

Overview of Priorities 2024-25

What are we aiming to achieve and why?

The Quality of Education	1a: to further develop approaches to the teaching and learning of Reading and Spelling	1b: to continue to develop a Mastery approach to the teaching of mathematics, using White Rose as a base	1c: to develop the use of ICT within the lesson to support teaching and learning	1d: to ensure that SEND children have the same opportunities to access the curriculum and that mechanisms to support knowledge and understanding are continually developed.
Behaviour and attitudes	2a: to develop online behaviours and attitudes to ensure our children are respectful, responsible and safe accessing technology		2b to continue to focus on attendance, improving punctuality , and working together with families to foster productive partnerships	
Personal Development	3a: to ensure there is a coherent strategy that secures every pupil's entitlement to wider opportunities during their time at school.			
Leadership and management	4a: to develop monitoring and evaluation of subjects to ensure that coverage, pitch of learning, progression and assessment is effective			
Early Years Education	5a: to continue develop early phonics and reading in EYFS (with a focus on first steps in Pre-School and Shared Reading in YR and KS1)		5b: to continue to develop a Forest schools' approach to enhance the Early Years and KS1 curriculum	

Context and Identified Needs

While our Year 6 cohort achieved 81% in the Reading test last year, our assessment data has revealed that key reading skills, such as inference and summarizing, need to be more explicitly taught. These skills are fundamental for deeper comprehension and overall literacy development. Without a targeted approach, children may struggle to meet higher expectations, particularly as they transition to more complex texts in later years.

Explicit Teaching of Key Reading Skills

Research and our own experiences demonstrate that children require structured instruction to master critical reading strategies like inference, summarizing, and comprehension monitoring. By integrating explicit teaching methods into our daily literacy sessions, we aim to close existing gaps and ensure all children develop these essential skills.

Leveraging Fisher Family Trust (FFT) Interventions

In Year 2, we have seen the success of using the Fisher Family Trust (FFT) reading interventions, which are designed to provide focused support to struggling readers. These interventions have proven effective in early years, offering systematic approaches that build confidence and skills in young readers. We plan to extend the principles of FFT's intervention strategies across other year groups, including older children, to reinforce key skills, provide additional scaffolding, and help boost overall reading proficiency.

Whole-Class Reader as a Pedagogical Tool

The use of a whole-class reader text is a powerful strategy for reinforcing reading skills through shared experiences. It fosters inclusive discussions, enabling all children to practice inference, summarizing, and comprehension together. This method promotes peer-to-peer learning, offering both challenge and support through dialogue. A whole-class reader allows teachers to model specific skills, engage all children actively, and create a collaborative learning environment where diverse perspectives and interpretations are encouraged.

Strengthening Spelling through Reading

Improving reading comprehension will also enhance spelling abilities, as children become more familiar with new vocabulary and spelling patterns. The continuous exposure to correctly spelled words in context, alongside structured spelling instruction, helps solidify spelling rules. As children read, they internalize spelling conventions, making them more effective writers.

By including these focused reading and spelling initiatives in our School Development Plan, drawing on the successes of FFT interventions in Year 2 and embedding whole-class strategies, we will ensure children receive the targeted support they need. This will not only improve attainment in reading but also strengthen spelling, fostering a culture of literacy that benefits all children.

1b: to continue to develop a Mastery approach to the teaching of mathematics, using White Rose as a base

Current Context and Need for Improvement

While Year 6 achieved 78% in maths attainment, it was evident from analysis of past paper answers that children sometimes struggle when faced with more complex, multi-step questions, indicating gaps in their conceptual grasp.

Adopting a Mastery Approach

The Mastery approach to teaching mathematics emphasizes depth over speed, ensuring that children fully understand and can apply core concepts before moving on. This method promotes reasoning, problem-solving, and fluency, which are essential for tackling challenging questions. We have already seen positive outcomes from the implementation of Mastery Teaching in Years 4 and 5 under the guidance of the Maths Hub. Extending this approach across all year groups will allow us to build a strong mathematical foundation for all children, ensuring consistency and progression as they move through the school.

