

# Pupil premium strategy statement

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 effect that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

## School overview

Detail	Data
School name	St Aidan's Catholic Academy
Number of pupils in school	925
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	22.7%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers <b>(3 year plans are recommended)</b>	2025/2026 to 2027/2028
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	Anne-Marie Whitten Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Suzanne Hudson, Acting Assistant Headteacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Fr Christopher Hancock

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£184595
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	-
School Led Tutoring Grant	-
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	-
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b>	£184595
If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year	

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

*"With resources and a strong determination to improve the life chances of all disadvantaged young people, schools have shown that progress can be made"*  
Sir John Dunford

St Aidan's is a Catholic learning community in which all pupils, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, are provided with the opportunity to flourish as a whole and complete person in a way that is rooted firmly in the values of the Gospel.

Our aim, in partnership with respective parents and carers, is to support pupils in their formation: spiritual and social; intellectual and emotional; aesthetic and physical through the provision of a broad, balanced and aspirational curriculum, a rigorous, vibrant curriculum which responds to needs, and at its heart recognises justice, liberty, peace and human freedom, whilst fostering intellectual curiosity and academic achievement.

The focus of our pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve this goal, including progress for those who are already high attainers. We will consider the challenges faced by vulnerable pupils, such as those who have a social worker and are young carers. The activities and routines outlined in this statement are intended to support their needs, regardless of whether they are disadvantaged or not.

We truly believe that every individual is capable of excellence and we encourage each individual to work hard, fulfilling their potential to pursue their next steps in life, whether it be their choice of University or a high-quality career.

Based on educational research we are certain that maximising learning through great teaching is the most important tool we have in ensuring the excellent progress of all pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. It is our intention that the outcome of our high quality, first wave teaching is that the attainment of non-disadvantaged pupils will be sustained whilst closing the disadvantaged attainment gap.

Our approach in responding to individual needs is centred around knowledge of individual pupils, a broad, inclusive curriculum, assessment and responsive teaching and strategies to address gaps. Within the academy accurate assessment strategies enable an informed and systematic judgement to be made about a pupil's knowledge, understanding, skills and attitude. Using this accurate assessment of pupil progress, we are able to implement the actions below swiftly and efficiently to ensure disadvantaged pupils are appropriately supported and challenged. In order to provide high quality, individually targeted support we engage with external providers recommended by the DfE such as Sounds Write and Reading Plus.

We strive as an academy to support all pupils to make excellent progress through robust and systematic approaches to numeracy, literacy and extracurricular activities. We believe enriching education has intrinsic benefits. All children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, deserve a well-rounded, culturally rich, education and because of these experiences they attain higher.

# Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p>Low levels of literacy which impedes confidence and access to deep understanding across the curriculum.</p> <p>Scaled Scores, internal assessment and observation indicates that some disadvantaged pupils have lower levels of reading comprehension than peers, predominantly in Y7 where some disadvantaged pupils have demonstrated a below average scaled score (compared to national indicator) in following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KS2 Spelling, punctuation and grammar - SAS &lt; 100.</li> <li>• KS2 Reading - SAS &lt; 100 and reading age below SAS 89 (NGRT)</li> </ul>
2	<p>Attendance is an issue for some disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>Our attendance data over the last 3 years indicates that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance among disadvantaged pupils has been between 5-6.1% lower than for non-disadvantaged pupils.</li> <li>• 38-40% of disadvantaged pupils have been 'persistently absent' compared to 13-18.2% of their peers during that period. Our assessments and observations indicate that absenteeism is negatively impacting disadvantaged pupils' progress.</li> </ul>
3	<p>Many of our PP pupils are socially, culturally, economically and knowledge deprived. Lack of aspiration and poor engagement of pupils and parents in school life particularly affects outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and attendance of disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>The Sunderland population experiences a higher level of social and economic disadvantage than the England average and there is a strong link between high levels of socioeconomic disadvantage and poor health. The English Indices of Deprivation (2025) based around seven domains: income, employment, health, education, crime, barriers to housing and living environment place Sunderland amongst the 10% most deprived areas across the country.</p>
4	<p>Some pupils face significant challenges in their lives and have social, emotional and mental health needs that prevent them from learning.</p>
6	<p>The Maths progress of some disadvantaged pupils is lower than that of their within-school peers. 20% of disadvantaged pupils had a SATs scaled score of below 100 in 2024/25 and QLA analysis shows that many pupils particularly struggle with 5 key concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fractions of amounts</li> <li>• Percentages of amounts</li> <li>• Decimal calculations</li> <li>• Converting between fractions, decimals and percentages</li> <li>• Problem Solving</li> </ul>
7	<p>Our observations suggest many lower attaining disadvantaged pupils lack metacognitive/self-regulation strategies when faced with challenging tasks, notably in their monitoring and evaluation of their answers.</p>

