

# Pupil Premium Strategy Statement – St Alban’s Catholic Voluntary Academy

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

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school	339
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	15%
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> )	2023-2026
Date this statement was published	December 2023 (under the old template)
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2024
Statement authorised by	Tim Brogan
Pupil premium lead	Michelle Hodgkinson
Governor / Trustee lead	Stuard Olivier

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£ 63,640
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year <i>Recovery premium received in academic year 2023/24 cannot be carried forward beyond August 31, 2024.</i>	£ 0
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years ( <i>enter £0 if not applicable</i> )	£ 0
<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>	£ 63,640

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

- At St Alban's Catholic Voluntary Academy, we are committed to our mission that all pupils, irrespective of disadvantage, socio-economic conditions or challenges faced, fulfil their potential and grow as unique, independent and confident individuals in society. We are committed to meeting the pastoral, social and academic needs of each of our children in a loving and spiritual environment. Our expectations are high for all pupils and we are driven to ensure that our disadvantaged learners progress and attainment will be developed and improved alongside their peers.
- Quality first teaching and curriculum design are at the heart of our approach as it is widely understood that this is one of the greatest drivers of pupil attainment, particularly for those from a disadvantaged background. Our cohesive, three-year strategy places a strong emphasis on developing teacher and teaching assistant expertise in the classroom, in order to meet the needs of all pupils. Robust analysis of our school data, alongside scrutiny of latest research-informed and evidence-based good practice, means the emphasis within our strategy has been placed on the development of pupil's vocabulary and language acquisition throughout all key stages. Continual CPD within this area will develop expertise in delivery across our staff, enabling all learners to excel in their learning. To further support our disadvantaged learner's academic development, carefully chosen, targeted small group and one-to-one interventions have been outlined.
- At St Albans, we also place great value on the development of the child as a whole: our approach extends beyond academic achievements to include an important focus on the social, emotional and mental health of our children. Our three-year strategy aims to further invest in providing a supportive and inclusive curriculum and school environment that will equip our pupils with the necessary skills needed to thrive in an ever-changing world.
- To ensure that the actions outlined in our strategy yield the best possible outcomes for our children, robust monitoring and review of our strategy aims will take place on a regular basis.

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge Internal
1	<u>Communication and language acquisition</u> Poor communication and language has a knock on effect for all other areas of the curriculum: if children cannot communicate effectively, they cannot interact and build the relationships required to become independent learners as they progress through the school. In the Ofsted English Curriculum Research Review (July 2022) it states that, "developing spoken language is especially important for those from

