

MAKING LEARNING IRRESISTIBLE



New Horizons  
Children's Academy



# Welcome to New Horizons Children's Academy

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New Horizons takes a [child first](#) approach to learning, encouraging our students to [aspire](#), [challenge](#) and [achieve](#).

Our school is part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust (TSAT), a non-profit, charitable trust which has successfully grown in recent years. The lead academy of TSAT is Rochester Grammar School which is an outstanding school with an inspiring reputation as one of the country's leading state schools.

At New Horizons, we want to transform the life chances of every child that walks through our doors. We work to provide our pupils with a safe and nurturing environment, in which they can aim high and develop a love for learning. Our school holds high standards for all members of our community, and everything that we do is motivated by wanting the best for our pupils.

We believe that children only thrive when they are happy and feel safe in their environment. We therefore make sure that:

- Our lessons are exciting and encourage children to think and learn
- Every child is treated as an individual
- Children learn to respect each other, and to play and learn together

Starting at a new school can be both exciting and daunting, so it is important that both you and your child have all the information you need. You are very welcome to arrange a visit to our school to meet our staff and pupils and get a feel for our friendly school environment.

I look forward to welcoming you at New Horizons Children's Academy!



Cormac Murphy  
Headteacher

# Values and Habits

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## Making Learning Irresistible

We aim to make learning irresistible so that your child comes to school every day happy and eager to learn. We know that children are naturally inquisitive, and we aim to feed this curiosity by providing a curriculum that engages, excites and challenges our children. As a Thinking School, we teach our children to become creative, analytical, adaptable and resilient thinkers, equipping them with the transferable skills they need to thrive in later life.

Above all, we want to encourage and inspire even the youngest children, teaching them the tools they need to become successful lifelong learners.

## High Aspiration for All Children

We have an ethos of high expectations, encouraging every child to flourish intellectually, personally and morally. We teach our children to be successful, independent learners who concentrate, persevere, take risks and have a willingness to make mistakes. We want all our children to make accelerated progress and achieve well, regardless of their background or circumstances.





## THINKING

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The Thinking Schools Academy Trust is a family of schools that work together to “transform the life chances” of all our children and young people. We share a common mission to nurture successful young people who are confident and can think and act independently.

As part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, New Horizons Children’s Academy takes pride in the unique approach we take to education: we provide our children with the skills and tools they need to think in a variety of ways and become lifelong learners. We believe that the best way to transform the life chances of our young people and help them achieve their aspirations is by shaping their minds, attitudes and habits through a framework of cognitive education that enables them to become the masters of their own destiny.

Our pupils are equipped with a bank of Thinking Tools designed to prepare them for a range of scenarios, dilemmas and circumstances that they may face in life as part of modern society. The use of these Tools in our curriculum is supported by scientific and metacognitive research, and pupils are encouraged to apply their tools independently and use them to unlock new ideas. Our Thinking Tools include: Thinking Maps, De Bono’s Thinking Hats and Art Costa’s Habits of Mind. These tools are used consistently across all areas of our curriculum and support our children tremendously in their learning and personal growth.

The concept of ‘Being your Best Self’ is also at the heart of our approach to learning at New Horizons, as part of our Thinking School ethos. Children are encouraged to strive to be and achieve their best, and are given multiple opportunities to reflect on their learning and work on their personal development.

In June 2022, New Horizons Children’s Academy was accredited as an Advanced Thinking School by the University of Exeter’s School of Education, which leads the way on Metacognition, Thinking Skills and Creativity and provides a framework for schools to follow to become recognised Thinking Schools. In a glowing report on our school, the University commented that:

*“The school seeks to make learning irresistible by developing children as creative, adaptable and resilient thinkers so that they become committed lifelong learners.”*

*“New Horizons Children’s Academy has developed a unique culture of personalisation that goes beyond a ‘broad-brush’ approach to learning and teaching”*

*“Student Voice is a strong part of the school and means that teachers can identify what works best, for whom, under what circumstances, how and why.”*

