

Alderwood Academy – KS2 Haven – History Subject Policy

Aims and purpose

This curriculum inspires curiosity about the past and develops pupils' understanding of history as a discipline. We provide a comprehensive narrative of British history situated within wider world developments. Our curriculum helps pupils understand historical concepts, methods of enquiry, and how different aspects of the past have been interpreted. We equip students to ask historical questions and make connections across different time periods

Knowledge and vocabulary

This principle recognises the important role that knowledge, and vocabulary as a particularly important type of knowledge, plays in learning. In this curriculum, substantive and disciplinary knowledge are taught hand in hand. Pupils are introduced to concepts such as 'king', 'empire', 'archaeologist' and 'artefact' early in key stage 1, and then develop their understanding of these complex concepts in multiple contexts, throughout the rest of the curriculum. We map vocabulary across the curriculum, both in terms of the introduction of new vocabulary and the necessary repetition of vocabulary. The most powerful new vocabulary, called keywords, are signalled in bold in our lesson materials to indicate their importance.

Sequencing

A careful and purposeful sequencing of our curriculum content underpins the design of our curriculum, ensuring that pupils are able to build on and make links with existing knowledge. At its simplest, this means, for example, that pupils might first learn about the Mughal Empire in India before being introduced to the growing influence of the East India Company. Attention is paid to vertical coherence via threads, which map the developments of concepts over time, for example, in our 'Empire, persecution and resistance' thread pupils are first introduced to the concept of 'empire' in key stage 1 through various traditional stories that reference one country ruling over another. In key stage 2, this concept is broadened through exposure to other examples of empires, such as the Roman Empire. The same concept is then built upon in key stage 3 at multiple points, from the medieval Angevin Empire to the late twentieth-century British Empire. This means that pupils' understanding of this concept is richly textured by the time that they encounter it again in key stage 4.

Evidence-informed

Our evidence-informed approach enables the rigorous application of research outcomes, the science of learning and impactful best practice both in education in general and at a subject-specific level. For example, the design of our resources reflects findings from Sweller's cognitive load theory and Mayer's principles of multimedia learning whilst our lesson design draws on Rosenshine's principles of instruction. We also draw on findings from research organisations such as the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). At the subject level, 'enquiry questions' are used as a catalyst for pupils to develop historical knowledge over time. This approach is grounded in the expertise of the history subject community including research by teachers such as Gorman, Riley, Burnham and Brown. The curriculum is structured in such a way as to reinforce the interplay between substantive and disciplinary knowledge, supported by the work of Wineburg and Fournier and structures substantive knowledge in a way that anticipates how it will be built on later, as discussed by Counsell. Furthermore, the diversity of our curriculum is guided by the work of Priggs and the Historical Association

Alderwood Academy – KS2 Haven – History Subject Policy

whereby a large number of women are met in the curriculum; the stories of minority groups show their own agency; rather than focusing on their oppression, and the pasts of pupils across the country are represented.

Diverse

Our commitment to breadth and diversity in content, language, texts and media can be seen throughout the curriculum, for example with the focus on women in history. Whilst teaching about male monarchs, political leaders and military chiefs is unavoidable due to the nature of historic power structures, we ensure that female characters present at the same time are represented in the narratives our curriculum presents. Equally, where appropriate, the presence of multiple ethnic groups in British history is represented and the stories of these groups show their own agency (rather than focusing solely on oppression). This curriculum makes it clear that history is studied at various levels, not just the global and that the pasts of pupils across the country are represented.

Accessible

Our curriculum is intentionally designed to facilitate high-quality teaching as a powerful lever to support pupils with SEND. Aligned with EEF guidance, our resources have a focus on clear explanations, modelling and frequent checks for understanding, with guided and independent practice. Lessons are chunked into learning cycles and redundant images and information are minimised and the narrative that accompanies historical stories and explanations is contained in a separate document, rather than on slides to manage cognitive load. We have removed reference to year groups in our resources so that they can be used when pupils are ready, regardless of their age. Our resources are purposefully created to be accessible, for example by using accessible fonts, colours with good contrast, and captions in our videos.

