Curriculum Policy

September 2026

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1 Mission Statement

1.1 At Holme Court Derby, we believe every child deserves the right environment to thrive. We nurture meaningful connections, inspire curiosity and build courage, enabling each young person to discover their strengths, find their voice and prepare for a successful future

1.2 We encourage every pupil to:

1.2.1 Be Connected Build positive relationships, understand themselves and contribute to their community.

1.2.2 Be Curious Develop a love of learning, ask questions, explore the world and discover their strengths.

1.2.3 Be Courageous Embrace challenge, develop resilience and believe in their ability to succeed.

2 Our School Aims

2.1 At Holme Court Derby we aim to:

2.1.1 Help every pupil feel safe, valued and successful.

2.1.2 Develop confidence, resilience and independence through strong relationships and high expectations.

2.1.3 Provide engaging learning experiences that inspire a love of learning and personal growth.

2.1.4 Deliver an ambitious curriculum through our Discover, Explore and Extend pathways.

2.1.5 Support pupils to achieve positive academic, personal and social outcomes.

2.1.6 Prepare young people for successful futures in education, employment, independent living and their communities.

3 Curriculum Vision

3.1 At Holme Court Derby, we recognise that our pupils arrive with diverse strengths, experiences and barriers to learning. Many pupils have experienced disrupted educational journeys and may have gaps in knowledge, confidence, communication, social understanding or emotional regulation.

3.2 Our curriculum is therefore designed to provide both support and ambition.

3.3 We believe that pupils should not be defined by their diagnosis or previous experiences. Instead, our curriculum provides a personalised pathway that develops confidence, independence and wellbeing whilst ensuring access to meaningful academic learning.

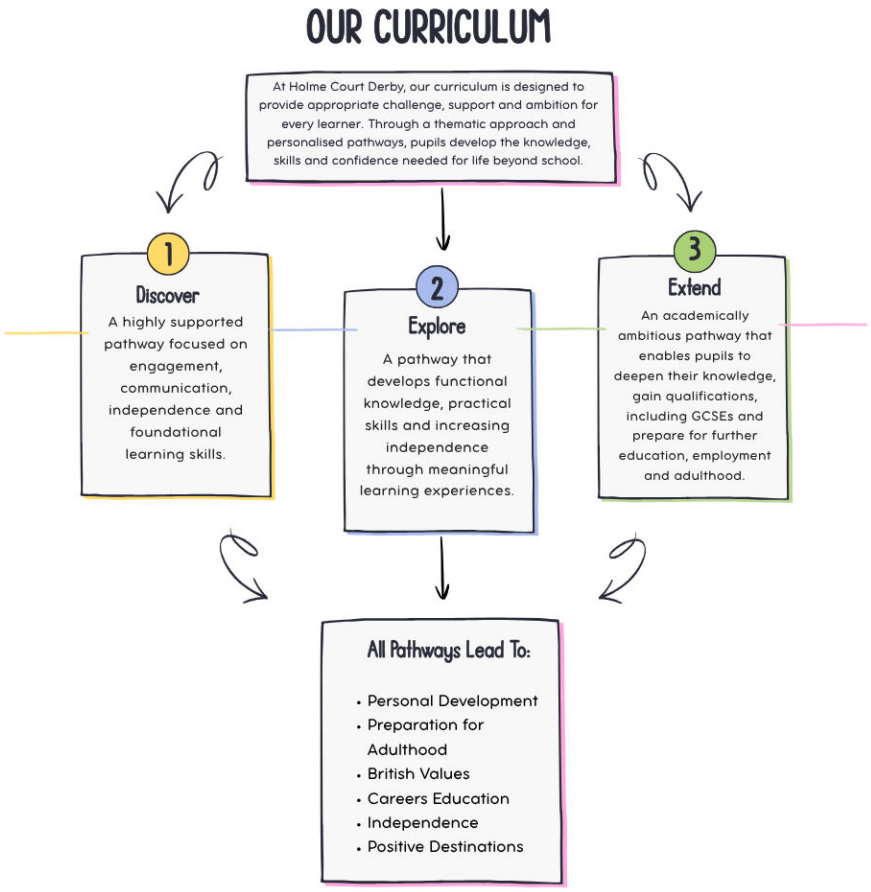
3.4 The curriculum is carefully sequenced to build knowledge, skills and understanding over time through repeated opportunities to revisit and deepen learning. We use a spiral approach which allows pupils to consolidate previous learning whilst making progress towards increasingly challenging outcomes.