Using White Rose Maths as a Framework

To support the development of a Mastery approach, the school is transitioning to White Rose Maths as its primary scheme of work. White Rose Maths is specifically designed to promote deep understanding through small, cumulative steps, ensuring that children not only know how to get the right answer but also why the method works. This will provide teachers with the structure and resources they need to embed Mastery principles into daily lessons.

Supporting the Transition

Changing to a new maths scheme, such as White Rose, requires careful planning and support to ensure a smooth transition. Teachers will need guidance and professional development to feel confident in delivering lessons that align with Mastery principles. Providing this support will enable us to implement the new approach effectively and ensure that all children benefit from the shift.

By continuing to develop the Mastery approach and using White Rose Maths as a foundation, we aim to raise maths attainment beyond the current 78%. A focus on deep understanding will better equip children to access complex mathematical concepts and apply their learning in varied contexts. This approach is critical for long-term success and will be a key priority in our School Development Plan.

The Quality of Education

1c: to develop the use of ICT within the lesson to support teaching and learning

Context and Identified Need

The school has made significant investments in technology, with iPads already supporting learning in some year groups and the recent purchase of laptops for Years 5 and 6. However, there is a recognised need to further develop how these resources are used to enhance teaching and learning. As education becomes increasingly digital, it is essential that we equip both teachers and children with the skills and tools to effectively integrate ICT into the classroom.

Supporting Learning with iPads

In Years 3, 4, and KS1, the iPads already play a role in supporting learning, but there is great potential to expand their use. With the right strategies, iPads can enhance student engagement, support personalised learning, and provide access to a wide range of educational apps that can make abstract concepts more concrete. By developing teachers' confidence in using iPads, we can ensure these devices are leveraged to their full potential, fostering creativity and collaboration in younger children.

Integration of Laptops in Upper Key Stage 2

The introduction of laptops in Years 5 and 6 presents an exciting opportunity to further integrate ICT into the curriculum. These devices can be used to support research, project-based learning, and interactive assessments, as well as develop key digital literacy skills that children will need for future learning. Ensuring teachers are fully trained and supported in using laptops effectively will maximize the impact of this new technology on student outcomes.

Focus on Online Safety

As we increase the use of technology in the classroom, it is equally important to prioritize Online Safety. The school's new progressive Online Safety scheme (Evolve) will ensure that children are taught the latest information on staying safe in an increasingly connected world. Embedding this knowledge across all year groups will not only help protect children but will also empower them to use technology responsibly and with confidence.

Incorporating ICT into everyday teaching and learning is essential for preparing children for the future. By focusing on the effective use of iPads in Years 3, 4, and KS1, fully integrating laptops in Years 5 and 6, and placing a strong emphasis on Online Safety, the school will create a dynamic, digitally literate learning environment. This will support both academic achievement and the development of essential life skills, making ICT a key priority in the School Development Plan.

The Quality of Education

1d: to ensure that SEND children have the same opportunities to access the curriculum and that mechanisms to support knowledge and understanding are continually developed.

Commitment to Inclusivity

The school is dedicated to ensuring that all children, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), have the same opportunities to access the curriculum. Every child is entitled to an education that allows them to reach their full potential, and it is our responsibility to remove any barriers that might hinder this. Inclusive education benefits not only SEND children but also enriches the learning environment for all.

Supporting Teachers to Address Barriers

Professional development (CPD) led by our SENCO has already equipped teachers with strategies to address potential barriers to learning. However, this needs to be an ongoing focus, with continuous reflection and development of practices to ensure we are meeting the diverse needs of our children. Ensuring that SEND children can access the curriculum alongside their peers promotes a sense of belonging and encourages collaborative learning.

In-Class Support and Targeted Interventions

The school priorities keeping SEND children within the classroom, learning alongside their peers, as much as possible. Specific interventions outside of the classroom are used only when absolutely necessary. This inclusive approach fosters social inclusion and helps SEND children feel part of the school community. To support this, we need to continuously develop mechanisms that ensure these children can access the curriculum in meaningful ways within the classroom.

Creative and Flexible Approaches

Delivering the curriculum in ways that meet the needs of all learners requires creativity and flexibility. Differentiation, the use of assistive technology, and multi-sensory teaching methods are just a few examples of approaches that can be employed to support SEND children. As we develop these practices, it is essential that teachers are provided with the resources, training, and support they need to deliver a curriculum that is accessible to all.

