



History at Caldecote Primary School





History Curriculum Intent

“Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it”.

George Santayana

Our history curriculum aims to develop young historians who have a secure, coherent and chronologically rich understanding of the past at a local, national and global level. Through the study of significant people, events, societies and civilisations, pupils develop an appreciation of how the past has shaped the world in which they live today.

We seek to inspire curiosity about the past and foster a lifelong interest in history. Pupils are encouraged to explore their own heritage alongside the experiences of people from diverse cultures and periods, developing an understanding of the complexity of human experiences, the process of change over time and the relationships between different societies.

Through meaningful historical enquiry, pupils develop the disciplinary knowledge and skills of historians. They learn to ask perceptive questions, think critically, analyse and evaluate evidence, consider different interpretations and construct informed judgements. In doing so, they become increasingly confident in communicating their understanding of the past.

We deliver an ambitious, engaging and knowledge-rich curriculum that:

- Develops a secure chronological understanding of British, local and world history.
- Systematically builds pupils' understanding of key substantive concepts, including power, monarchy, invasion, civilisation, democracy and empire.
- Introduces pupils to significant ancient civilisations, empires and non-European societies.
- Enables pupils to make meaningful connections between local, regional, national and international history.
- Uses timelines and other historical frameworks to support the organisation and retention of knowledge.
- Develops disciplinary knowledge through historical enquiry, including the use of evidence, understanding cause and consequence, recognising continuity and change, evaluating interpretations and considering historical significance.



History and Our Personal Development Drivers

Our history curriculum makes a significant contribution to the development of the whole child and reflects our four personal development drivers:

As **successful learners**, pupils develop secure substantive and disciplinary knowledge, including chronological understanding, significant events, influential individuals and important civilisations from Britain and beyond. They acquire and apply the vocabulary and concepts used by historians, enabling them to ask meaningful questions, analyse evidence, evaluate sources and construct well-reasoned explanations. As a result, pupils become increasingly confident and independent learners who can communicate their historical understanding effectively.

Pupils develop as **confident individuals** through purposeful historical enquiry. This promotes curiosity, resilience and intellectual confidence. They learn to investigate questions, test interpretations against evidence and refine their thinking in response to new information. Through carefully scaffolded opportunities for discussion, analysis and extended writing, pupils become reflective learners who take pride in the accuracy and quality of their work.

As **responsible citizens**, pupils understand how the past has shaped societies, communities and identities. Through studying continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity and difference, and historical significance, pupils develop an informed understanding of the world around them. Exposure to a diverse range of people, cultures and perspectives fosters empathy, respect and an appreciation of different experiences, helping pupils become thoughtful and responsible citizens.

As **effective contributors**, pupils learn to collaborate, discuss and communicate their ideas clearly using historical evidence. They develop the ability to construct balanced arguments, justify opinions and adapt explanations for different audiences and purposes. These transferable skills support success across the curriculum and prepare pupils for future learning, employment and active participation in society.

Curriculum Design

Our history curriculum is carefully sequenced to ensure that disciplinary and substantive knowledge build progressively from the Early Years through to the end of Key Stage 2. Using the National Curriculum, we have identified the essential knowledge, concepts and skills that pupils need to develop at each stage of their learning journey. This approach enables pupils to build secure historical understanding and achieve well by the time they leave our school.

The foundations of historical learning begin in the Early Years through the 'Past and Present' strand of Understanding the World. Through stories, photographs, artefacts, discussions and first-hand experiences, children explore changes within their own lives and families, compare past and present, and begin to understand the roles people play within society. Opportunities for observation, questioning and investigation encourage children to develop early historical thinking and communication skills.



In Key Stage 1, pupils begin to develop a broader understanding of the past through the study of changes within living memory, events beyond living memory, significant individuals and important local historical contexts. They begin to organise their knowledge chronologically, ask questions about the past, use a range of historical sources and recognise that history can be interpreted in different ways.

In Key Stage 2, pupils extend their chronological understanding through the study of local, British and world history. Topics such as the Romans, Anglo-Saxons and the Maya civilisation enable pupils to develop increasingly sophisticated historical knowledge and understanding. Timelines are used across year groups to strengthen chronological awareness and help pupils make connections between different periods of history. Alongside this growing substantive knowledge, disciplinary knowledge is systematically developed, enabling pupils to think, question and work as historians.

The curriculum is further enriched through educational visits, visits from experts and engagement with local historical sites and resources, providing meaningful opportunities for pupils to bring their learning to life and deepen their understanding of the past.



