



HOMEBROOK WOODS

Independent Special School

Ages 5–11 | Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) and Associated EBSA

Curriculum Policy and Implementation Framework

Independent School Standards – Part 1: Quality of Education

Proprietor:	Vonika Shelley
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DOCUMENT GOVERNANCE & VERSION CONTROL

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1. Statutory Compliance Statement

This policy is written in accordance with:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- ISS Part 1 – Quality of Education (Paragraphs 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(2))
- ISS Part 2 – Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (Paragraph 5)
- ISS Part 6 – Provision of Information (Paragraph 32(1)(a))
- ISS Part 8 – Leadership and Management (Paragraph 34)
- Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)

Homebrook Woods maintains and implements a written policy supported by detailed curriculum plans, schemes of work and assessment systems.

Together, these documents demonstrate that the school is likely to meet the Independent School Standards from the point of opening.

The curriculum is planned and delivered within a strong safeguarding culture. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, the curriculum supports pupils' safety, wellbeing, resilience and preparation for life in modern Britain, while promoting their physical and mental wellbeing and protecting them from harm.

2. School Context and Pupil Profile

Homebrook Woods is an independent specialist primary school for pupils aged 5-11.

The school is designed for pupils who:

- Are autistic and/or
- Have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)
- Present with associated sensory processing differences
- Hold an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or are undergoing statutory assessment

Many pupils will present with:

- Difficulties in emotional regulation
- Social communication differences

- Uneven cognitive profiles
- Delayed expressive and/or receptive language

The curriculum is specifically designed for pupils whose primary barriers to learning relate to communication, regulation and social understanding. Placement decisions are made only where the school can demonstrably:

- Meet identified needs
- Deliver provision aligned to EHCP outcomes
- Provide safe, full-time supervised education

3. Curriculum Vision and Intent

The curriculum at Homebrook Woods is:

- Ambitious
- Developmentally sequenced
- Outcomes-driven
- Therapeutically informed
- Communication-centred

The curriculum ensures that pupils:

- Acquire knowledge and skills across a broad range of subjects
- Develop functional communication as the foundation for learning and life
- Build literacy and numeracy for academic access and real-world application
- Develop emotional regulation and readiness to learn
- Increase independence and daily living capability
- Are prepared for transition to their next stage of education
- Apply their knowledge, skills and independence through carefully planned educational visits, community experiences and real-life learning opportunities which enrich the curriculum and support the generalisation of learning.

Core Curriculum Drivers

At Homebrook Woods, every subject is built around three non-negotiable drivers:

1. **Language and Communication**
2. **Therapeutic and Regulation-Informed Practice**
3. **Independence and Life Skills**

These drivers are not separate subjects; they underpin all planning, teaching and assessment.

The curriculum is adapted for accessibility without lowering expectations.

3A. Communication, Interaction and Therapeutic Pedagogy

At Homebrook Woods, communication is not treated as a discrete subject area; it is the structural foundation of the entire curriculum.

Given the school's designation for pupils with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), all teaching is designed to create a communication-accessible environment in which pupils can understand, express, regulate and interact successfully.

Total Communication Environment

Homebrook Woods operates a Total Communication approach. This recognises that pupils may communicate through speech, sign, symbol, gesture, facial expression, body language, behaviour or assistive technology.

Provision includes:

- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems tailored to individual need
- Core vocabulary and topic-based communication boards
- Symbol-supported resources
- Voice-output communication aids (where appropriate)
- Objects of reference for pupils at early developmental stages

Communication systems are personalised and reviewed regularly.

Structured Interaction and Adult Modelling

Staff are trained to:

- Model clear, developmentally appropriate language
- Reduce language load while maintaining ambition
- Use pause, processing time and responsive interaction
- Reinforce all intentional communication attempts
- Embed communication opportunities into routines, transitions and subject teaching

Adults adapt their interaction style according to pupil profile, ensuring communication is scaffolded rather than assumed.

SCERTS-Informed Practice

Homebrook Woods draws on principles of the SCERTS framework to support:

- Social Communication development
- Emotional Regulation
- Transactional Support (adapting environment and adult responses)

SCERTS is used as a guiding framework to inform practice rather than as a branded curriculum. It supports alignment between communication goals, emotional regulation and environmental adjustments.

This aligns directly with the school's three curriculum drivers:

- Language and Communication
- Therapeutic and Regulation-Informed Practice
- Independence and Life Skills

Structured Teaching and Environmental Design

Classrooms are organised using structured teaching principles informed by evidence-based approaches such as TEACCH. This includes:

- Clearly defined learning areas
- Visual schedules
- Predictable routines
- Individual work systems (where appropriate)
- Calm and regulation spaces

Environmental clarity supports independence, reduces anxiety and increases cognitive availability for learning.

