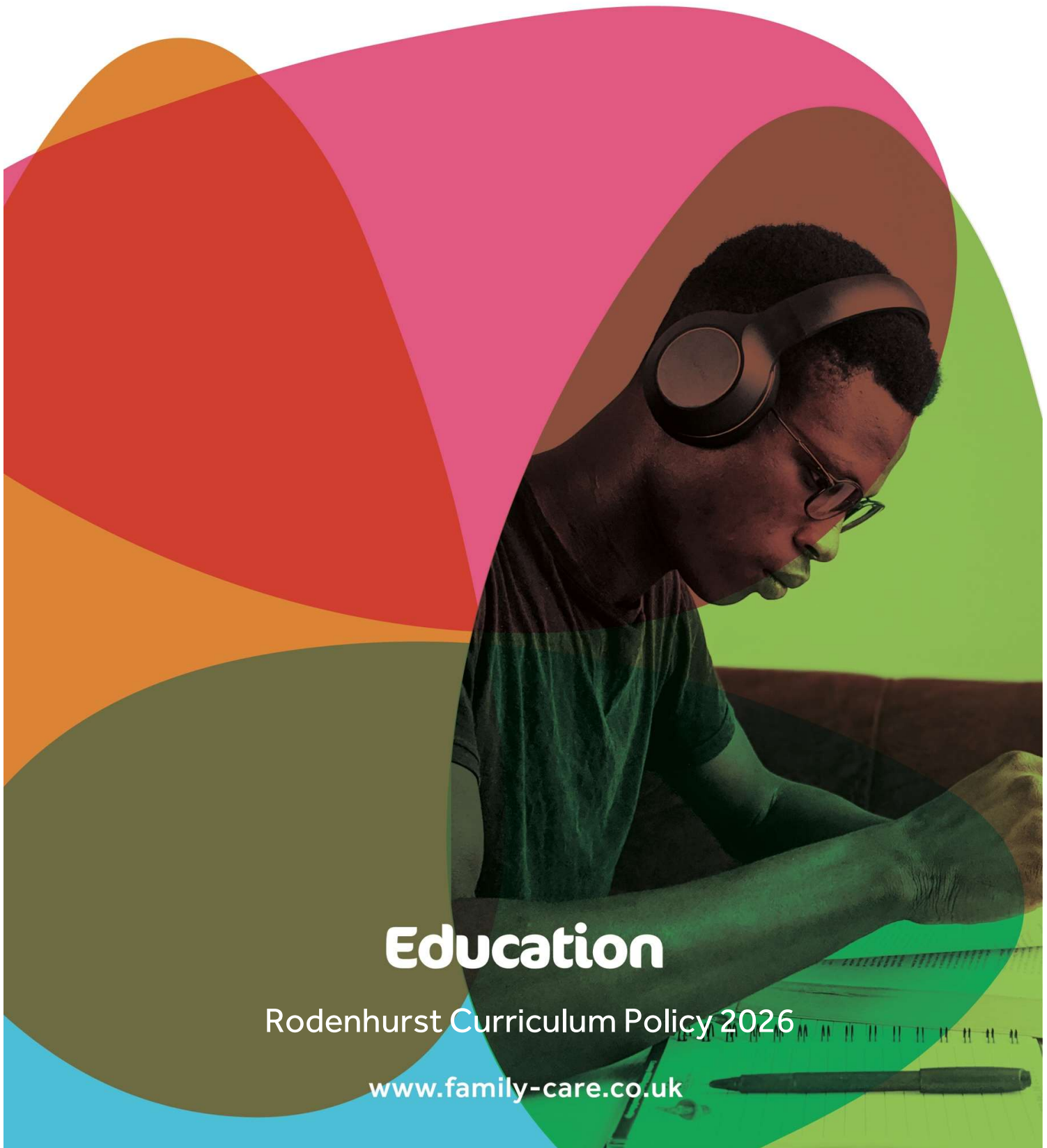


FamilyCare

Healing pasts • Building futures



Education

Rodenhurst Curriculum Policy 2026

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Curriculum Policy

Implemented/Reviewed: September 2026

Date of Next Review: September 2027

Introduction

Rodenhurst School is a specialist provision for pupils aged 6–16 with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), ADHD, and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN). All pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and require a personalised and therapeutic approach to education.

