



Pupil Premium Policy

Academic Year 2026 to 2027

Policy owner	Headteacher and Pupil Premium Lead
Approved by	Local Governing Body
Approval date	September 2026
Review date	September 2027
Applies to	St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Our Mission

"We are proud of our school as a place of learning, prayer and happiness. Hand in hand with God, Our Lady and St. Joseph, we promise to work hard and be kind to one another so that we can grow stronger together in our faith."

This policy should be read alongside the published Pupil Premium Strategy Statement, which is updated annually.

1 Purpose and scope

This policy sets out how St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy will use pupil premium funding to improve the educational outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. It explains the principles that guide decisions, the responsibilities of leaders and governors, and the arrangements for planning, monitoring, evaluation and public reporting.

The policy applies to pupil premium grant, pupil premium plus for looked-after and previously looked-after children, and service pupil premium. It reflects the Department for Education conditions of grant and guidance for the 2026 to 2027 financial year.

2 Statement of intent

At St Joseph's, we have high expectations for every pupil. Our Catholic mission calls us to recognise the dignity and potential of each child, remove barriers to participation and achievement, and ensure that disadvantage does not limit future opportunities.

We will use pupil premium strategically, alongside other school resources, to improve teaching, provide timely academic support and address wider barriers that affect attendance, belonging, readiness to learn and success. Decisions will be rooted in a careful diagnosis of need, informed by evidence and evaluated for impact.

Pupil premium is not a personal budget for individual pupils. Funding may support eligible pupils, other pupils with identified needs and whole-class approaches where these are likely to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

3 Legal and guidance framework

This policy has regard to:

- Sections 14 and 16 of the Education Act 2002.
- The Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- The Children Act 1989 and current guidance for looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Department for Education Pupil premium conditions of grant for the 2026 to 2027 financial year.
- Department for Education Pupil premium overview and Using pupil premium guidance for school leaders, updated in 2026.
- The Department for Education menu of approaches and pupil premium strategy statement template.
- Education Endowment Foundation guidance on pupil premium and implementation.

4 Eligibility and funding

Funding is allocated according to national eligibility criteria. For 2026 to 2027, the main rates relevant to a

Eligibility category	Primary rate	Paid to
Pupils eligible for free school meals, or eligible at any point in the previous six years, under the targeted FSM criteria	£1,550	School
Previously looked-after children, including eligible children adopted from state care or equivalent care outside England and Wales	£2,690	School
Looked-after children	£2,690	Local authority
Eligible service children	£360	School

primary academy are:

From the 2026 to 2027 academic year, expanded free school meal eligibility for households receiving Universal Credit does not automatically attract pupil premium. Only pupils within the targeted FSM category enter the Ever 6 pupil premium cohort. Pupils already in the cohort remain eligible for the relevant six-year period.

5 Principles for decision making

- Diagnosis before intervention. We use assessment, attendance, behaviour, wellbeing and safeguarding information, staff knowledge, pupil voice and engagement with families to identify barriers and their underlying causes.
- High expectations. Disadvantaged pupils, including higher-attaining pupils and those with SEND, will receive appropriate challenge and support.
- Evidence-informed choices. Approaches will be selected from the DfE menu and informed by credible evidence, including the EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit and guidance reports.
- Quality first. High-quality teaching is the first priority because it has the greatest potential to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Careful implementation. New approaches will be planned, resourced, communicated, monitored and refined rather than treated as one-off activities.
- Equity and inclusion. Support will be responsive to pupils' academic and wider needs and will avoid stigma or unnecessary removal from the curriculum.
- Value and impact. Expenditure will be proportionate, financially responsible and reviewed against clear intended outcomes.

6 Permitted use and the menu of approaches

Pupil premium, excluding service pupil premium, must be used for evidence-informed activity that falls within the current DfE menu of approaches. The school will organise its strategy across three connected strands.

6.1 High-quality teaching

Approaches may include:

- high-quality teaching, assessment and a broad, balanced and knowledge-rich curriculum that responds to pupil need;
- professional development, coaching and mentoring for teachers and support staff;
- evidence-informed approaches to phonics, early language, reading, writing, mathematics and feedback;
- effective deployment, recruitment and retention of staff; and
- technology that strengthens teaching or diagnostic assessment.