	disadvantaged backgrounds, who are most likely to be word-poor.” Reception baseline assessments frequently highlight that our children from disadvantaged backgrounds are entering school with delayed communication and language skills. As they progress through school, these delayed communication and language skills impact pupil’s abilities to reason, problem solve and communicate in maths; to acquire reading comprehension fluency and to articulate themselves in writing tasks, along with providing barriers to social interaction and personal expression.
2	<p><u>Exposure to rich and ambitious vocabulary</u></p> <p>This is further supported by ‘Why closing the word gap matters: Oxford language report’ where evidence between poor vocabulary acquisition and disadvantaged backgrounds is clear (see appendix A). Internal data in EYFS, KS1 SATS and phonics screening checks confirms that there is a significant progress gap between our disadvantaged children in Early years and KS1 and their non-disadvantaged peers in reading and phonics (see appendix B). This further extends to KS2 where, in year 3, the gap continues to stay wide.</p>
3	<p><u>Writing</u></p> <p>Fluency in writing underpins the primary curriculum. At KS1, both attainment and progress for our disadvantaged has fallen significantly below school non-disadvantaged and national non-disadvantaged (see appendix B). Internal data in KS2 shows a gap for all year groups between attainment for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged learners. Although the progress gap decreases throughout this phase, regular intervention and enhanced support are needed to achieve this.</p>
<b>Challenge number</b>	<b>Detail of challenge - external barriers</b>
4	<p><u>Social, emotional, and mental health challenges</u></p> <p>Evidence suggests that children from disadvantaged backgrounds have, on average, weaker SEL skills at all ages than their more affluent peers. These skills are likely to influence a range of outcomes for pupils: lower SEL skills are linked with poorer mental health and lower academic attainment. As well as this, there is some evidence to suggest that disadvantaged pupils are less likely to use metacognitive and self-regulatory strategies to support their own learning and overcoming challenges (IIS, closing the disadvantage gap: evidence from EEF toolkit). Internal observations, pupil/staff conversations and data show this as a barrier to further attainment for our disadvantaged cohort across all phases.</p>
5	<p><u>Opportunities for socio-cultural capital</u></p> <p>Socio-cultural capital refers to our background knowledge and how this influences our perceptions and understanding of the world around us. Commitment to developing knowledge, skills, values and experiences for our pupils is essential in addressing the barriers to our children’s development of character and in seeking out their passions and aspirations in the world.</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	Challenge
For children to be articulate in their communication skills when in conversation with both peers and adults. To be proficient at communicating in maths, reading and writing in order to achieve their academic potential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Success for our disadvantaged cohort to be measured against progress in the Communication and Language Curriculum.</li> <li>- Academic progress will be seen in reading, writing and maths across the key stage.</li> </ul>	1
For children to have experience, understanding and acquisition of a broad and ambitious vocabulary in order to communicate orally and in writing, across a range of social contexts and academic subjects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For the progress gap between our disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged cohorts to have progressively closed in both reading and phonics in KS1 so that our disadvantaged learners' progress is in line with non-disadvantaged.</li> <li>- For both attainment and progress for our disadvantaged learners in reading to remain in line or exceeding, both in school and nationally at KS2.</li> <li>- For writing results to be impacted by vocabulary knowledge and use in KS2 so that the gap closes between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged cohorts in end of key stage tests.</li> <li>- Focussed learning walks and book looks will evidence the high focus on and priority of vocabulary acquisition across the curriculum and in particular in Reading for Meaning sessions and English lessons.</li> </ul>	2
For the progress gap between our disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged cohorts to close in writing so that our disadvantaged children achieve in line with both school and national non-disadvantaged cohorts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For Rainbow Grammar to have impacted children's writing so that technical accuracy of sentence structure is a strength of our disadvantaged cohort's writing.</li> <li>- For staff understanding and subject knowledge of writing to be of a consistently high level across school, resulting in high quality teaching and feedback having a direct impact on the progress of our disadvantaged cohort's writing across all phases.</li> </ul>	3

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internal assessments in years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 will demonstrate maintained or accelerated progress for our disadvantaged cohort.</li> </ul>	
For our disadvantaged children to have raised aspirations, demonstrating positive self-esteem and motivation which will support their mental health and wellbeing. For all children to have strategies in place to support and develop their self-regulation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internal data (Priority pupil team minutes, PP phase reviews, Edukey tracking of 5 step plans) will show that emotional health concerns have been identified at the earliest opportunity and strategies/interventions have been put in place to support.</li> <li>- Focussed learning walks will show that emotional health and wellbeing is part of classroom culture across school.</li> </ul>	4
For our co-curriculum to reflect a broad and diverse range of opportunities, and barriers to participation be removed or reduced, so that our children from disadvantaged backgrounds can both explore new interests and develop existing ones to achieve their full potential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Both internal and external curriculum reviews will demonstrate clear and explicit teaching of character behaviour mapped out progressively across subjects and phases within school. Pupil voice from within both our disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged cohorts will demonstrate that barriers to participation have been broken down and there is no significant difference between the uptake of co-curricular opportunities between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged cohorts.</li> </ul>	

