Lake Haven

A Special Place to Learn

Intent

Due to their complex needs/backgrounds and their experiences in previous settings, almost all of our children will arrive at Lake Haven with significant gaps or delays in their acquisition of the fundamental skills of English [speaking, listening, reading and writing]. As a sound knowledge of English underpins learning across the curriculum, we recognise that this clearly puts our children at a very real academic disadvantage. It can also have a grave impact upon their mental health and wellbeing; and can limit their future life chances – putting them at risk of being effectively disenfranchised as they grow older. As such, we are passionate about and committed to helping all of our children overcome barriers, develop positive attitudes and start believing in themselves as

learners.

As soon as they start their journey with us, we set about building positive professional relationships with the children, which enable them to feel safe and take risks as we work together to reframe adverse past experiences and take positive steps forward. By consistently championing and coaching our children to try new skills and extend their comfort zone, we empower them to challenge negative views of themselves, start to build resilience in learning and celebrate their unique achievements. Ultimately, we aim to empower our children to view themselves as life-long learners who are capable of building their knowledge and skills to pursue their interests and achieve success.

We believe that, by carefully considering the needs of our children (both in the moment and the future), we provide a carefully sequenced and inter-linked English curriculum that raises the aspirations of every child and enables them to thrive. In line with our Curriculum Policy, the first priority of our English curriculum is to re-engage all children in education by providing them with positive experiences that raise their self-esteem and enable them to make progress from their individual starting points. Through our English curriculum's thematic approach and its cross-curricular links, we aim to inspire and motivate our children, fostering curiosity and an intrinsic desire to keep learning; and enhance their self-perception (as learners first; then as readers and writers as per the Writing Framework 2025).

Our NCFE Functional Skills curriculum will allow our children to gain skills and knowledge in English that they can apply to their everyday lives and take into adulthood and their working life in the future. We believe that our children deserve to experience success in ways that are appropriate to them and in a way that will ensure they are fully equipped for life after Lake Haven.

We have developed the aims of the National Curriculum for English, thus, in order to meet the needs of our learners:

NC Aims to *"ensure that all pupils…"*	**Lake Haven Aims to empower our children to…**
use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas	· develop their oracy skills to become more effective speakers (communicators) and listeners; and better understand themselves, each other and the world around them
are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate	· Develop their confidence in communicating and harness that power to help them successfully advocate for themselves in school and life
acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language	· develop the confidence, knowledge and skills to access information effectively; and to communicate their own ideas and opinions coherently and articulately · make choices about their preferred means of communication; and have the knowledge and skills to access non-traditional methods of recording
write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences	· engage in positive experiences that help to build self-esteem; challenging their expectations of themselves and allowing them to see themselves as a writer · develop the skills and knowledge to create written text; embarking on a journey which will ultimately enable them to communicate effectively for a range of practical and social purposes

Implementation – Ethos and Approach

In every class at Lake Haven we will have children from a wide range of previous schools and settings; each of which has given them a different start in their educational journey. Our commitment to placing children based on the needs of the whole child (rather than simply by their chronological age) also means that we may have classes with a mix of ages. It is, therefore, essential that our bespoke English curriculum is flexible enough to enable us to meet a wide range of needs and empower all children to make progress, whatever their starting point.

Implementation – Oracy

· *"Oracy education is valuable at all stages of education, in all settings and for all types of pupils... settings should prioritise the development of communication and language, noting that language provides the foundation of thinking and learning."*

[All-Party Parliamentary Group on Oracy, Education Endowment Foundation response September 2019]

· In line with recent research and EEF recommendations, we believe that talk matters – both in its own right and because of its impact on other aspects of learning. Focusing on improving oracy consistently shows positive benefits for children's learning; including their spoken language skills, their expressive vocabulary and their reading skills.

Through class discussion, morning activities, assemblies and opportunities to share work, oracy skills will be

taught and developed in line with the NCFE Speaking, Listening and Communication outcomes and those of the National Curriculum.

. At Lake Haven, oracy is a starting point for many in their journey to becoming confident readers and writers. As a communication and interactive school this focus is gentle and considered in its approach to support our learners with their differences.

Implementation – Reading: Ethos & Approach

· As the National Curriculum for English states in its aims; "*Through reading, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually... Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know.*"

· As well as being an essential life skill, we believe that reading has the power to enhance and transform lives – to enable people to see and understand the world through the lives of others, to build empathy, and to develop a better understanding of the role we can play in shaping our world. Similarly, reading for pleasure can provide inspiration and a positive form of escapism, and is very beneficial for mental health and wellbeing.