## 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
Improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in English and Maths.	Increased percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 4+ in English and Maths. In 2024/25 this figure was 60%.
Improved reading comprehension for all, particularly disadvantaged pupils; focus on developing fluent reading, freeing pupil focus (cognitive resource) on word recognition and therefore improving comprehension of the text.	<p>Reading comprehension tests demonstrate improved comprehension skills among disadvantaged pupils and a smaller disparity between the scores of disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers. Teachers should also have recognised this improvement through engagement in lessons, the Reading Canon, Scholarly reading, extended writing and book sampling.</p> <p>Rasinski reading fluency implemented with ALL pupils to aid comprehension and reading pace – expect to see +6 months reading gains per year.</p> <p>Reading Plus implemented with identified pupils with a reading age below NGRT SAS 89.</p>
Improve teaching some aspects of literacy, by developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the relationship between written symbols and sounds, particularly disadvantaged pupils. The aim is to systematically teach pupils the relationship between these sounds and the written spelling patterns, or graphemes, which represent them. Phonics emphasises the skills of decoding new words by sounding them out and combining or blending' the sound-spelling patterns.	<p>Systematic phonics training with staff via Sounds Write completed and embedded across the Academy.</p> <p>Improved understanding of phonics, fast pace reading, word cards, dictated sounds and word sentences and how to develop this with pupils.</p> <p>Assessment sheets in reading books indicate pupil level understanding.</p> <p>All DA pupils have fluent phonic use.</p> <p>Disadvantaged pupils participate fully in the Reading Canon – reading surveys.</p>
Improve language enrichment for disadvantaged pupils, increasing vocabulary and improving oracy and written skills/language.	<p>Training has been undertaken by all staff to understand communication and language in greater depth, signposting up-to-date research, knowing how to identify different types of communication delay, and learning about dialogic teaching (encouraging pupils to learn by questioning and discussion) across the curriculum.</p> <p>Pupils can access all areas of the curriculum.</p>
Improved metacognitive and self-regulatory skills among disadvantaged pupils across all subjects.	<p>Teacher reports and class observations suggest disadvantaged pupils are more able to monitor and regulate their own learning/behaviour. This finding is supported by pupil voice, homework completion rates across all classes and subjects.</p>
Improve mastery of learning and acquisition of knowledge to ensure all pupils know and remember more; particularly disadvantaged pupils in English and Maths.	<p>Pupils demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding on formative and summative assessments with gaps in knowledge filled prior to moving onto the next concept.</p> <p>All Pupils who do not achieve secure knowledge and understanding are provided with extra support through a range of teaching strategies such as more intensive teaching, 11am support sessions, peer-assisted learning, small group discussions, or additional homework/gap task.</p>

<p>To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.</p>	<p>Sustained high attendance by 2027/28 demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall absence rate gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers being reduced</li> <li>• Gap between persistently absent disadvantaged pupils and their peers being reduced</li> </ul> <p>2024/25 attendance of disadvantaged pupils was: 88.48% compared to 93.65% of non-disadvantaged students.</p>
<p>Develop and sustain improved resilience and aspiration among disadvantaged pupils, improving pupil social and emotional wellbeing.</p>	<p>Sustained high levels of wellbeing from demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data from pupil voice, pupil and parent surveys and teacher observations.</li> <li>• A significant increase in participation in enrichment activities, Duke of Edinburgh, university and STEM visits and volunteering among disadvantaged pupils.</li> <li>• Continued high involvement of Y7 and Y8 pupils in enrichment.</li> <li>• Significant decrease in referral to Anna Freud, Washington Mind and Pastoral.</li> <li>• Increased participation in 'One Voice' pupil council with focus on wellbeing, environment, antibullying, stewardship and legacy activities.</li> </ul>

