



Outcomes
First Group

Curriculum Policy

THE HOLDEN SCHOOL**CURRICULUM POLICY****Ambitious • Personalised • Trauma-Informed • Preparation for Adulthood**

Curriculum Statement

Through ambitious, personalised and trauma-informed learning pathways, The Holden School equips every pupil with the knowledge, skills, confidence and qualifications needed to thrive in education, within their communities and throughout adult life.

Document Information

Item	Detail
School	The Holden School
Policy Title	Curriculum Policy
Policy Owner	Deputy Headteacher – Curriculum and Quality of Education
Author	Lyn Hackett
Version	1.0
Date Approved	September 2026
Review Cycle	Annual
Next Review Date	August 2027

Linked Policies

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- SEND Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Careers Education Policy
- RSE Policy
- PSHE Policy

The Holden School Curriculum

The Holden School is committed to providing a broad, balanced, relevant and ambitious curriculum that enables every pupil to achieve, thrive and prepare successfully for adulthood. Our curriculum is designed to meet the diverse needs of pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), whilst recognising that every learner follows an individual developmental pathway.

The curriculum promotes academic achievement, personal development, emotional wellbeing, communication, independence and positive participation in society. Through a flexible pathway model, pupils access learning opportunities that are appropriately matched to their strengths, interests, aspirations and special educational needs.

This policy reflects the requirements of the Independent School Standards (ISS), particularly Part 1: Quality of Education, which requires schools to provide a curriculum that gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. It also supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and promotes Fundamental British Values.

SAFE LEARN supports curriculum delivery through the lesson planning framework set out in the school's SAFE LEARN Lesson Planning Toolkit. Its guiding principle is 'Think: SAFE first, THEN learn'.

Curriculum Intent

At The Holden School, our curriculum is designed to enable every pupil to achieve, thrive and prepare successfully for adulthood regardless of their starting point, individual needs or previous educational experiences. We recognise that many of our pupils present with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) needs, Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and associated barriers to learning. Therefore, our curriculum is intentionally flexible, therapeutic, ambitious and highly personalised.

Our intent is to provide a curriculum that:

- Promotes academic achievement whilst prioritising emotional wellbeing and personal development.
- Develops the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary for lifelong learning.
- Enables pupils to become confident, independent and active participants in their communities.
- Supports pupils to achieve meaningful and recognised qualifications.
- Develops resilience, self-regulation and self-advocacy.
- Prepares pupils for further education, employment, training and independent living.
- Ensures all pupils experience success through appropriately challenging and accessible learning opportunities.
- Celebrates neurodiversity and individual strengths whilst providing targeted support for areas of need.
- Delivers the breadth of experience required by the Independent School Standards, including linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education.

Our curriculum is underpinned by the belief that positive relationships, emotional safety, high aspirations and meaningful learning experiences are essential prerequisites for successful outcomes.

SAFE LEARN and Lesson Planning

Teachers should incorporate SAFE LEARN into their lesson planning. The school's toolkit combines Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction with trauma-informed practice, connecting explicit teaching, modelling, guided practice and checking understanding with emotional safety, predictable routines and support for regulation.

The nine stages below reproduce the key questions and core strategies from the SAFE LEARN Lesson Planning Toolkit.

S – Safety First

How will I settle and regulate pupils, so they are ready to learn?

Meet & greet (use names, build connection); Quick check-in (scale/emoji/verbal); Calm, predictable start; Locate and support dysregulated pupils; Apply EHCP/IEP strategies; Low-stress, structured environment.

A – Anchor Learning

Do pupils know what they are learning, why it matters, and how to succeed?

Clear learning objective; Link to prior learning; Explain purpose and relevance; 2–3 steps to success; Retrieval activity.

F – Facilitate Learning

How will I teach this clearly so all pupils can access it?

Explicit modelling (“I do”); Small, manageable steps; Visuals and scaffolds; Pre-teach vocabulary; Adapt teaching to needs.

E – Engage (Guided Practice)

How will pupils practise successfully with support?

Guided practice (“we do”); Inclusive questioning; Pair/share or scaffolded tasks; Build early success; Purposeful TA deployment.

L – Look & Listen

How will I check understanding and respond in the moment?

Circulate with purpose; Check understanding (questioning, MWBs, live marking); Identify support/stretch needs; Spot disengagement; Adapt teaching immediately.

E – Encourage

What will I notice and reinforce to build success?

Specific praise; Reinforce progress; High expectations; Recognise independence; Fair, consistent rewards.

A – Apply

Can pupils demonstrate learning independently?

Independent task (“you do”); Tasks match modelling; Scaffold then remove support; Immediate feedback; Monitor participation.

R – Regulate

How will I respond if pupils become dysregulated?

Stay calm and consistent; Low tone, simple language; Offer choices; Provide regulation strategies; Positive reintegration.

N – Next Steps (Exit)

How will I secure learning and end the lesson positively?

Review/reflection; Link to objective; Exit checks; Preview next steps; Calm transition.

The toolkit's strategies include applying EHCP/IEP strategies, adapting teaching to needs, using visuals and scaffolds, and identifying support and stretch needs. These provide practical reference points when planning accessible learning across the school's curriculum pathways.