Reading comprehensions are embedded each week as part of our Literacy curriculum. They give children a chance to develop their inference and retrieval skills whilst understanding language choices and text structures. These sessions are planned and implemented in line with the NCFE Functional Skills outcomes.

Implementation – Reading: Phonics

- As a school, we will follow the 'Twinkl' programme to teach phonics; and children who need to develop their phonic knowledge and application receive individual/small group intervention four times a week. At Lake Haven the systematic and regular teaching of phonics will not be shied away from as our children will already be in KS2 and usually in a mainstream setting, phonics is only reserved for the younger children. However, many of our children will be in Key Stage Two when they join us, and may have limited phonological awareness.

- In line with the DfE's Reading Framework, we demonstrate *"fidelity to the programme"*. However, due to the complex and varied needs of the children, our staff are highly skilled in adapting programme materials in order to maximise engagement and progress. Whilst adapting sessions to meet individual needs, we ensure that sessions:

  - have clear objectives (and make sure that the children understand them)
  - make the most of the time and use activities that maximise opportunities to consolidate and extend learning
  - practise prior knowledge until children can use it automatically (thus, freeing up their capacity to learn new knowledge)
  - support children to connect new knowledge with previous learning; and demonstrate new learning in bite-sized chunks
  - ensure children are given opportunities to apply what they have learnt
  - use assessment to clearly determine next steps

Many of our children have been working through a phonic scheme for most of their education and we find that

they reach a point where they become disengaged and their progress is impacted. To ensure that we continue to support our children's decoding and reading skills, we will either move the children to exclusively use our DIPT approach or we will use Twinkl's 'Decoders' programme which is designed as a KS2 phonics intervention and is more age appropriate for our children. Ensuring the children remain engaged and develop reading skills that will allow them to access everyday life is our priority and we will exercise our professional judgement as to which approach will be best suited to each individual child.

Implementation – Reading: Individual Reading Books

· All of our children have an individual reading book which they read and discuss with adults every day. Each classroom has a small library that children have continual access to and are filled with books that are age appropriate and tailored to their interests. In addition, we subscribe to the Warwickshire School Library Service who provide 50 reading for pleasure books per year which we can exchange for new titles and a termly topic box.

· Children who are accessing Twinkl phonics sessions have time to read a book from the Rhino Readers series which aligns with the progression of the Twinkl Scheme. Children who have completed Twinkl will be directed to a selection of books based on their skills and understanding. They will be supported in choosing a reading book choice which their adult deem is appropriate for their reading ability and then be able to choose a book for pleasure (Appendix 3).

· As well as being a regular opportunity to develop their fluency (accuracy and speed), these 1:1 sessions are also used to engage the child in book talk – to explore their depth of understanding about what they have read,

and to discuss connections, commonality and difference.

. With the nature of some of our children's complex needs, 1:1 reading sessions are adapted but we communicate in a manner the children can access.

Implementation – Reading: Class Story Time

· At Lake Haven, we understand the cognitive consequences of the story format – that our minds treat stories differently to other types of material and find them interesting, easy to understand and easy to remember. As such, we will use daily class story time sessions to share important, inspiring and engaging texts. Through these sessions, we want to enable the children to use their imagination to transport themselves to other places, inhabit the lives of people who are similar/different to them, and be able to imagine themselves as the protagonist in a story.

· Our class novels will be carefully chosen to ensure that they:

- have a strong narrative that will encourage and sustain a strong emotional response
- are diverse and inclusive in representing people from a wide range of cultures, groups and backgrounds
- extend the children's knowledge and vocabulary
- introduce significant authors, especially those from groups who are typically under-represented

· Our class novel discussion books will support teachers to engage children in conversations about key points from the story – exploring ideas, sharing opinions and deepening understanding of concepts and vocabulary.

Implementation – Reading: Library & Additional Reading Opportunities

· We have a vast stock of books on site with a range of picture books, novels for children, non-fiction and poetry as well as a small library collection of books in each classroom. Children have continual access to these and they are filled with books that are age appropriate and tailored to their interests.

· If a child chooses books which are beyond their level at which they can read independently, they will be sensitively supported to access these books via shared reading with adults to preserve their confidence with reading.

Implementation – Writing: Developing Writers

· Negative attitudes towards writing (often based on prior adverse experiences, low self-esteem and a fear of failure) are, perhaps, one of the greatest barriers to learning that we encounter. Therefore, we will enable our children to overcome this during their time at Lake Haven. We are sensitive towards the children's feelings and 'meet them where they are' on their literacy journey.

