

Curriculum Policy

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1 Introduction

This policy, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all learners, including those learners with an EHC plan; and do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Doucecroft School undertakes to provide a full-time supervised education for learners of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996),

- Which gives learners experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education;
- That learners acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills;
- Personal, social, health and economic education which:
 - Reflects the school's aim and ethos; and
 - Encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act(a);
- For learners receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that:
 - Is presented in an impartial manner;
 - Enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - Helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential;
- Where the school has learners above compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs;
- That all learners have the opportunity to learn and make progress; and
- Effective preparation of learners for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

Doucecroft School is dedicated to providing outstanding education with an 'Empowering Curriculum' that is broad, balanced, irresistible and learner centred.

Consistent with our vision, we aim for our learners to have the best opportunity to realise their full potential by building their academic, creative, social, emotional skills and resilience so that they can become the best version of themselves in modern British society. Therefore, we work with learners and parents/carers to ensure that the curriculum takes individual differences into account and that it provides continuity and progression.

2 Our Curriculum Aims

All children have a right to a broad, balanced and relevant education which provides continuity and progression and takes individual differences into account. Learners at Doucecroft School will have access to a curriculum based on the National Curriculum as well as being tailored to individual needs. In addition, we focus on the core differences that lie at the heart of autism. These include social interaction, managing uncertainty and change, and understanding and managing emotions.

At Doucecroft School, our curriculum involves academic learning, but our first priority is to work on these core differences to ensure learners are ready to learn.

Our aims are to:

- To build on learners' interests and help them develop an appreciation for human creativity and achievement.
- To promote a positive attitude towards learning, so that learners enjoy coming to school, are motivated and acquire the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life.
- To develop confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.
- To provide opportunities that inspire and enable learners to reach their full potential; this includes exposing learners to knowledge which is outside of their daily experiences.
- Provide a broad and balanced education for all learners that's coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge for skills and future learning and employment.
- Enable learners to develop knowledge, understand concepts and acquire skills, and be able to choose and apply these in relevant situations.
- Support learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- It is ambitious but flexible enough to help our learners make sense of the world around them.
- To develop learner's sense of responsibility for their own learning and behaviour through promoting fundamental British values.

These curriculum aims are underpinned by our core curriculum drivers:



Crucially, these values are embedded in the rationale for curriculum choice at all key stages, informing the way the curriculum is implemented and the outcomes that it is designed to achieve. They are designed to bring our aims and values to life and meet the needs of all our learners.

3 Roles & Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

The Board of Trustees will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets.
- The school is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes English, maths, science and (subject to providing the right to withdraw) religious education, and enough teaching time is provided for learners to cover the requirements of the funding agreement.
- Proper provision is made for learners with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN).

- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements.
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum.
- Learners from year 7 onwards are provided with independent, impartial careers guidance, and that this is appropriately resourced.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual learners will be met.
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the board of Trustees.
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements.

Other Staff

Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy, ensuring that appropriate plans and schemes of work are provided, that takes into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all learners.

4 Organisation & Planning

Curriculum Entitlement

All learners have access to the curriculum regardless of gender, race, cultural background or any physical or sensory disability. Where the use of resources and materials proves difficult because of a disability, the school will try to provide specialist equipment and adult support, so that the learner may have full access. In some cases, learners may need one to one support in accessing specific areas of the curriculum. In all cases the unique nature of a learner's autism must be considered to ensure maximum accessibility.

Curriculum Design

We recognise the need to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which is prioritised and relevant to the needs of all learners. This means establishing clear starting points for each young person and planning and delivering a curriculum that meets individual needs and interests. We carefully consider the next steps and end points in the planning to ensure that learners are provided with the best possible learning opportunities, preparing them for the next stages of their lives. We, therefore, must be flexible in our timetabling, school day timings and use of support staff.

Learners at Doucecroft do not follow the National Curriculum programme of Study in its entirety, however reference is made to the National Curriculum.

The curriculum delivers full-time supervised education for learners of compulsory school age, encompassing linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human, social, physical, aesthetic, and creative education. It is designed to develop essential speaking, listening, literacy, and numeracy skills. Where applicable, provisions for teaching written and spoken English are made, supporting learners whose principal language of instruction is not English.