Curriculum Rationale

The Holden School serves pupils with a diverse range of learning, communication, social and emotional needs. As a specialist setting, we recognise that a traditional "one-size-fits-all" curriculum would not adequately meet the needs of all learners. For this reason, we have developed three flexible pathways that allow pupils to access a curriculum matched to their developmental stage, learning profile, aspirations and EHCP outcomes. The rationale for our curriculum model is based on four key principles:

1. Readiness to Learn

Many pupils arrive at The Holden School having experienced disrupted education, anxiety, emotionally based school avoidance, trauma, unmet needs or difficulties accessing previous educational settings. We recognise that engagement, emotional regulation and feelings of safety are often prerequisites to academic success.

Our curriculum therefore places significant emphasis on:

- Building trusting relationships
- Emotional literacy
- Self-regulation
- Communication skills
- Therapeutic and relational practice
- Positive behaviour support

These foundations enable pupils to re-engage with learning and develop confidence as successful learners.

2. Personalised Learning Pathways

Area	Explorers Pathway	Adventurers Pathway	Pioneers Pathway
Pathway Description	Designed for pupils requiring a highly personalised, semi-formal curriculum.	Designed for pupils who can engage with a more formal curriculum whilst still requiring significant support and adaptation.	Offers a curriculum closely aligned with mainstream educational expectations whilst maintaining specialist support and reasonable adjustments.
Curriculum Focus	• Communication and interaction • Emotional regulation • Independence skills • Functional literacy and numeracy • Personal development • Life skills • Community engagement • Preparation for adulthood	• Academic development • Functional application of skills • Personal development • Employability skills • Independence • Preparation for adulthood	• Academic achievement • Subject specialism • Qualifications and progression • Employability • Independence • Preparation for further education, training and employment
Curriculum Model	Based upon the EQUALS Semi-Formal Curriculum, adapted to meet individual developmental needs.	Based upon the EQUALS Formal Curriculum, incorporating subject-specialist teaching where appropriate.	Subject-based curriculum broadly aligned to mainstream expectations and delivered by specialist teachers where appropriate.
Core Curriculum Areas	• Communication • Literacy • Numeracy • Personal Development • Life Skills • Independence • Community Participation • Emotional Wellbeing	• English • Mathematics • Science • Personal Development • PSHE • Careers Education • Creative Arts • Physical Education • Computing • Preparation for Adulthood	• English Language and Literature • Mathematics • Science • Humanities • Computing • Creative Arts • Physical Education • PSHE • Careers Education

Area	Explorers Pathway	Adventurers Pathway	Pioneers Pathway
Qualifications and Accreditation	• ASDAN Towards Independence • Entry Level Functional Skills • Personal Development Awards (where appropriate)	• ASDAN Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) • BTEC Qualifications • Functional Skills (Entry Level 3–Level 2) • Unit Awards and vocational accreditation (where appropriate)	• GCSE Qualifications • BTEC Qualifications • ASDAN Short Courses • Functional Skills (where appropriate)
Primary Outcomes	Development of independence, communication, confidence and functional life skills across a range of contexts.	Development of transferable skills, employability, personal achievement and increasing independence.	Successful progression to further education, apprenticeships, employment and independent adulthood.
Typical Learner Profile	Pupils requiring significant curriculum adaptation, personalised learning and a developmental approach to learning.	Pupils able to access a structured formal curriculum with appropriate support and scaffolding.	Pupils able to access a broad, subject-based curriculum with qualifications comparable to mainstream provision.

We believe that pupils make the strongest progress when learning is appropriately matched to their needs and aspirations. Our pathway model allows for varying levels of curriculum structure, support and accreditation whilst maintaining ambitious expectations for all. The pathways are flexible rather than fixed, allowing movement as pupils' strengths, confidence and needs develop.

3. Preparation for Adulthood

Preparing pupils for adulthood is a central driver of curriculum design. We recognise that successful outcomes extend beyond academic attainment and include the development of practical life skills, independence, employability and community participation.

Across all pathways, pupils develop:

- Communication skills
- Functional literacy and numeracy
- Independent living skills
- Personal organisation
- Problem-solving skills

- Social understanding
- Employability skills
- Decision-making and self-advocacy

Learning is contextualised wherever possible to increase relevance, engagement and long-term retention.

Careers Education, Employability and Preparation for Adulthood

At The Holden School, we believe that all pupils are entitled to high-quality careers education, information, advice and guidance that enables them to make informed choices about their futures. Careers education is embedded throughout the curriculum, ensuring that pupils develop the knowledge, skills, confidence and aspirations required to move successfully into further education, training, employment and adult life.

Recognising the diverse strengths, interests and needs of our pupils, careers education is delivered in a personalised, aspirational and inclusive manner. Opportunities are carefully adapted to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their starting points, can develop an understanding of the world of work and their potential role within it.

Careers Programme

The school provides a structured careers programme that is progressive and age appropriate, encompassing:

- Self-awareness, strengths and career interests.
- Understanding different occupations and employment sectors.
- Developing employability and transferable skills.
- Financial capability and independent living skills.
- Enterprise and entrepreneurship opportunities.
- Workplace expectations and professional behaviours.
- Further education, training, apprenticeships and employment routes.
- Preparation for adulthood and community participation.