Many pupils arrive at Rodenhurst following disrupted education or periods out of school. Re-engaging pupils with learning, rebuilding trust in education and supporting emotional regulation are therefore central to the school's work.

The curriculum is designed to be ambitious, inclusive and developmentally appropriate, ensuring that all pupils develop the communication, knowledge and independence required for adulthood.

Curriculum Vision

The Rodenhurst curriculum provides a safe, structured and nurturing learning environment where pupils develop:

Emotional regulation and relational security

Functional literacy and numeracy

Knowledge across a broad and balanced curriculum

Communication and social understanding

Independence and preparation for adulthood

The curriculum is built on the principle that communication is fundamental to learning. A language-rich approach ensures pupils develop the vocabulary, reasoning and expressive skills required to access learning and participate in society.

Core Curriculum Principles

The Rodenhurst curriculum is underpinned by five key principles:

Regulation before cognition – pupils must feel safe and regulated before learning begins.

Communication is foundational – language development is embedded across all subjects.

Academic ambition for all – pathways adjust support, not expectations.

Preparation for adulthood begins early – independence and life skills are developed from the earliest stages.

Relational practice drives behaviour – strong relationships support engagement and wellbeing.

Curriculum Golden Thread

The Rodenhurst Golden Thread underpins teaching and learning across all phases, subjects and pathways:

Regulation → Communication → Engagement

Regulation supports pupils to feel safe, ready and able to access learning. Communication enables pupils to understand, express themselves, participate and influence their learning.

Engagement enables pupils to connect meaningfully with learning experiences and develop knowledge and skills.

These elements are interconnected and are not intended to represent a rigid or linear sequence. Pupils may move between them throughout learning according to their individual needs.

Developmental Progression

Alongside the Golden Thread, the curriculum supports pupils to develop through:

Understanding → Application → Independence → Generalisation → Adulthood

Pupils progress through this developmental journey in different ways and at different rates according to their individual starting points, needs and aspirations. Progress may be demonstrated through increasing understanding, consistency, complexity, application, appropriate independence and the ability to generalise learning across people, places, resources, tasks and contexts.

Three-Pathway Curriculum Model

The curriculum is delivered through a Primary and Secondary phase structure, with each phase organised into three pathways to ensure learning is matched to pupils' developmental readiness, communication needs and long-term outcomes. This allows pupils to access learning through age-respectful contexts while teaching and support are adapted to developmental need.

Pathways are curriculum and access lenses, not attainment levels. They describe how pupils access learning and the teaching, communication and support approaches that enable them to participate successfully. Progress is not defined by movement from one pathway to another. Pupils make progress within their pathway through increasing understanding, consistency, complexity, application, appropriate independence and generalisation. A pupil may be working at different developmental points across different subjects and curriculum strands.

Pathway Allocation and Flexibility

Each pupil is allocated a main curriculum pathway based on a holistic assessment of their communication, regulation, engagement, academic attainment, independence, EHCP outcomes and long-term aspirations. Pathway placement is reviewed regularly and may change when a pupil's access or support needs change. Pupils may access learning associated with different developmental points within individual subjects and strands while retaining one main curriculum pathway. A change of class, phase or pathway does not restart curriculum assessment; existing secure learning and strand-level starting points carry forward.

Curriculum Organisation and Sequencing

The curriculum is organised through clearly sequenced subject curriculum maps and schemes of work which identify the knowledge, skills, vocabulary and experiences pupils will encounter and revisit over time.

Learning is organised through a two-year Year A and Year B cycle, providing breadth and coherence while enabling pupils to revisit important concepts in increasingly complex and meaningful ways. Thematic connections are used where they strengthen understanding; however, the integrity and progression of individual curriculum areas are maintained.

