

Implementation - Topic at New Horizons Academy

At New Horizons Academy, our Topic curriculum has been designed specifically for our learners. We have moved away from "off-the-shelf" schemes to create a bespoke curriculum that prioritises core National Curriculum skills while maximising student engagement.

A Bespoke and Flexible Framework

- **Core Skill Mapping:** Each unit is mapped against core skills taken from the relevant National Curriculum documents to ensure academic rigor, while the content remains flexible enough to pivot based on student interest and current world events whilst opportunities for oracy and critical thinking are given to support the pupils' development.
- **Broadening Horizons:** Topics are carefully selected to ensure that pupils have opportunities to learn about different people, places and events that they may not have studied due to their previous educational experiences. By focusing on areas of pupil interest, areas linked to the National curriculum and units which support SEMH and cultural capital development, pupils are given varied opportunities to engage positively with their learning.

High-Engagement Delivery

- **Hands-On Learning:** To re-engage learners who may have had negative experiences with formal education, our topic units use various strategies to "hook" our pupils and provide learning experiences which not only provide them with core skills and knowledge but foster a love of learning. Alongside the use of interactive resources, trips and or visitors, our learners are immersed in their topic.
- **Learner Voice:** In line with our intent to encourage ownership, students are given a say in the direction of their projects and topic units. This "co-construction" of the curriculum ensures that the learning feels relevant to their lives and aspirations.

Meaningful Cross-Curricular Links

- **Holistic Integration:** Throughout our planning, we make cross-curricular links where applicable. This reinforcement helps secure prior learning and reduces the cognitive load for our students.

- **Adaptive Instruction:** Planning is adapted for every lesson to account for the emotional temperature of the classroom. We use appropriate resources to ensure that personal circumstances or learning barriers do not prevent access to complex historical or geographical concepts.

Impact - Topic at New Horizons Academy

The impact of our Topic curriculum is seen in students who are more connected to the world around them and more confident in their ability to navigate it.

Re-engagement and Academic Agency

The primary impact is a measurable increase in learner engagement. Students move from a state of educational passivity to becoming active "researchers" and "explorers." This is evidenced by pupil voices, pupil engagement in topic learning and a visible pride in the work produced for their project outcomes.

Broadened Horizons and Cultural Capital

Our learners develop a genuine appreciation for diversity and global history. By exploring cultures and viewpoints different from their own, they develop the empathy and respect necessary for a positive, inclusive society. They leave us with a sense of "Cultural Capital" that bridges the gap between their personal experiences and the wider world.

Critical Thinking and Resilience

Through open-ended discussions and supported inquiry, students develop the ability to think critically. They learn that history and geography are not just about "facts" but about interpretation. This promotes resilience, as students become more comfortable with the idea that there isn't always one "right" answer, fostering a safer environment for self-expression.

Preparedness for Transition

The impact is seen in the "transferable skills" our students acquire. By mastering core skills they are better equipped for their next educational setting. They leave New Horizons Academy not just with knowledge, but with an improved confidence to communicate their ideas clearly in any future classroom environment.