Careers education is delivered through PSHE, curriculum subjects, enrichment activities, transition planning and dedicated careers learning opportunities.

Employer Encounters

Pupils are provided with meaningful opportunities to engage with employers, employees and representatives from a range of occupational sectors. These encounters are designed to broaden aspirations, increase understanding of employment opportunities and help pupils make informed decisions about future pathways.

Employer encounters may include:

- Visiting speakers and workplace ambassadors.
- Enterprise events.
- Workplace visits and tours.
- Mock interviews and employability workshops.
- Partnerships with local businesses and community organisations.

Where necessary, reasonable adjustments and additional support are provided to ensure all pupils can participate fully and confidently.

Work-Related Learning

The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop practical employability skills through meaningful work-related learning experiences. These experiences are designed to develop confidence, independence, responsibility and transferable skills relevant to adult life.

Opportunities may include:

- Enterprise and fundraising projects.
- Vocational learning programmes.
- Community-based activities.
- Work experience placements.
- Supported internships and vocational tasters where appropriate.
- Volunteering opportunities.
- Travel training and independent living activities.

Work-related learning is personalised according to each pupil's age, needs, aspirations and level of readiness, ensuring that experiences are purposeful, accessible and relevant.

Gatsby Benchmarks

Where appropriate, the school uses the Gatsby Benchmarks as a framework for evaluating and developing careers provision. Whilst recognising the specialist nature of our setting and the individual needs of our pupils, we are committed to providing careers education that:

- Raises aspirations and broadens horizons.
- Supports informed decision making.
- Links learning to future opportunities.
- Provides encounters with employers and education providers.
- Offers personalised careers guidance.
- Promotes successful transition into adulthood.

The school regularly reviews its careers provision to ensure it remains relevant, inclusive and responsive to pupils' changing needs and aspirations.

Transition Planning

Effective transition planning is a key element of our curriculum and preparation for adulthood offer. We recognise that successful transitions require careful planning, collaboration and personalised support.

Transition planning begins early and includes:

- Identification of long-term aspirations and destinations.
- Annual review discussions and EHCP planning.
- Development of independence and self-advocacy skills.
- Visits to colleges, training providers and potential placements.
- Information sharing with receiving provisions and agencies.
- Collaborative working with families, local authorities and external professionals.
- Supported transition programmes where required.

Particular emphasis is placed on ensuring that pupils understand their options, can express their preferences and are actively involved in decisions about their future.

Intended Impact

Through our careers' education and guidance programme, we intend that pupils will:

- Develop ambitious yet realistic future aspirations.
- Understand the range of opportunities available to them.
- Recognise and value their individual strengths and talents.
- Acquire employability, independence and life skills.
- Make informed choices about post-16 and post-18 pathways.
- Successfully transition into further education, training, supported internships, employment or other appropriate destinations.
- Leave The Holden School with the confidence, knowledge and skills required to participate positively and successfully in adult life.

4. Achievement for Every Learner

We are committed to ensuring that all pupils leave The Holden School with evidence of achievement and a positive sense of self as a learner.

Success is recognised through:

- Academic progress
- Personal development
- EHCP outcomes

- Emotional growth
- Independence development
- Accredited qualifications
- Community participation
- Positive destinations after school

We believe that achievement should be celebrated in all its forms and that progress should be measured against ambitious individual outcomes as well as national expectations where appropriate.

What We Want Pupils to Leave Holden With

By the time pupils leave The Holden School, we intend that they will:

- Have achieved meaningful qualifications matched to their individual aspirations and abilities.
- Be able to communicate effectively and advocate for themselves.
- Demonstrate improved emotional regulation and resilience.
- Understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy.
- Respect diversity and contribute positively to society.
- Have the confidence to access further education, training or employment.
- Possess the skills needed for increased independence and successful adult life.
- Recognise their own strengths, talents and potential.
- Be proud of their achievements and optimistic about their future.

Curriculum Implementation

Lesson planning uses SAFE LEARN to connect the learning objective and prior learning with modelling, guided practice and independent application. Teachers plan checks for understanding, adapt teaching in response and use the toolkit's strategies to support regulation and calm transitions.

All curriculum pathways are supported by long-term plans, medium-term plans and schemes of work that demonstrate progression in knowledge, skills and understanding and take account of pupils' ages, aptitudes, needs and EHCP outcomes.

We ensure access to all required areas of learning:

- Linguistic: Focus on functional literacy, phonics intervention, and speaking and listening skills.
- Mathematical: Practical numeracy, money management, and problem-solving.
- Scientific & Technological: Experimental science, digital literacy, online safety, and coding.
- Human & Social: Differentiated history, geography, and Relationship and Sex Education.
- Aesthetic & Creative: Art, music, and hands-on design technology to allow non-verbal emotional expression.
- Physical Development and Wellbeing: Pupils participate in physical education, outdoor learning, physical wellbeing activities and opportunities that promote healthy lifestyles, resilience, teamwork, physical competence and positive wellbeing.