As pupils progress through the pathways and phases, learning becomes increasingly subject-specific and is designed to prepare pupils for appropriate KS4 qualifications, vocational learning and Preparation for Adulthood.

Progression is not defined by coverage alone. Pupils demonstrate progress through increasing depth of knowledge and understanding, alongside greater communication, engagement, application, independence and generalisation.

Repetition, retrieval, overlearning and planned opportunities to apply learning across different people, environments and contexts are deliberately built into curriculum design. This supports pupils to retain learning, make connections and transfer knowledge and skills beyond the context in which they were originally taught.

Primary Phase

The Primary Phase focuses on developing communication, regulation, early academic understanding, independence and positive learning behaviours through nurturing and structured experiences.

Pathway 1 – Engage & Communicate

For pupils with significant communication, interaction or regulation needs. Learning focuses on attention, engagement, emotional regulation, communication, sensory exploration, early cognition and developing independence through practical and highly supported experiences.

Pathway 2 – Explore & Apply

For pupils beginning to apply literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Learning focuses on developing subject knowledge, communication, reasoning, problem-solving, vocabulary development and increasing independence through structured and meaningful learning experiences.

Pathway 3 – Achieve & Aspire

For pupils working towards more formal and subject-specific learning. Pupils develop academic knowledge, independent learning skills, resilience and preparation for future qualifications and transition into Secondary learning pathways.

Primary Subject Organisation

Within Primary Pathways 1 and 2, Understanding the World provides an integrated and developmentally appropriate context through which pupils encounter foundational learning in science, humanities and religious education. This enables pupils to explore people, places, communities, the natural world, beliefs and ways of life through concrete, sensory and experiential learning.

As pupils demonstrate increasing readiness for more formal and abstract learning, curriculum content becomes increasingly subject-specific. Within Primary Pathway 3, pupils access more discrete subject teaching, including Science, Humanities and Religious Education, while continuing to make meaningful connections across the wider curriculum.

This structure ensures that all pupils receive appropriate curriculum breadth while the organisation and delivery of subject knowledge reflect their pathway, communication needs and developmental readiness. Developmental starting point determines the learning step being taught; chronological age determines the context, resources and purpose through which it is taught.

Secondary Phase

The Secondary Phase builds upon prior learning while preparing pupils for adulthood, independence, community participation and future destinations.

Secondary Subject Organisation

Within the Secondary phase, pupils continue to access the curriculum through their identified pathway, with increasingly subject-specific teaching and purposeful opportunities to apply learning across contexts. Communication, regulation and independence remain integral to curriculum access across all pathways. Careers education becomes increasingly explicit through curriculum-career links, encounters with employers and employees, experiences of workplaces, accessible careers information and exploration of future education, training and employment-related pathways.

Key Stage 4 Curriculum Offer

At Key Stage 4, pupils access a personalised programme of study leading to nationally recognised qualifications. The curriculum combines academic achievement, vocational learning and preparation for adulthood to ensure pupils leave Rodenhurst equipped for further education, employment or training.

Core Qualifications

- Functional Skills English
- Functional Skills Mathematics
- Applied Science (currently delivered through a BTEC qualification)

Vocational Pathways

Pupils will access a vocational specialism matched to their interests, strengths and aspirations. Vocational pathways currently available include:

- BTEC Award in Home skills and Cooking
- BTEC Introductory Award in Art & Design
- BTEC Introductory Award in Digital Media

Preparation for Adulthood, Careers Education and therapeutic support remain embedded throughout the KS4 curriculum. Pupils access progressive careers learning including employer encounters, meaningful work-related experiences, encounters with post-16 providers, personal guidance and transition planning. Preparation for Adulthood supports development across employment and further education, independent living, community participation and relationships, and good health, ensuring pupils develop the knowledge, skills, confidence and self-advocacy required for adult life.

Qualification pathways are personalised according to each pupil's EHCP outcomes, strengths, aspirations and intended post-16 destination. Not all pupils will follow identical qualification pathways; however, every pupil will access an ambitious curriculum that prepares them for adulthood, further education, employment or training.

