

Subject Progression Model - Careers

Pre-Formal

For learners in Key Stage 4 and 5 working towards sensory AQA Unit Awards and ASDAN accreditations, career-related learning is embedded through practical, meaningful experiences that support the development of transferable skills. These learners engage in structured activities that promote communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and independence—key competencies for future employment and adult life. Each activity is carefully selected to align with learners' Individual Learning Plan (ILP) targets, personal interests, and long-term career aspirations. Through hands-on tasks, community-based learning, and vocational tasters, students explore real-world environments and roles, gradually building confidence and a sense of purpose. The accreditation frameworks offer a personalised pathway, allowing learners to gain recognition for progress in areas such as work-related learning, independent living, and enterprise. This approach ensures learners are not only prepared for the world of work but are also supported to make informed choices about their future destinations.

Pre-Formal

At Key Stage 3, learners begin to explore career-related learning through engaging, hands-on activities that help them develop essential life and work skills. Students take part in structured experiences that introduce them to different roles, responsibilities, and real-world environments in a way that is accessible and meaningful. Activities are carefully chosen to reflect their interests and abilities, while also supporting Individual Learning Plan (ILP) targets. These experiences help learners build confidence, improve communication and teamwork, and develop a greater awareness of the world of work. Students are encouraged to take pride in their achievements and begin to understand how their strengths and interests can shape their future career pathways.

Pre-Formal

At Key Stage 1 and 2, career-related learning is introduced in a fun, accessible way that encourages curiosity and helps learners begin to understand the world of work. Pupils engage in practical, play-based activities that build important early skills such as communication, following instructions, making choices, and working with others. These experiences are tailored to each child's interests and needs, supporting their Individual Learning Plan (ILP) targets and laying the groundwork for future independence. Whether exploring different job roles through imaginative play or taking part in real-life tasks like cooking, gardening, or helping in the classroom, learners begin to make links between what they enjoy and what they might do in the future. Achieving accreditation at this stage builds confidence and provides a strong foundation for later vocational learning.

Pre-Formal

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), career-related learning begins through play and exploration, helping children make sense of the world around them. Through sensory-rich, hands-on experiences, learners begin to develop early skills that form the foundation for future learning and independence—such as making choices, communicating preferences, and working alongside others. Activities may include role play, stories about different jobs, and real-life tasks like tidying, gardening, or helping with routines, all designed to build curiosity and understanding of different roles in everyday life. All experiences are carefully linked to each child's developmental stage and Individual Learning Plan (ILP), ensuring learning is meaningful, enjoyable, and sets the stage for later vocational development.

Engagement

In the Engagement Pathway, meeting Individual Learning Plan (ILP) targets remains the core focus, with careers education woven throughout sensory AQA Unit Awards and ASDAN to support each learner's personal development and future pathways. A total communication approach is used to ensure consistency and accessibility, with visual supports like "now and next" boards helping students understand their routines and manage transitions effectively. Teaching and support strategies are guided by the Engagement Model, using approaches such as Attention Autism to build attention, engagement, and readiness to learn. Music, songs of reference, and objects of reference are used to reinforce communication and support understanding in daily tasks. Careers-related learning is embedded across the curriculum through real-life, age-appropriate topics that promote functional and life skills. Students are supported to take increasing responsibility for tasks, promoting independence and preparation for adulthood. This might include activities such as following instructions, using tools safely, engaging in simple enterprise projects, or contributing to class-based vocational tasks. The SCERTS framework underpins all interactions and planning, ensuring that activities are structured, familiar, and meaningful to learners. Therapies are also integrated throughout to support each learner's holistic development and help them progress towards future independence and employment opportunities where appropriate.

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Post 16

In Post 16, careers and preparation for adulthood are at the heart of learning. Progress is measured through Individual Learning Plan (ILP) targets and curriculum statements, with all learners working on outcomes in functional skills. Careers adviser interviews provide pupils with personalised guidance to help them explore future education, training, and employment options. These one-to-one sessions offer a supportive space to discuss interests, strengths, and potential career pathways. The interviews are adapted to meet individual needs and may include visual supports or key staff present. The aim is to help each young person make informed choices about their next steps and feel confident about their future. Vocational experiences such as running pop-up cafés, taking part in horticulture projects, enterprise activities, and supported work experience placements help students develop real-world skills in practical settings. These activities are linked to ASDAN lifeskills challenges, giving students the opportunity to gain recognition for their achievements through nationally accredited units. By developing confidence, independence, and workplace behaviours, students begin to build the foundations they need for adult life and future employment opportunities. Students use Skills Builder to develop essential skills—like teamwork, communication, problem solving, and self-management—that are crucial for career success. By strengthening these core skills, pupils are better prepared for the workplace, improving their employability and ability to progress in a wide range of careers.

