

We have taken the decision to implement a 3 year strategy to move away from full annual reviews. We will look at a “multi-year approach”, such as one review covering a three-year period, with “light touch” annual reviews. Thus following the DFE’s directive which would help schools take a longer view of the support the grant would provide and “align their plan with the wider school improvement strategy”. We will still summarise annually though due to the changes to the Pupil Premium year on year.

The St. Christopher School Pupil Premium Strategy Statement

This statement details our school’s use of pupil premium (and recovery 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

School name	The St. Christopher School
Number of pupils in school	262
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	43.5% (114)
Academic year(s) that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2022/2023 to 2025/2026
Date this statement was published	November 2022
Date on which it is being reviewed	November 2024
Statement authorized by	Headteacher Dan Woodman
Pupil premium lead	Deputy Headteacher Elspeth Kirk
Governor lead	Stephen Budge

Funding Overview

Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£146,030
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£0
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous year (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	£146,030

Part A: Pupil Premium Strategy Plan

Statement of Intent

The St. Christopher School is a special school for children aged 3-19 years with a range of learning difficulties including autism, ADHD, communication and interaction difficulties, cognition and learning difficulties and some with social emotional and mental health difficulties. All pupils have a Statement of SEN/EHC plan. Levels of attainment upon entry to the school are significantly below age related expectations and due to the complexity of some of our learners needs it is not always possible to identify the degree to which their achievement is affected by social background. The catchment area is wide with pupils placed via many different Local Authorities, with many of our young people from some of the most deprived areas in the country.

Our strategy is driven by the needs and strengths of each young person, based on formal and informal assessments, not assumptions or labels. This helps us to ensure that we offer the relevant skills and experience they require to achieve greater independence and to prepare them for the next stage of their learning journey.

Although the strategy plan is focused on the needs of disadvantaged pupils, it will benefit all pupils within our school where funding is spent on whole-class and whole-school approaches such as high quality teaching. As there is no discernible gap in performance between our pupils due to their additional needs, we have therefore identified all of our pupils as needing further and additional support and will continue to access the premium to supplement this.

Challenges

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

Challenge Number	Detail of Challenge
1	<i>Individual Special Educational Needs of pupils</i> Each of our pupils has individual learning needs and experiences different challenges to their learning. Ensure the quality of teaching is consistently strong and effective pedagogy is selected to meet learners needs.
2	<i>Access to relevant bespoke curriculum</i> Our assessments show that pupils achieve better outcomes when they receive specific learning taught by well qualified staff. We want to ensure that all students are accessing relevant, well-resourced lessons with well trained teachers and assistants, available across all three curriculum routes. Embed curriculum routes and further develop subject leader roles.
3	<i>Family engagement</i>

	Ensuring families have appropriate skills, knowledge and strategies to support their child in the home setting. Supporting the families of those pupils struggling to attend which then impacts on the learner's confidence/resilience in attempting work or engaging in tasks.
4	<i>Emotional well-being, behavioural and mental health needs of our pupils</i> High anxiety / poor mental health which may result in challenging behaviours either at school or at home and attendance difficulties. Support with interventions and strategies to self-soothe and regulate in order that high quality teaching and learning can take place.
5	<i>Personal and life skills</i> Our pupils often require additional support to develop personal skills, e.g., independent travel, preparation for adulthood. Enable learners and staff to further develop independence in all aspects of their work.
6	<i>Barriers to communication</i> Our pupils generally have greater challenges around communicating and expressing their needs than their peers, including those who are nonverbal, have limited language and have social interaction difficulties.
7	<i>Opportunities to learn outside the classroom</i> Through observations and conversations with pupils and their families, we find that our pupils are less likely to have opportunities to access outdoor learning. Review and ensure learning environment is fully conducive to meeting learners' needs.

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
1	High quality leadership which promotes ownership of the strategy and school priorities across the school	Leaders at all levels can articulate and exemplify the pupil premium strategy and are engaged with the school priorities
2	Targeted family support to enrich and improve experience, further improve attendance and opportunities both inside and outside of school	Families feel empowered to support their children. Feedback is sought via informal meetings, conversations and questionnaires and intervention strategies are shared by all.
3	Support to access an "experience-rich curriculum" within and beyond school	No learner is excluded from accessing additional enriching experiences. Actively pursue opportunities and experiences to benefit all of our young people.

