



St Mary's Catholic School

Information on Pupil Premium 2020-21

Introduction

The Pupil Premium is additional funding allocated to St Mary's Catholic School. It is used to support students who, within the last six years, have been registered for free school meals at any point or have been on a local authority's looked-after children register. Pupil Premium funding applies to children of service personnel too. St Mary's currently has 289 Pupil Premium students in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, representing 24% of the school population in these year groups.

At St Mary's, we have an excellent record of closing the gap between our disadvantaged pupils and those who are not in receipt of Pupil Premium funding. We have the highest aspirations for all our pupils, regardless of social background, and allocate our resources so that they have maximum impact on pupil progress and learning. This is reflected in the fact that, year on year, our valued added scores, the expected progress that a pupil makes between Year 6 and Year 11, are significantly above national averages for both Pupil Premium students and non-Pupil Premium students. We are proud of this outstanding achievement.

Clearly, 2020-21 has been different to all other school years. The impact of the pandemic has been significant, disrupting our normal routines and constantly forcing us to readjust our plans. During the school year, there have been times when some pupils have gone into self-isolation whilst others have remained in school. At other times, there has been full school closure and all pupils have been learning at home. This has required a more pragmatic approach in the way we have used our PP funding this year.

Pupil Premium Allocation

Below is the school's allocation for Pupil Premium this academic year.

Academic Year	PP Allocation
2020-21	£280,910

Use of Pupil Premium Funding

Pupil Premium funding allows our children to benefit from a range of strategies, including:

1. Reducing Class Sizes

Across the curriculum, there are many classes with fewer than fifteen students. Whilst smaller class sizes alone do not necessarily lead to improved attainment, they do allow for more one-to-one and small-group support from the teacher during the lesson. This improves outcomes considerably, especially in those groups where students require more intervention. What is more, smaller class sizes are a result of the high degree of flexibility within our curriculum. In short, this means that the vast majority of our Key Stage 4 pupils study subjects that are most suited to their needs and preferences.

Cost: £100,000

Commentary

All our Pupil Premium students benefit from this strategy. For example, this year, across Key Stage 4, there are over twenty classes with 15 students or fewer.

2. Additional Maths and English classes

We have created additional classes in maths and English across Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 to provide our more vulnerable students with extra support in the most important areas of the curriculum. These classes run at times when it is possible and appropriate to withdraw these students from other lessons. For example, some pupils in Key Stage 3 study only one modern foreign language instead of two. This time is spent catching up on literacy and numeracy.

Cost: £50,000

Commentary

The achievement of our Pupil Premium students in English and Maths is outstanding. In 2019, the last year that students sat external exams, 49% of PP students at St Mary's scored Grade 5 or above in English and Maths. This far exceeded national averages for PP students and almost equalled the national figure of 50% for non-PP students achieving Grade 5+.

3. Pastoral Care

Improving behaviour, attendance and punctuality across each year group continues to be an important element at St Mary's in the drive to raise the attainment of all students, particularly those who suffer from socio-economic disadvantage. The leadership of pastoral care within the main school is very strong. In addition to heads of year for each year group, there are key stage leaders for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. They have responsibility for pastoral provision within their respective key stage. When students have been self-isolating, particularly during periods of lockdown, much time and effort has gone into ensuring that our most vulnerable students are safe and well. Depending on individual need, pastoral leaders check in on a regular basis with parents and carers. In April 2021, we employed an attendance officer, with the objective of targeting and improving the attendance and punctuality of those students who are regularly absent. A significant number of these students are disadvantaged. We have very high standards in relation to behaviour, attendance and punctuality, and intervene swiftly when these standards are not being met. Closing any gap in punctuality and attendance between our Pupil Premium and non-Pupil Premium students is always a priority and a specific focus of our work.

Cost: £30,000

Commentary

In 2020-21, much of the pastoral work in the school was carried out remotely. During periods of lockdown and pupil isolation, our pastoral teams were in regular contact with the parents and carers of our pupil premium and our most vulnerable students, ensuring that they were safe, well supported, and were focusing on their learning, which was being delivered remotely via Teams.

4. Additional Learning Support Assistants

Learning support assistants play a vital role in raising achievement across the school. By giving one-to-one support during lessons and ensuring that key concepts are firmly grasped and knowledge and understanding is consolidated, learning support assistants offer essential support to those teachers who work with our most vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils. What is more, learning support assistants also provide one-to-one guidance for pupils on the early morning Fresh Start literacy programme. The Pupil Premium Grant allows us to employ three extra learning support assistants.

Cost: £60,000

5. Remote learning

In 2020-21, a significant amount of time was spent improving the IT skills of the whole staff body, so that we were able to deliver on-line lessons efficiently and effectively to all our students, including our most disadvantaged. A senior leader and two associate senior leaders organised and ran an ongoing training programme, delivering training sessions, producing information material, and running question and answer sessions to ensure that remote learning in the school was high quality and pupils were able to make excellent progress, despite the challenging circumstances. Many of our disadvantaged students received laptops from specific DfE grants. Much time and effort went into supporting these students, ensuring that they had connectivity at home and technical issues were addressed quickly.

Cost: £20,000

6. Attendance during lockdown

During the lockdown in January and February, many of our vulnerable students, including those who suffer socio-economic disadvantage, regularly attended school. The supervision and delivery of in-school learning during the lockdown period was partially staffed by two regular members of our supply team.

Cost: £15,000

7. General Financial Support

At St Mary's, we support our pupils in whatever way we can. Pupil Premium funds have also been used to subsidise uniform and general school equipment, such as uniform, stationery and PE kit.

Cost: £5,000