Key Stage 4

In KS4, careers and preparation for adulthood are at the heart of learning. Progress is measured through Individual Learning Plan (ILP) targets and curriculum statements, with learners working on outcomes in functional skills. Careers adviser interviews provide pupils with personalised guidance to help them explore future education, training, and employment options. These one-to-one sessions offer a supportive space to discuss interests, strengths, and potential career pathways. The interviews are adapted to meet individual needs and may include visual supports or key staff present. The aim is to help each young person make informed choices about their next steps and feel confident about their future. Vocational experiences such as running pop-up cafés, taking part in horticulture projects, enterprise activities, and supported work experience placements help students develop real-world skills in practical settings. These activities are linked to the AQA Unit Award Schemes, giving students the opportunity to gain recognition for their achievements through nationally accredited units. By developing confidence, independence, and workplace behaviours, students begin to build the foundations they need for adult life and future employment opportunities. Students use Skills Builder to develop essential skills—like teamwork, communication, problem solving, and self-management—that are crucial for career success. By strengthening these core skills, pupils are better prepared for the workplace, improving their employability and ability to progress in a wide range of careers.

Semi -Formal

Progress is measured through Individual Learning Plan (ILP) targets alongside curriculum outcomes linked to the "Preparing for Adulthood" and careers education framework, all underpinned by the principles of the Engagement Model. Learners take part in a carousel of activities that offer a balance of high-, low-, and no-demand tasks, allowing for differentiation and personalised access to vocational and life skills learning. A total communication approach is consistently used, with tools such as "now and next" boards supporting understanding, routine, and transitions throughout the day. Strategies such as Attention Autism are integrated to improve focus, participation, and engagement—particularly during activities that require sustained attention or task completion. Careers-related learning encourages self-expression and personal development through meaningful, real-life experiences. Learners are given opportunities to explore and develop skills related to independence, responsibility, and workplace readiness, in ways that are accessible and relevant to their needs. Students use Skills Builder to develop essential skills—like teamwork, communication, problem solving, and self-management—that are crucial for career success. By strengthening these core skills, pupils are better prepared for the workplace, improving their employability and ability to progress in a wide range of careers.

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Formal

Progression at KS3 is built around Individual Learning Plan (ILP) targets and guided by curriculum aims aligned with the National Curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2. Learners take part in a carousel of carefully planned activities that include high-, low-, and no-demand tasks, ensuring all students can access learning at a level that challenges and supports them. As part of their vocational journey, students begin to explore different work-related skills and experiences. They are encouraged to reflect on what they've done and how they've completed tasks, using simple recording methods such as photo logs, checklists, or work journals to build self-awareness and independence. Learners gain early understanding of the world of work through exposure to a range of vocational areas, such as basic food preparation, gardening, classroom jobs, and enterprise tasks. Where appropriate, students have the opportunity to work towards ASDAN accreditations, recognising their achievements and helping them set aspirations for future learning and work. Pupils are encouraged to select and use tools and resources with growing independence and begin to recognise the types of jobs and skills different careers involve. Students use Skills Builder to develop essential skills—like teamwork, communication, problem solving, and self-management—that are crucial for career success. By strengthening these core skills, pupils are better prepared for the workplace, improving their employability and ability to progress in a wide range of careers.

Formal

Progression at Key Stage 2 is guided by Individual Learning Plan (ILP) targets and aligned with the National Curriculum from Key Stage 1 onwards. Learners engage in a carousel of activities designed to include a balance of high-, low-, and no-demand tasks, supporting inclusion and providing personalised levels of challenge for each pupil. A key focus is on building early independence and developing essential life and work-related skills. Pupils are encouraged to make confident choices, use a range of tools and materials safely, and take increasing responsibility for completing practical tasks. These may include activities such as basic food preparation, gardening, classroom jobs, or early enterprise tasks. Students begin to explore different types of jobs through themed activities and role play, introducing them to the world of work in an age-appropriate and accessible way. They also start to reflect on what they enjoy and what they are good at, laying the foundation for future vocational learning.

Formal

At Key Stage 1, learning is guided by Individual Learning Plan (ILP) targets and closely aligned with early National Curriculum goals. Pupils take part in a range of carefully planned activities that include high-, low-, and no-demand tasks. This helps all children feel included, successful, and challenged at the right level for them. A key focus is on building early independence. Children are supported to make simple choices, use tools and materials with growing confidence, and take part in everyday tasks such as tidying, helping with snack preparation, or looking after classroom resources. These early responsibilities help pupils feel proud of their contributions and begin to understand the idea of working together and helping others. Through role play, stories, and themed days, pupils are introduced to the world of work in a fun and accessible way—learning about jobs like being a shopkeeper, gardener, chef, or teacher. These experiences help them start to think about what people do and the different tools and skills jobs might need.

Early Years

In the Early Years, our focus is on developing key skills that lay the foundation for future independence and awareness of the world of work. Through structured play, routines, and real-life role play experiences, children begin to explore everyday jobs and responsibilities in a way that is fun, accessible, and meaningful. Activities such as tidying up, helping with snack time, dressing up as different workers (e.g. doctors, shopkeepers, builders), and using simple tools like pretend tills or watering cans support early understanding of working roles and teamwork. A total communication approach is used to help all children access and understand activities, using visuals, objects of reference, and consistent routines. These early encounters help children build confidence, develop communication, and take pride in small achievements—essential first steps in preparing for future learning and the wider world of work. Early Years staff use the Cherry Garden framework to assess all subjects across the curriculum.

What to include in your subject progression model?

- Intention for your subject in this area of school
- What learning/learners look like?
- What support strategies/groupings are deployed?
- What curriculum is followed?
- What assessment methods/processes are utilised?
- Accreditations?