Therapeutic and Clinical Input

Therapy is not an "add-on"; it is embedded into daily timetabling:

- Sensory Diets: Scheduled sensory breaks, movement breaks, and access to low-arousal regulation spaces.
- Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT): Integrated communication frameworks (e.g., PECS, visual schedules, Social Stories).
- Emotional Regulation: Daily check-ins using tools like the Zones of Regulation or similar frameworks.

Vocational & Life Skills

- Independent Living: Cookery, personal hygiene, and travel training using public transport.
- Community Access: Trips to local libraries, shops, and sports facilities to generalise social skills.

- Accreditation: Pathways include Functional Skills (Entry Level to Level 2), ASDAN awards, BTECs, and GCSEs where appropriate.

Personalisation and Implementation

Every pupil attending The Holden School has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The curriculum is adapted to support individual needs, aspirations and statutory outcomes.

The curriculum is adapted to meet these legal duties through:

- Individual Learning Targets: Broad EHCP targets are broken down into small, measurable, termly academic and social targets.
- Flexible Timetabling: Standard 1-hour lessons are replaced with shorter, high-impact modules (e.g. slots of 15-45 minutes) with built-in transition buffers.
- Staff-to-Pupil Ratios: High staffing ratios (typically 1:3 or 1:4) ensure immediate emotional co-regulation and scaffolded learning.

Equality, Inclusion and Accessibility

The Holden School is committed to providing an inclusive, equitable and accessible curriculum for all pupils. We recognise and celebrate the diversity of our school community and are committed to ensuring that every pupil has the opportunity to participate, progress and achieve regardless of their background, abilities, needs or protected characteristics.

Equality Act 2010

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, The Holden School actively works to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster positive relationships between individuals and groups. Curriculum planning, teaching and wider school activities are designed to ensure that no pupil is disadvantaged as a result of disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, or other protected characteristics.

Our curriculum promotes respect, understanding and inclusion whilst preparing pupils to participate positively in a diverse society. Pupils are supported to develop an appreciation of difference, challenge stereotypes and demonstrate respect for the rights, beliefs and experiences of others.

SEND Code of Practice

As a specialist setting, the curriculum is delivered in accordance with the principles set out within the SEND Code of Practice (2015). We recognise that every pupil has unique strengths, needs, aspirations and outcomes identified through their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Curriculum provision is therefore personalised to:

- Meet individual EHCP outcomes and long-term aspirations.
- Address identified learning, communication, social, emotional and sensory needs.
- Support participation, engagement and achievement across all areas of learning.
- Facilitate successful preparation for adulthood, including employment, independent living, community participation and healthy lifestyles.
- Promote pupil voice and involvement in decisions about their learning.

Multi-disciplinary collaboration between education staff, therapists, families and external professionals ensures that curriculum provision remains responsive to individual needs and evidence-based practice.

Individual Adaptations and Reasonable Adjustments

The Holden School recognises that equitable access does not mean identical provision. We make reasonable adjustments and individual adaptations to enable pupils to access learning successfully and demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding.

Adaptations may include:

- Differentiated learning activities and outcomes.
- Alternative methods of recording and communication.
- Visual supports, structured routines and adapted resources.
- Assistive technology and communication aids.
- Flexible timetabling and personalised learning pathways.
- Environmental adaptations to reduce sensory overload.
- Additional adult support and co-regulation strategies.
- Therapeutic interventions embedded within the school day.

These adjustments are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain appropriate, effective and reflective of each pupil's evolving needs.

Removing Barriers to Learning

Many pupils attending The Holden School have experienced barriers to learning arising from social, emotional, communication, sensory, developmental or educational needs. We are committed to identifying and removing these barriers wherever possible.

Through high-quality assessment, collaborative planning and ongoing review, staff work to ensure that pupils can access a curriculum that is ambitious, meaningful and achievable. This includes:

- Supporting emotional readiness for learning.
- Promoting attendance, engagement and participation.
- Reducing anxiety through predictable routines and positive relationships.
- Providing therapeutic and relational approaches to support regulation.
- Adapting teaching approaches to individual learning profiles.
- Ensuring learning environments are safe, accessible and conducive to success.

We recognise that progress may look different for different pupils and value personal development, emotional growth, communication, independence and wellbeing alongside academic achievement.

Neurodiversity-Affirming Practice

The Holden School adopts a neurodiversity-affirming approach to education. We recognise neurodivergence, including autism, ADHD and other forms of neurological difference, as valuable aspects of human diversity rather than deficits to be corrected.

Our curriculum seeks to build upon pupils' strengths, interests and talents whilst providing support for areas of need. We strive to create an environment in which pupils feel valued, understood and able to be themselves.

This approach includes:

- Promoting acceptance, understanding and celebration of neurodiversity.
- Recognising and valuing different communication styles.
- Respecting individual sensory needs and preferences.
- Providing opportunities for pupil choice, self-advocacy and autonomy.
- Focusing on strengths-based assessment and planning.
- Avoiding deficit-based language and assumptions.
- Supporting pupils to develop positive self-identity, confidence and wellbeing.

Through this approach, we aim to ensure that all pupils experience belonging, dignity, success and the opportunity to flourish both within school and beyond.

Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural (SMSC) Development

In line with independent school requirements, our curriculum actively promotes Fundamental British Values:

- **Democracy:** Handled through school councils and collaborative choice-making activities.
- **Rule of Law:** Co-creating classroom boundaries and understanding social consequences.
- **Individual Liberty:** Encouraging self-advocacy, identifying personal boundaries, and expressing choices safely.
- **Mutual Respect & Tolerance:** Celebrating neurodiversity and diverse cultures while explicitly teaching bullying prevention.

Relationship and Sex Education

We make appropriate adaptations in our PSHCE and RSE curriculum:

- **Explicit Language over Metaphor:** Abstract concepts are stripped of metaphor to prevent literal-minded ASD students from misunderstanding. Lessons use anatomically correct language and clear, direct explanations of consent, personal boundaries, and public vs. private spaces.
- **Online Vulnerability and Grooming:** Due to the elevated risk of online exploitation among isolated ASC/SEMH youth, the curriculum explicitly teaches the mechanics of digital grooming, catfishing, and the legal consequences of sharing digital imagery.
- **Visual Support and Social Stories:** Lessons utilize highly visual frameworks like Comic Strip Conversations and customised Social Stories (Carol Gray) to teach complex social scenarios, such as reading non-verbal cues during peer interactions.
- **Co-Regulation and Opt-Out Spaces:** Recognising that RSE content can trigger past trauma or high anxiety, emotional co-regulation breaks are embedded into the

timetable. A staff member is always assigned to monitor emotional distress and provide a safe sensory escape route if needed.

Online Safety

Online safety is an integral part of The Holden School's personal development curriculum. Pupils are taught how to use technology safely, responsibly and respectfully and how to recognise, respond to and report risks associated with online activity. This includes learning about appropriate online communication and relationships, privacy and personal information, passwords and account security, cyberbullying, online abuse, harmful or inappropriate content, grooming and exploitation, scams and fraud, misinformation and the potential impact of excessive or unsafe use of technology and social media.

Online safety is taught through planned provision within PSHE and RSHE, Personal Development, IT and other relevant curriculum areas, as well as through assemblies, tutor activities and responsive teaching arising from pupils' individual needs or safeguarding concerns. Teaching is age appropriate and adapted to reflect pupils' individual developmental levels, SEND, communication needs, vulnerabilities and lived experiences.

Pupils are explicitly taught what to do if they encounter something online that makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe, including how to stop engaging, block or report users or content, seek help from a trusted adult and report concerns through the school's safeguarding procedures. Staff reinforce these messages through everyday interactions and through the school's wider safeguarding culture.

Online safety education is supported by appropriate filtering and monitoring arrangements and by clear expectations regarding the use of technology and mobile devices. Curriculum provision, pupil understanding and emerging online risks are reviewed through safeguarding monitoring, pupil voice, curriculum quality assurance and consideration of incidents or concerns, enabling teaching to be adapted where necessary.

This approach forms part of the school's wider duty to safeguard pupils and prepare them for safe and responsible participation in an increasingly digital society.

Roles and Responsibilities for Curriculum Leadership and Delivery

The Holden School recognises that the successful design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum is a collective responsibility. Clear lines of accountability ensure that the curriculum remains ambitious, inclusive, responsive to pupils' needs and compliant with the Independent School Standards. The curriculum is underpinned by the school's

commitment to personalised learning, preparation for adulthood, positive outcomes and continuous improvement.

Proprietor and Governing Body

The Proprietor, supported by Governors where appropriate, is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school meets the Independent School Standards and other statutory requirements.
- Providing strategic oversight of curriculum effectiveness and educational outcomes.
- Monitoring the quality of education provided by the school.
- Holding senior leaders accountable for curriculum implementation, pupil progress and school improvement.
- Ensuring sufficient resources are available to deliver the curriculum effectively.
- Receiving regular reports regarding pupil outcomes, curriculum developments and quality assurance findings.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Providing strategic leadership for curriculum development and improvement.
- Ensuring that the curriculum reflects the school's vision, values and aims.
- Securing compliance with statutory requirements and regulatory expectations.
- Promoting a culture of high aspirations, inclusion and continuous improvement.
- Monitoring curriculum effectiveness and ensuring appropriate action is taken where improvement is required.
- Ensuring that curriculum provision meets the needs of all pupils, including those with EHCPs and additional needs.
- Reporting to the Proprietor and Governors regarding curriculum quality and pupil outcomes.

Deputy Headteacher and Operational Area Leaders

Operational Area Leaders are responsible for:

- Leading the development, implementation and evaluation of curriculum provision.
- Ensuring that long-term plans, medium-term plans and schemes of work support progression in knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Monitoring curriculum coverage and progression across all pathways.
- Ensuring that provision remains appropriately personalised and responsive to pupil needs.
- Supporting staff to develop high-quality curriculum practice.

- Analysing assessment information and using evidence to inform curriculum development.
- Leading curriculum review, quality assurance and improvement planning.
- Ensuring effective preparation for adulthood and careers education opportunities are embedded throughout the curriculum.

