Highfield Primary School Development Plan 2025-26

Unlocking Potential

1. **Effective Planning**
2. **Maths**
3. **Religious Education**
4. **To improve the school infrastructure**

1. Effective Planning

"The future belongs to those who prepare for it today."

- Malcolm X

Why? Rationale.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) identifies explicit instruction, scaffolding, and diagnostic assessment—all of which rely on thoughtful planning—as key components of high-quality teaching. Planning helps anticipate misconceptions, build on prior knowledge, and ensure long-term retention of skills. The NASUWT emphasises that lesson planning is a critical contributor to effective teaching and learning with the focus being on planning for pupil progress, not accountability. Effective and accessible planning with accessible design in mind; effective planning supports professional judgement and helps teachers respond to pupil needs dynamically which is what we embrace at Highfield; the ability to respond to children's needs in the moment. It is foundational to effective pedagogy. As David Ausubel, an American educational psychologist said:

"The most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach accordingly."

Internal Audit and Work Scrutiny: Curriculum planning constantly evolves and is a strength. Book scrutiny highlighted the importance of allowing children to fully express their individual understanding which was dictated by lesson and task design. The best outcomes were achieved where pupils were fully able to express their ability.

Staff: The staff team has changed significantly in the last 3 years. Therefore we are returning to the principles of excellent teaching and learning, which starts with planning. There is an opportunity here to improve the effectiveness of the approach to planning.

Community: In the last decade the EAL intake of the school has increased from less than 5% to <40%. Following the intake boundary change in 2019-20, the deprivation of intake has significantly changed (school research). The number of children on the SEND register has also increased significantly and we must ensure that the needs of these learner groups are met effectively.

2. Maths

'Why do children dread mathematics? Because of the wrong approach. Because it is looked at as a subject.'

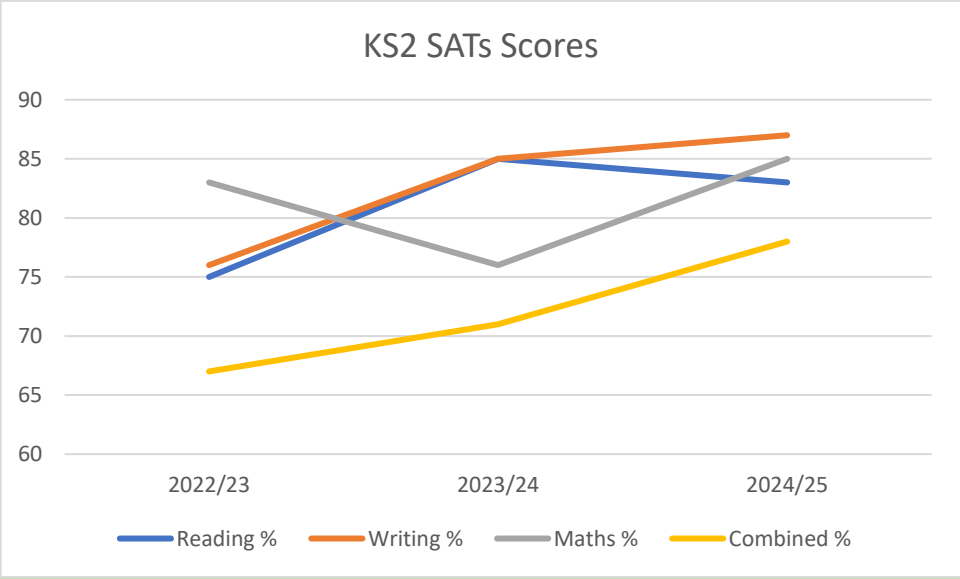
– Shakuntala Devi.'

Why? Rationale.

School Change:

- To support recovery following COVID, the school bought into Maths No Problem to support the teaching and learning of maths in KS1. That came to an end in the school year 2024-25. KS1 are moving back to White Rose Maths as the main source of guidance and resourcing.
- Maths has not been on the School Development Plan since 2017, since then there have been staffing changes.
- New maths lead appointed in 2023

External Data:



According to the Department for Education:

- **74% of pupils nationally met the expected standard in maths**, up from 73% in 2024
- **26% met the higher standard**, nearly returning to pre-pandemic levels. **47% of Highfield children** met the higher standard

Local Authority: The Leeds City Council's Annual Academic Outcomes Report notes that, across the local authority, average outcomes in the primary phase tend to be in the bottom half nationally, though they are closer to national averages for some indicators. Further analysis from the Department for Education highlights that **socioeconomic factors** continue to influence attainment the greatest.