Personalised Communication Profiles

Each pupil has a Communication Profile (within their Individual Learning Plan), outlining:

- Preferred communication methods
- AAC systems used
- Regulation strategies
- Key vocabulary targets
- Social interaction priorities

These profiles are co-constructed with families and reviewed termly.

Therapeutic Collaboration

Homebrook Woods works collaboratively with:

- Speech and Language Therapists
- Occupational Therapists

- Educational Psychologists (as required)

Therapeutic strategies are embedded within daily teaching rather than delivered in isolation. Provision is mapped directly to EHCP outcomes.

Parent Communication and Partnership

Homebrook Woods uses a secure digital platform (for example, Evidence for Learning or ClassDojo School Story – platform confirmed upon opening) to:

- Share brief, purposeful learning updates
- Celebrate small-step progress
- Provide visual examples of learning
- Maintain two-way communication with families

Observations are concise and learning-focused. High-quality interaction with pupils always takes priority over administrative recording.

Communication Through Play and Real Contexts

Communication development is embedded within:

- Structured play
- Sensory exploration
- Thematic learning
- Community-based learning and carefully planned educational visits
- Daily routines

Opportunities for interaction are intentionally planned, scaffolded and revisited to support generalisation.

4. Broad and Balanced Curriculum – ISS 2(1)(a)

Homebrook Woods provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is appropriate to the ages, aptitudes and needs of pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

The curriculum is ambitious in scope and ensures that all pupils access learning across a full range of subject areas. These include:

- English (speaking, listening, reading and writing)
- Mathematics (number, reasoning and applied numeracy)
- Science
- Personal, Social, Health and Relationships Education (PSHE/RSE)
- Physical Education
- Creative Education (Art, Music, Drama and design-based learning)
- Humanities-linked thematic learning
- Independence and life skills
- Preparation for transition and next-stage education

While subject entitlement is maintained, the curriculum is not delivered as a simplified version of a mainstream model. Instead, it is developmentally structured and specifically designed for pupils with:

- Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)
- Associated sensory processing differences

For many pupils at Homebrook Woods, barriers to learning are rooted in communication, regulation and social understanding. The curriculum is therefore structured to:

- Prioritise expressive and receptive language development
- Embed visual scaffolding and structured routines
- Support emotional regulation alongside academic learning
- Provide repetition, overlearning and generalisation opportunities
- Build independence explicitly and progressively

Where pupils are working significantly below age-related expectations, curriculum content is drawn from developmentally appropriate semi-formal frameworks, including elements of the Equals Semi-Formal Curriculum. These elements are carefully adapted and integrated into the Homebrook Woods curriculum model.

The Equals materials are not used as a standalone curriculum; rather, they inform structured progression in areas such as:

- Communication
- Thinking and problem-solving

- Independence
- Play and leisure
- Creative expression
- Physical well-being

All curriculum content is personalised and sequenced to ensure that pupils build secure knowledge, skills and understanding over time. Learning is enriched through carefully planned educational visits, visitors to school, outdoor learning and community participation, enabling pupils to apply knowledge and skills in meaningful real-life contexts.

Adaptation does not reduce ambition. All pupils retain full curriculum entitlement, and the curriculum is designed to support measurable progress appropriate to each pupil's age, ability and aptitude.

5. Full-Time Supervised Education

Homebrook Woods provides full-time supervised education in accordance with the Independent School Standards.

The school operates a structured weekly timetable exceeding the 18-hour minimum threshold required for compulsory school age provision.

All pupils access:

- A planned and coherent curriculum
- Direct teaching
- Structured therapeutic support
- Supervised educational activities

Provision is full-time from admission. Part-time arrangements are not part of the standard offer at point of registration.

6. Developmental Curriculum Structure

The curriculum is organised into three developmental stages. These stages are not age-based.

Movement between stages is determined by:

- Engagement profile
- Communication development
- Readiness for structured learning
- Demonstrated progress

Stage 1: Regulation & Engagement

For pupils who:

- Require significant co-regulation
- Are developing shared attention
- Have limited or emerging communication
- Require structured sensory support

Curriculum focus:

- Emotional regulation
- Joint attention
- Early communication
- Structured sensory-informed play
- Foundations of cognition

Teaching is highly structured, predictable and relational.

Stage 2: Communication & Cognition

For pupils who:

- Sustain engagement for structured teaching
- Are developing expressive and receptive language
- Are building symbolic understanding
- Are accessing early literacy and numeracy

Curriculum focus:

- Language development
- Early reading and phonics
- Early numeracy and reasoning
- Social communication
- Cognitive sequencing

Learning becomes increasingly structured while maintaining regulation support.