4 Curriculum Pathways

4.1 To meet the needs of our diverse cohort, pupils access one of three curriculum pathways: Discover, Explore or Extend.

4.2 Placement within a pathway is not fixed. Pupils may move between the Discover, Explore and Extend pathways as their needs, confidence, attainment, independence and aspirations develop. Decisions regarding pathway placement are informed by ongoing assessment, EHCP outcomes, pupil progress, professional judgement and consultation with parents/carers.

4.3 The pathway model provides a clear progression journey from entry to destination, ensuring pupils are supported to develop increasing independence, knowledge, skills and readiness for adulthood.



5 Discover

5.1 The Discover pathway is designed for pupils working significantly below age-related expectations who require a highly scaffolded curriculum.

5.2 Learning focuses on:

5.2.1 Communication and interaction

5.2.2 Emotional regulation

5.2.3 Social understanding

5.2.4 Independence

5.2.5 Functional literacy and numeracy

5.2.6 Exploration of the world around them

5.3 Learning is practical, experiential and highly supported.

5.4 Success is measured through increasing independence, engagement and application of skills across different contexts.

6 Explore

6.1 The Explore pathway bridges functional and academic learning.

6.2 Pupils follow a broad curriculum that develops:

- 6.2.1 Literacy and communication
- 6.2.2 Mathematical understanding
- 6.2.3 Scientific enquiry
- 6.2.4 Personal development
- 6.2.5 Independence skills
- 6.2.6 Community awareness

6.3 Learning remains highly structured and personalised but includes increasing opportunities for problem solving collaboration and independent working.

6.4 The Explore pathway prepares pupils for functional qualifications and further academic progression where appropriate.

7 Extend

7.1 The Extend pathway provides an academically ambitious curriculum for pupils who can access age-related content with appropriate SEND adaptations.

7.2 Pupils follow a curriculum aligned closely to the National Curriculum and may progress towards qualifications including:

- 7.2.1 Entry Level Certificates
- 7.2.2 Functional Skills
- 7.2.3 GCSEs
- 7.2.4 Other accredited outcomes

7.3 Whilst academic achievement is important, the Extend pathway remains fully personalised and incorporates therapeutic support, emotional regulation and preparation for adulthood.

8 The Extend Pathway Model

8.1 In most subjects, pupils follow a two-year rolling curriculum cycle which ensures progression whilst remaining flexible enough to accommodate pupils joining at different points.

8.2 For Mathematics, Computer Science and Science, a modified model is used.

8.3 These subjects contain a greater volume of specialised knowledge and, for pupils working towards GCSE qualifications, require careful sequencing of content. Pupils therefore study broad scientific and mathematical concepts through the curriculum cycles before progressing to more advanced and qualification-focused content as required.

8.4 This approach enables pupils to:

- 8.4.1 Build secure foundational knowledge.
- 8.4.2 Revisit and strengthen learning through a spiral curriculum.

8.4.3 Access Entry Level qualifications where appropriate.

8.4.4 Progress towards GCSE outcomes without curriculum gaps.

8.4.5 Join the school at different ages without disadvantage.

8.5 This ensures academic ambition whilst maintaining accessibility for pupils with SEND.

9 Curriculum Drivers

9.1 Our curriculum is driven by our values:

9.1.1 Be Connected

9.1.2 Be Curious

9.1.3 Be Courageous

10 Curriculum Pillars

10.1 Our curriculum is built upon four pillars:

10.1.1 Academic Knowledge & Skills

10.1.2 Communication

10.1.3 Regulation & Wellbeing

10.1.4 Independence & Futures

11 Core Principles of our Curriculum

11.1 The curriculum at Holme Court Derby is designed around a set of core principles that reflect our mission, values and aims. These principles underpin curriculum design, teaching, learning and assessment across all pathways.

11.2 High Expectations for All

11.2.1 We believe that every pupil can achieve and make meaningful progress. Our curriculum is ambitious and personalised, ensuring that support and adaptations remove barriers to learning without placing a ceiling on achievement. Pupils are challenged appropriately and encouraged to develop confidence, resilience and independence.