National Considerations: The national landscape of mathematics education in England is at a pivotal point, with multiple stakeholders calling for systemic reform. Ofsted's 2023 subject report highlights notable improvements in teaching quality, particularly through initiatives like Maths Hubs, but also identifies persistent challenges such as teacher shortages and an overemphasis on exam preparation in secondary schools (Ofsted, 2023). The Department for Education's interim Curriculum and Assessment Review reveals that while primary pupils generally enjoy maths, engagement and confidence decline in secondary education, with many students lacking fluency in core skills (DfE, 2025). In response, the Royal Society has proposed a radical overhaul of maths education through a new model of "mathematical and data education," integrating statistics, data science, and digital tools across the curriculum to better prepare students for modern life and work (Royal Society, 2024). Meanwhile, OCR has raised concerns about the current GCSE system, noting that around a third of students fail to achieve a Grade 4 and enter a cycle of post-16 resits. They propose a new Short Course Maths GCSE, improved Key Stage 3 assessment, and a more focused curriculum to ensure all students master essential mathematical skills (OCR, 2025). Together, these developments reflect a growing consensus on the need for bold, long-term reform to ensure maths education is equitable, relevant, and fit for the future.

Global Considerations: England's primary mathematics education ranks competitively on the global stage, though it trails behind the highest-performing nations in East Asia. According to the 2023 TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study), Year 5 pupils in England scored significantly above the international average and the TIMSS centre point of 500, placing England in a group of strong performers globally 1. However, countries like Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Japan, and South Korea consistently outperform England, particularly in mathematical reasoning and problem-solving domains. In terms of broader international comparisons, England has also made gains in the OECD's PISA rankings, which assess 15-year-olds. England rose from 17th in maths in 2018 to 11th in 2022, making it one of the highest-performing Western countries. While PISA focuses on secondary education, the upward trend reflects improvements in foundational maths skills developed during primary years.

Employment Considerations: Growing Demand Across Sectors: According to the UK government's *Assessment of Priority Skills to 2030*, sectors such as Digital Technologies, Engineering, Construction, and Adult Social Care are projected to see the largest increases in job demand by 2030. Many of these roles require strong mathematical competencies, especially in data analysis, programming, and technical problem-solving. Maths in the Workplace: Research by Education and Employers highlights a disconnect between how maths is taught in schools and how it's used in the workplace. In real-world settings, maths is embedded in tasks and tools—often hidden behind spreadsheets or software—yet essential for productivity. Poor numeracy costs UK employers an estimated £3.2 billion annually due to errors and inefficiencies. Future Labour Market Trends: The Department for Education's *Labour Market and Skills Projections to 2035* shows that jobs requiring higher-level qualifications and analytical skills—including mathematical reasoning—will grow faster than others. This trend is especially strong in STEM-related fields, where mathematical literacy is a core requirement.

3. To embed the new Religious Education syllabus *Believing and Belonging*

"All religions try to benefit people, with the same basic message of the need for love and compassion, for justice and honesty, for contentment."

Dalai Lama

Why? Rationale.

Personal development and improving society: Religious Education (RE) plays a vital role in helping pupils make sense of the complex and diverse world they inhabit. According to the *Deep and Meaningful* subject report by Ofsted, RE enables students to engage with ancient and contemporary traditions, explore foundational texts, and grapple with profound questions that have shaped human thought across history. In an increasingly pluralistic society, RE fosters understanding of both religious and non-religious worldviews, promoting personal development and social cohesion. However, the report highlights that many RE curriculums lack the depth and substance needed to prepare pupils for life in a multi-religious and multi-secular society. Over-simplified content and inconsistent teaching practices often hinder meaningful learning. As global and local communities become more diverse, the importance of RE grows—not only as an academic subject but as a means of cultivating empathy, critical thinking, and informed citizenship. Strengthening RE through rigorous curriculum design and professional development is essential to ensure all pupils gain the knowledge and insight needed to navigate today's world thoughtfully and respectfully.

School Development: Religious Education has not been on the school development plan as an individual subject. The change of syllabus brings about opportunity for change, particularly considering the increasingly diverse Highfield community. We need to ensure that our curriculum meets the needs of our community and promotes personal development.

Local Authority: Leeds City Council has introduced a new Religious Education syllabus titled "Believing and Belonging", which became statutory for all maintained schools in Leeds, Bradford, Kirklees, and Calderdale from September 2024. Its statutory status ensures that all maintained schools must deliver RE in line with this framework, helping to foster respectful dialogue and cultural literacy in increasingly diverse communities.