6.2 Targeted academic support

- structured one-to-one or small-group tuition;
- targeted support for language, communication, literacy and numeracy;
- peer tutoring where evidence and careful implementation support its use;
- teaching assistant deployment that strengthens classroom provision or delivers structured interventions;
- targeted resources and interventions for disadvantaged pupils with SEND; and
- additional learning time where a clear need and expected benefit have been identified.

6.3 Wider strategies

- support for attendance and action to address underlying causes of absence;
- support for social, emotional and behavioural needs and readiness to learn;
- breakfast provision or help with essential equipment where this removes an identified barrier;
- enrichment, sport, outdoor learning, arts participation, trips and wider life skills;
- communication and effective partnership with parents and carers; and
- transition support and work with relevant external services.

The exact balance across these strands will reflect the school's diagnosis of need. The school is not required to fund every item in the menu. In exceptional circumstances, expenditure outside the menu may be considered where it is necessary to overcome a specific barrier to attainment and is permitted by the conditions of grant.

7 Developing the pupil premium strategy

The school will follow the DfE five-step approach:

1. Identify the challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils.
2. Use suitable research and school evidence.
3. Develop an effective, coherent strategy.
4. Deliver and monitor the strategy.
5. Evaluate impact and sustain effective practice.

The strategy may cover up to three academic years, but it will be reviewed and republished each year. It will align with the school improvement plan, curriculum priorities, attendance work, SEND provision and safeguarding arrangements.

8 Identification of need

Leaders will consider cohort patterns and individual circumstances without making assumptions based solely on eligibility. Evidence may include:

- formative and summative assessment information;
- attendance, persistent absence and punctuality;
- behaviour, suspension and exclusion information;
- language, communication, literacy and numeracy needs;
- SEND, wellbeing, safeguarding and social care information;
- pupil and parent or carer views;
- engagement in wider curriculum and enrichment; and
- transition information and advice from relevant professionals.

Personal information will be handled lawfully and shared only where necessary. Public reporting will not identify individual pupils or disclose information from which they could reasonably be identified.

9 Roles and responsibilities

9.1 Headteacher

- ensures the grant is used in accordance with the conditions of grant and this policy;
- ensures disadvantaged pupils' needs are integral to school improvement and budget planning;
- approves the strategy before it is presented for governance scrutiny;
- ensures suitable staffing, professional development and systems are in place; and
- reports to governors and the academy trust as required.

9.2 Pupil Premium Lead

- coordinates diagnosis, strategy development and implementation;
- maintains a clear overview of eligible pupils and other pupils with identified needs;
- supports teachers to understand barriers, provision and intended outcomes;
- monitors delivery, participation, attendance, attainment and progress;
- evaluates value for money and recommends changes where impact is limited; and
- prepares the annual strategy statement and reports for leaders and governors.

9.3 Teachers and support staff

- maintain high expectations and take responsibility for disadvantaged pupils' progress;
- use assessment and adaptive teaching to respond to need;
- deliver agreed approaches with fidelity and provide timely feedback on impact;
- avoid labelling, stigma or assumptions about pupils and families; and
- work constructively with parents, carers and relevant professionals.

9.4 Local Governing Body

- scrutinises the rationale, intended outcomes, expenditure and impact of the strategy;
- assures itself that the strategy follows the conditions of grant and DfE menu;
- asks how leaders know that identified barriers and chosen approaches are appropriate;
- monitors outcomes without seeking personal information about individual pupils; and
- ensures the annual strategy statement is published by the required deadline.

9.5 Academy trust

The academy trust retains its responsibilities as the accountable body. Where funding or provision is pooled, the trust must ensure that the specific needs of St Joseph's disadvantaged cohort are met and that the school publishes its own annual strategy statement.

10 Looked-after and previously looked-after children

For a looked-after child, pupil premium plus is managed by the virtual school head of the local authority that looks after the child. The school's designated teacher will work with the virtual school head, social worker, carers and other relevant professionals so that proposed expenditure is evidence-informed, timely and clearly connected to the child's Personal Education Plan.

Funding for previously looked-after children is paid to the school. It is not a personal budget, but leaders must ensure that the particular needs of previously looked-after children are understood and appropriately supported. The designated teacher will contribute to planning and monitoring, drawing on professional advice where necessary.