Teachers

Teachers are responsible for:

- Delivering a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum that reflects the school's curriculum intent.
- Planning and delivering learning experiences that are matched to pupils' ages, aptitudes, interests and individual needs.
- Implementing reasonable adjustments and adaptive teaching strategies.
- Monitoring, assessing and recording pupil progress.
- Contributing to EHCP reviews and target setting.
- Creating positive, inclusive and emotionally safe learning environments.
- Promoting high expectations, engagement and achievement for all pupils.
- Working collaboratively with families, therapists and other professionals to support pupil progress.

Learning Support Assistants and Support Staff

Learning Support Assistants and other support staff play a vital role in enabling pupils to access the curriculum. Their responsibilities include:

- Supporting pupils to engage successfully with learning activities.
- Facilitating communication, independence and self-advocacy.
- Implementing agreed strategies, interventions and reasonable adjustments.
- Supporting emotional regulation and readiness for learning.
- Contributing observations and evidence towards assessment and progress monitoring.
- Promoting pupil wellbeing, participation and inclusion across all aspects of school life.

Therapists and Specialist Professionals

Therapists and specialist professionals contribute to curriculum implementation through:

- Providing specialist assessment and intervention.
- Advising staff regarding communication, sensory, emotional and developmental needs.
- Supporting the integration of therapeutic approaches within everyday learning.
- Contributing to EHCP outcomes, review processes and transition planning.
- Supporting the development of inclusive and accessible learning environments.

Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to play an active role in their learning through:

- Participating in curriculum planning where appropriate.
- Sharing their views, aspirations and interests.
- Reflecting on their progress and achievements.
- Developing increasing independence, self-advocacy and responsibility for learning.
- Contributing to pupil voice activities that inform curriculum development.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are valued partners in their child's education and are encouraged to:

- Support attendance, engagement and learning.
- Contribute to EHCP reviews, transition planning and target setting.
- Share information that may support learning and wellbeing.
- Engage with curriculum events, reports and review meetings.
- Work collaboratively with the school to support positive outcomes for their child.

Accountability and Review

All stakeholders contribute to the ongoing evaluation and improvement of curriculum provision. Curriculum effectiveness is monitored through assessment outcomes, quality

assurance activities, stakeholder feedback, EHCP reviews, destination data and school improvement processes to ensure that every pupil receives an ambitious, relevant and meaningful education.

Curriculum Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Assurance

When reviewing the implementation of SAFE LEARN, leaders use the key questions and core strategies in the school's Lesson Planning Toolkit as reference points. Planning scrutiny and lesson visits consider how these are reflected in teaching, including checks for understanding, adaptations, guided and independent practice, and support for regulation.

The Holden School is committed to ensuring that all pupils receive a high-quality, ambitious and personalised curriculum that enables them to achieve positive educational, personal and preparation for adulthood outcomes. Robust curriculum monitoring and quality assurance processes are integral to securing continuous improvement, maintaining high standards and ensuring compliance with the Independent School Standards.

Curriculum monitoring is undertaken throughout the academic year to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum intent, implementation and impact. Leaders use a range of evidence sources to assess the quality of education provided and to identify strengths, areas for development and priorities for improvement.

Principles of Quality Assurance

Our quality assurance processes are designed to:

- Ensure that curriculum provision remains ambitious, appropriate and accessible for all pupils.
- Evaluate the extent to which teaching, learning and assessment support pupil progress and achievement.
- Monitor the effectiveness of curriculum pathways and personalised provision.
- Ensure consistency of practice across classes, phases and sites.
- Identify professional development needs and support continuous improvement.
- Secure positive outcomes for pupils academically, socially, emotionally and developmentally.
- Promote accountability at all levels of the organisation.
- Ensure compliance with statutory responsibilities, the Independent School Standards and the school's curriculum intent.

Monitoring Curriculum Implementation

Leaders regularly monitor curriculum implementation through a range of activities, including:

Learning Walks and Lesson Visits

Learning walks and lesson visits are conducted throughout the year to evaluate:

- Curriculum delivery.
- Quality of teaching and learning.
- Pupil engagement and participation.
- Adaptive teaching and reasonable adjustments.
- Communication, sensory and regulation support.
- Classroom environments and learning resources.
- Consistency of practice across the school.

These activities provide opportunities to celebrate effective practice, identify areas for development and support professional growth.

Planning and Curriculum Scrutiny

Leaders review long-term plans, medium-term plans, lesson plans and curriculum documentation to ensure:

- Alignment with curriculum intent and pathway expectations.
- Coverage of the Independent School Standards curriculum areas.
- Appropriate progression in knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Effective integration of EHCP outcomes and individual targets.
- Inclusion of preparation for adulthood, personal development and careers learning.
- Appropriate adaptation for individual pupil needs.

Monitoring Curriculum Impact

The impact of the curriculum is evaluated through a range of quantitative and qualitative measures, including:

- Progress towards EHCP outcomes.
- Academic attainment and progress data.
- Assessment information.
- Accreditation and qualification outcomes.
- Attendance and engagement data.
- Behaviour and wellbeing indicators.
- Preparation for adulthood outcomes.

- Destination data and post-school progression.

Leaders analyse trends and patterns to identify strengths, barriers to learning and areas requiring further intervention or development.

Work Scrutiny and Moderation

Work scrutiny forms an important part of curriculum evaluation and is undertaken regularly across all pathways. This process enables leaders to:

- Evaluate the quality and appropriateness of learning activities.
- Review pupil progress over time.
- Monitor consistency of expectations
- Assess the effectiveness of feedback and assessment processes.
- Ensure that recorded progress reflects the evidence available in pupils' work and learning records.