Ensuring that SEND children can access the curriculum and supporting their knowledge and understanding is vital to their academic and social development. By making this a focus in the School Development Plan, we will continue to create an inclusive learning environment where all children can thrive, regardless of their individual challenges. This commitment aligns with our school's ethos of inclusivity and equality for all.

Behaviour and Attitudes

2a: to develop online behaviours and attitudes to ensure our children are respectful, responsible and safe accessing technology

Context and School Values

As technology becomes an integral part of children's lives, it is crucial that we, as a school, equip our children with the skills and understanding needed to navigate the digital world in a safe, respectful, and responsible manner. This aligns with our core values of being Ready, Respectful, and Safe, which guide not only our behaviour in the physical world but also in the virtual one. Developing strong online behaviours and attitudes is essential to ensuring our children grow into responsible citizens in an increasingly digital society.

The Need for a Comprehensive Approach to Online Safety

The impact of technology misuse, such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content sharing, and unsafe online interactions, can be damaging to both relationships and personal safety. As a school, we are committed to creating an environment where children feel safe, nurtured, and supported. Misuse of technology can undermine this ethos, leading to social conflicts, anxiety, and other issues that affect children's well-being. Therefore, we must proactively teach children how to behave responsibly online, ensuring that they are aware of the consequences of their actions and how to protect themselves and others.

Utilizing the Evolve Online Safety Scheme

To address these concerns, we are implementing the Evolve Online Safety scheme of work, which provides a structured, progressive approach to teaching online safety. This scheme is designed to keep up with the latest developments in the digital world, ensuring that children are equipped with up-to-date knowledge on how to stay safe online. Evolve aligns with our school's values and curriculum, reinforcing the importance of being respectful and responsible in all online interactions.

Building Responsible Digital Citizens

By incorporating online safety and responsible digital behaviours into our curriculum, we are preparing children not only for the present but for their future roles as responsible citizens. They will learn how to communicate respectfully, protect their privacy, and critically evaluate information in the digital world. These skills are essential for their personal development and future success, as responsible technology use is increasingly important in education, employment, and social life.

Developing respectful, responsible, and safe online behaviours is essential for our children's well-being and future success. By embedding our school's values of Ready, Respectful, and Safe into online safety education and utilizing the Evolve scheme, we ensure that our children are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate technology safely. This commitment to nurturing responsible online behaviour is a vital part of our school's ethos of safety and care, helping us build a foundation for our children to become responsible, respectful digital citizens.

2b: to continue to focus on attendance, improving punctuality, and working together with families to foster productive partnerships

Attendance as a Priority for Success

Attendance is a critical factor in the academic success of all children. Research consistently shows a strong link between regular attendance and high attainment. When children attend school consistently, they are able to fully engage in learning, participate in classroom activities, and develop strong relationships with peers and teachers. As a school, we prioritize the attendance of all children because it lays the foundation for their academic achievement and overall development.

Government Legislation and Early Intervention

Recent changes in Government legislation emphasise the importance of identifying attendance issues early and providing timely support to families. This means we must be proactive in recognizing the challenges that may prevent regular attendance, such as health concerns, anxiety, or family circumstances. By addressing these barriers through early intervention, we can help prevent issues from escalating and ensure that all children have the opportunity to succeed.

Punctuality and Readiness for Learning

Punctuality is also a key factor in children's success. When children arrive on time, they are ready to start their day with focus and energy, which directly impacts their learning. Our value of being 'Ready' aligns with this, as it sets the expectation that children are prepared to engage in their education from the moment they walk through the school gates. Late arrivals disrupt not only the child's learning but also the entire class, and consistent punctuality helps maintain a positive, productive learning environment.

Addressing Barriers and Building Partnerships

We recognise that some families face significant barriers to regular attendance, such as anxiety, mental health issues, or prolonged or frequent illness. The school is committed to working alongside parents to support them in overcoming these challenges. It is essential to foster productive partnerships with families, built on open communication and mutual understanding, to ensure children can attend school regularly and thrive. The school's strapline, "*Putting children first, progress through partnerships,*" is at the heart of our approach to attendance. By working collaboratively with families, we can offer tailored support, whether it's mental health resources or flexible approaches to learning, to address the root causes of absenteeism.