· The children will participate in daily English lessons with clear input and tasks set by the class teacher. Whilst expectations for the children's engagement and effort are consistently high within and across classes; the style and content of lessons may vary, as they are carefully designed and tailored to meet the needs of and facilitate good progress for individuals.

As stated in the DfE's Writing Framework; '*Pupils should not be expected to produce extended pieces of writing*

until they are ready. Instead, they should be given ample opportunities to practise their basic sentence construction skills.' Therefore at Lake Haven, we endeavour to ensure that writing, whether it is on a laptop or handwritten, is woven into different aspects of the curriculum to provide frequent opportunities and builds their confidence and skills to be able to write more at length.

Teachers will follow a consistent approach for planning and delivering units of work which are themed across the school. All teachers are aware of the individual child's end points and will plan and deliver lessons to enable all of our learners to achieve this. When considering our plans we aim to work through three main phases:

- Explore – Children spend time exploring high quality examples of the text type/genre being studied; breaking them down into their constituent parts and discussing key features of their organisation and language.
- Experiment – Following careful explanation and modelling, children use imitation and innovation to adapt and create examples of specific features of the text type/genre.
- Plan and create – Children apply their growing knowledge of language and organisational features to plan and create their own original version of the text type/genre.

NB: Throughout all of these phases, children are encouraged and supported to reflect upon and evaluate their work – both to recognise and celebrate their successes; and to identify aspects that they can edit and improve.

At Lake Haven, our English focus and pieces of writing are themed across the school but are often linked to our foundation curriculum or events in our world or calendar to support an immersive approach to learning (Appendix 1). As part of the explore phase of writing, lessons in history, geography, science and wider life will support the children's understanding of the content of their writing.

These phases are inline with the DfE's Writing Framework 2025 in which they state that children shouldn't be expected to write about a topic they are not familiar with.

For our learners who may choose our academic pathway, English lessons are focused around a study of a specific text, rather than the theme based approach, to support the development of skills that would be needed for GCSE English Literature and Language.

In line with the DfE's Writing Framework 2025, throughout the writing process, adults at Lake Haven, ensure they are modelling oral composition, demonstrating thought processes when writing, whilst ensuring that children are also composing their sentences orally to reduce the cognitive demand.

· As many of our children's technical writing skills may lag behind their ability to communicate ideas orally, adults will occasionally act as scribes for them or the child can utilise the 'Speech to Text' technology to support. This is managed very carefully to ensure that children do not slip back into negative attitudes towards writing, whilst ensuring that they continue to develop their own skills and do not become dependent upon adult support and intervention.

· Children will be offered and taught how to use non-traditional means of recording (including making audio recordings or using voice-to-text technology).

Vocabulary is a key part of the writing process but one that the children at Lake Haven can find more difficult. The DfE's Writing Framework 2025 states that *'vocabulary can be built through robust, purposeful, explicit instruction'* which is supported by the EEF who explain that *'schools extend vocabulary by explicitly teaching new words, providing repeated exposure to them, and providing opportunities for pupils to use them.'* At Lake Haven we weave vocabulary focuses into our timetables and resources are always available during lessons to support the use of topic words. Adults model the use of new vocabulary and ensure that the meaning of new words are explained to children in a way that is appropriate and relatable to them. These approaches in turn will positively impact the writing process but also the children's ability to communicate and express

themselves.

Implementation – Writing: Spelling

· To spell (encode) words, our children are first taught to identify the sounds (phonemes) in spoken words – often referred to as segmenting; then they learn to write the letters that represent the sounds.

· Matching phonemes and graphemes is a core part of the Twinkl phonics programme that we use, and our children incrementally build up a secure bank of phonological knowledge and awareness that enables them to start making phonetically plausible attempts at spelling simple words. As they develop their understanding of alternative ways to make phonemes, they are then encouraged to use what they have learnt about common spelling patterns to make their attempts increasingly accurate.

· To help them become increasingly independent and accurate in spelling words with unfamiliar spelling patterns, the children are also taught how to access and use a range of spelling aids; including word bank dictionaries and 'spell checker' devices and technology.

For children who are not experiencing success or progress with their spelling on our phonics scheme, they will be moved onto a DIPT programme to support their reading and spelling development. Children are assessed using a baseline and are moved through the high frequency words before moving onto Entry Level and Functional Skills word lists (Appendix 2)

Implementation – Writing: Handwriting

· We know that research suggests that slow or effortful handwriting [as well as spelling] takes most of children's focus and limits the amount of thought that can be given to the content of their writing.