Pathway 1 – Engage & Communicate

For pupils who continue to require a highly personalised and therapeutic approach to learning. The focus remains on communication, emotional regulation, functional independence, life skills, engagement and preparation for adulthood through meaningful real-life experiences. Where appropriate, pupils may work towards personalised or accredited independence-based learning matched to their needs, aspirations and intended destination.

Pathway 2 – Explore & Apply

For pupils developing greater subject understanding and applying skills across a wider curriculum. Learning focuses on literacy, numeracy, reasoning, vocabulary, problem-solving, independence and applying knowledge in functional and real-world contexts. Pupils work

towards nationally recognised qualifications including Functional Skills English and Mathematics alongside vocational qualifications where appropriate. The curriculum places increasing emphasis on preparation for adulthood, employability and successful transition to post-16 education or training.

Pathway 3 – Achieve & Aspire

For pupils accessing increasingly formal and accredited learning pathways in preparation for adulthood, further education, employment or training. Pupils follow a personalised programme which may include Functional Skills English and Mathematics, Applied Science and vocational learning such as Cooking or Art & Design, with nationally recognised qualifications selected where appropriate to pupils' strengths, aspirations and intended destinations.

Age-16 Pathway Endpoints

The Rodenhurst curriculum prepares every pupil for a meaningful and appropriately supported post-16 destination.

Pathway 1 – Engage & Communicate: Pupils work towards effective communication, participation, self-advocacy and the greatest possible level of functional independence.

Pathway 2 – Explore & Apply: Pupils work towards applying functional literacy, numeracy, communication and independence skills across everyday, community and vocational contexts.

Pathway 3 – Achieve & Aspire: Pupils work towards applying academic, vocational and independent-learning skills, achieving appropriate qualifications and progressing to further education, training or employment.

Individual outcomes and qualifications are personalised according to each pupil's starting points, EHCP outcomes, strengths, aspirations and intended post-16 destination.

Language-Rich Curriculum

Language development is embedded across the curriculum. Teaching is designed to develop pupils' receptive and expressive language through explicit vocabulary instruction and structured opportunities to communicate.

Vocabulary development follows a progression across the pathways:

Engage & Communicate – functional vocabulary and early communication.

Explore & Apply – Tier 2 vocabulary and reasoning language.

Achieve & Aspire – Tier 3 subject-specific and workplace language.

Teachers model language, use sentence stems, provide visual supports and build structured discussion into lessons so pupils can explain, justify and apply their understanding. Oracy and communication are developed progressively across all curriculum areas and pathways. Pupils are provided with structured opportunities to listen, attend, communicate, question, explain, discuss and present according to their individual communication profile. Spoken language, AAC and other appropriate communication approaches are equally valued as means through which pupils can participate in learning, demonstrate understanding and develop increasingly independent communication.

Curriculum Breadth

Across the school, pupils access a broad and balanced curriculum through subjects and curriculum areas appropriate to their phase and pathway. The curriculum includes:

English

Mathematics

Science

Understanding the World

Humanities

Religious Education

PSHE & Wellbeing and RSHE

Physical Development

Creative Arts

Communication & Language

Independence & Life Skills

Careers Education

Curriculum organisation reflects pupils' developmental readiness while maintaining breadth, ambition and age-respectful learning. Within Primary Pathways 1 and 2, aspects of science, humanities and religious education are encountered through Understanding the World. Increasingly discrete subject teaching develops as pupils progress through the pathways and phases.

Careers-related learning begins in Primary, where pupils develop self-awareness, recognise roles within their community, develop transferable skills and encounter the world of work. This develops into a structured careers programme through Secondary and KS4, including employer encounters, workplace experiences, careers information, personal guidance and preparation for post-16 transition.

Preparation for Adulthood is embedded throughout the 6–16 curriculum and becomes increasingly explicit and personalised as pupils approach adulthood. It supports progression towards employment and further education, independent living, community participation and relationships, and good health.