11.3 Personalised Pathways

11.3.1 Through our Discover, Explore and Extend pathways, learning is matched to pupils' individual strengths, needs, prior learning and aspirations. Pathways provide an appropriate level of support and challenge and are reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to meet pupils' evolving needs and aspirations.

11.4 Communication at the Centre

11.4.1 Communication is fundamental to learning, relationships and independence. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop expressive and receptive communication, social interaction, vocabulary development and self-advocacy across all subjects and experiences.

11.5 Wellbeing and Readiness to Learn

11.5.1 We recognise that pupils learn best when they feel safe, understood and supported. Emotional wellbeing, self-regulation and positive relationships are therefore central to our curriculum and daily practice.

11.6 A Broad, Balanced and Ambitious Curriculum

11.6.1 Pupils access a curriculum that develops academic knowledge, personal development, creativity, physical wellbeing and preparation for adulthood. Learning is carefully sequenced to enable pupils to build upon prior knowledge and develop increasing depth of understanding over time.

11.7 Preparation for Adulthood

11.7.1 Preparation for adulthood is embedded throughout the curriculum from the moment pupils join the school. Learning supports the development of independence, decision-making, community participation, employability and life skills, enabling pupils to achieve successful futures.

11.8 Learning That Builds Over Time

11.8.1 Our curriculum follows a spiral model in which key knowledge, skills and vocabulary are revisited and extended. This approach supports retention, consolidation and long-term progression whilst ensuring pupils can successfully access increasingly challenging learning.

11.9 Partnership and Multi-Disciplinary Working

11.9.1 We work closely with families and external professionals to ensure that learning reflects each pupil's needs and aspirations. Therapeutic recommendations, EHCP outcomes and specialist advice are embedded within curriculum planning and delivery where appropriate.

12 Curriculum Organisation

12.1 The Holme Court Derby curriculum is delivered through a broad range of subject disciplines, adapted appropriately through the Discover, Explore and Extend pathways.

12.2 The curriculum includes:

12.2.1 English
12.2.2 Mathematics
12.2.3 Science
12.2.4 Personal Development (including PSHE, RSE and Careers)
12.2.5 Humanities
12.2.6 Computing
12.2.7 Creative Arts
12.2.8 Physical Education
12.2.9 Preparation for Adulthood

12.3 Curriculum delivery is supported through long-term curriculum maps, medium-term planning and subject-specific schemes of work, to ensure progression in knowledge, skills and vocabulary. Curriculum leaders ensure that learning builds over time through a spiral approach, enabling pupils to revisit, consolidate and extend prior learning.

12.4 Further information regarding individual subjects can be found within subject curriculum maps and schemes of work.

13 Personal Development

13.1 Personal Development is central to the Holme Court Derby curriculum and supports our mission to prepare pupils for successful futures.

13.2 Our Personal Development curriculum enables pupils to develop the knowledge, skills, confidence and understanding required to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives. Through a carefully sequenced programme of learning, pupils are supported to understand themselves, develop positive relationships and become active members of their communities.

13.3 Personal Development is delivered through:

- 13.3.1 Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education
- 13.3.2 Relationships Education
- 13.3.3 Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)
- 13.3.4 Careers Education
- 13.3.5 Preparation for Adulthood
- 13.3.6 British Values
- 13.3.7 Online Safety
- 13.3.8 Enrichment Opportunities

13.4 The curriculum supports pupils to develop:

- 13.4.1 Self-awareness and self-advocacy
- 13.4.2 Emotional literacy and self-regulation
- 13.4.3 Positive relationships and communication skills
- 13.4.4 Physical and mental wellbeing
- 13.4.5 Personal safety and risk awareness
- 13.4.6 Respect for diversity and individual differences
- 13.4.7 Community participation and citizenship
- 13.4.8 Employability and life skills
- 13.4.9 Independence and resilience

13.5 British Values are explicitly promoted throughout the curriculum through opportunities to develop understanding of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths, beliefs and backgrounds.

13.6 Learning is carefully adapted to meet pupils' developmental, communication and emotional needs whilst ensuring access to age-appropriate content. Personal Development promotes the school's values of Be Connected, Be Curious and Be Courageous, helping pupils to become confident, responsible and successful young people.

14 PSHE

14.1 Personal Development is central to the Holme Court Derby curriculum and underpins our mission to prepare pupils for successful futures.