4	Increased CPD for staff to develop skills and knowledge to support pupils and identify all needs so they are met and progress can be made. High quality teaching and learning for all, including specific targeted training to develop and retain staff.	Increased positive behaviours to enable learning. Staff undertaking additional learning and engaging in regular liaison with qualified professionals. All teaching is at least good or better.
5	Targeted support by a team of SALTs employed by the school to support in the development of language and communication skills	Clear strategies in place for individuals and groups of pupils to support their needs to enable them to fully engage in the curriculum, evidenced through records of progress and achievement.
6	Pupils need additional support to enable them to access the school curriculum, social activities and manage their own behaviour in acceptable ways	Specialist staff who are dedicated to providing additional support to develop personal, life and social skills for those in most extreme need and are vulnerable to not making the progress they could without this additional support. Group social skills opportunities outside school are available.

Activity in this Academy 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 (CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted Cost: **£25,000**

Contribution to specialist training including upskilling and concentrated development for teaching and support staff (CPD routes, Elklan, Professional Memberships, embedding Evidence for Learning (software and tech), specialist conferences, supporting professional qualifications).

Focused TLRs to drive curriculum improvement

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Further develop leadership at all levels through additional training	Strong leadership results in high quality support and monitoring to drive school improvement.	1, 2, 6, 7
Targeted TLRs to develop and improve subject areas across the school	Teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge within specific subjects has a significant impact on pupil outcomes.	1, 2, 6
Focused CPD routes for support staff	Support staff with specialist knowledge within each class group to underpin and reinforce teachers' pedagogy.	1, 2, 4, 6

Targeted academic support (structured interventions)

Budget Cost: **£100,000**

Contribution to SALT and SALT support assistant salaries, bought in OT, Education Psychologist and additional administrative support

Targeted literacy material

Pupil assessment tracking and identification of appropriate interventions

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Access to specialist speech and language therapists	SALT support is provided at class level, specific targeted group level and individual pupil level. This includes a range of play therapy, intensive interaction, lego therapy, PECS, language	1, 3, 4, 6

	assessments, social groups and attention autism. Our SALTs and SALT assistants work with class teachers to support pupils to achieve ISP and EHCP targets.	
All pupils baselined at the start of the academic year to identify areas needing further or enhanced levels of support. Evidence for Learning embedded across the school.	Using the baseline assessment results, subject specific structured catch-up sessions have been arranged, which supports the evidence of one to one and small group tuition as a catch-up strategy. This ensures that tuition is guided by the school, linked to the curriculum and focused on the areas where pupils would most benefit from additional support. Designated experienced administrator to support the recording of pupil results and interventions and subsequently update the specialist in-house database. Evidence for Learning is used to monitor pupil progress by capturing and organising evidence of learning aligned with individual EHCP targets. This allows educators to track progress, adjust support, and share insights with families and professionals effectively.	2, 3, 6
Focussed group and individual CPD planned linked to school and individual development priorities	Continually improving teaching support and professional development aids staff retention and quality of teaching has the biggest impact for disadvantaged learners.	1, 2

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

Budget Cost: **£25,000**

Contribution to Pastoral team salary costs (including safeguarding, school counsellor, family support)

Staff training to support this strategy

Financial support (including residential trips, travel training and accessing school owned caravans)

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
The work of the Pastoral Team is supported by a counsellor and other specialist staff who are dedicated to providing additional support to develop personal, life and social skills for those who are in most extreme need, and are vulnerable to not making the progress they could without additional support	A number of pupils have extreme difficulties understanding the regular expectation of society and schools when it comes to interacting with their peers, working alongside others and behaving in appropriate ways in social situations. They need additional support to enable them to access the school curriculum, social activities and manage their own behaviour in acceptable ways. This can also be support with dietary difficulties.	3, 4, 5, 6
Staff access wellbeing and mindfulness training and accreditation	For those pupils and staff who need it, one to one mentoring to support their emotional wellbeing is available	1, 4
School to identify and offer financial support to disadvantaged learners to access specific activities e.g. caravan trips, residential trips, class outings	Disadvantaged learners provided with a wide range of experiences and opportunities they otherwise may miss out on, increasing confidence, enjoyment and desire to attend school. For those young people who are independently able to travel, travel training is available.	5, 7

Total Budget Cost: £150,000

Part B: Review of Outcomes in the Previous Academic Years

Pupil Premium Strategy Outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on pupils in the 2023 to 2024 academic year.