Where appropriate, moderation activities are undertaken to ensure the accuracy and consistency of assessment judgements across the school.

Pupil Voice

Pupil views are a vital component of curriculum evaluation. The school actively seeks feedback from pupils regarding:

- Their learning experiences.
- Curriculum interests and preferences.
- Feelings of inclusion and belonging.
- Aspirations and future goals.
- Preparation for adulthood opportunities.
- Personal development and wellbeing.

Pupil voice is gathered through formal and informal mechanisms, including school council activities, pupil questionnaires, review meetings and day-to-day interactions.

Parent and Carer Voice

The school values the perspectives of parents and carers and actively seeks feedback regarding:

- Curriculum quality and relevance.
- Communication and reporting.
- Progress towards EHCP outcomes.

- Preparation for adulthood provision.
- Transitions and destination planning.
- Overall educational experience.

Feedback from families contributes to curriculum review and improvement planning.

Quality Assurance of SEND and Therapeutic Provision

As a specialist setting, curriculum quality assurance includes specific evaluation of:

- SEND provision and accessibility.
- Implementation of EHCP outcomes.
- Therapeutic interventions and their impact.
- Communication strategies and support.
- Sensory and environmental adaptations.
- Emotional wellbeing and regulation support.
- Personalised curriculum pathways.

Leaders work collaboratively with therapists and other professionals to ensure provision remains effective, responsive and evidence based.

Self-Evaluation and School Improvement

Findings from curriculum monitoring activities contribute directly to the school's self-evaluation processes and school improvement planning. Evidence gathered through quality assurance activities is used to:

- Identify strengths and areas for development.
- Set improvement priorities.
- Inform staff professional development.
- Refine curriculum design and delivery.
- Improve outcomes for pupils.
- Monitor progress against strategic objectives.

Governance and Accountability

Curriculum quality and pupil outcomes are reported regularly to senior leaders, governors and the Proprietor. Monitoring evidence is triangulated through multiple sources to ensure that evaluations are accurate, representative and reflective of pupils' experiences.

Through robust curriculum monitoring and quality assurance processes, The Holden School ensures that its curriculum remains ambitious, inclusive, responsive and effective, enabling all pupils to flourish, achieve and prepare successfully for their futures.

Curriculum Review and Continuous Improvement

The Holden School is committed to maintaining a curriculum that is ambitious, relevant, responsive and reflective of the evolving needs of its pupils. Curriculum review is a continuous process that ensures provision remains aligned with the school's vision, values, curriculum intent and statutory responsibilities, whilst supporting positive educational, personal and preparation for adulthood outcomes for all pupils.

Through regular review and evaluation, the school seeks to ensure that curriculum provision continues to:

- Meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards.
- Reflect current research, evidence-informed practice and developments within SEND education.
- Respond to the changing needs of pupils and cohorts.
- Support achievement, wellbeing, personal development and preparation for adulthood.
- Promote inclusion, accessibility and equality of opportunity.
- Deliver high aspirations and positive destinations for all pupils.

Annual Curriculum Review

A formal curriculum review is undertaken annually by senior leaders and curriculum leads. The review evaluates the effectiveness of curriculum intent, implementation and impact across all pathways and areas of provision.

The review considers:

- Pupil attainment and progress.
- Progress towards EHCP outcomes.
- Assessment and accreditation outcomes.
- Attendance, engagement and wellbeing data.
- Behaviour and personal development information.
- Preparation for adulthood outcomes.
- Destination and transition outcomes.
- The effectiveness of curriculum pathways and subject provision.
- The accessibility and inclusivity of curriculum delivery.
- Compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.

Curriculum Pathway Review

The school's curriculum pathways are reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain appropriate, ambitious and responsive to the needs of pupils.

This includes consideration of:

- Suitability of pathway structures and progression routes.
- Curriculum content and breadth.
- Alignment with EHCP needs and aspirations.
- Accreditation opportunities and qualifications.
- Preparation for adulthood outcomes.
- Emerging needs within the school population.
- Changes in national guidance, inspection frameworks or specialist SEND practice.

Where improvements are identified, pathway documentation, schemes of work and curriculum planning are updated accordingly.

Stakeholder Consultation

Curriculum development is informed by the views and experiences of those who access, deliver and support the curriculum.

The school actively seeks feedback from:

Pupils

Through pupil voice activities, review meetings, school council discussions and surveys, pupils are encouraged to contribute their views regarding:

- Learning experiences.
- Curriculum interests.
- Future aspirations.
- Preparation for adulthood opportunities.
- Personal development and wellbeing.

Parents and Carers

Feedback from parents and carers is gathered through:

- Annual reviews.
- Parent meetings.
- Surveys and consultation activities.
- Informal discussions and communication.

Families provide valuable insight into how effectively the curriculum supports progress, wellbeing and future aspirations.

Staff

Teaching staff, support staff and therapists contribute to curriculum review through:

- Quality assurance processes.
- Professional dialogue.
- Curriculum development meetings.
- Evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment.