# Our Curriculum

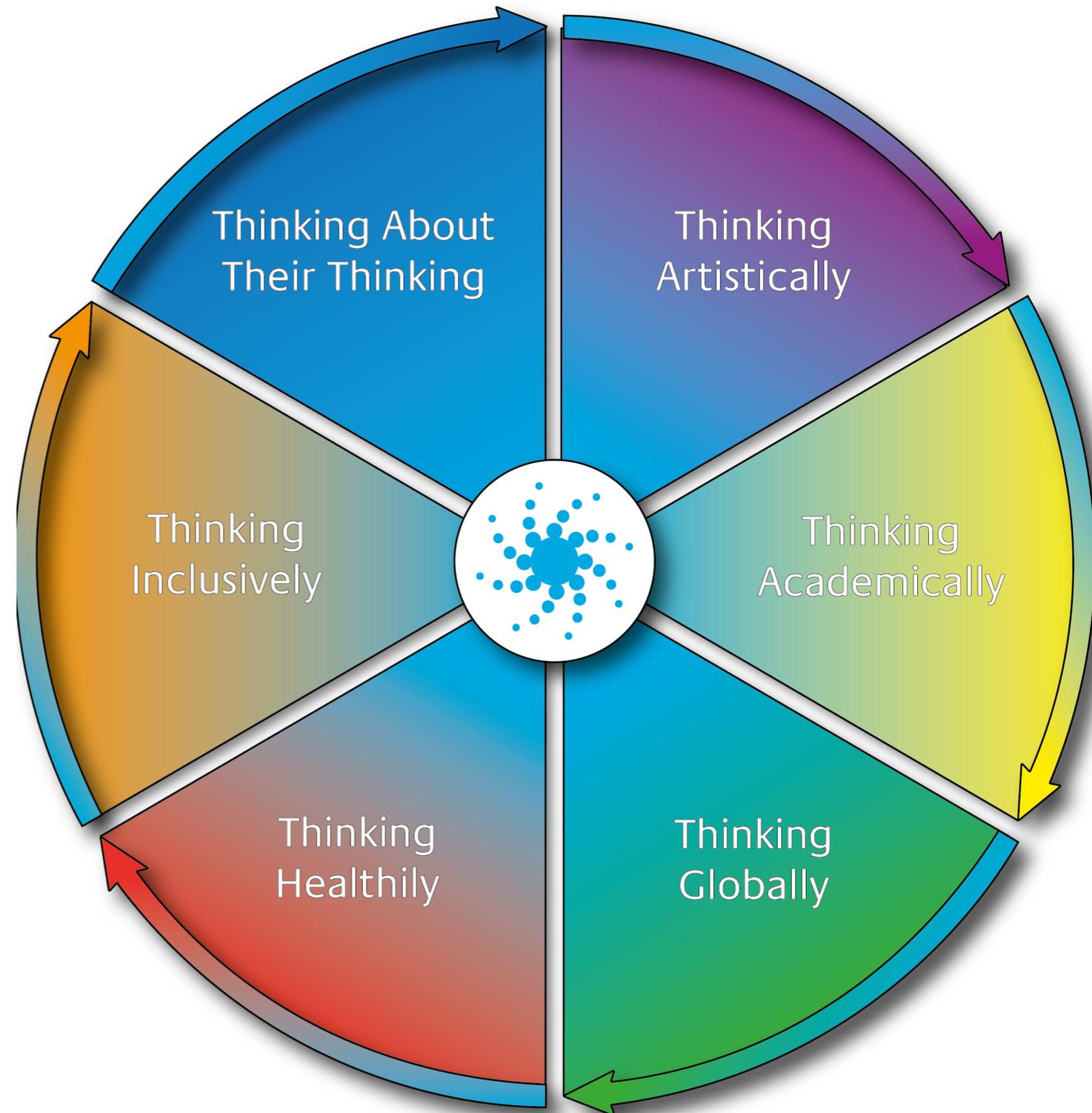
We believe that children learn best when their learning is engaging and meaningful. Our curriculum is designed to develop our children as thinkers, excite their imaginations and provide plenty of first-hand experiences to help them make sense of the world.

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Nursery and Reception children follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, consisting of three key areas: communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development, and 4 subject areas: literacy, numeracy, understanding the world and expressive art and design. The environment in the foundation stage is set up to allow children to develop their knowledge and skills through play. There are opportunities for children to learn, thrive and explore both inside and outside the classroom.

## National Curriculum

Years 1-6 follow the National Curriculum, equipping children with a range of knowledge and skills in English, Maths, Science, Computing, History, Geography, Art and Design, Design Technology, Music, Physical Education and Personal, Social and Emotional Education. We use a topic-based curriculum to seamlessly make links between all subject areas to enhance the quality of the provision for the children.





## Enrichment Opportunities

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### Enrichment

New Horizons Children's Academy provides before and after-school clubs to provide extra-curricular opportunities for our children and extra childcare. Clubs start after the first full week following the Summer, Christmas and Easter holidays and finish a full week prior to these breaks.

A range of clubs are also on offer, including football, cooking and art and crafts. You can find an up-to-date list of clubs on our website. We also offer a wide range of opportunities for our children including a residential adventure trip, workshops, cooking sessions and other valuable experiences to help bring their learning to life.

