

History Curriculum

The more you know about the past, the better prepared you will be for the future.
Theodore Roosevelt

At our school, we understand the importance of history in developing pupils' understanding of the past to prepare them for the future.

Lessons are carefully planned so that pupils are able to regularly develop their chronological understanding, analyse and evaluate historical evidence, compare and contrast life in different periods and empathise with people from different eras.

Pupils learn that the examination of the past demands critical use of evidence and that they should raise questions about what sources tell them. The second order concepts (cause, consequence, change and continuity, similarity and difference, and historical significance) are carefully mapped out and revisited to develop pupils' disciplinary knowledge.

Pupils are provided with many opportunities to investigate how and why different versions of the past differ – a vital skill for any historian.

The curriculum teaches pupils about diverse people from the past to allow them to see their connection to the past and to understand the world today.





Early Years Foundation Stage

Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes in 'The Past and Present' are prerequisite skills for history in Key Stage 1. It is important that pupils develop their chronological understanding by completing sequencing activities which introduce them to the language of time.

In lessons, pupils focus on themselves first before exploring similarities and differences between themselves and others. Pupils' chronological understanding is developed through talk when they discuss past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members.

Pupils are provided with opportunities to use the language of time to organise events including events that happened before they were born and a long time ago. During lessons, pupils read a range of stories to compare and contrast characters- including figures from the past.

Throughout Early Years Foundation Stage settings, pupils study a number of celebrations, such as Remembrance Day and Bonfire Night. This learning allows pupils to understand how and why events from the past are still celebrated today.

Key Stage One

In Key Stage 1, pupils continue to develop awareness of the past by using common words and phrases relating to the passing of time. They begin by studying how toys have changed through time. A local study provides pupils with the opportunity to see how their school and the locality have changed over time, including the changes within living memory.

Pupils move on to thinking about where key events beyond living memory, such as The Great Fire of London, fit within a simple chronological framework. They learn how this major event in history changed the way that houses were built; how we lived and how we keep ourselves safe. As pupils progress through the curriculum, they expand their chronological understanding by comparing aspects of life in different periods. They study the achievements of Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole.

In lessons, pupils consider the important issues of justice, rights and fairness when they think about how the two women should be remembered. Towards the end of the unit of work, pupils are introduced to the achievements of Edith Cavell. They start to consider how hospitals improved as a result of the achievements of these women.

Pupils are taught about a historical figure who has had a significant impact in their locality. This varies depending on the geographical location. However, all schools tailor learning around the impact and actions of the selected individual and where appropriate, study evidence that can found in the locality.



Lower Key Stage Two

As pupils move to Key Stage 2, British history units are taught in chronological order and timeline work is planned into the beginning of each unit to ensure that pupils have a sound chronological understanding of British history, within and across the periods that they have studied.

To develop pupils' understanding of concurrent periods, they are introduced to ancient civilisations across Key Stage 2 and regular comparisons are made with British History.

In lower Key Stage 2, pupils start by studying changes from the Stone Age to the Iron Age. This unit enables pupils to understand how civilisation started, human's first significant achievements and the growth of civilisation as a whole. When pupils study the achievements of Ancient Egypt and early civilizations, they revisit their learning from Stone Age Britain to provide them with opportunities for comparative work between the two civilizations.

When studying Roman Britain, pupils investigate and are taught about the makeup of the Empire before the Romans invaded Britain. Links will be made with the Year 3 British history unit when pupils recap over the Celtic tribes living in Britain at the time of the Iron Age. This allows pupils to draw conclusions and comparisons about the two groups of people. Pupils continue to develop a sense of the significant changes that took place in Britain over an extended period of time, driven by external factors such as invaders and settlers.

Upper Key Stage Two

In upper Key Stage 2, pupils study the achievements of the Islamic civilisation and the legacy which has been left behind today. Throughout the unit, pupils continually draw this knowledge back to what was happening in Britain at this time to enable them to compare Baghdad with Saxon and Viking Britain. This unit allows pupils to evaluate the level of advancement in these two civilisations.

When studying Britain at War, pupils develop their thinking skills by evaluating evidence in terms of propaganda and censorship and to consider the diversity of experiences of those who were affected by the war. The final British history unit, Crime and Punishment, provides pupils with a broad chronological sweep of nearly a thousand years. This unit helps pupils to develop a deeper understanding of crucial historical concepts, such as continuity and change.

Ancient Greece is studied to provide pupils with ample opportunities to explore contemporary issues connected with democracy, rights and freedoms. Pupils also explore why Ancient Greece has had such a long and dramatic legacy.

As many of the concepts involved are fairly abstract, this unit is taught as the final study at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils are again encouraged to make links with previous periods (The Bronze Age and Ancient Egypt) that have been studied.