Impact of Absences on Learning

We also understand that some parents may choose to take children out of school for holidays during term time. While family time is important, time away from school can impact a child's learning, particularly when they miss key lessons. It is crucial for families to understand that even short periods of absence can affect their child's progress, and we will work with parents to minimise this impact through open dialogue and clear communication about the importance of uninterrupted learning.

Focusing on improving attendance and punctuality, while working closely with families, is essential for ensuring that every child has the opportunity to succeed. By continuing to prioritise attendance in the School Development Plan and strengthening our partnerships with parents, we can address barriers early, support student well-being, and uphold our commitment to putting children first and fostering progress through collaboration.

Personal Development

3a: to ensure there is a coherent strategy that secures every pupil's entitlement to wider opportunities during their time at school.

OFSTED Feedback and School Ethos

In the recent OFSTED report, the wide range of experiences offered at Lionel Walden School was praised. However, it was also noted that we must ensure no child misses out on these opportunities. This feedback highlights the need for a coherent strategy that guarantees all pupils have access to the rich array of experiences—both academic and extracurricular—that contribute to their overall development. These opportunities are integral to fostering well-rounded individuals who are prepared for life beyond school.

Tracking Engagement and Addressing Gaps

The school has already taken steps to track children's engagement and attendance in events such as after-school clubs. By analysing this data, we can identify any trends or barriers that may prevent certain groups of children from participating. This will enable us to ensure that every pupil, regardless of background or circumstance, can access the full range of opportunities the school offers. Addressing these trends is key to making sure no child is left behind and that the opportunities are distributed equitably.

Variety and Progression of Experiences

It is also important that the range of experiences offered is varied and progressive as children move through the school. This includes activities such as school trips, workshops, and enrichment programs that contribute to the children's cultural capital. By reviewing and planning these opportunities, we can ensure that children experience a diverse set of activities, building on their learning and personal growth at each stage of their education.

Link to Attendance

Attendance plays a crucial role in ensuring that children can participate in these wider opportunities. If children are not in school, they are unable to benefit from the full range of experiences we offer, including special events, trips, and clubs. Therefore, a coherent strategy must also focus on improving attendance, ensuring children are present to take advantage of all that is available to them.

By including this objective in the School Development Plan, we are committing to a strategy that ensures every child at Lionel Walden School has access to a broad and enriching educational experience. Tracking engagement, ensuring variety, and linking opportunities to attendance are essential to achieving this goal. This focus will help nurture well-rounded individuals who are not only academically successful but also enriched by the wide range of experiences we offer.

4a: to develop monitoring and evaluation of subjects to ensure that coverage, pitch of learning, progression and assessment is effective

Subject Development and Leadership

The school has invested considerable effort in the development of subject areas, with subject leaders dedicating time to evaluate the impact of teaching and learning. This foundational work has been essential in ensuring that our curriculum is engaging and aligned with educational standards. However, there is now a need to focus on the next phase: developing robust monitoring and evaluation processes that ensure the coverage, pitch of learning, progression, and assessment within each subject is effective.

Pitch of Learning and Differentiation

One key aspect of this objective is ensuring that lessons are appropriately pitched to meet the needs of all learners. This not only ties into our broader goal of removing barriers to learning but also ensures that there is sufficient stretch and challenge for children at all ability levels. By developing systems to evaluate how lessons are pitched, we can ensure that every child is engaged and appropriately challenged, regardless of their starting point.

Progression of Skills Across Year Groups

The progression of skills as children move through the school is another vital area of focus. A well-structured curriculum should build on previous learning, allowing children to deepen their understanding and develop their skills in a logical and progressive manner. Effective monitoring will ensure that progression is happening as planned and that any gaps in learning or skill development are quickly identified and addressed.

Accurate Assessment of Knowledge and Understanding

Accurate and meaningful assessment is critical for understanding where children are in their learning journey. Subject leaders need to develop and implement systems that allow teachers to assess knowledge and understanding effectively. These assessments must not only measure current attainment but also provide insights into how children are progressing over time. By strengthening assessment practices, we can ensure that all children are being supported and challenged appropriately.