Additionally, the curriculum promotes personal, social, health, and economic education, reflecting the school's ethos and fostering respect for all individuals in accordance with the protected characteristics

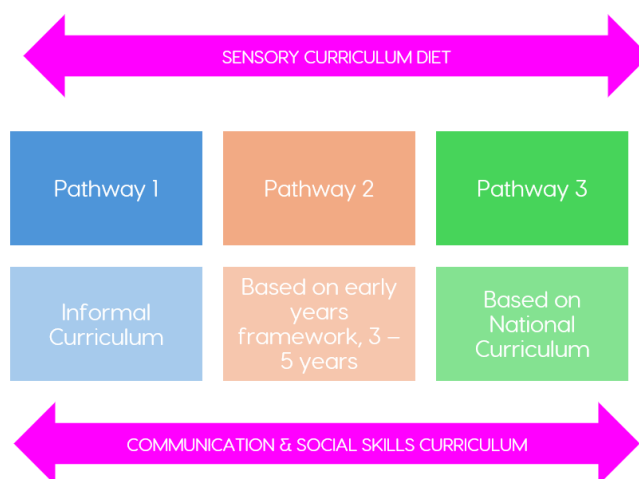
of the 2010 Act. For learners in secondary education, the school provides comprehensive careers guidance, facilitating informed decision-making and the pursuit of potential. Importantly, the curriculum ensures that all learners have opportunities to learn, progress, and prepare effectively for the responsibilities and experiences of life within British society, while upholding the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect.

Primary Department

Within primary the curriculum approach is through a thematic approach. Thematic Learning is an instructional method of teaching where the learners work within a specific theme/topic title each half term but integrate a range of subjects together so that they can link their learning across the subjects and build a greater depth of understanding.

Thematic learning is based on the idea that knowledge acquisition is efficient among learners when they learn in the context of a coherent and holistic way and when they can associate whatever they learn to their surrounding and real-life examples. Thematic instruction seeks to put the cognitive skills such as reading, thinking, memorising, and writing in the context of a real life situation under the broad aim to allow creative exploration.

There are 3 curriculum pathways within the Primary department:



Learners on **Pathway 1** are working consistently and over time below or very near the start of their national curriculum. The equals informal curriculum is used as a basis for these learners as they benefit from a different curriculum as opposed to differentiated, because the way such learners learn is different, and often very, very different from neuro-typical, conventional developing learners for whom the national curriculum was designed. The Equals Informal Curriculum offers six schemes of work (SoW), namely My Communication, My Sensory Play, My Physical Wellbeing, My Independence, My Creativity and My Outdoor Learning. The curriculum for learners on Pathway 1 is designed to meet the needs of learners with severe and complex needs who are working below subject specific learning. The curriculum is used to enhance learning and promote wellbeing in learners across school who present with sensory difficulties and those who learn best via a multi- sensory approach. Activities that will promote motivation and engagement based on their interests will be addressed through termly targets, based on EHCP outcomes.

Learners on **Pathway 2** access a curriculum based on the Framework for the Early Years Curriculum. The framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. Three areas, known as the prime areas, are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building learners' capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language.
- Physical development.
- Personal, social and emotional development.

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy.
- Mathematics.
- Understanding the world.
- Expressive arts and design.

Staff plan activities and experiences for learners that enable learners to develop and learn effectively. To do this, staff working with the youngest learners are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas. Staff also consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each learner in their care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. All our learners have a special educational need or disability, staff ensure specialist support is in place and staff reflect on the different ways that learners learn and include these in their practice.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and learner-initiated activities. Staff respond to each learner's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. To learn well, learners must approach opportunities with curiosity, energy and enthusiasm. The 3 characteristics of effective learning within Pathway 2 are playing and exploring, active learning and creative and critical thinking. Effective learning must be meaningful to the learner, so that they are able to use what they have learned and apply it in new situations.