The Use and Impact of the Pupil Premium Grant Academic Year 2023-2024

Allocation – £235,475

The school's pupil and recovery premium allocation for 2023-24 was £140,873 and £94,602 respectively.

The Local Authorities who placed learners at the school for the 23/24 academic year included Southend City Council, Essex County Council, Thurrock Council and Hertfordshire County Council.

The allocation was spent on providing support for specific areas. These were:

- Mental health and wellbeing continued to be a focused area of support for many of our learners, and their families. We supported our learners with direct access to our own school counsellor which was not funded by the Health Service.
- Direct access to school funded Speech and Language Therapists (4 therapists – not provided by the Health Service). The pupils had access to a suite of rooms and facilities. This gave space for all of our therapists to work in 1:1 and small group sessions with our pupils – with a particular emphasis on our pupil premium pupils.
- Buying in direct services from an Education Psychologist and Occupational Therapist to support those pupils who needed additional support.
- There was a team of staff who were responsible for pastoral support for both pupils and their families.
- Specific literacy intervention by our specifically trained teacher in Dyslexia for those pupils who needed additional help, over and above the specific support within classes.
- Support for residential trips – included trips to the Isle of White, Portugal, Center Parcs and the continued use of two caravans owned by the school to support life and social skills for our pupils. These trips were encouraged and very popular as they provided a safe place for our pupils to engage in essential life and social skills.
- Outdoor Learning – our enhanced outdoor learning facilities continued to be very popular with our learners accessing our nature reserve area and attached outdoor classroom.
- Supporting our pupils in accessing the Business and Enterprise centre which taught pupils about field to fork – pupils grew their own produce and subsequently offered a café/dining experience to family and friends, teaching our pupils valuable life, social and work experience skills.

Usage – 2023-24 – Barriers to Learning and Development

Due to the number of pupils affected by Autistic Spectrum Disorder, the predominant barrier to learning at The St. Christopher School was the development of communication and language skills. The other main area of need was that of behavioural support for those pupils with challenging behaviours. Both of these were key areas that needed additional specialist support to enable pupils to make the most of their abilities and develop into successful learners in school and when they left school and moved into the outside world.

Speech and Language Therapists

School employed qualified Speech and Language Therapists were on the school site throughout the year working with individual and groups of pupils as well as working in the classrooms alongside staff, giving advice and support in the development of language and communication. This team of specialist staff are employed by the school and there is no financial support for this service, the NHS do not provide any speech therapy.

School Counsellor / Learning Mentors

The Pastoral Team comprised specialist staff who provided dedicated additional support to develop personal, life and social skills for those who were in most extreme need, and were vulnerable to not making the progress they could without additional support. The team supported a number of our pupils to access everyday activities such as blood tests, dentist and hair appointments. For a number of our pupils this was very difficult, so they were supported by a member of staff accompanying them.

Interventions

- All of our pupil premium pupils had access to a wide range of interventions which were monitored for their impact. Some interventions were fun based and there was no measurable outcome, other than enjoyment. Other interventions were more subtle in their desired impact and outcome. For example, we ran age appropriate girls groups within primary and secondary (girls are a minority within the school) to provide a time and space for them to interact together and talk about any issues that they wanted to share.
- There were specific interventions to help access the curriculum in fine and gross motor control, 'stay safe' training, play therapy, intensive interaction, lego therapy, travel training and social skills groups.

Impact and Progress

- The school used various methods to assess the impact of all initiatives and has kept a detailed record of all the interventions put in place on top of the regular curriculum and support given to our children.
- We used a system of assessing progress which showed whether a pupil had made expected, above or below expected progress in overall academic achievement in English, Maths and PSHCE.
- The overall picture of those who were in receipt of Free School Meals and those who were not is roughly similar with no big 'gap' between the two groups, and also for those in Looked After Care the picture was similar with all pupils in that group reaching expected progress.