## Activity in this academic year – 2023/4

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: £28,720

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p><i>To improve communication skills across all phases, including foundation stage and early years</i></p> <p>Speak Out Oracy Project involvement 2 x lead teachers working with artist in school. CPD on oral language and oracy intervention given to English lead and 2 x oracy project lead teachers.</p>	<p>Children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds and who are English language learners (ELL) are at high risk of limited oral language skills which impacts on later educational achievement and socio-emotional functioning (University of Bristol research report 2023)</p> <p>On average, oral language intervention approaches have a high impact on pupil outcomes of around 6 months additional progress (EEF 2021)</p>	1
<p><i>To develop broad and ambitious vocabulary use</i></p> <p>Sounds Write training and resourcing – LKS2 focus</p> <p>Refresher CPD in vocabulary strategies in English teaching</p> <p>Foundation subjects' curriculum design to highlight key vocabulary to be taught in each topic</p>	<p>Phonics has a positive impact overall (+5 months) with very extensive evidence and is an important component in the development of early reading skills, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds (EEF toolkit 2024)</p> <p>Regular exposure to high quality, ambitious vocabulary is an impacting factor in progress in reading comprehension and writing for the disadvantaged cohort in our school. Language and literacy have a central role in school success (Clark, 2019, p. 6) and difficulties with the language can present a significant barrier to academic achievement.</p> <p>The complexities of language children are exposed to in KS3 is significantly higher than KS2. To bridge this transition gap there is a need for a coherent approach to vocabulary embedded through curriculum, pedagogy and transition activities at KS2. (Derby Research school, Bridging the gap at KS2-3 transition, 2024)</p>	2

<p><i>Development of writing</i></p> <p>Rainbow Grammar implementation</p> <p>Whole staff regular CPD and coaching programme for key phase.</p> <p>Development of internal writing moderation – staff CPD</p>	<p>Internal assessment of writing and of our writing curriculum across the school shows a gap in children’s understanding of sentence structures and Grammar for writing support. Rainbow Grammar is based upon Rosenshine’s principles of instruction.</p>	3
<p><i>SEMH support</i></p> <p>Development of Zones of regulation and our SEL curriculum across school</p> <p>Ongoing training for school senior mental health lead – mental health school’s award</p> <p>Implementation and embedding of 5 step mental health plan across school</p>	<p>Interventions which target social and emotional learning (SEL) seek to improve pupils’ interaction with others and self-management of emotions. The EEF have reported that, on average, SEL interventions have an identifiable and valuable impact on attitudes to learning and social relationships in school. They also have an average overall impact of four months' additional progress on attainment. Improvements are greater when SEL approaches are embedded into routine educational practices and supported by professional development and training for staff.</p>	4
<p><i>Opportunities for socio-cultural capital</i></p> <p>Development of cultural capital curriculum across school</p> <p>Music teaching provision across school from music partnership</p>	<p>The Cultural Learning Alliance’s 2017 research project used large sample sizes of 12,000 to find the following key research findings:</p> <p>Participation in structured arts activities can increase cognitive abilities by 17%</p> <p>Learning through arts and culture can improve attainment in Maths &amp; English</p> <p>Learning through arts and culture develops skills and behaviour that lead children to do better in school.</p> <p>Students from low-income families who take part in arts activities at school are three times more likely to get a degree.</p>	