## 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: £ 7390.40

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed	Cost:
<b>Behaviour Policy:</b> A robust and consistent approach to behavioural expectations within the academy which allows all pupils to thrive in positive learning environments reinforced by Morning Meeting. Reflecting on the consequences of their actions when things go wrong.	EEF - 3+ Months. A consistent behaviour policy supports classroom management, reducing the number of permanent or fixed term exclusions which disadvantaged pupils are more likely to receive.	2,3,4, and 5.	N/A
<b>Teacher training</b> is focussed on ensuring quality first way teaching through the Great Teaching Toolkit. Teachers reflect on the key elements of excellent teaching and the science behind learning. Development and implementation of a bespoke CPD platform focused on St Aidan's culture, T&L and processes. Systematic phonics training with staff via Sounds Write. Strong uptake by staff in NPQ programme. Socialisation and Practice secures consistency across Academy. Continuous cycle of professional improvement is in place based on knowledge building – teachers revisit key components over the three cycles.	EEF Attainment Gap Report 2018 – <i>"Ensuring every teacher is supported in delivering high-quality teaching is essential to achieving the best outcomes for all pupils, particularly the most disadvantaged among them. It is crucial; therefore, that schools focus all their resources on proven ways of improving teaching."</i>	1,2,4,5 and 6.	£4000 (Great Teaching Toolkit)
Consistent, high quality <b>active retrieval homework</b> supports pupil's knowledge and understanding. Homework clubs with support staff and subject specialists allowing pupils time and space to complete this work in a conducive environment. Daily Morning Meeting dedicated to active retrieval of threshold knowledge. Effective technology and resources are utilised to enhance the ambitious curriculum.	EEF 5+ months over a year. High quality homework and the opportunity to complete this work within school supports disadvantaged pupils who may have difficulty accessing quiet work spaces and/or technology	1,2, and 6.	£3390.40 (100% Books)
<b>Modelling</b> develops strategies for planning, monitoring and evaluating pupil's own learning. These focus pupils on the self-regulated learning of cognition. Pupils are able to consider the mental process involved in knowing, understanding,	EEF - Metacognition 7+ months progress over a year when developing cognitive processes as part of the school's curriculum and in subject specific lessons	6 and 7.	£0

and learning. Visualisers in every classroom – Socialisation and Practice around effective visualiser use.			
Highly targeted, curriculum specific <b>feedback</b> enables pupils to refocus their actions to achieve their goal. Feedback enables pupils to understand and self-regulate their own improvements and progress.	EEF - Feedback 5+ months Clear and actionable feedback allows pupils to understand their specific strengths and areas for improvement.	2,6 and 7.	£0
All lessons within the academy focus on <b>active retrieval</b> . These activities take account of the prior knowledge that pupils bring to lessons and to help them to build upon this understanding. Additionally, anticipating common misconceptions, and using diagnostic assessment to uncover them, is an important way to support pupils.	(Karpicke & Aue, 2015, p.318) <i>'to be able to retrieve, use, and apply knowledge in the long term, it is highly effective to practice retrieving, using, and applying knowledge during learning'</i>	1,2,6 and 7.	£0
<b>Adaptation to the school day.</b> Focussed on Year 11 and allowing teachers to review core content and allow DA pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the taught curriculum in a small group setting at the end of the school day.  Pupils receive an hour of revision each day from subject specialists delivering bespoke revision sessions that fill gaps in knowledge, provide regular exam practice and develop positive revision skills.	EEF - 2+ months. Disadvantaged pupils may benefit from additional school time when engagement and attendance are secured.	2 and 6.	£0

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

Budgeted cost: £ 146,337.25

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed	Cost:
Pupils are taught strategies in small groups to improve their <b>reading comprehension</b> . Rigorous screening programme in place to ensure support at point of need. Focussing on decoding words, understanding language structures or developing vocabulary. Use of Reading Plus intelligent adaptive software to support. Resources directed at transcription with daily support in place.	EEF 7+ months over the course of a year. Helping disadvantaged pupils in particular as they are less likely to own a book or read at home meaning they may not have previously acquired the necessary skills for reading or understanding challenging texts. Oxford Language Report and national case study 2021.	1,2 and 6.	£5211 (Reading plus) £5080 (Accelerated Reader) £22, 811.53 (Reading support staff) £9936(NGRT)
Pupils are given the opportunity to read out loud in front of peers	EEF 5+ Months over the course of a year. Oral language interventions with frequent sessions (3 times a week or	1,2 and 6.	Additional Literacy Support