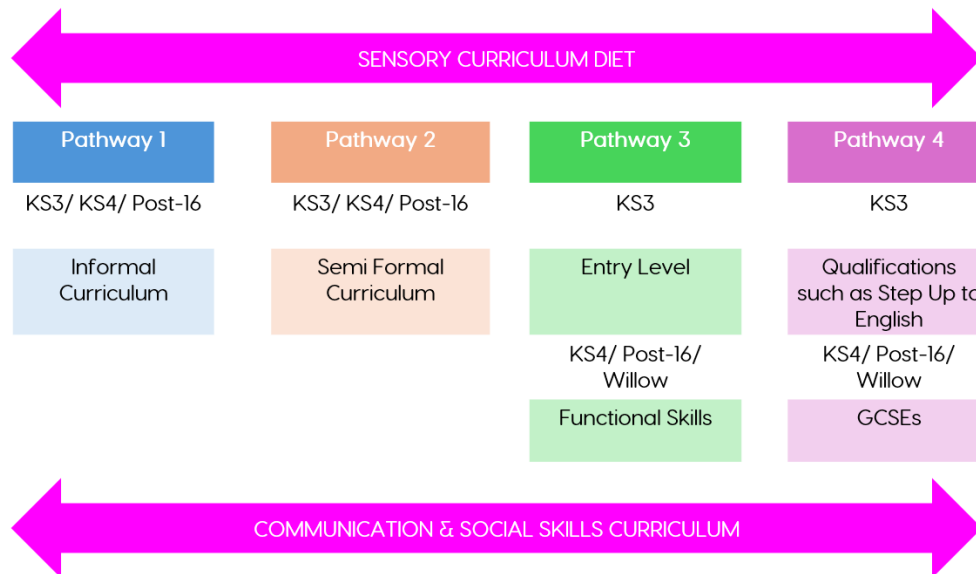
Learners on **Pathway 3** will access learning based on their abilities and current levels rather than age related expectations. There are opportunities to stretch and challenge learners in their learning, however, take into consideration individual learners' starting points and learning styles. Reference will be made to the National Curriculum. Our curriculum model enables learners' learning to be developed sequentially over time, where learning builds on from one milestone to another. Teaching sequences include opportunities to revisit learning to support the acquisition of knowledge into long term memory.

Whilst still based on a thematic approach the day is structured differently with subjects being placed on the timetable:

- English
- Maths
- Reading
- Theme
- Computing
- PSHE
- Science

Secondary & Transition Department

Within the secondary and transition department, the curriculum is organised into 4 pathways. Learners can access different pathways in different subjects and move between pathways as they move through the school.



Learners on **Pathway 1** access the Equals Informal curriculum.

Learners on **Pathway 2** access the Equals Semi-Formal Curriculum. Learners on **Pathways 3 and 4** in KS3 access content that links to the National Curriculum. The curriculum is adapted and differentiated for learners working within Pre-Key Stages. They will access the Equals Semi-Formal curriculum which is developmental in nature and open to personalisation. Learners start at the beginning of their learning journey and aim for the highest level of independence possible. The semi-formal curriculum is a multi-tiered curriculum approach which recognises that differentiation from the National Curriculum is not sufficient to meet the needs of these learners. Provision is based around the following core areas: communication, play and leisure, thinking and problem solving and independence. This is a learner centred and holistic curriculum and some of these areas run as threads through the whole curriculum. Additionally, learners will cover learning in music, dance, art, drama, the world about me, relationship and sex education (PSHE), outdoor school and physical well-being. Some learners may also study some maths and English such as following a phonics programme where this is relevant and beneficial.

In Transition, learners on **Pathway 3** will access Functional Skills and learners on **Pathway 4** will access GCSE's. Learners on Pathways 3 and 4 access subject specific learning; content is adapted and differentiated based on individual learner's ability and pathway. Reference is made to the National Curriculum.

Learners can access different pathways in different subjects and move between pathways as they move through the school.

Curriculum Intent

At Doucecroft, our curriculum is designed to maximise the learning experience offered by our school. We recognise that our learners have complex and varied learning difficulties and by providing a learner-centered curriculum; we aim to develop the skills and behaviours that will enable them to effectively access the curriculum and engage in learning through a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) approach. Curriculum is planned to ensure continuity and progression, supported by an on-going system of assessment, which informs the teaching and learning process. Our curriculum is

underpinned by the four key curriculum drivers. Each subject taught is supported by schemes of work, that takes into account the learners pathway, age and needs.