National Curriculum Programmes of Study

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
		<i>Pupils should be taught about:</i>		<i>Pupils should be taught about:</i>			
Historical Knowledge	Knowledge & Understanding of British History	Changes within living memory – where appropriate, these should be used to reveal aspects of change in national life		- Changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age - The Roman Empire and its impact on Britain - Britain's settlement by Anglo-Saxons and Scots - The Viking and Anglo-Saxon struggle for the Kingdom of England to the time of Edward the Confessor - A study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066			
	Local History	Significant historical events, people and places in their own locality		A local history study			
	Knowledge & Understanding of Wider World History	- Events beyond living memory that are significant nationally or globally - The lives of significant individuals in the past who have contributed to national and international achievements, some should be used to compare aspects of life in different periods		- The achievements of the earliest civilizations – an overview of where and when the first civilizations appeared and a depth study of one of the following: Ancient Sumer, The Indus Valley, Ancient Egypt, The Shang Dynasty of Ancient China - Ancient Greece – a study of Greek life and achievements and their influence on the western world - A non-European society that provides contrasts with British history – one study chosen from: early Islamic civilization, including a study of Baghdad c. AD 900; Mayan civilization c. AD 900; Benin (West Africa) c. AD 900-1300.			
History Skills and Concepts		- Be aware of the past, using common words and phrases relating to time - Fit people and events into a chronological framework - Identify similarities and differences between periods - Use wide vocabulary of everyday historical terms - Ask and answer questions - Choose and use from stories and other sources to show understanding - Understand some ways we find out about the past - Identify different ways in which past is represented		- Continue to develop chronologically secure knowledge of history - Establish clear narratives within and across periods studied - Note connections, contrasts and trends over time - Develop the appropriate use of historical terms - Regularly address and sometimes devise historically valid questions - Understand how knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources - Construct informed responses by selecting and organising relevant historical information - Understand that different versions of the past may exist, giving some reasons for this			



Themes and concepts in our curriculum

Our history curriculum is structured around four key conceptual themes: Society and Community, Exploration and Invasion, Power, and Conflict and Disaster. These concepts thread through the curriculum, enabling pupils to identify patterns, make comparisons and draw connections across different historical periods and societies.

By revisiting these themes throughout their learning, pupils develop a deeper understanding of historical change, continuity and significance, strengthening both their substantive knowledge and their ability to think critically as historians.

	Themes			
	Society and Community	Exploration and Invasion	Power	Conflict and Disaster
Year 6	Shang Dynasty		Ancient Maya Crime and punishment	Crime and punishment
Year 5	Industrial Revolution	Anglo Saxons and Vikings		World War Two
Year 4	Ancient Greece Local History study	The Romans		
Year 3	Stone Age – Iron Age		Ancient Egypt Mighty Monarchs	
Year 2	Toys Local History Study			The Great Fire of London
Year 1		Famous Explorers	Kings, Queens and Castles	Healthcare and medical science



Substantive knowledge and concepts in our curriculum

This is factual knowledge of the past - key events, place, people - and includes two types - 'generative knowledge' and 'fingertip knowledge':

- **Fingertip knowledge** is the knowledge of the key facts and dates which pupils need in their minds, *or at their fingertips*, whilst undertaking historical enquiries, without which they would be incapable of constructing answers. Without essential fingertip knowledge, working memory is overloaded when undertaking enquiries, and it is thus useful to have this fingertip knowledge in knowledge organisers. Fingertip knowledge must be taught and pupils must retain it during their enquiry within the current topic.
- **Generative knowledge** is the essential, underpinning, in-depth knowledge of a topic or time period that supports further historical learning and thus supports pupils to *generate* more knowledge. Generative knowledge can be categorised into '**substantive concepts**' and '**chronological knowledge**'.
- **Chronological knowledge** - the specific knowledge of the broad developments and features of historical periods and supports pupils to build coherent schema for particular topics.
- **Substantive Concepts** - Substantive concepts represent the core ideas or key themes that help students develop a deep, interconnected understanding of various topics.

Our history curriculum focuses on nine substantive concepts: Civilisation, Empire, Exploration, Industry, Migration, Monarchy, Rebellion, Settlement and Trade.

In history, these concepts help students make sense of different events, periods, and historical trends. Substantive concepts are best understood with repeated encounters in specific, meaningful contexts, rather than being taught in an abstract way. By revisiting and building on these concepts as they progress through the curriculum, children develop a more comprehensive and lasting understanding, reinforcing their ability to retain and apply knowledge.