Stage 3: Application & Independence

For pupils who:

- Access structured subject teaching
- Can generalise learning across contexts
- Are developing functional literacy and numeracy
- Are preparing for transition

Curriculum focus:

- Functional reading and writing
- Applied mathematics
- Community participation
- Daily living skills
- Emotional self-regulation
- Preparation for next-stage education

Teaching prioritises independence, generalisation and real-world application, while maintaining appropriate scaffolding and structured support to ensure secure and transferable learning.

7. English, Reading and Phonics

Communication is the foundation of the Homebrook Woods curriculum. For many pupils, barriers to learning are rooted in expressive and receptive language differences; therefore, the development of communication underpins all literacy teaching.

English is delivered as a structured and progressive subject, ensuring that pupils develop knowledge and skills in:

- Speaking and listening
- Reading
- Writing
- Vocabulary development
- Narrative understanding

The curriculum is ambitious and sequenced, while being carefully adapted for pupils with ASC and SLCN.

Language and Communication

The school prioritises:

- Expressive and receptive language development
- Total communication approaches (speech, symbol, AAC, sign, visuals)
- Structured vocabulary teaching
- Narrative development and comprehension
- Pragmatic and social communication skills

Language is taught explicitly. Vocabulary is not assumed; it is introduced, modelled, revisited and generalised across contexts. Key language structures

(e.g. requesting, commenting, sequencing, explaining, questioning) are systematically developed.

For many pupils, developing secure communication is a prerequisite for literacy progress. Planning therefore ensures that communication development and literacy learning are integrated rather than separated.

Phonics

Phonics is delivered through a structured, systematic approach aligned with recognised principles of systematic synthetic phonics, adapted for pupils with ASC and SLCN.

Teaching ensures:

- Multisensory access (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic)
- Clear, consistent routines
- Visual reinforcement of grapheme–phoneme correspondence
- Frequent consolidation and overlearning
- Small-step, assessment-informed progression

Phonics is introduced only when pupils demonstrate readiness in attention, auditory discrimination and symbolic understanding. Where pupils are not developmentally ready for formal phonics, early sound awareness and pre-phonics foundations are prioritised.

Assessment informs grouping, pacing and intervention.

Reading

Reading at Homebrook Woods follows multiple developmentally appropriate routes.

Reading development includes:

- Sensory book exploration
- Shared adult-led reading
- Structured phonics-based decoding
- Symbol-supported text
- Environmental print recognition
- Functional reading for meaning

Reading progression is carefully sequenced from:

1. Engagement with books
2. Sound awareness
3. Word recognition
4. Decoding (where appropriate)

5. Reading for understanding
6. Functional reading for independence

The aim is not simply decoding accuracy but comprehension and purposeful application.

Writing

Writing development is structured and progressive.

For some pupils, this begins with:

- Mark-making
- Sensory exploration of tools
- Symbol selection
- Labelling

As pupils progress, writing may include:

- Sentence construction
- Caption writing
- Narrative retelling
- Functional writing (lists, forms, labels, instructions)

Writing is taught as purposeful communication rather than transcription alone.

Adaptation for ASC and SLCN

The English curriculum is adapted to support:

- Reduced language load during instruction
- Visual scaffolding
- Clear modelling of sentence structures
- Structured lesson routines
- Additional processing time
- Explicit teaching of inference and generalisation

Many pupils may demonstrate uneven literacy profiles. Progression is therefore carefully assessed and based on developmental readiness rather than chronological age.

Use of Developmental Frameworks

The Equals Semi-Formal Curriculum informs progression in communication and literacy.

These frameworks support structured development in:

- Communication
- Thinking and problem-solving

- Independence within literacy contexts

Such materials are adapted and integrated within the Homebrook Woods curriculum model and are not used as a standalone programme.

Ambition and Entitlement

All pupils retain entitlement to literacy development appropriate to their age, ability and aptitude.

The school does not limit access to reading and writing because of diagnosis. Instead, literacy routes are personalised to ensure that pupils make measurable progress over time.

8. Mathematics

Mathematics at Homebrook Woods is ambitious, structured and sequential. It enables pupils to develop secure understanding of number, quantity, pattern, reasoning and problem-solving in ways that are accessible and meaningful.

The mathematics curriculum is designed specifically for pupils with ASC and SLCN, recognising that difficulties in language processing, working memory and abstract reasoning can present significant barriers to mathematical understanding.

Teaching is therefore delivered through:

- Concrete, visual and practical learning approaches
- Carefully scaffolded progression from experiential to symbolic understanding
- Explicit modelling and repetition
- Real-world and functional application
- Structured reasoning development
- Systematic and explicit vocabulary teaching

Mathematical language is taught directly and revisited frequently. Key vocabulary such as *more*, *less*, *equal*, *before*, *after*, *altogether*, *difference* and *share* is embedded through visual supports, practical activity and repetition across contexts.