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

Budgeted cost: £ 17,782

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p><i>To develop broad and ambitious vocabulary use</i></p> <p>Targeted intervention in reading to support KS1 and KS2 children in making additional progress:</p> <p>KS1 – Sounds write intervention.</p> <p>KS2 – Herts for learning reading intervention.</p>	<p>Phonics has a positive impact overall (+5 months) with very extensive evidence and is an important component in the development of early reading skills, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds (EEF toolkit 2024)</p> <p>HFL Reading Fluency Project has been proven to support the reading development of low achieving pupils. On average, in 8 weeks, pupils taking part in the project made 2 years and 3 months progress in reading comprehension age and have gained an increase in accuracy of 13 months as measured by the YARC assessment tool.</p>	1
<p><i>To develop competent and confident writers across school</i></p> <p>High quality CPD ion leading writing interventions linked to Rainbow Grammar will be delivered by the English and PP lead, in order to ensure knowledge and skills to deliver high quality intervention are present.</p> <p>Targeted writing interventions delivered in KS1, LKS2 and UKS2 for those children with sentence construction need, based on Rainbow Grammar teaching techniques.</p>	<p>The simple view of writing (EEF guidance report 2021) states that Ronald Kellogg, an American literacy expert, argues writing can be as cognitively demanding as chess. It is demanding because children need to coordinate several different processes. The EEF also states that In England, positive effects have been found in studies where teaching assistants deliver high-quality structured interventions which deliver short sessions, over a finite period, and link learning to classroom teaching,</p>	3
<p><i>For children's mental health and wellbeing to feel supported in order to allow them emotional freedom to learn.</i></p> <p>Priority pupil meetings held weekly to identify children in need of emotional or mental health support.</p> <p>Staff CPD, training and delivery of ELSA intervention across school delivered at</p>	<p>Interventions which target social and emotional learning (SEL) seek to improve pupils' interaction with others and self-management of emotions. The EEF have reported that, on average, SEL interventions have an identifiable and valuable impact on attitudes to learning and social relationships in school. They also have an average overall impact of four months' additional progress on attainment. Improvements are greater when SEL approaches are embedded into routine educational practices and supported by professional development and training for staff.</p>	4



<p>earliest help level. High quality specialist training for ELSA delivery.</p> <p>Zones of regulation/ mental health check ins / friends resilience interventions delivered at earliest help level. Mental health first aider training provided to support delivery of sessions.</p> <p>Bridge the Gap support for vulnerable pupils delivered by professional support agency. Delivered at early help level.</p>		
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## Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £4370

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p><i>To develop broad and ambitious vocabulary use</i></p> <p>Accelerated Reader Programme</p> <p>Development of library space</p> <p>Development of reading book offer across Early years / KS1 / KS2</p> <p>Development of reading spine</p> <p>Employment of librarian to coordinate library space</p>	<p>Educational research suggests a strong relationship between vocabulary and comprehension, where a broad vocabulary (knowing lots of words) and a deep vocabulary (knowing those words well) correlates with better understanding. In an EEF study, pupils eligible for free school meals made on average 5 months' additional progress in reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition intervention.</p> <p>Young people who enjoy reading very much are three times as likely to read above the level expected for their age as young people who do not enjoy reading at all (<i>Children's and Young People's Reading in 2015, National Literacy Trust</i>).</p> <p>Development of library resources will aim to engage disadvantaged children to read for pleasure. Children who read for pleasure also have enhanced levels of text comprehension, an increased knowledge of grammar and show improvement in their writing.</p>	1,2,3,5

<p><i>For our co-curriculum to reflect a broad and diverse range of opportunities, so that children can achieve their full potential</i></p> <p>Educational visits into school to support cultural/ character curriculum (authors / cultural and religious experiences / arts practitioners)</p> <p>In school club provision / offers developed to reflect wide variety of interests and support oracy and vocabulary building</p>	<p>Research shows that offering arts and cultural opportunities are perceived to have wider life-enhancing benefits. The EEF reports that Arts participation approaches can have a positive impact on academic outcomes in other areas of the curriculum.</p> <p>Knowledge is not neutral, as Ogbu (1990, Ogbu1992) elucidates; students whose cultural capital, funds of learning and social intelligence lay outside that endorsed by the education system become inherently disadvantaged.</p> <p>Lau (2016) explains that social intelligence is a crucial influence on how young adults learn in modern times. If we can support our students to build this, then we will help them to access our curriculum and thrive.</p>	All
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**Total budgeted cost: £ 50,872**

## Part B: Review of the previous academic year – 2023-4

### Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Last year, 2023/4, marked the end of the first year of the school's first year of the new three-year pupil premium strategy. The aims of the current strategy are as follows:

For children to be articulate in their communication skills when in conversation with both peers and adults. To be proficient at communicating in maths, reading and writing in order to achieve their academic potential.