14.2 Through PSHE, Relationships Education, RSE, Careers Education and Preparation for Adulthood, pupils develop:

14.2.1 Self-awareness and self-advocacy
14.2.2 Emotional literacy and regulation
14.2.3 Positive relationships
14.2.4 Physical and mental wellbeing
14.2.5 Online safety
14.2.6 Community participation
14.2.7 Economic understanding
14.2.8 Employability skills
14.2.9 Independence and life skills

14.3 Learning is carefully adapted to meet the developmental, communication and emotional needs of pupils while ensuring that all pupils access age-appropriate content.

14.4 Our Personal Development curriculum is explicitly linked to our values of Be Connected, Be Curious and Be Courageous.

15 Preparation for Adulthood

15.1 Preparation for adulthood is embedded throughout the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to make choices, solve problems, take responsibility and develop the skills required for successful adult life.

15.2 Preparation for Adulthood is structured around four key areas:

15.2.1 Employment
15.2.2 Independent Living
15.2.3 Community Inclusion
15.2.4 Good Health

15.3 Preparation for Adulthood outcomes are identified within curriculum planning and reviewed through assessment and EHCP review processes.

15.4 Teaching approaches are informed by assessment, therapeutic recommendations, EHCP outcomes and the individual needs of pupils. Through high-quality teaching, pupils are supported to make meaningful progress across academic, personal and social domains.

15.5 **Le**arning opportunities support pupils to develop:

15.5.1 Independent living skills
15.5.2 Communication skills
15.5.3 Travel and community awareness
15.5.4 Employability skills
15.5.5 Decision making
15.5.6 Self-advocacy
15.5.7 Healthy relationships
15.5.8 Personal safety

15.6 The development of these skills begins from the point pupils join Holme Court Derby and increases in complexity throughout their educational journey.

16 Teaching and Learning Principles

16.1 Teaching and learning at Holme Court Derby are underpinned by high expectations, strong relationships and an understanding of each pupil's individual strengths and needs.

16.2 Staff use evidence-informed approaches to ensure pupils are supported, challenged and enabled to achieve success.

16.3 Teaching across the curriculum is characterised by:

16.3.1 Adaptive Practice

(a) Learning is adapted to remove barriers and provide appropriate levels of support and challenge whilst maintaining ambitious outcomes for all pupils.

16.3.2 Communication-Rich Classrooms

(a) Teachers explicitly develop communication skills through modelling, discussion, vocabulary instruction, visual supports and opportunities for meaningful interaction.

16.3.3 Structured and Predictable Learning

(a) Consistent routines, clear expectations and well-sequenced learning support pupils to feel safe, engaged and ready to learn.

16.3.4 Explicit Teaching

(a) New knowledge and skills are introduced through modelling, explanation, guided practice and opportunities for independent application.

16.3.5 Retrieval and Overlearning

(a) Key knowledge, vocabulary and skills are revisited regularly to strengthen understanding, improve retention and promote long-term learning.

16.3.6 Practical and Experiential Learning

(a) Learning is made meaningful through practical activities, investigation, community experiences, educational visits and real-life contexts.

16.3.7 Wellbeing and Regulation

(a) Teaching takes account of pupils' emotional wellbeing and readiness to learn. Staff support pupils to develop emotional literacy, self-regulation and resilience.

16.4 All staff are continually:

16.4.1 Actively encouraging pupils to act on their own interests through the use of open questions, and positive encouragement.

16.4.2 Planning for the needs and interests of individual pupils;

16.4.3 Catering for different learning styles;

16.4.4 Using pupil's individual assessments and observations as a basis for planning.

16.4.5 Providing a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities;

16.4.6 Providing a wide variety of practical activities and experiences on a daily basis, both indoors and outdoors.

16.4.7 Developing a good relationship with parents and cares to gain a deeper understanding of the pupils and incorporating this information in planning.

16.4.8 Actively valuing diversity within our setting and using resources which promote positive images of all the different groups of adults and children living within our society.

16.4.9 The entire curriculum at Holme Court encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes about themselves and about all people who make up the world around them.

17 Assessment

17.1 Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning at Holme Court Derby. It is used to identify starting points, inform teaching, monitor progress and ensure that pupils achieve ambitious outcomes.

17.2 Assessment arrangements are aligned to the Discover, Explore and Extend pathway model and recognise both academic and non-academic achievement. Assessment information is used to identify next steps, review pathway placement and inform curriculum planning.