Curriculum Content

Mathematics includes:

- Number sense and counting
- Place value (where developmentally appropriate)
- Calculation (using concrete and visual strategies)
- Pattern and sequencing
- Shape, space and measure
- Time and money
- Mathematical reasoning and problem-solving

For pupils at early developmental stages, mathematical learning begins with:

- Cause and effect
- Matching and sorting
- Comparing quantities
- One-to-one correspondence
- Early sequencing

As pupils progress, learning moves towards:

- Functional calculation
- Application of number in daily life
- Reasoning about quantity and measure
- Generalising mathematical understanding across contexts

Adaptation for ASC and SLCN

The mathematics curriculum is adapted to support:

- Reduced language load during initial concept teaching
- Use of visuals and structured layouts
- Clear task boundaries
- Predictable lesson routines
- Additional processing time
- Opportunities for overlearning and generalisation

Teaching recognises that for many pupils, conceptual understanding may develop unevenly. Progression is therefore carefully sequenced and assessed using small-step measures.

Use of Developmental Frameworks

The Equals Semi-Formal Curriculum is used to inform progression.

These frameworks support structured development in:

- Thinking and problem-solving
- Early number concepts
- Independence within mathematical contexts

Such materials are adapted and integrated into the Homebrook Woods curriculum model and are not used as a standalone programme.

Application and Generalisation

Numeracy is embedded across daily routines, life skills and thematic learning. Pupils apply mathematical understanding in contexts such as:

- Snack preparation
- Shopping role play
- Time awareness
- Measuring in cooking
- Handling money
- Managing quantities in real-life tasks

This ensures that mathematical learning is transferable, functional and meaningful.

All pupils retain entitlement to mathematical learning appropriate to their age, ability and aptitude. Progress is reviewed regularly and informs subsequent planning.

9. Assessment and Progress - ISS 2(1)(b), 2(2)

Progress is defined as measurable improvement over time in:

- Academic attainment
- Communication
- Emotional regulation
- Social understanding
- Independence

Assessment includes:

- Baseline on entry
- Small-step developmental tracking
- Ongoing formative assessment
- Termly review
- EHCP outcome monitoring

Assessment also considers pupils' ability to generalise knowledge and skills across different environments and real-life situations, including educational visits and community learning opportunities.

Progress is:

- Baseline-informed
- Individually tracked
- Reviewed by leadership
- Used to adapt curriculum delivery

The school distinguishes between behavioural compliance and genuine developmental progress.

10. Planning and Implementation - ISS 2(2)

The curriculum is supported by:

- Whole-school curriculum mapping
- Six-year thematic overview
- Medium-term planning
- Weekly planning
- Individual Learning Plans
- Provision mapping aligned to EHCP outcomes

All planning at Homebrook Woods follows a consistent structure that includes:

- Clear learning intention
- Communication focus
- Explicit vocabulary
- Cognitive demand
- Differentiation
- Regulation strategy
- Assessment criteria
- EHCP link

Teaching is:

- Structured and predictable
- Language-rich
- Visually scaffolded
- Sensory-aware
- Adapted for cognitive profile

11. SMSC and Fundamental British Values (ISS Part 2)

The curriculum actively promotes:

- Self-knowledge and self-confidence
- Understanding of right and wrong
- Respectful relationships
- Tolerance and mutual respect
- Understanding how to keep themselves safe, including online, in the community and during everyday activities
- Awareness of diversity

SMSC development is embedded across curriculum themes, daily routines and community engagement.

British Values are taught in developmentally appropriate ways and are not delivered in a partisan manner.

The school does not promote partisan political views and does not undermine democratic principles.

12. Equality, Inclusion and EAL

The curriculum is implemented in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. The school:

- Makes reasonable adjustments
- Removes barriers to learning
- Adapts teaching approaches
- Integrates EHCP provision into curriculum planning

Where pupils have English as an Additional Language, communication is supported through a total communication approach, valuing home language and cultural identity.

All pupils retain full curriculum entitlement.

13. Leadership and Oversight (ISS Part 8)

The Proprietor and Headteacher, and SENDCO ensure that:

- Curriculum design complies with ISS
- Implementation is monitored and quality assured
- Progress data is reviewed systematically
- Staff are trained and supported
- Safeguarding, including KCSIE 2026 updates, is reflected throughout curriculum planning and implementation
- Documentation is maintained and inspection-ready

Monitoring includes:

- Planning scrutiny
- Lesson observation
- Progress review meetings
- Curriculum evaluation
- Staff development review

Leadership ensures that the curriculum is implemented effectively and consistently.

14. Information for Parents (ISS Part 6)

Parents are provided with:

- This Curriculum Policy
- Curriculum overview documentation
- Termly progress reporting
- EHCP review documentation

The school works in partnership with families to support pupil progress.

15. Review

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if:

- Regulatory requirements change
- Changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), the Independent School Standards or other statutory guidance
- The cohort profile changes materially
- Evaluation identifies areas for improvement