For children to have experience, understanding and acquisition of a broad and ambitious vocabulary in order to communicate orally and in writing, across a range of social contexts and academic subjects.

For the progress gap between our disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged cohorts to close in writing so that our disadvantaged children achieve in line with both school and national non-disadvantaged cohorts.

For our disadvantaged children to have raised aspirations, demonstrating positive self-esteem and motivation which will support their mental health and wellbeing. For all children to have strategies in place to support and develop their self-regulation.

For our co-curriculum to reflect a broad and diverse range of opportunities, and barriers to participation be removed or reduced, so that our children from disadvantaged backgrounds can both explore new interests and develop existing ones to achieve their full potential.

We have analysed the performance of our school's disadvantaged pupils during the previous academic year, drawing on national assessment data and our own internal summative and formative assessments.

End of Key Stage data (2023/4) has demonstrated that 100% of children eligible for PP funding achieved expected progress in reading, writing and maths at the end of KS2, with 14% achieving above expected progress in reading and 29% achieving above expected progress in writing and maths. However, end of KS1 data has demonstrated that only 50% of children eligible for PP made their expected progress in reading and maths. 40% of the Y2 cohort passed their phonics screening check in y1, rising to 60% in year 2. Furthermore, 67% of the disadvantaged Y1 cohort failed to pass their phonics screening check in 2024.

To help us gauge the performance of our disadvantaged pupils we compared their results to those for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils at national level and to results achieved by our non-disadvantaged pupils (though we know that pupils included in the performance data will have experienced some disruption due to Covid-19 earlier in their schooling, which will have affected individual pupils and schools differently).

The data demonstrates that KS2 data compares favourably against school and national non-disadvantaged achievement. Our disadvantaged cohort outperformed both our own non-disadvantaged and national non-disadvantaged cohorts in 2024 in terms of progress in reading and maths. Achievement for our disadvantaged cohort also significantly outperformed that of our own non-disadvantaged and national non-disadvantaged cohorts in both reading and maths. The gap between progress and attainment in writing was smaller; however, our disadvantaged cohort still outperformed both school and national non-disadvantaged in

attainment. With progress, our disadvantaged cohort was in line with national non-disadvantaged but below our school non-disadvantaged cohort.

In Ks1, data demonstrates that there is a significant gap between the attainment and progress of our disadvantaged cohort and non-disadvantaged school and national in reading, maths and writing. Although we know that aspects of this drop are cohort dependent, significant support and intervention is needed in KS1 to ensure that further drops do not occur. Support will also need to be given to lower KS2 in order to provide catch up through training and CPD for quality first teaching and intervention, along with staffing support.

Based on all the information above, the performance of our disadvantaged pupils has exceeded expectations in KS2 but not met expectations in KS1; however, we are still, at present, on course to achieve the outcomes we set out to achieve by 2026/27, as stated in the Intended Outcomes section above, with support put in place.

We have also drawn on school data and observations to assess wider issues impacting disadvantaged pupils' performance, including attendance, behaviour and wellbeing. Attendance for our disadvantaged cohort last year was 92% however, this data is skewed by one child with significant SEN needs who was out of school for a high proportion of the year. Within the remaining disadvantaged cohort, the three children that dropped below 85% attendance were all in receipt of school earliest help or early help support, funded by the PP strategy: Elsa support, regular mental health drop-ins (from a trained mental health first-aider) and Bridge the Gap mental health support. Data for PHSE shows that 91% of our disadvantaged cohort are achieving age-related expectations across school, which demonstrates good understanding of social and emotional challenges, contributing towards high attendance rates. Data from a pupil voice survey conducted at the end of the year has shown a high level of engagement in learning, positive attitude towards school and schoolwork and self-regard as a learner from within the disadvantaged cohort. Only one question scored less than 90% for agreement which was 'I enjoy challenging work'. 45% of our cohort answered 'sometimes' with 4% (one year 6 child) answering never. This demonstrates an overwhelmingly positive attitude towards school and learning from our disadvantaged cohort.