11 Service pupil premium

Service pupil premium is primarily intended to provide pastoral support and to mitigate the impact of mobility or parental deployment. It may also support academic progress where the school identifies this as a priority. It is not subject to the DfE menu of approaches, but expenditure will still be purposeful, proportionate and evaluated.

Support may include transition arrangements, pastoral or wellbeing support, communication with families, staff time to respond to mobility or deployment, and targeted academic support. Routine provision will not be charged to service pupil premium unless there is a clear additional benefit for eligible service pupils.

12 Inclusion, SEND and equality

Disadvantage and SEND are distinct, but they may overlap. The Pupil Premium Lead and SENCO will work together to ensure that provision is coordinated, that needs are accurately identified and that funding streams are used appropriately. Pupil premium will not replace the school's duties to make reasonable adjustments or secure SEND provision.

The school will consider the impact of its decisions on pupils with protected characteristics and will take reasonable steps to ensure equal access to teaching, targeted support and wider opportunities. Higher-attaining disadvantaged pupils will receive appropriate attention and challenge.

13 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring will focus on whether approaches are being delivered as intended and whether they are improving the outcomes they were selected to address. Leaders will avoid relying on a single measure or comparing small groups in ways that produce unreliable conclusions.

Depending on the approach, evidence may include:

- implementation checks and staff feedback;
- pupil participation, work and voice;
- diagnostic and curriculum assessment information;
- attendance, punctuality and persistent absence;
- behaviour, belonging and engagement;
- progress against SEND or PEP outcomes where relevant;
- parent or carer feedback; and
- cost, reach, sustainability and unintended consequences.

Leaders will review implementation during the year and adapt activity where evidence shows that delivery is weak, circumstances have changed or the approach is not producing the expected benefit. Evaluation will inform the next annual strategy and school improvement planning.

14 Accountability and reporting

The school will publish an updated pupil premium strategy statement on its website by 31 December each academic year using the current DfE template. A multi-year strategy will still be reviewed and republished annually.

The published statement will explain:

- the school's context and the key challenges affecting disadvantaged pupils;
- the intended outcomes and evidence-informed activity selected;
- how the activity aligns with the DfE menu of approaches;
- the budgeted cost of the strategy; and
- the impact of the previous year's activity, using appropriate and non-identifying information.

Governors and trustees will scrutinise the strategy, expenditure and impact. The school will cooperate with Ofsted, the Department for Education, the academy trust and other authorised bodies in relation to assurance and accountability.

15 Financial controls, assurance and overpayments

Pupil premium income and expenditure will be identifiable within the school's financial systems. Spending decisions will follow the academy trust's financial procedures, procurement requirements and delegated authorities. Records will demonstrate how expenditure supports the purposes of the grant and the published strategy.

Any overpayment, unspent balance or recovery of funding will be handled in accordance with the current conditions of grant and academy trust instructions. The school will retain records for the periods required by the trust, the Department for Education and applicable financial regulations.

16 Pupil premium reviews

Where outcomes remain weak, implementation is insecure or leaders require additional assurance, the school may commission or participate in an external review of its pupil premium strategy. Any review will be proportionate, evidence-informed and focused on improving future planning and delivery. The school will also respond to any review required by the academy trust, Department for Education or Ofsted.

17 Complaints

Questions about the use of pupil premium should first be raised with the Headteacher. Formal complaints will be considered under the school's complaints procedure. Decisions about support for individual pupils remain professional decisions based on assessed need and do not create an individual entitlement to a particular sum or intervention.

18 Monitoring and review of this policy

The Headteacher and Pupil Premium Lead will review this policy annually and sooner if the Department for Education changes the conditions of grant or associated guidance. The Local Governing Body will approve material revisions.

19 Linked school documents

- Annual Pupil Premium Strategy Statement
- School Improvement Plan
- SEND Policy and SEN Information Report
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

- Equality Information and Objectives
- Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children Policy
- Complaints Procedure and academy trust financial procedures

20 Current national references

Department for Education: Pupil premium overview, updated 24 August 2026

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium/pupil-premium>

Department for Education: Using pupil premium guidance for school leaders, updated 24 August 2026

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium/using-pupil-premium-guidance-for-school-leaders>

Department for Education: Pupil premium conditions of grant for the 2026 to 2027 financial year

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2026-to-2027>

Education Endowment Foundation: Guide to the pupil premium and Teaching and Learning Toolkit

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/using-pupil-premium>