Each substantive concept is represented by its own icon, which appears on the relevant lesson slides throughout the history units.

Whenever a concept is revisited, we prompt children to reflect on their previous learning, helping to make connections to new content.



the action of buying and selling goods and services



The nine substantive concepts are mapped below:

	Key Substantive knowledge Enquiry questions Substantive concepts		
	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Reception	Changes in their lives	Physical world and Community	Learning about Past Events
Year 1	British History: Kings, Queens and Castles <i>Where did kings and queens live through time?</i> <i>Trade, industry, empire, monarchy</i>	Wider World: Healthcare and medical science <i>Which women have shaped healthcare and medical science?</i> <i>Empire, industry</i>	Wider World: Famous Explorers <i>Where have humans explored?</i> <i>Migration, Trade</i>
Year 2	British History: The Great Fire of London (1666) <i>How did the Great Fire change London?</i> <i>Monarchy, civilisation</i>	Wider World: Toys - Then and now <i>How have toys changed over the last 60 years?</i> <i>Trade, civilisation and industry</i>	Local History: Cambridge <i>What makes my local area important?</i> <i>Civilisation, settlement, industry</i>
Year 3	British History: Pre-Historic Britain - Stone Age to Iron Age <i>How did daily life change in Britain from the Stone Age - Iron Age?</i> <i>Migration, trade, settlement, civilisation, industry</i>	Wider World: Ancient Egypt <i>What were the greatest achievements of ancient Egypt?</i> <i>Civilisation, trade, settlement, empire, monarchy</i>	British History: Mighty Monarchs <i>How powerful is a Monarch?</i> <i>Civilisation, settlement, empire, monarchy</i>
Year 4	Wider World: Ancient Greece – Achievements of The Greeks <i>What were the greatest achievements of The Greeks?</i> <i>Civilisation, trade, settlement, empire, monarchy</i>	British History: The Roman Empire and its impact on Britain <i>How did the Roman Empire impact Britain?</i> <i>Civilisation, trade, settlement, empire, monarchy</i>	Local History: Caldecote <i>How has life changed for children in Caldecote?</i> <i>Civilisation, settlement</i>
Year 5	British History: World War Two <i>What role did Britain play in WW2 and how did this impact the outcome of the war?</i> <i>Empire, monarchy and civilisation</i>	British History: Britain's settlement by the Anglo Saxons <i>How did England change during the settlement of the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings?</i> <i>Migration, trade, monarchy, settlement</i>	British History: Industrial revolution in Great Britain <i>How did Britain change during the Industrial Revolution?</i> <i>Trade, civilisation and industry</i>
Year 6	Wider World: Non-European society - Mayan civilisation <i>What similarities and differences are there between the Maya civilisation and England from the 8th to the 10th century?</i> <i>Civilisation, trade, settlement, empire, monarchy</i>	British History: Crime and Punishment <i>How has crime and punishment changed over time in Britain?</i> <i>Empire, monarchy and civilisation</i>	Wider World: Ancient civilisation - Shang Dynasty <i>What were the achievements of the Shang Dynasty of ancient China?</i> <i>Civilisation, trade, settlement, empire, monarchy</i>



Disciplinary Knowledge in our curriculum

Disciplinary knowledge is knowledge about how historians investigate the past, and how they develop critical thinking and construct historical claims, arguments and accounts. Pupils learn disciplinary knowledge through application within the history topics. It is split into two categories:

1. **Historical Enquiry skills** – the knowledge of how to undertake a historical enquiry. Historical enquiry skills are essential for helping children engage with history more effectively. These skills enhance their ability to think critically, communicate ideas, and deepen their understanding of concepts.

There are six historical enquiry skills which are revisited within our curriculum:



Understanding timelines



Studying evidence



Sifting arguments



Developing perspective and judgement



Thinking critically



Asking and answering questions

2. **Disciplinary concepts** - The six foundational, subject-specific methods, principles, and thinking processes used by experts to create, organize, and evaluate knowledge:

Chronological understanding	Cause and consequence	Change and continuity	Similarity and difference	Historical significance	Evidence and interpretation
Establishing a "chronological framework" by sequencing, and determining duration of events, placing historical periods and understanding how different times relate to each other.	Questions about why things happened and their results.	Analysing the pace, nature and extent of change within and between periods of history.	Analysing the extent and type of difference between people, groups, experiences or places in the same historical period.	Understanding how and why historical events, trends and individuals are thought of as being important.	Using evidence to understand how and why different accounts of the past are constructed.