Our curriculum is tailored to meet individual needs. Outcomes from EHCPs are addressed through individual termly targets (ITTs). We recognise that our learners need a curriculum that is broad, balanced, personalised and enables them to work on the skills connected to a clearer understanding of non-verbal and verbal communication, social understanding and social behaviour, understanding and controlling their own emotions and thinking and behaving flexibly. We therefore use the SCERTS approach, when appropriate within these classes. Our intention is to use SCERTS to help provide the best possible provision for learners who are taught in the autism-specific classrooms. SCERTS is to be used as a framework which enables a range of interventions to be used in a holistic approach to autism (e.g. TEACCH, PECS, Intensive Interaction, Sensory Diets etc). SCERTS will be embedded within the delivery of the curriculum. As learners begin to move successfully through the SCERTS framework, they will be able to access other curriculum areas more fully. The SCERTS framework will be used in co-operation with teaching staff, speech and language therapist (SALT), occupational therapist (OT), music therapist, parents, and outside agencies when required. We consider SCERTS an important part of our curriculum and it will, therefore, form an important part of the Individual Student Plans (ISPs).

All aspects of a learner's day provide learning opportunities in key areas of the curriculum. The invisible curriculum consists of concepts informally and often unintentionally taught, for example thoughtfulness, honesty, respect for difference, moral principles, self-respect, independence, social expectations and behaviour are examples of this. These concepts are addressed through the curriculum for example in PSHE and citizenship lessons, however much of it is reflected in our daily practices and approaches. Staff play a key role in modeling positive behavior and expectations. Learners are provided with a wide range of opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and interests through engaging SMSC, British Values and Cultural Capital opportunities. The results of the invisible curriculum filter out into society as our learners grow into adults.

The curriculum is geared to provide opportunities that inspires and enables learners to reach their full potential based on their curriculum pathway so that they can live a safe, healthy and fulfilling life as possible. The learners in secondary and transition also access up-to-date careers guidance that is presented in an impartial manner; and enables them to make informed choices and helps them to fulfil their potential.

Curriculum Implementation

Long term plans are produced by the leaders of learning/specialist tutors. Class/Subject Teachers and Specialist tutors produce half termly medium-term plans based on the outcomes and pathways for each learner in each key stage and class. Teachers produce a weekly plan which indicates clear differentiation, meeting the needs of all learners in the class and incorporates key therapy input. Teachers are responsible for planning, delivering and assessing the curriculum in accordance with relevant policies and agreed assessment tools. Learner's individual SCERTS transactional supports should be incorporated into all lessons, for example, specific skills taught in communication and language lessons, but then generalised/used in other lessons (e.g., theme work). This should be evidenced in the teacher's planning.

Timetables are personalised, taking into consideration each learner's needs and interests are timetabled, reviewed half termly to ensure that learning opportunities are maximised and incorporate therapy needs as appropriate.

A wide range of resources are used to engage learners in learning and enable them to grasp concepts more easily through their first-hand experiences. Teachers consider the sequence of lessons when planning so that learners' knowledge and skills progress over time. All staff have high expectations of what learners can achieve and learners are suitably stretched in their learning.

5 Inclusion

Teachers set high expectations for all learners. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all learners, ensuring that there are no barriers to every learner achieving.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of learners whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help learners to develop their English, and to support learners to take part in all subjects.

Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEN policy and information report.

6 Monitoring Arrangements

The board of Trustees monitor whether the school is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a “broad and balanced curriculum” which includes the required subjects, through:

- School visits, meetings with the school council, through reports to Trustees etc.

The leaders of learning monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school by:

- Planning scrutinises, learning walks, book scrutinises, etc.

They also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by school management team. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full board of trustees.

7 Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Assessment policy
- Calculation Policy
- Careers Education Policy
- EAL Policy
- Examinations Policy
- SEN policy and information report
- Equality information and objectives
- Relationships and sex education policy
- SEND policy
- SMSC and British Values Policy
- Therapy Policy