The curriculum is adapted to meet EHCP outcomes while maintaining academic ambition.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching at Rodenhurst is structured, predictable, language rich and responsive to individual need. The Rodenhurst teaching and learning model is:

Regulate → Retrieve → Learn → Practise → Apply → Review

This is not a rigid lesson script. Teachers use professional judgement to revisit stages, adapt pacing and respond to pupils' regulation, communication, sensory, processing and executive functioning needs.

Staff use appropriate communication approaches, including speech, AAC, symbols, objects of reference, signing and gesture, according to individual pupil need. Teaching allows appropriate processing time and uses repetition, retrieval and overlearning to secure knowledge and skills. Planned opportunities for application and generalisation enable pupils to transfer learning across activities, people, environments and real-life contexts. Adaptations support access to ambitious curriculum content rather than reducing the intended learning. A pupil's established communication system, assistive technology, visual support or adapted equipment provides access and does not in itself indicate dependence; adult prompting should be distinguished from access support and faded where appropriate.

Assessment

Assessment is continuous, strand-based, personalised and proportionate. It focuses on recognising meaningful small-step progress and identifying what a pupil knows, understands and can do, what is developing and what should be taught next. Trackable (SOLAR) is the central platform for recording progress through the Rodenhurst 6–16 curriculum progression frameworks.

Assessment evidence may include:

- teacher observations,
- pupil work samples,
- photographs of learning,
- video evidence of participation and engagement,
- communication and regulation observations,
- practical demonstrations of learning,
- pupil voice and reflection,

Additional assessment information may include WRAT and other appropriate standardised or diagnostic assessment, Read Write Inc. Phonics or Fresh Start assessment where appropriate, the Engagement Model for eligible Primary Pathway 1 pupils, Functional Skills or qualification evidence, EHCP outcomes and ADPR targets. These provide additional information alongside curriculum assessment and do not replace strand-level progression in Trackable (SOLAR).

Assessment begins from each pupil's secure starting point within relevant subjects and strands. Pathway informs curriculum access, scaffolding and teaching approach; it is not an attainment level. A pupil may be at different developmental points across different strands, and assessment does not restart when the pupil changes class, phase or pathway. Progress is considered through increasing understanding, consistency, complexity, application, appropriate independence and generalisation. Evidence is purposeful and proportionate: significant evidence supports professional judgement, but evidence quantity does not equal progress and staff are not expected to create evidence solely to meet a daily or weekly upload quota.

Preparation for Adulthood

Preparation for adulthood is embedded across the curriculum. Pupils develop:

- Communication and social interaction
- Emotional resilience and self-advocacy
- Independent living skills
- Functional literacy and numeracy
- Career awareness and workplace readiness

These opportunities support progression across the four Preparation for Adulthood areas: employment and further education; independent living; friends, relationships and community; and good health. The relative emphasis and level of independence are personalised according to each pupil's needs, aspirations and intended outcomes.

Preparation for Adulthood is embedded throughout Key Stage 4 curriculum and qualification routes. Functional Skills develop literacy and numeracy for everyday life, Applied Science develops investigative and problem-solving skills, while vocational learning such as Cooking and Art & Design provides practical experience connected to future pathways. Careers education, work-related learning, enterprise opportunities and community participation enable pupils to apply their learning in meaningful contexts and prepare confidently for their next stage of education, employment or training.

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

Senior leaders monitor the curriculum through a triangulated approach including:

- Curriculum learning walks
- Work and evidence scrutiny
- Pupil voice
- Subject deep dives
- Pupil progress and EHCP/ADPR reviews

Curriculum and assessment review

Monitoring focuses on curriculum implementation, knowledge and skills progression, language and communication development, pupil engagement and independence, and the extent to which pupils can apply and generalise their learning. Leaders also consider whether curriculum adaptations maintain appropriate ambition and whether pupils across all pathways receive their intended curriculum entitlement.

Equality and Inclusion

The Rodenhurst curriculum promotes equality, diversity and inclusion. It supports pupils to understand difference, challenge discrimination and participate positively in society.

Review

The curriculum is reviewed annually by senior leaders and governors to ensure it remains responsive to pupil need, local authority priorities and best practice in SEND education.