<p>every day to develop their <b>Oracy skills</b>. With small group interventions for pupils who need support in this area from Literacy Assistant and Sixth Form pupils.</p> <p>Oracy taught explicitly, children are given enough time for talk and to express themselves.</p> <p>Staff are also conscious of the need to model language and conversation, so children learn to recognise language structure as well as vocabulary – quality assurance data. Regular CPD is implemented to support staff.</p> <p>Vocabulary slides, including etymology, are used in each lesson, not just to display new words, but to actively integrate the teaching of vocabulary into lessons.</p>	<p>more) over a sustained period appear to be most successful. Some pupils from lower socio-economic backgrounds are behind their advantaged counter parts.</p> <p>Oxford Language Report and national case study 2021.</p>		<p>£13692.61</p>
<p><b>Phonics interventions</b>, Full screening programme.</p> <p>Supporting pupils in small groups to develop their literacy skills through the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of the relationship.</p> <p>Sounds Write implemented with small groups. Subject specialists available across the Academy – Geography, English and Science.</p>	<p>EEF 5+ Months over a year when taught explicitly and systematically to support children in making connection between sounds and written word.</p> <p>Some disadvantaged pupils may not have developed phonological awareness at the same rate as others.</p> <p>Oxford Language Report and national case study 2021.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>£0</p>
<p>30-minute <b>numeracy intervention</b> sessions each week to develop core numeracy skills. Working in small groups with a subject specialist.</p>	<p>Evidence on mathematics from the Teaching and Learning Toolkit alongside the findings from recent EEF projects suggest that interventions should include; explicit and systematic instruction, clear support for whole class instruction and must motivate pupils.</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>£2000 (Sparx Maths) £27955.36 - (Maths Staff Support)</p>
<p><b>Small group support</b> focussed on reducing literacy and numeracy gaps identified from KS2. This is explicitly linked with normal teaching and planned with the classroom teacher.</p>	<p>EEF - 4+ months over a year when organised into short, regular sessions over a set period of time.</p>	<p>1,6 and 7.</p>	<p>£7921.10 (Literacy Staff support)</p>
<p><b>Attendance officer</b> supports individual attendance gaps, liaising with families and tracking progress.</p> <p>Increased capacity through appointment of pupil support officer – attendance focus.</p> <p>Trust attendance officer appointed to support team.</p>	<p>"An evidence informed approach to improving attendance" by Durrington Research School outlines the importance of robust attendance data tracking and monitoring systems in schools, to address attendance issues.</p>	<p>3,4 and 5.</p>	<p>£13,000 (attendance/family liaison officer)</p>
<p>Heads of House for all Year Groups, Careers Officer and SLT lead for Character Development. The funding is</p>	<p>'Targeted interventions to character development/behaviour for learning have positive overall effects'. EEF</p>		<p>£38,729.65 (Careers advisory service)</p>

used to ensure smooth transitions between key stages, day to day pastoral care, meetings and communications with parents, maintain effective links with primary feeders and for additional Pupil Premium Academic Review Days to discuss academic progress and strategies for success.			
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## Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £ 33662.00

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed	Cost:
<b>Reading Canon – 13 book journey.</b> Pupils read age appropriate texts in form groups, read aloud, developing reading comprehension, inferring meaning from context linked to 9 protected characteristics, summarising key points and developing questioning skills.	EEF 7+ months progress over the course of a year - Successful reading comprehension allows pupils to develop their reading capabilities in an environment which allows effective but not overwhelming challenge. Oxford Language Report and national case study 2021.	1,5 and 7.	£4000(Reading canon)
<b>Developing oral language skills</b> through spoken language and verbal interaction in the classroom. This occurs through targeted reading aloud and book discussion linked to 9 protected characteristics - 30-minute slots four times per week. Pupils with low reading ages (<SAS 89), via NGRT, also access support with trained staff via Reading Plus – 4x per week for 30 minutes.	EEF - 5+ Months progress over a year. Pupils from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to be behind in language and speech skills which affect future learning. Oracy interventions allow pupils to catch up with peers. Oxford Language Report and national case study 2021.	1,5 and 7.	£5211 (Reading plus) – Already costed
<b>Academy wide approach to enhanced numeracy development – ALL staff as leaders of numeracy.</b> Numeracy forms part of every Morning Meeting and bi-weekly DEAR – Drop everything and reason sessions for every pupil. All staff trained in delivery (S&P).	Evidence on mathematics from the Teaching and Learning Toolkit alongside the findings from recent EEF projects suggest the importance of modelling positive attitudes towards numeracy whole school and the importance of developing pupil's ability to reflect on and articulate reasoning strategies.	6	£0
<b>Regular opportunities for parental engagement</b> allow leaders to involve parents in the learning process. These sessions cover; revision strategies, purpose of homework, reading, literacy and numeracy strategies.	EEF - 2+ Months. Disadvantaged pupils are less likely to participate in formal and informal educational activities in holidays. Parental engagement sessions can support parents to assist their children's learning and self-regulation at home.	1,4, 6 and 5	£0