· As such, we aim to ensure that basic skills like handwriting [and spelling] are taught and enabled to make sure that they don't impact negatively on our children's wider ability to learn and communicate.

· Teachers incorporate gross and fine motor skill exercises into the children's routines as necessary in order to ensure that they have the physical strength and dexterity to hold and guide a writing implement (children with the most significant difficulties also receive additional input from occupational therapists in school and/or at home).

· Aims and expectations for careful handwriting are consistent across the curriculum, but teachers recognise that standards of presentation will be affected by additional demands that children are facing (including Dyslexia, Autism, EBSA, hypermobility, sensory differences, anxiety needs and cognitive load).

For many of our children, handwriting can pose a sensory difficulty and can be uncomfortable. In these cases we provide aids and alternatives to support their handwriting. All children have access to a laptop to complete their writing on and touch typing sessions are part of the weekly timetable. This is done to ease the cognitive load of handwriting on pupils, as stated in the DfE's Writing Framework 2025.

For all aspects of our English curriculum, our teachers will continually monitor and evaluate where each child is on their 'journey' through our English pathway. Professional discussions between staff will take place at any time of transition to ensure that the approach taken with each child is individualised and continued no matter who their teacher is and which class they are part of.

Impact

Our unwavering commitment to improving outcomes for our children enables them to overcome negative experiences and leave us believing that they are speakers, readers and writers. Similarly, our focus on nurturing the whole child enables them to develop positive behaviours for learning – they are able to recognise and celebrate their progress, build resilience to accept and manage setbacks, and no longer feel they need to mask throughout their learning or feel an overwhelming 'can't'. This marks the start of a journey that has the power to reframe their experiences and attributes in a positive way, and significantly improve their life chances and outcomes.

Our children will be able to transfer the knowledge, skills and confidence that they learn in English lessons across the curriculum, and to life outside of school. As readers, they are able to access information to better understand their world and experience the calm and joy that reading for pleasure can bring; and, as speakers and writers, they can communicate their ideas and make their voice heard.

All children are on a pathway of Entry Level 1,2 and 3; and Functional Skills Level 1 or 2. They will all gain a certificate of qualification throughout their time at Lake Haven and definitely leave with a certified qualification in the subject of English. Depending upon which curriculum pathway the child is deemed to be best suited, the academic pathway offers the children the opportunity to build towards achieving GCSE English Literature and GCSE English Language. This may not be achieved whilst at Lake Haven, but they will all be on a pathway, should they continue to study English, therefore being able to achieve this level of qualification.

With our thematic approach to English, which focuses on country wide events and the academic calendar, our children's life skills and understanding of the world are being enhanced alongside their education of English.

