



Doubletrees School

Curriculum Design Summary

An overview of shared rationale, pathway design, vision, values and four curriculum strands

Our curriculum in one sentence

Our curriculum is designed around the complex SEN needs of our learners, prioritising communication, independence, emotional resilience and community access so that every learner can develop the skills, confidence and agency they need for life beyond Doubletrees.

1. Shared Curriculum Intent

The Doubletrees curriculum is deliberately individualised, therapeutic and ambitious. Across EYFS, Engagement, Exploration and Discovery, the curriculum begins with each learner's needs, barriers and aspirations. It recognises that many learners need support to feel safe, regulated and understood before they can access formal learning. For this reason, curriculum access begins with attuned relationships, total communication, co-regulation and opportunities to experience success in meaningful contexts.

The curriculum is not designed as a narrow academic offer. It combines academic, communication, physical, sensory, emotional, social and independence learning. It is also designed to prepare learners for adulthood, including community participation, health and wellbeing, supported independence, relationships, leisure, further education or vocational opportunities where appropriate.

Design principle

The curriculum meets learners where they are, reduces barriers to access, revisits key learning over time, and supports learners to apply meaningful skills in school, at home and in the community.

Values-led curriculum design

The four curriculum strands are the mechanism through which the school values are enacted: learners feel safe enough to Achieve, experience Belonging, are supported to Communicate, are enabled to Develop, and are motivated to Enjoy learning and life beyond school.



2. Alignment with Our Vision and Values

Our curriculum design directly reflects the Doubletrees values of **Achieve, Belong, Communicate, Develop and Enjoy**. These values are not separate statements alongside the curriculum; they shape curriculum intent, implementation and assessment. They help explain why the offer prioritises communication, independence, emotional resilience, therapeutic access and meaningful participation in school, community and adult-life contexts.

Value	How it is reflected in curriculum design	Curriculum implications
Achieve	Learners are supported to reach their unique potential through personalised, meaningful and holistic goals. Achievement includes academic progress, communication, regulation, independence, engagement, maintenance of vital skills and application in new contexts.	Progress is tracked through PLGs, EHCP outcomes, engagement, learning journeys and pupil conferencing rather than through a single narrow measure.
Belong	Learners need to feel safe, recognised and valued as members of their class, school and wider community. Belonging is built through attuned adults, predictable routines, relationships, inclusion and opportunities to contribute.	The curriculum creates emotionally safe environments and brings the community and wider world to learners where direct access is challenging.
Communicate	Communication is central because many learners experience communication as a primary barrier to learning, relationships, autonomy and community access.	Total Communication, AAC, symbols, Makaton, objects of reference, Intensive Interaction and communication partners are embedded across the day.
Develop	The curriculum develops the whole learner: cognition, communication, physical and sensory access, emotional resilience, self-help, independence, social interaction and preparation for adulthood.	Learning is sequenced through small, personalised steps and revisited through a spiralling model until it is embedded and transferable.
Enjoy	Learners are motivated through curiosity, sensory exploration, play, creativity, themes, community experiences and joyful relationships. Enjoyment supports engagement, persistence and wellbeing.	Themes, immersive experiences, creative arts, sensory stories, movement and real-life learning are used to make learning meaningful and accessible.



3. Why Communication, Independence, Emotional Resilience and Community Access Are Prioritised

For our learners, these priorities are not additional to the curriculum; they are the route into it. They enable pupils to access learning, express preferences, maintain dignity, experience belonging and prepare for life beyond school.

Priority	Why it matters in our context	What this looks like in practice
Communication	Communication is a significant barrier for many pupils. Learners need reliable ways to express wants, needs, choices, feelings, preferences, refusals and ideas.	Total Communication, AAC, objects of reference, symbols, Makaton, Intensive Interaction, core words, communication partners and repeated opportunities to communicate across the day.
Independence	Independence is developed in highly personalised ways, from early autonomy and choice making to self-help, travel training, community safety, enterprise and home-management tasks.	Self-care routines, feeding, personal care, preparing snacks or meals, managing belongings, following routines, practising life skills and gradually reducing adult prompts.
Emotional resilience	Learners need to feel safe, connected and regulated before they can engage. Emotional resilience is developed through predictable routines, relationship-based practice and supported risk-taking.	Trauma-informed practice, emotional coaching, Motional activities, co-regulation, check-ins, attunement and repeated opportunities to recover, try again and experience success.
Community access	Many learners face barriers to accessing the wider world due to communication, sensory, social, emotional, physical or safety needs. Community learning therefore needs to be planned, scaffolded and rehearsed.	Carefully planned visits, local partnerships, school-based simulations, role play, enterprise, leisure experiences, travel training, and bringing community experiences into school when direct access is not yet possible.

4. Accessing the Community and the Wider World

The curriculum acknowledges that access to the community and the wider world is challenging for many learners with SEN. Community contexts can be unpredictable, noisy, socially complex, physically demanding and communication-heavy. For some pupils, accessing the community directly may not always be possible or may require careful preparation, familiar adults, therapeutic planning and graduated exposure.