<p>Development of pupil metacognition through timetabled <b>revision days</b> which provide pupils a repertoire of strategies to choose from and the skills to select the most suitable strategy for their independent revision. Suitable revision guide/material purchased for all disadvantaged pupils.</p>	<p>EEF - Metacognition strategies offer an additional seven months' progress over the course of a year when explicitly taught these strategies. Explicit teaching of metacognitive and self-regulatory strategies encourages pupils to practise and use these skills more frequently in the future.</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>£6014</p>
<p>Academy wide approach to developing a <b>culture</b> of intrinsic motivation through metacognition with a particular focus on self-regulating motivation.</p> <p>Developing an academy wide approach to culture through a focus on the core values of 'hard work, trust, fairness'.</p>	<p>EEF - Impact for disadvantaged pupils are potentially +7 months when pupils have developed this motivation and it becomes independent and habitual.</p>	<p>4,5 and 7.</p>	<p>£18,018 (External excursions)</p>
<p>Develop and sustain improved resilience and aspiration among disadvantaged pupils, improving pupil social and emotional wellbeing. Establishing links with external agencies to support those pupils for whom resilience is a challenge.</p> <p>Development and implementation of a</p>	<p>EEF - Impact for disadvantaged pupils are potentially +7 months when pupils have developed this motivation and it becomes independent and habitual.</p>	<p>4,5 and 7.</p>	
<p>Aspirational <b>extra curricula opportunities</b> in all aspects of school life including the following: Science clubs, STEAM focus, local industry opportunities (Nissan), Art, Sport and Fitness, cooking, theatre visits, music (subsided externally), language visits, educational excursion to lakes and mountains and spiritual retreats. A wide range of after school activities are available from chess to lego club.</p> <p>Yr10 and Yr12 Cambridge Residential.</p>	<p>Children from the wealthiest backgrounds are 3 times more likely to take up music classes out of school hours than children from the poorest backgrounds. There is also a 20% participation gap in sport, a new report by the Social Mobility Commission reveals (Friday 19 July). "Our report shows that a young person may miss out on some of the most valuable experiences in life – a chance to bond with others, aspire to learn more, and gain the soft skills so important to employers – simply because of their social background and where they grew up. It is time to level the playing field"</p>	<p>4, 5 and 6.</p>	<p>£0</p>
<p><b>Enrichment</b> activities which develop metacognition, a sense of belonging and leadership skills through opportunities such as Mountain Visits, CLIMB, Duke of Edinburgh and John Paul II Award.</p>	<p>EEF – Life Skills and Enrichment: <i>"At the EEF, we think enriching education has intrinsic benefits (sometimes referred to as "arts for arts' sake"). We think all children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, deserve a well-rounded, culturally rich, education. However, many go beyond this and argue that enrichment approaches can directly improve pupils' attainment"</i></p>	<p>4 and 5.</p>	<p>£1680 (Duke of Edinburgh)</p>

<p>A progressive, inclusive careers programme that promotes equity and delivers a diverse range of meaningful experiences with sustained engagement across all year groups. It ensures pupils benefit from encounters with higher education, employers, and workplaces, including university visits, high-quality work experience, and personalised careers information, advice, and guidance to support informed decision-making and successful transitions.</p>	<p>EEF – Careers Education states: “<i>Careers education can be crucial in developing the knowledge, confidence and skills young people need to make wellinformed, relevant choices and plans for their future. This is especially true of pupils from poorer backgrounds, who are less likely to have family or friends with the insight and expertise to offer advice. High quality careers education can help them progress smoothly into further learning and work.</i>”</p>	<p>3, 4 and 5.</p>	<p>£3950 (CDI, Career Wave)</p>
<p><b>Shine</b> ‘Accompaniment’ is a year-long mentoring programme for disadvantaged Year 7 pupils, designed to help them feel a strong sense of belonging within the school community. Through consistent support and positive role models, it builds trust and nurtures emotional, social, and academic growth. The programme encourages resilience, responsibility and aspiration, helping each boy find his place, voice, and purpose</p>	<p>SHINE Sunderland “<i>Students from low-income backgrounds often face significant barriers to achievement, with those receiving free school meals typically showing lower grades and slower progress—even among pupils who excelled in primary school. To improve outcomes, we must strengthen the transition between primary and secondary education and address challenges such as mental health, attendance, parental engagement, and SEND. Every child deserves the support and foundations needed to reach their full potential.</i>”</p>	<p>3, 4 and 7.</p>	<p>£0 (Funding from Shine)</p>

**Total budgeted cost: £187,389.65**

# 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 2023 to 2024 academic year.

The academic year 2024-25 marked the end of the three-year cycle of the pupil premium plan.