Disciplinary knowledge is mapped to ensure that it is progressive throughout the curriculum – See the **[History disciplinary knowledge progression document](#)**.



History Curriculum Implementation

Enquiry-based approach

We have adopted an enquiry-based approach to learning. Starting with our youngest children asking questions about themselves and their own families and then expanding their enquiries to the wider world. For each unit of work, learning is focused on an overarching enquiry question which explores themes and substantive concepts. For example, '*What were the greatest achievements of Ancient Greeks?*' focuses on the themes: *Society and Community*, and the substantive concepts: *Civilisation, Trade, Settlement, Empire and Monarchy*.

Each individual lesson has a key question which focuses on specific substantive concepts in depth, and related disciplinary concepts. For example, '*What was life like in Athens and Sparta?*' focuses on the substantive concepts: *Civilisation and Settlement*, and the disciplinary concepts: *Similarities and Differences*. This approach encourages high expectations as it allows both the children and teachers to know the focus of the lesson without restricting children's responses.

Curriculum links

Links are made within the history curriculum, across lessons, units of learning and year groups. This allows children to add new knowledge to their existing schema, for example reinforcing substantive concepts or enhancing chronological understanding when placing periods of history onto existing timelines. Where appropriate, links are also made across subject areas, for example, exploring ancient history trade routes or empire expansion in light of geographical positioning, or exploring emotions in poetry in relation to the events of World War Two.

Vocabulary development

Vocabulary acts as the backbone of our history curriculum, transforming fragmented facts into deep conceptual understanding. It enables our children to grasp complex social shifts, decode primary sources, and articulate sophisticated arguments.

Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary has been identified in each teaching unit. In each lesson, simple definitions are provided to ensure that new vocabulary does not act as a barrier to learning new information.

Vocabulary is mapped to ensure that it is progressive throughout the curriculum – Please see the [History vocabulary progression document](#).



Planning

Curriculum allocation

Approximately 12 hours per half term are allocated for the teaching of History. Teachers use their professional judgement to deliver this in weekly lessons or in blocked sessions (e.g. afternoons for a whole week or as full days).

Planning documentation

Long term plan - Curriculum overview

The **History whole-school overview** is mapped for each year group. It outlines what topic is taught and when.

Medium term plans - Unit overviews

The **unit overviews** form our medium-term plans. They outline:

- an overarching enquiry question for the unit and individual enquiry questions for each lesson
- links to prior and future learning related to the topic
- National Curriculum (NC) objectives covered in the unit
- Themes and concepts
- Historical enquiry skills covered in each lesson
- common misconceptions students may have
- key vocabulary for teaching and explaining
- ideas for stretching and challenging students
- suggestions for assessment

Short term plans

Teaching presentations and daily lesson plans form our short-term plans.



Planning cycle

There are four key elements to planning within the history curriculum:

- **Plan:** Each lesson is judiciously planned to identify the different types of knowledge that the lesson focusses on. It builds on pupils' prior learning, drawing upon previously lessons and the prior learning as identified in the medium-term plans.
- **Teach:** The Caldecote Lesson Rubric is used when implementing the history curriculum.
- **Assess:** Pupils are given enquiry-based tasks that enable pupils to demonstrate their understanding of the knowledge.
- **Intervene and re-teach:** Carefully designed pit-stop style activities ('true or false' and 'stop-and-jot') and exit tickets (cumulative quiz questions) identify knowledge that is not secure. Concepts are re-taught or misconceptions addressed before moving on to avoid future gaps emerging.

Adapting the curriculum for pupils with SEND

Adaptive teaching takes place:

- For sensory-impaired pupils, learning may necessitate enlarging texts, using clear fonts, using visual overlays, or audio description of images. Dyslexic pupils use well-spaced print.
- Teachers identify and break down the components of the subject curriculum into manageable chunks for pupils who find learning more difficult, particularly those with cognition and learning needs. These smaller 'steps' avoid overloading the working memory.
- A variety of additional scaffolds may be used in lessons, such vocabulary banks, additional visual stimuli or adult support.