17.3 Where appropriate, assessment frameworks include descriptors such as Emerging, Developing and Secure to support identification of progress over time.

17.4 Assessment takes place continuously through:

17.4.1 Baseline assessment

17.4.2 Daily formative assessment

17.4.3 Observation

17.4.4 Questioning and discussion

17.4.5 Scrutiny of pupil work

17.4.6 Practical demonstrations of learning

17.4.7 Subject-specific assessment

17.4.8 Progress towards EHCP outcomes

17.4.9 Pupil voice and engagement

17.5 Assessment information is used to:

17.5.1 Identify individual strengths and areas for development

17.5.2 Adapt teaching and learning

17.5.3 Plan next steps

17.5.4 Monitor progress over time

17.5.5 Evaluate curriculum effectiveness

17.5.6 Support annual reviews and reporting to parents and carers

17.6 Progress is measured against individual starting points while maintaining high expectations for all pupils. Success is recognised through academic achievement, personal development, communication, independence and preparation for adulthood outcomes.

17.7 Curriculum implementation is monitored through lesson visits, work scrutiny, assessment review, pupil voice, staff feedback and quality assurance activities undertaken by senior leaders.

17.8 Assessment approaches may be adapted to ensure that pupils are able to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding in ways that are appropriate to their individual needs and strengths.

18 Allocation of Timetable to each Subject Area

18.1 Teachers are expected to be flexible with the timetable to suit the needs of extended lessons in line with the needs of the pupils and to make cross-curricular links between different subjects.

19 School Trips and Visits

19.1 Appropriate school trips and visits are arranged to enrich and enhance pupils understanding of the curriculum they follow. Parents receive a letter detailing events and trips taking place, newsletters and items of news.

20 Review

20.1 This policy is a working document and therefore is open to change and restructuring as and when the need arises. Use of reasonable force

21 Version control

Date of adoption of this policy	September 2026
Date of last review of this policy	September 2026
Date for next review of this policy	September 2027
Policy owner (School)	Head

Appendix 1 Curriculum Adaptations and SEN Reasonable Adjustments

1.1 Holme Court Derby provides a highly adapted curriculum that enables autistic pupils with a wide range of learning profiles to access high-quality education. While the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (where applicable) and the National Curriculum provide the basis of our curriculum, learning is personalised to reflect each pupil's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), developmental profile, strengths, interests and individual barriers to learning.

1.2 Individualised Curriculum Planning

1.2.1 Each pupil has an individual learning profile informed by:

(a) EHCP outcomes
(b) Educational psychology advice
(c) Speech and Language Therapy recommendations
(d) Occupational Therapy recommendations
(e) Functional assessments
(f) Teacher assessment
(g) Parent/carer contributions
(h) Pupil voice where appropriate

1.2.2 Planning focuses on both academic achievement and preparation for lifelong independence.

1.3 Communication Adaptations

1.3.1 Teaching is adapted to meet differing communication needs by providing:

(a) Visual timetables
(b) Now and Next boards
(c) Symbols and picture supports
(d) Written instructions alongside verbal explanations
(e) Simplified language
(f) Chunked instructions
(g) Additional processing time
(h) Predictable routines
(i) Alternative methods of recording
(j) AAC (where appropriate)
(k) Makaton or PECS where required
(l) Opportunities for supported communication

1.4 Sensory Adjustments

1.4.1 Learning environments are adapted to minimise sensory overload and maximise engagement.

1.4.2 Adjustments may include:

(a) low arousal classrooms

(b) reduced visual clutter
(c) controlled lighting
(d) noise reduction strategies
(e) ear defenders where appropriate
(f) sensory breaks
(g) movement breaks
(h) access to sensory equipment
(i) flexible seating
(j) wobble cushions
(k) standing desks
(l) weighted resources (where professionally advised)
(m) sensory circuits
(n) individual sensory regulation plans

1.5 Executive Function Supports

1.5.1 Teaching explicitly supports pupils who experience difficulties with:

(a) planning
(b) organisation
(c) working memory
(d) sequencing
(e) initiation
(f) task completion
(g) time management

1.5.2 Strategies include:

(a) task breakdown
(b) checklists
(c) colour coding
(d) visual organisers
(e) timers
(f) modelling
(g) scaffolded tasks
(h) explicit routines
(i) repetition
(j) overlearning

