

# HISTORY CURRICULUM DESIGN

"TO REMAIN  
IGNORANT OF  
HISTORY IS TO  
REMAIN FOREVER  
A CHILD"

- CICERO



## KNOWING



## BECOMING



## FEELING



The study of History offers us the chance to understand not only our own cultural heritage, but also that of the world around us. Inevitably, our curriculum must be selective – we have carefully chosen content to equip pupils with a deep sense of key periods of the history of our nation, as well as to introduce them to less familiar civilizations globally. We have sequenced this learning to build from more accessible content to more abstract periods, especially for younger pupils. Chronological understanding is introduced in Early Years and builds through school. Children will study local, national and international history through teacher-led enquiry questions to understand how the past has shaped the present, and how historians approach their discipline in understanding the past.

Our curriculum focusses both on the substantive knowledge of historical periods (dates, names, events and context), as well as the disciplinary knowledge of the subject (how historians learn about the past). We teach the disciplinary concepts of sources and evidence, significance, similarity and difference, cause and consequence and interpretations not as discrete topics, but embedded within a context of the deep study of an aspect of a period of history. Part of this involves acquiring key vocabulary, relating to the specifics of events/ periods (Pudding Lane, Ptolemaic, Parthenon etc.); the broader ideas which transcend topics and time (empire, values, trade, migration etc.); and particular historiographical terms (evaluate, argument, interpretation, impact etc.). We are selective about the focus of our learning – looking for generative themes which occur across civilisations, continents and eras (rule, conflict etc.) and therefore study particular aspects in greater depth, rather than attempting a surface level overview of an entire period. That said, we also seek to ensure that specific knowledge of a topic (e.g. the life of a particular figure) can be contextualised in the wider background of that society. We use a variety of interpretations to help pupils acquire this knowledge – including contemporary sources, museums, sites and even the narratives of historical fiction.

We want our pupils to become passionate students of history – excited both about the periods and topics they study, but also interested in how historians build their understanding of the past. Through historical enquiry questions, we allow children to put this knowledge into practice – letting them wrestle with these complex ideas, drawing on and building their understanding of a period as they go. They engage with 'live' issues and real debates (such as the future of the Elgin / Parthenon Marbles), justifying their opinions and views based on historical interpretations and sources. In doing so, pupils can become genuine contributors – recognising that history is not a 'fixed' thing – history is always being 'made'. We also introduce to older pupils the idea that there are different ways of looking at something, and historians frequently disagree, but without suggesting that there is "no right answer" – recognising that sometimes history is a matter of interpretation, but that not all interpretations are equally valid. We therefore help children to become confident in their historical judgements – using their own knowledge and awareness of sources of evidence to support these.

Our military community offers a particularly close connection to aspects of history – most notably topics such as remembrance, war and conflict. Pupils' experience of studying these topics is carefully stewarded; embracing the rich heritage that the children have as armed forces families, but also recognising the emotional implications of certain themes. We want children (particularly younger pupils) to 'see themselves' and their lives reflected in history, so that it ceases to be abstract, preparing them for more complex learning later in the curriculum. We seek to engage pupils' passion for history and historiography by giving them direct access to inspirational experiences, and, where possible, embed this in the locality – considering sites, events and issues pertinent to this area or their own lived experience. Lastly through studying history, we introduce the concept of legacy – showing children that the actions of individuals can shape the future in profound ways – and giving them the self belief that their own actions can have such an impact as they grow and mature.

**INSPIRING EXCELLENCE**

"We care, we respect, we do our best"