Pedagogy

Our lessons are based on Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction, and split into 6 key phases, outlined in the Caldecote Lesson Rubric:

Caldecote Lesson Rubric		
Phases	Principle	Details
Connect	Activate prior learning	Teachers introduce the learning outcome of the lesson, making links to both the wider learning journey and the real world. They connect what pupils already know with what they are about to learn, activating prior knowledge. Teachers provide opportunities for retrieval practice of substantive knowledge through a range of strategies: completing 'Do now' tasks (starter activities), populating blank knowledge organisers and participating in low-stakes quizzes.
Explain (I do)	Explicit instruction and teacher modelling	Teachers explain the key concept concisely and precisely. The 'Think aloud' technique is used during explicit instruction to promote metacognition. Teachers ensure explicit teaching of dual-coded vocabulary (Tier 2 and Tier 3) to support children to retain substantive knowledge. Teachers may model written answers to demonstrate clear understanding of substantive concepts.
Practise (We do)	Guided practice	Through guided practice, pupils all achieve success in applying the target concept. Scaffolding is gradually reduced.
Apply (You do)	Independent practice	Pupils achieve fluency with the target concept through deliberate practice. Some pupils may need additional instruction at this point – flexible grouping is used to ensure children receive the right support at the right time.
Challenge	Deepen understanding	Pupils are challenged to sophisticate their thinking and to think hard about the concept they have been taught. This may include exploring exceptions, identifying common errors or applying a concept in multiple contexts. Teachers ensure that substantive knowledge is developed alongside disciplinary knowledge within meaningful historical enquiry. Teachers provide meaningful opportunities for extended writing.

This is not a linear structure and teachers may need to move backwards and forwards between the lesson phases to help them break concepts into manageable chunks for pupils or to provide additional modelling or guided practice. Checking for understanding should be built into each phase of instruction so that misconceptions can be addressed and resolved quickly.



Assessing learning

Teachers will:

1. Maximise engagement, learning and progress through regular use of techniques such as Cold Calling (using lolly sticks to randomise pupil responses), 'Phone a Friend' (pupil gaining a response from a peer), 'TTYP - Talk To Your Partner (peer discussion time)', '123, Show Me' (pupils displaying response recorded on mini whiteboard).
2. Build in regular checks for understanding during lessons, through assertive monitoring, mini plenaries, self-assessment opportunities and targeted questioning, addressing misconceptions quickly and remodelling where necessary.
3. Check priority knowledge and vocabulary has been retained to the working memory at the end of every lesson, including through the use of cumulative quizzes and Exit Tickets.
4. Ensure pupils take pride in their written work, continually focus on their handwriting and quality of diagrams, and provide clear evidence in their books of responding to written and verbal teacher feedback.

Subject-specific enrichment

In every year group, we provide rich history experiences to make learning memorable, build secure knowledge and develop pupils' curiosity about the past. Enrichment activities are chosen to strengthen the curriculum: they deepen understanding, provide first-hand sources and help pupils make links between topics across school. They also support personal development (confidence, teamwork, cultural awareness) and are inclusive for pupils with SEND. Our enrichment opportunities include the following:

- Local history walks
- Museum and site-based day trips
- Local historians and museum educators provide specialist talks and artefact handling workshops linked to current topics.
- Reenactors and living history experts to bring periods to life.
- Community residents, planned as part of local history projects.
- A whole-school or phase-based "History in Action" afternoon each year.



History Curriculum Impact

The impact of our history curriculum can be seen in pupils' growing knowledge, historical skills and enthusiasm for learning about the past. Through a carefully planned sequence of learning, pupils build on what they already know, helping them to remember more and achieve more as they move through the school.

Pupils develop a strong understanding of key historical concepts such as chronology, cause and consequence, change and continuity, significance and interpretation. They make links between different periods of history, use historical vocabulary confidently, and think critically by asking questions, analysing evidence and drawing conclusions.

The impact of the curriculum is monitored through planning reviews, book scrutinies, lesson visits, assessment analysis and pupil voice. These activities help leaders evaluate the quality of teaching, the progression of knowledge and skills, and how well pupils retain and apply their learning.

Pupil voice shows that children enjoy history and can talk confidently about what they have learned. They recall knowledge from previous topics and understand how new learning connects to prior learning. Monitoring demonstrates that pupils make good progress and develop an increasingly secure understanding of the past.

Regular curriculum reviews ensure that the history curriculum remains ambitious, relevant and inclusive for all learners. As a result, pupils leave primary school with a secure foundation of historical knowledge, an understanding of how the past has shaped the present, and the skills to become informed and thoughtful learners.