1.6 Social Understanding

1.6.1 Teaching incorporates explicit instruction in:

(a) social communication
(b) emotional literacy

(c) perspective taking
(d) flexible thinking
(e) recognising emotions
(f) friendship skills
(g) conflict resolution
(h) self-advocacy

1.6.2 Learning opportunities are carefully structured rather than relying upon incidental learning.

1.7 Behaviour as Communication

1.7.1 The curriculum recognises that behaviour may communicate unmet needs.

1.7.2 Teaching staff:

(a) identify underlying causes
(b) use Positive Behaviour Support principles
(c) teach replacement skills
(d) promote emotional regulation
(e) avoid punitive approaches
(f) use restorative conversations appropriate to developmental level

1.8 Flexible Teaching Approaches

1.8.1 Teachers use a range of evidence-informed approaches including:

(a) TEACCH principles
(b) structured teaching
(c) direct instruction
(d) modelling
(e) overlearning
(f) multisensory learning
(g) practical activities
(h) visual learning
(i) experiential learning
(j) precision teaching (where appropriate)
(k) play-based learning where developmentally appropriate
(l) small group teaching
(m) 1:1 intervention where required

1.9 Curriculum Flexibility

1.9.1 The curriculum may be adapted by:

(a) reducing cognitive load
(b) adjusting lesson pace
(c) pre-teaching vocabulary

(d) overlearning key concepts
(e) alternative methods of demonstrating learning
(f) practical rather than written outcomes
(g) reduced written recording
(h) personalised success criteria
(i) adapted homework expectations
(j) differentiated resources
(k) scaffolded learning tasks

1.9.2 Pupils may work significantly below, at or above age-related expectations depending on their individual profile.

1.10 Autism-Specific Learning

1.10.1 Additional curriculum priorities include:

(a) emotional regulation
(b) interoception
(c) understanding autism
(d) self-advocacy
(e) independence
(f) community safety
(g) travel training (where appropriate)
(h) self-care
(i) life skills
(j) functional communication
(k) problem solving
(l) resilience
(m) coping with change
(n) managing uncertainty

1.11 Therapeutic Integration

1.11.1 Therapeutic recommendations are embedded throughout the curriculum.

1.11.2 Where appropriate, learning incorporates:

(a) speech and language targets
(b) occupational therapy programmes
(c) sensory regulation strategies
(d) emotional wellbeing interventions
(e) attention and listening programmes
(f) fine and gross motor development
(g) social communication programmes

1.12 Assessment Adaptations

1.12.1 Assessment is flexible and may include:

(a) observation
(b) photographs
(c) practical demonstration
(d) verbal responses
(e) structured discussion
(f) work samples
(g) developmental assessment
(h) National Curriculum assessment where appropriate
(i) EYFS assessment where appropriate
(j) individual progress against EHCP outcomes

1.12.2 Success is measured against pupils' individual starting points as well as national expectations where appropriate.

1.13 Reasonable Adjustments

1.13.1 Reasonable adjustments may include:

(a) additional adult support
(b) adapted timetables
(c) reduced transitions
(d) movement breaks
(e) sensory regulation opportunities
(f) quiet workspaces
(g) safe spaces
(h) alternative recording methods
(i) assistive technology
(j) visual supports
(k) extended processing time
(l) modified assessment arrangements
(m) personalised behaviour support plans

1.14 High Expectations

1.14.1 While learning is personalised, the school maintains high aspirations for every pupil. Staff have ambitious expectations and seek to develop each pupil's academic achievement, communication, independence, wellbeing and preparation for adulthood through a curriculum that is appropriately challenging, inclusive and responsive to individual need.

1.15 Additional elements:

1.15.1 Our curriculum:

(a) is designed using the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) where appropriate, reducing barriers before individual adaptations are needed.

(b) explicitly teaches self-regulation using evidence-informed approaches (e.g. Zones of Regulation or similar frameworks where appropriate).

(c) embeds opportunities to generalise skills across different environments and contexts, as autistic pupils may not naturally transfer learning from one setting to another.

(d) includes planned preparation for transitions (within lessons, between activities, across the school day, and into secondary education).

(e) incorporates pupils' special interests as motivators and vehicles for engagement without allowing them to narrow the curriculum.

(f) recognises that autistic pupils may have uneven cognitive profiles, with significant strengths in some curriculum areas alongside substantial support needs in others.