For this reason, Doubletrees does two things simultaneously:

- We take learners into the community when it is safe, purposeful and appropriately scaffolded, so that they can practise functional skills within real contexts.
- We bring the community and wider world to learners through immersive experiences, sensory stories, role play, visitors, enterprise, themed projects, school-based community events and carefully adapted learning environments.

This approach ensures equity of opportunity. Learners are not excluded from the wider world simply because direct access is difficult; instead, the curriculum creates meaningful, motivating and accessible routes into community understanding, participation and belonging.



5. The Four Key Strands of Curriculum Design

The curriculum across pathways is structured through four shared strands. These provide coherence across the school while still allowing each pathway to personalise pedagogy, pace, context and level of support.

Strand	Name	EHCP link	Summary
1	Feeling Safe in My World	Social, emotional and mental health	The foundation for learning. Adults prioritise attunement, relational connection, regulation, predictability and emotional safety so that learners are ready to engage. Emotional Literacy, trauma-informed approaches and Motional-based activities support learners to recognise, communicate and manage feelings.
2	Exploring My World	Cognition and learning	The strand through which learners build knowledge, concepts, curiosity and thinking skills. This may be play-based, pre-formal, skills-based, thematic, subject-specific, functional or accredited depending on pathway. Learning is motivating, practical and rooted in meaningful contexts.
3	Accessing My World	Sensory and physical	The therapeutic strand. Learners access sensory, physical, medical and regulation support so that barriers to participation are reduced. Therapy plans, physical development, sensory regulation, health routines and accessible environments are embedded across the day.
4	Interacting with My World	Communication and interaction	The communication strand. Learners are supported to understand others, express themselves, make choices, build relationships, interact socially and communicate within school, home, community and real-life contexts using the most appropriate communication systems.

6. Personalisation and a Spiralling Model of Learning

Personalisation is central to curriculum design. Each learner's pathway is shaped by EHCP outcomes, Personalised Learning Goals, family aspirations, learner interests, therapeutic needs and readiness for learning. Progress is understood holistically, including academic, communication, social, emotional, sensory, physical and independence development.

The curriculum is intentionally spiralling. Learners revisit key knowledge, vocabulary, routines, concepts and skills over time. Learning is not considered secure simply because it has been encountered once. Learners need repeated, motivating and varied opportunities to:

- encounter and experience new learning
- revisit and rehearse skills across familiar routines
- embed learning through repetition and overlearning
- apply skills in different contexts, with different adults and peers
- generalise learning from school-based activities to home, community and wider-life contexts
- move on only when learning is secure, meaningful and transferable

What progression means at Doubletrees

Progress may mean acquisition of a new skill, increased independence, greater consistency, improved regulation, communication in a new context, maintenance of a vital skill, or applying learning with a different adult or in a different environment.



7. Pathway Coherence: One Curriculum, Differentiated Routes

Pathway / phase	Curriculum emphasis
EYFS	Secure foundations through play, early communication, co-regulation, physical development, sensory exploration and independence from the beginning of the school journey.
Engagement	A therapeutic, multi-sensory and highly personalised curriculum for learners with profound and complex needs, focused on engagement, communication, agency, health, dignity and quality of life.
Exploration	A skills-based, therapeutic and thematic curriculum for learners with complex communication, sensory, social and emotional needs, focusing on functional communication, regulation, independence and meaningful access to learning.
Discovery	A structured, practical and scaffolded curriculum for learners accessing a broader subject-specific offer, with a strong emphasis on functional English and maths, independence, wellbeing, community participation and preparation for adulthood.
Upper School	An age-appropriate and purposeful continuation of the pathways, with greater emphasis on Preparing for Adulthood, community inclusion, enterprise, accreditation where appropriate, life skills, independence and transition planning.

8. What Success Looks Like

A successful curriculum at Doubletrees is visible in the small, meaningful steps that enable learners to have greater agency, participation and quality of life. Success may be seen when learners communicate more clearly, regulate with increasing support or independence, participate for longer, make choices, tolerate transitions, engage with peers, practise life skills, access community experiences or apply learning beyond the classroom.

Assessment therefore captures more than academic attainment. It includes PLG progress, EHCP outcomes, engagement, learning journeys, wider curriculum progress, pupil conferencing, therapeutic progress, independence development and preparation for adulthood.



9. Summary Statement

Curriculum summary

The Doubletrees curriculum is designed to be inclusive, personalised and purposeful. It acknowledges that learners with complex SEN may face significant barriers to accessing learning, the community and the wider world. Therefore, the curriculum prioritises the foundational skills that make access possible: communication, independence, emotional resilience and community participation. Through the four strands of Feeling Safe in My World, Exploring My World, Accessing My World and Interacting with My World, learners receive a coherent offer that is adapted to their pathway, age, needs and aspirations. Learning is revisited through a spiralling curriculum so that skills are not only encountered, but embedded, applied and generalised across meaningful contexts. Where direct community access is difficult, Doubletrees brings the wider world to learners through immersive, adapted and motivating experiences, while continuing to build the confidence, communication and independence needed for life beyond school.