance has a significant impact on outcomes, especially for pupils with irregular	4, 5

patterns monitoring, relationship-based follow-up)	patterns. DfE: early intervention prevents persistent absence.	
Social, emotional and wellbeing support (e.g., Drawing & Talking, Friends in Faith, nurture-style provision, sensory circuits)	EEF: Social and emotional learning approaches improve self-regulation, behaviour and readiness to learn; strong impact when needs are high.	2, 5
Forest School / outdoor learning (for confidence, resilience, teamwork and attachment to learning)	Strong evidence that outdoor learning builds resilience, engagement, wellbeing and problem-solving for disadvantaged pupils.	5
Pupil leadership opportunities (Faith leaders, School Council, roles that promote agency and belonging)	Research on belonging and agency shows improved engagement, motivation and behaviour; particularly beneficial for disadvantaged pupils.	5, 6
Access to enrichment (music, piano, clubs, trips) for identified pupils	EEF + wider research show enrichment improves engagement, cultural capital, confidence and resilience. Removing cost barriers widens participation.	5, 6
Strengthening transition support (EYFS into KS1, KS2 into secondary)	Strong continuity and early identification reduce gaps for vulnerable pupils; transitions disproportionately affect disadvantaged pupils.	1, 4, 5
Chaplaincy and Catholic Life activities that build hope, belonging and dignity	Evidence from faith-based schooling shows benefits in wellbeing, moral development and sense of community—particularly for vulnerable pupils.	5, 6

Total budgeted cost: £27,270

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Outcomes for Disadvantaged Pupils (2024–25)

Because of very small cohort sizes, disadvantaged pupil data is frequently suppressed in published datasets. Where this is the case (EYFS, KS1, KS2), internal school assessment, formative information, and pastoral data have been used to understand outcomes and identify trends.

Early Years Foundation Stage

In 2024–25, one disadvantaged pupil was eligible for EYFSP assessment; published data is suppressed.

Internal school information indicates that this pupil did not reach a Good Level of Development (GLD), reflecting low starting points and high levels of need, consistent with the broader cohort profile in Reception (GLD 76.5% overall)

Phonics (Year 1)

There were no eligible disadvantaged pupils in Year 1 in 2024–25.

Overall school performance was 83.3% meeting the expected standard, broadly in line with national averages (79.9%) and local averages (Herts 81.6%) .

This provides a strong foundation for disadvantaged pupils approaching the check in future years.

Key Stage 2

No disadvantaged pupils were eligible for KS2 statutory assessment in 2024–25.

Internal assessment shows that current disadvantaged pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrate mixed attainment. Two pupils are currently on track for expected in all three core subjects, and the majority working below or well below age-related expectations.

Internal Attainment and Progress Picture (Y1–Y6)

Across the 12 disadvantaged pupils (6 of whom have SEND):

- Attainment is significantly below that of nondisadvantaged peers, especially in reading and writing.
- Language gaps, reading fluency barriers and SEND needs are the most common limiting factors.

- Mathematics attainment is moderately stronger than literacy, but still below peers for most pupils.
- Progress is uneven, with some strong individual gains (e.g. language, SEMH, phonics) but limited sustained academic acceleration for the majority.

Attendance, Behaviour and Wellbeing

FSM pupils' attendance was 93.9%, which is higher than the median attendance for disadvantaged pupils in similar schools (91.4%), indicating that disadvantaged pupils here attend comparatively well even if their absolute attendance is below ideal levels .

SEN Support pupils' attendance is 94.8%, again higher than similar schools (93.6%), reflecting the impact of relational and pastoral work.

Social and emotional needs were prominent: several pupils require significant support for confidence, regulation and relationships, which impacts engagement and independence.

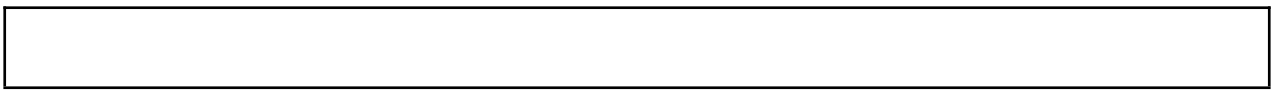
Externally provided programmes

Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you used your pupil premium to fund in the previous academic year.

Programme	Provider

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information: **How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year**
The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils



Further information (optional)

Use this space to provide any further information about your pupil premium strategy. For example, about your strategy planning, implementation and evaluation, or other activity that you are delivering to support disadvantaged pupils that is not dependent on pupil premium funding.