

Thematic Learning



Intent

At the William Henry Smith School & Sixth Form, our curriculum is centered around a thematic approach to learning. In lower and middle school, students work around a driver subject which have been carefully chosen to meet the interests and needs of our students. Our thematic projects are centered around history and geography, carefully mapped to build on historical and geographical skills. We want all children to be curious about the stories of our past, how people used to live and how historical figures paved the way for our current way of life. We want all pupils to know key events and periods of history and how to use historical skills to conduct their own research about the past. The history curriculum is sequenced chronologically to provide pupils with opportunities to build and revisit knowledge as they progress through the school, slotting together the pieces to form a timeline of historical periods and events. Our pupils also take opportunities to compare worldwide history to national and local history. The geography curriculum is sequenced to provide pupils with opportunities to build and revisit knowledge as they progress through the school. We provide opportunities for pupils to experience history and geography learning beyond the school drive and further afield and ensure our students experience a wide range of school trips.

Implementation

Our students have several thematic learning sessions a week to fully explore their projects. Where possible, art, DT and food technology are linked to our thematic projects to allow students to apply their learning in a cross curricular way. Lessons are sequenced to build on prior skills and students have the opportunity to be creative in their sessions. Practical exercises and class trips help our students to apply their learning and experience the world beyond our drive. In lessons, staff will model explicitly the subject-specific vocabulary, knowledge and skills relevant to the learning at hand to enable the integration of new knowledge. Opportunities to learn from first-hand experience will be offered wherever possible. A regular programme of monitoring, evaluation and review, combined with a celebration of good practice will contribute to the ongoing commitment to evolve and improve further.

Impact

Through our thematic learning offer, students will develop their curiosity and ability to examine primary and secondary sources of information. Their ability to develop an understanding of chronology will increase and they will be able to identify key characteristics of the world around them. Students will have the opportunity to develop their critical thinking skills and be able to apply this across the curriculum.