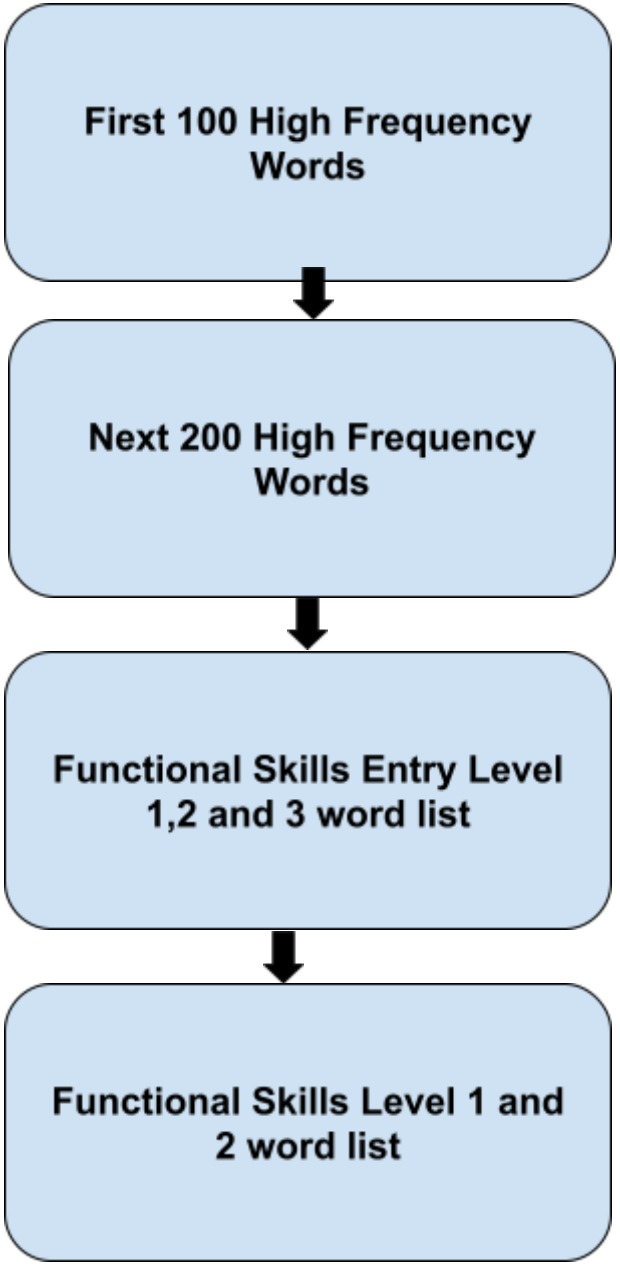
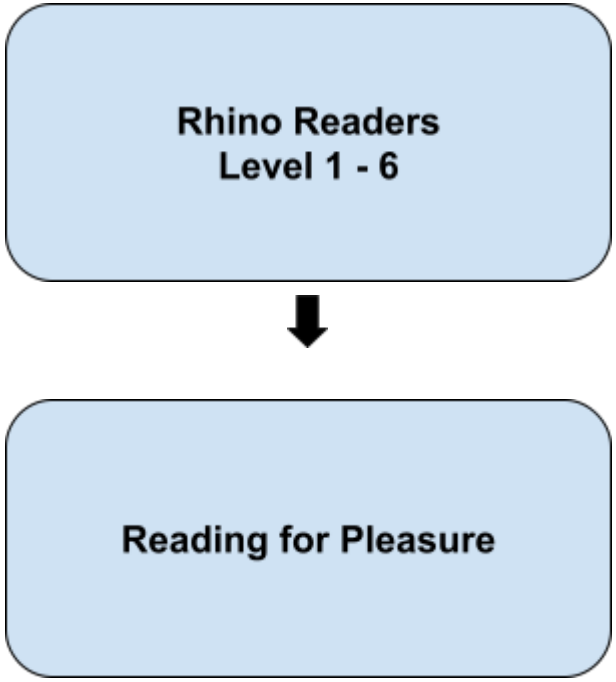
Appendix 1 - English Themes and Styles

Half Term	Theme	Style of Text
Autumn 1	**Week 1 &2** - Returning to School - Everyone's Welcome **Week 3 &4** - Author's - Roald Dahl **Week 5 & 6** - Black History Month **Week 7** -Interfaith Week - Creation Stories	**Fiction:** Diary/Recount Description **Non-fiction:** Explanation Letter Leaflet
Autumn 2	**Week 1** -Remembrance **Week 2 &3**- Fairy Tales/Traditional Stories **Week 4 & 5**- Anti - Bullying **Week 6** - Children in Need **Week 7 &8** - Christmas Advert	**Fiction:** Poetry Narratives **Non-fiction:** Advert Vlog Letter Poster
Spring 1	**Week 1 &2** - Everyone's Welcome **Week 3 &4** - Biomes/Geographical **Week 5** - Countries - Winter Olympics **Week 6** - Children's Mental Health Week	**Fiction:** Description Graphic novel **Non-fiction:** Autobiographies Instructions Non-chronological report
Spring 2	**Week 1** - Online Safety **Week 2** - World Book Day **Week 3** - Science Week **Week 4 & 5** - Shakespeare - playscripts	Narrative Playscripts **Non-fiction:** Explanation Book reviews
Summer 1	**Week 1 - 3** - Enterprise/Jobs and Careers/Aspirations **Week 4 - 5 -** Environmental Week **Week 6** - History	**Fiction:** Narrative Description **Non-fiction:** Letter Newspaper report Persuasion/Debate
Summer 2	**Week 1** - Everyone's Welcome **Week 2** - Sports - World Cup **Week 3 and 4** - Change and transition **Week 5** - Pobble/Picture This - creative writing	**Fiction:** Poetry Diary/Recount **Non-fiction:** Non-chronological report Interviews Leaflet

Across the school, the same theme will be followed and teachers will decide which style of text they feel is most appropriate for the topic and their class.

Teachers will make note of the styles they cover across the year to ensure the children are exposed to a variety of styles and their features.

Appendix 2 - Spelling Progression



Appendix 3 - Reading Progression