External Professionals

Where appropriate, the school works collaboratively with therapists, local authorities, colleges, training providers and other professionals to ensure curriculum provision reflects current best practice and supports successful transitions into adulthood.

Responding to Review Findings

Information gathered through curriculum review is used to inform:

- School self-evaluation.
- Strategic planning.
- School improvement priorities.
- Curriculum development plans.
- Professional development programmes.
- Resource allocation decisions.
- Pathway and subject curriculum revisions.

Leaders use review findings to ensure that curriculum provision remains effective, evidence-informed and tailored to the needs of current and future pupils.

Monitoring the Impact of Curriculum Change

Where curriculum developments or changes are introduced, leaders evaluate their impact through ongoing monitoring activities. This includes reviewing:

- Progress and achievement data.
- Pupil engagement and participation.
- Stakeholder feedback.
- Preparation for adulthood outcomes.
- Quality assurance evidence.
- Destination and transition data.

This enables leaders to determine whether changes have improved outcomes and to make further refinements where necessary

Approval and Policy Review

This Curriculum Policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required due to:

- Changes in legislation or statutory guidance.
- Updates to the Independent School Standards.
- Significant changes to curriculum provision.
- Emerging best practice in specialist education.
- Outcomes from school self-evaluation and quality assurance activities.

The review process ensures that the curriculum continues to provide all pupils with a broad, balanced, ambitious and personalised education that prepares them for successful participation in modern British society and adult life.

Assessment, Tracking and Pupil Progress

In accordance with Part 1, Paragraph 3(g) of the Independent School Standards, the school maintains a robust, structured framework to evaluate pupils' work and performance regularly and thoroughly. Because our pupil population presenting with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) and Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs experiences high baseline academic anxiety, traditional testing is adapted. Assessment is a therapeutic and collaborative diagnostic tool used to evidence progress against national norms, individual milestones, and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) objectives.

Assessment and Prior Attainment

- To identify gaps caused by educational trauma, school exclusion, or prolonged school phobia, every pupil undergoes a multi-disciplinary baseline assessment within their first six weeks of placement:
- Academic Baseline: Utilisation of standardized, low-stakes diagnostic tools (e.g., Star Reader, Star Maths and Salford Reading and Comprehension tests) to establish cognitive baselines without triggering rejection or anxiety.

- Neurodivergent & Communication Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) and WELLCOM assessments to map specific receptive and expressive communication barriers.
- Social-Emotional Baseline: Compilation of initial profiles using SDQs and Thrive assessments to map emotional regulation capabilities and developmental gaps.
- EHCP Synthesis: Quantitative and qualitative data is cross-referenced with the pupil's statutory EHCP targets to formulate personalized, manageable termly targets.
-

Formative Assessment: "Assessment for Learning" (AfL)

Within SAFE LEARN, Look & Listen focuses on checking understanding and responding in the moment. Apply provides opportunities for pupils to demonstrate learning independently, while Next Steps (Exit) includes review, reflection, exit checks and links to the learning objective.

- Teachers use formative assessment dynamically within every lesson to adjust the pace, sensory delivery, and cognitive load of the curriculum:
- Micro-Step Tracking: Academic subjects are broken down into granular progression milestones via systems like MAPP and Stages not Ages. This captures microscopic steps of progress (e.g., 1–5% increases in skill mastery) which standard assessment frameworks overlook.
- Low-Arousal Feedback: Verbal feedback is prioritized over heavy red-pen marking, which can be interpreted by SEMH learners as criticism or failure. Written feedback focuses entirely on a "What Went Well" (WWW) and "Even Better If" (EBI) strategy.
- Co-Regulation Gauges: Teachers evaluate emotional readiness for learning throughout lessons using the Zones of Regulation visual framework, ensuring a pupil's emotional state is tracked alongside their academic output.

Summative Assessment and National Norms

While learning is highly personalized, the school benchmarks pupil outcomes against national norms to satisfy ISI requirements and maximize post-16 prospects:

- **Qualification Tracking:** Regular moderation of coursework portfolios for accredited pathways including Functional Skills, ASDAN, BTECs, and GCSEs.
- **Termly Data Drops:** Teachers update progress data three times per year. This data is reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to identify flatlining progress and deploy targeted therapeutic or academic interventions immediately.
- **Comparative Frameworks:** Progress is evaluated against both the individual's historic trajectory (ipsative assessment) and regional/national demographic data for learners with similar SEND profiles.

Reporting, Triangulation, and Quality Assurance

To satisfy the ISI requirement for clear communication with parents, placing Local Authorities (LAs), and external stakeholders:

- **Parental Reporting:** Parents receive comprehensive written reports twice yearly, alongside two parent's meetings (face to face or on Teams), attendance data, and therapeutic milestones.
- **Statutory EHCP Reviews:** Assessment data is consolidated annually into a formal report detailing progress towards every section of the pupil's EHCP, providing legally defensible evidence for Local Authority annual reviews.
- **Work Scrutiny and Moderation:** The Quality of Education team conducts half-termly work scrutinies. These cross-reference the work in pupils' books against the progress recorded on tracking software to ensure "triangulation and typicality" of evidence ahead of ISI inspections.



Outcomes
First Group