60% of disadvantaged (DA) pupils attained a pass in both English and Maths in 2025. EBacc attainment among DA pupils was 36%, representing a 3-percentage-point increase from 2024 and a 16-percentage-point reduction in the attainment gap between DA and non-DA pupils. In English, 68% of DA pupils achieved a Standard Pass (grade 4+) and 60% achieved a Strong Pass (grade 5+). Attainment in Maths was similarly strong, with 68% securing a Standard Pass and 52% achieving the Strong Pass benchmark. Across both subjects, DA pupils showed improved outcomes at both the 4+ and 5+ thresholds. The average Attainment 8 score for DA pupils was 42.76, which is above the national figure for disadvantaged pupils (34.9)\*. In the 2025 Ofsted report, inspectors noted that '*Pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, achieve highly across the curriculum.*' Improving the attainment and progress of DA pupils remains a major whole-school priority for the 2025–26 academic year.

The continued use of NGRT tests has provided further evidence of the impact of interventions. 42 pupils have been identified to have literacy gaps to the extent where intervention was necessary, of which 13 students were DA. This cohort underwent either Reading Plus (fluency, comprehensions and vocabulary focus) or Sounds Write (phonics) intervention, in some cases both. These students all had reading age below 9 years and 11 months and/or an SAS below 89 at the first test window in the year. The test at the end of 24-25 showed the good progress DA pupils are making with 83.3% of students being removed from intervention prior to the end of the year, all showing secure improvements in Reading Age and securing an SAS >89 which puts them in either the Average or Above Average band. All pupils who have been involved in intervention are continuously monitored to ensure that knowledge gaps remain closed and no further need to for intervention arises once the intervention is finished.

Over the year, seven disadvantaged pupils in Year 7 were identified for numeracy intervention following low numeracy SATs scores. They received targeted support designed to address specific knowledge gaps, and were subsequently reassessed to evaluate the impact of the intervention. All pupils demonstrated progress. Of the seven, four were placed on the watchlist during the year as their individual progress improved significantly, and both formative and summative assessments indicated no new significant knowledge gaps. At the end of the year, three pupils continued to show some remaining gaps in understanding. These pupils will receive ongoing support in the 2025/26 academic year.

Qualitative student voice indicates that the interventions offered, together with the strong culture at St Aidan's, support improvements in pupils' self-esteem, communication, teamwork, engagement, motivation, creativity, confidence, reflection, resilience, attitudes to school, and leadership skills. The school's enrichment offer provides further opportunities to strengthen these qualities, enabling pupils to extend their personal development beyond the classroom. Ofsted noted that "*Pupils welcome opportunities to extend their experiences wherever possible. Almost all of them participate in the wide range of activities the school provides. Staff encourage all pupils to take part, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.*"

Whole-school quality assurance, alongside the recent Ofsted inspection, confirms that disadvantaged pupils are consistently experiencing quality-first teaching in all classes. Ofsted reported that "*Pupils' understanding is checked thoroughly to ensure they are succeeding in each aspect of their learning.*" The recent addition of the St Aidan's Standard has ensured that production levels and transcription are priority.

Attendance of DA pupils at St Aidan's has been closely monitored and continues to show an improving trend. Current attendance is 2.8% above the national figure for DA pupils and 3.6% above the average for DA pupils in the North East\*\*.

Throughout the year, DA pupils benefited from a wide range of enriching experiences, including visits to the Lake District as well as aspirational visits to Oxford and Cambridge Universities. DA pupils also had full access to music and sport provision, with no barriers to participation.

\* [Key stage 4 performance, Academic year 2024/25 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/education-statistics)

\*\* FFT Aspire

## 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
Adaptive Literacy Intervention	Reading Plus & Sounds Write
Adaptive Numeracy Intervention	Sparx Maths
Sixth Form Careers and Guidance	Educational Development Trust
Attendance Officer/Support	Attendance 100
Mental Health First Aid	MHFA England
Mental Health and Youth Support	Washington Mind
Duke of Edinburgh Award	St Aidan's Catholic Academy
Music Tuition	Sunderland Music Hub/Peripatetics

## 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 pupils?	N/A