Curriculum:

this curriculum balances depth and breadth, covering diverse periods and cultures. It integrates substantive and disciplinary knowledge, emphasising key concepts through varied contexts. Rich historical context supports learning, addresses misconceptions and represents academic history's complexity. The curriculum includes diverse interpretations. In key stage 3 these range from popular depictions of Elizabeth I to arguments about Haiti's role in the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. These reflect the past's intricacy while avoiding negative group portrayals.

Learning about different groups' contributions to history prepares pupils for modern life. Building on existing knowledge enables pupils to construct their own historical arguments, whilst clear exposition and narrative support learning.

Our curriculum is adaptable to the needs of different pupils and emphasises British history within global contexts. For example, in key stage 2 units about life in Anglo-Saxon and Viking England emphasise the trade connections that existed between Britain and the rest of the world. This approach develops historical thinking skills, contextual understanding, and engagement with complex narratives.

Alderwood Academy – KS2 Haven – History Subject Policy

Key stage 2

Our curriculum teaches the following key events and periods in history:

- Changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age:
 - Settlement in the Mesolithic and Neolithic, including a focus on Skara Brae
 - Changes to agriculture, settlement and trade in Bronze Age Britain
 - Important Iron Age archaeological finds such as the Snettisham Torc, Lindow Man and the Wetwang chariot
- The Roman Empire and its impact on Britain:
 - Rome's development from monarchy to republic, to empire, and its subsequent decline
 - Claudius' invasion of Britain and the changes the Romans brought about
 - The role played by the Roman Empire in the spread of Christianity
- Britain's settlement by Anglo-Saxons and Scots:
 - Roman withdrawal from Britain in c. 410 AD
 - Scots and Anglo-Saxon invasions
 - Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, art, culture and life
 - The survival of Christianity in parts of Britain such as Ireland and the later conversion of the Anglo-Saxons
- The Viking and Anglo-Saxon struggle for the Kingdom of England to the time of Edward the Confessor:
 - Viking raids and invasion
 - Resistance by Alfred the Great, Aethelflaed and Athelstan
 - The creation of the Kingdom of England
- A local history study:
 - The life and achievements of Captain Noel Chavasse and how the Great War affected various local communities
- A study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066:
 - The Second World War as a significant turning point for the British people during it and in the decades following it
- The achievements of the earliest civilisations:
 - An overview of where and when the first civilisations appeared, using Ancient Sumer as a lens through which to compare these civilisations
 - Depth studies of Ancient Egypt, the Indus Valley and the Shang Dynasty of Ancient China
- Ancient Greece:
 - A study of Greek life including depth studies of Athens and Sparta
 - A study of Ancient Greece's achievements and legacy in philosophy, language and sport
 - The rivalry between Greece and Persia and the achievements of Alexander the Great
- A non-European society that provides contrasts with British history

Alderwood Academy – KS2 Haven – History Subject Policy

- The rise of Islam and early Islamic civilisation, including a study of Baghdad and its connections to the wider world
- Maya civilization c. AD 900
- Benin c. AD 900-1300 and the arguments surrounding its looted artworks and religious objects

National Curriculum

Our curriculum has been designed to enact the aims and purpose of the national curriculum. We use clear, chronological narratives to develop pupils' understanding of Britain's history and its interaction with the wider world. We inspire curiosity and critical thinking about the past by supporting pupils to ask questions, analyse sources, and form judgements in our practice tasks. We have included early civilizations, empires, and non-European societies such as the Shang Dynasty, the Maya, Mali, Haiti, and India so that pupils 'understand significant aspects of world history'. The curriculum develops pupils' knowledge 'of historical concepts like continuity and change, using them to create structured historical accounts'. Our enquiries use a wide range of source material and interpretations to help pupils 'learn and apply the methods of historical enquiry, understand how evidence is used, and form differing interpretations of the past'. The careful selection and sequencing of content help pupils to understand 'the connections between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history'.