### #WeAreOne Events

As part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, our children have the opportunity to participate in our Trust's 'We Are One' events, where schools across our Trust unite in celebration of a key event or national day. Our children love getting involved and representing our school in a range of Trust-wide competitions, fundraising events and creative activities. Previous 'We Are One' events have included World Book Day, LGBTQ+ History Month and TSArTs Week. Being part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust family opens our school and our children up to a world of opportunities to network, collaborate and compete as part of a wider community.



## ARTSMARK

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As part of New Horizons Children's Academy's mission to "transform life chances", we believe we have a responsibility to build our young people's cultural capital as much as possible: this means offering opportunities for our children to explore culture in its various forms, immerse themselves in the Arts and learn about the world beyond their personal location and circumstances. We believe that in expanding our pupils' cultural knowledge and encouraging them to engage in new experiences, we can support their personal growth and extend their knowledge beyond the taught curriculum.

Every student at New Horizons has a Cultural Passport which encourages them to record and reflect on their cultural experiences. The Passport offers a range of activities and ideas for broadening students' horizons and developing their skills, from managing a budget and learning a survival skill to visiting an art gallery and trying foods from different countries. Our school offers as many opportunities as possible to equip our young people with a diverse set of experiences, skills and knowledge.

In order to offer a full and enriching experience which builds cultural capital, New Horizons has committed to our Artsmark journey, ensuring the cultural and creative education we provide is broad, diverse and engaging.

'Arts and culture are highly valued at New Horizons Children's Academy. You have invested time and money to ensure the Arts have a high profile in the school, the Trust and the community. The Arts are used to enrich and link learning across the curriculum as well as teaching art, dance, music and design and technology discretely.'

Gold Artsmark report June 2022





## Parental Involvement

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At New Horizons Children's Academy, parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning and to have high expectations of the school from the beginning.

We value you as your child's first educator, and ask that you work with us to ensure that your child is achieving and progressing as much as possible. We encourage you to help your child complete the homework set by the class teacher. There are regular workshops for parents explaining the approaches the school uses for key areas such as phonics, maths, reading and thinking skills, and parents are regularly invited into school for Curriculum Days, Class Assemblies and various other events. There are also regular opportunities throughout the year to meet with staff to review your child's progress, and a written report will be provided at the end of the year. We pride ourselves on being very approachable and have an open-door policy, so if you are ever concerned about your child's education, please make an appointment at any time to meet with their class teacher.



# ALL THROUGH EDUCATION AT THINKING SCHOOLS ACADEMY TRUST



In Medway, we have created a unique offer for parents; the chance for your child to experience an 'all through' educational journey where they stay with the same family of schools.

We have a number of infant/junior and all-through primaries in the area and our secondary schools – The Victory Academy, Rochester Grammar School and Holcombe Grammar School. Each of our schools has adapted their admissions policies so that parents get a priority preference, when applying for a place in another Thinking School.

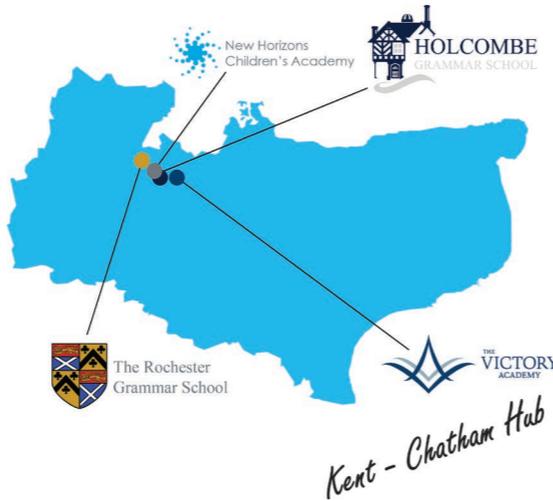
All-through education has many potential benefits for your child. First and foremost, our multi-academy Trust does have a shared approach to teaching children, a language of learning that is taught and then built upon. This consistency helps to accelerate children's progress as they understand what to do, and how to do it. Indeed, developing metacognition right from the early years has been shown to have a massive effect on young people's learning capacity. In addition, the familiarity is reassuring and helps make changing schools easier.

Secondly, our teachers and leaders work really closely together. This means we can design a curriculum that builds on what children already know. Our experienced Headteachers work very closely together to identify and implement strategies that we know will make a massive difference to children's progress in school, confidence and well-being. We are innovative and forward-thinking and work with the local authority to both share our good practice, and also to learn from others beyond our Multi-Academy Trust.

Children see us moving between schools and the continuation of our relationships with them helps them to feel a sense of belonging, security and of being looked after.



Mandy Gage  
Director of Education – TSAT Chatham schools



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