By developing more rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating subjects, we can ensure that the coverage, pitch, progression, and assessment of learning are as effective as possible. This objective will contribute to a richer, more personalized learning experience for all children, helping them to achieve their full potential. It also supports the broader school goal of creating an inclusive environment that meets the needs of all learners.

Early Years Education

5a: to continue develop early phonics and reading in EYFS (with a focus on first steps in Pre-School and Shared Reading in YR and KS1)

Phonics Success and Continuity

The success of our Phonics teaching is evident in the 2024 Year 1 Phonics results, where 90% of students (27 out of 30) passed the Government Statutory Phonics Test. This achievement highlights the strength of our approach and the effectiveness of the FFT Phonics Scheme, which has provided a solid foundation for phonics instruction in the lower school. Building on this success, we aim to ensure consistency across the early years, from Pre-School to Reception, in order to maintain and further improve these outcomes.

First Steps in Pre-School and Systematic Shared Reading

Developing a coherent approach to early reading begins with ensuring that the first steps in phonics instruction in Pre-School are aligned with the methods used in Reception. By providing a consistent approach to phonics from the earliest stages, we can better support children's reading development and ensure a smooth transition between year groups.

We also aim to continue developing systematic shared reading in Reception and Year 1, using the successful framework established in Year 2 through the FFT Shared Reader program. This will help children build on their early phonics knowledge, enhancing their reading fluency and comprehension.

Building on the Success of Shared Readers

The introduction of the FFT Shared Reader framework has shown promising results in Year 2, and expanding this approach into Reception and Year 1 will further embed reading skills at a critical stage of development. By systematically incorporating shared reading, we are not only developing children's decoding skills but also fostering a love of reading through engagement with rich texts, which supports their overall literacy development.

Continuing to develop early phonics and reading across Pre-School, Reception, and Year 1 will strengthen our successful phonics outcomes and ensure that children are given the best possible start in their literacy journey. By aligning early reading practices and building on the success of shared reading frameworks, we are fostering a consistent and effective approach to reading that supports long-term success in literacy.

Early Years Education

5b: to continue to develop a Forest schools' approach to enhance the Early Years and KS1 curriculum

Success in Reception and Expanding into KS1

The Forest Schools approach has already been implemented successfully in Reception, with positive outcomes in terms of children's creative and enquiring learning. The training undertaken by our EYFS lead has provided a strong foundation for delivering these sessions, and the benefits observed last year demonstrate the value of this approach. Expanding the Forest Schools program into Key Stage 1 will ensure that children can build on the skills they developed in Reception, fostering continuity in their learning and deepening their connection with nature.

Evidence-Based Approach

A wealth of research supports the Forest Schools method as a powerful tool for enhancing children's learning. It promotes problem-solving, independent thinking, and resilience by encouraging children to explore and engage with the natural environment. This creative, hands-on learning experience is highly effective for developing a child's curiosity and critical thinking skills. It also aligns with our broader goal of nurturing well-rounded individuals who are confident learners.

Positive Impact on Mental Health and Well-being

In addition to the academic benefits, the Forest Schools approach has been shown to have a significant positive impact on children's mental health and well-being. Time spent outdoors, engaging in active and explorative learning, helps children manage stress and improves emotional resilience. Given the increasing importance of mental health in education, extending Forest Schools into KS1 will continue to provide opportunities for children to thrive both academically and emotionally.

Parent Involvement and Community Engagement

One of the key successes of the Forest Schools program has been the involvement of parent helpers. This community engagement enhances the learning experience and strengthens the bond between home and school. By continuing to involve parents in these activities, and encouraging more to participate, we can further build a supportive learning environment that benefits both the children and the wider school community.

Developing the Forest Schools approach in KS1 will ensure that children continue to benefit from this enriching, hands-on learning experience. It supports the development of essential life skills, promotes mental well-being, and fosters strong community ties. Including this objective in the School Development Plan ensures that we are committed to providing a holistic and creative curriculum that meets the needs of every child.