Our evaluation of the approaches delivered last academic year indicates that there has been varying success up to this point with our chosen approaches to spending funding allocated, as indicated with our RAG rating (please see above).

It is clear from observations, learning walks, pupil and staff voice, that the use of Rainbow Grammar is beginning to have the desired effect on our children's writing. Significant CPD has been put in place to support teacher knowledge and understanding and teachers are feeling positive about this approach to writing teaching. However, further support needs to be put in place, particularly within KS1, in order to ensure that the approach is being implemented consistently to have the desired effect on supporting writing composition. Further investment is needed in training for teaching assistants in how to use Rainbow Grammar to deliver an intervention for our disadvantaged children who need further support across the school. Alongside this, year 2 of our plan will need a focus on vocabulary CPD across school as internal observations suggest that this is an area that is still holding back the writing of our disadvantaged pupils.

The implementation of Sounds-Write across school (now in its second year) has been successful up to this point. This has been proven through teacher voice where confidence of staff to deliver the programme was seen to be high and teacher observations in KS1 have seen the programme being delivered well. Results from the phonics screening check, however, suggest that more needs to be done to support KS1, particularly year 1, in their delivery and intervention of Sounds-Write. While some of the dip in achievement of the phonics screening check may be cohort dependent, year 2 of our plan will primarily focus funding on this support, as well as begin to roll the programme out into KS2 in order to maintain consistency of approach to the teaching of reading and spelling while also providing intervention to those disadvantaged children who are falling behind in their phonic knowledge and understanding.

The implementation of ELSA to support our most vulnerable children has been successful: we now have three trained ELSA specialists who deliver sessions to pupils weekly. Continued investment in this area from our PP budget will be essential in year 2 of our plan.

Aspects of the plan that have been RAG rated as red will be moved into year 2 as these approaches are still considered important towards meeting the overall aims and objectives set out in our plan.

We have reviewed our strategy plan and made changes to how we intend to use some of our budget this academic year. The Further Information section below provides more details about our planning, implementation, and evaluation processes.

## Further information

### Planning, implementation, and evaluation

Our pupil premium strategy has been formed with extensive reviews of the previous three-year strategy (2020 – 23), has built on areas of the implementation that did not have the expected impact and has further developed areas that were showing success for our disadvantaged cohort. The school has actively taken part in Pupil premium triads across the St Ralph Sherwin trust to quality assure our processes and objectives. This will be a process that will be continued within the new three year cycle.

Research has heavily influenced our decision-making regarding key focuses for the new strategy with the EEF being a reliable and useful source of effective practice and support for disadvantaged pupils. We have also relied on the expertise of other key educational theorists such as Barak Rosenshine and John Sweller to underpin our curriculum model and refine our practice with adaptive teaching at the heart of supporting children to achieve. We have done this with our disadvantaged pupils in the forefront of our thoughts believing that, if we are supporting these pupils well, then all pupils will be supported to achieve their full potential.

Our Pupil Premium Lead has, this year, worked with The Derby Research school in developing our new strategy using the most relevant and recent research from the EEF supported by the EEF's implementation guidance to support our decision making and review process.

We use a range of formative and summative assessment formats to inform the decision-making process and to monitor progress. This will continue to be carefully monitored over the three years with regular points set for review and refinements to be made. Our pupil premium strategy is a working document designed to adapt to the ever changing needs of our disadvantaged cohort and applying the best evidence-based practice to help our disadvantaged pupils secure strong outcomes in their learning.