

## Curriculum intent and rationale

### Key Stage 3

The aim of the history curriculum is to use a wide breadth of substantive knowledge to give our students a powerful sense of who they are, what it means to be British, and to attempt to offer an explanation and understanding of the world we live in today.

The curriculum is written in a way that will capture their interest, instil a passion for learning, and help support an enthusiasm for a future they have a part in changing for the better. The curriculum provides students with coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain's past, while developing skills that enable them to critically dissect events that have shaped Britain today.

Students develop their debate skills to argue key issues like whether vaccinations should be compulsory in Britain, and they will become exposed to vital primary sources such as the Silent Highway Man when studying cholera, which will enable our students to make informed, calculated judgements. An example of this is in Year 7, as students start to develop their substantive knowledge of Medieval England and use a visual source like the Bayeux Tapestry from the Battle of Hastings to debate the importance of images in a time when the vast majority of people could not read or write. We build on the notion of using images to tell a story and debate the importance of propaganda. Propaganda is a theme which features heavily

throughout the curriculum in all years and is extremely important for Year 11, when students study Nazi Germany.

For Years 7 and 8, the curriculum in the autumn and spring terms follow a chronological order, which allows students to look at the changes in Britain, and how key events have shaped the nation. As students work their way through the content, they are able to develop their critical and analytical thinking to make educated conclusions. The summer of each year focuses on a wider topic and the impact that it had, both in Britain and overseas.

Students in Year 7 learn about Britain from a global, national, and local aspect. They start from the Anglo-Saxon era, and move on to Edward I. This enables students to look at how parliament and law and order were established in Britain and engages students in topical debates about how our country is run. They look at varying punishments and court systems used across the country throughout history and utilize primary sources to help build their debate skills, as it is crucial students can look at both sides of an argument to make an informed decision.

A unit on local history enables students to see how history has moulded Birmingham. They are able to see how diverse the city has become and focus on the social and economic issues that

have arisen over time. The study of Birmingham is then linked to the slave trade and the anti-slavery movement that began with the Lunar Society. There is ample opportunity for students to develop their disciplinary knowledge here, by annotating a mix of both written sources (such as snippets from Priestley's sermon of the slave trade) and visual sources (such as Josiah Wedgwood's abolition emblem).

In Year 8, students again look at British history and also look at current conflicts and the role Britain has played in them. Through the study of the Tudors, students learn how Britain changed religiously and how the current Church of England was established. Students look at the context of why England changed. They spend half a term focusing how Elizabeth I broke many stereotypes there were around for women at the time. Students debate topics like marriage and religion, things they can draw upon from today's society, and look at how the role of women has changed over time. This allows students to build on the knowledge they developed in Year 7, to assess how and why England changed so drastically in a short number of years.

At the end of the Elizabeth unit, we look at how the British government has been developed over time, through a unit study focused on the English Civil War. This helps students to understand how the roles of the monarch and parliament have changed.

Many of our students have heard of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the 'Free Palestine' movement, but may be unsure of what exactly it is, or why it's happening. Our curriculum is taught from an outside perspective and students are given accounts and evidence from both

sides. Students have prior knowledge of the area due to studying Edward and his crusades in Year 7, therefore establishing a context of religious and political instability in the area, building for the present-day conflict.

By the end of the topic, students are able to make connections between the crusades of Edward I and the current conflict in the Middle East. Students are not expected to decide on who the land belongs to, but by expanding their disciplinary knowledge, they are able to see why both sides see the land as theirs, by utilising ample evidence and arguments that have arisen. This topic allows students a chance to delve into a conflict that was born out of British promises from World War I, and is still raging today.

The final term of Year 8 solely focuses on the causes and impacts of World War I. Again, this is a time for students to develop their historical skills and tackle a topic that has had lasting impacts on the world they live in, as well as change the concept that all future wars were fought. The vast amount of evidence from this time is striking and enables students to address the 'Britishness' of the people who were fighting whilst originating from other countries. During this topic, powerful knowledge is demonstrated when students are asked 'what does a British person look like?' and 'what does it mean to have a sense of identity within the British Empire?'

The final part of the Key Stage 3 curriculum requires students to use the knowledge and skills they have developed in Years 7 and 8, and to apply them to topics associated with high profile careers.

Firstly, students develop their substantive knowledge of medicine from pre-historic cavepeople to modern developments, such as cancer cures and HIV medication. There is also a large proportion taken up with investigating substantive knowledge in the history of pandemics. This is now something that students have had first-hand experience with, which helps to put the diseases and the pandemics of the past into perspective. Students are expected to familiarise themselves with more primary sources. Students then use the sources to explain changes in medicine and to look closely at how key physicians and surgeons have managed to prove their findings in such compromising times.

Students then move onto politics, focusing on how it has changed from the beginnings of Edward I, to the political parties and law and order we have in place today. The curriculum allows students to focus on the difficulties faced by governments over time, while giving them the chance to argue whether these governments have always acted in their best interests.

Finally, students focus on one time period, the Renaissance, and more specifically, Tudor England, whilst using the content they've looked at during the academic year. They focus on politics, law and medicine, to tie up the whole year. Students have a wide range of sources to look at for this as they start by looking at the state of England from Henry VIII. Religious changes and economic difficulties allow for our students to study key evidence, which helps them to develop their writing styles, as well as their comprehension and debate skills, which they can then transfer across many of their GCSE subjects.

## Key Stage 4

The Key Stage 4 curriculum follows the AQA specification. Students have four exams at the end of Year 11. The programme runs in three parts chronologically. Firstly students study 'Elizabeth I' before moving onto 'Germany and conflict & tension'. Students also study 'health and the people', which runs in intervention throughout Year 11.

Students look at an in-depth British study. For that, we look into Elizabethan England. Here, rather than comparing Elizabeth to her father and siblings, as we do in Year 8, students delve further into the darker side of Elizabeth's life with topics such as war, poverty, assassinations, and religion. This all culminates with a case study for a sixteen-mark question. This question requires students to debate multiple factors surrounding one topic. They must be able to show they can argue a given factor but also, counter argue, with the same effort and with additional evidence to back up. Students need to recall specific substantive knowledge and show their developed disciplinary knowledge to reach a sophisticated conclusion.

Component two is 'health and the people' and, as previously mentioned, runs separately in intervention. This unit is set out similarly to the Elizabeth I paper and concludes with a factor question, which is worth twenty marks. This question requires students to formulate arguments and counterarguments to reach a justified and balanced judgement.

Components three and four intertwine. They are taught as one, as the content can be used on both exam papers. Students are taught objectively about Germany prior to World War I, as well as the inter-war years, finally ending with

the outbreak of World War II. This unit requires students to look at content that they might be a little uncomfortable with, but this will cause them to confront the actions of the European countries who failed to act quickly enough and also the speed and efficiency of the Nazi party. Students need to understand the appeal of the Nazi party and use evidence to argue why they managed to turn both the German economy and the military around.

The final GCSE exams for history are a combination of debating, source analysis, and complex thinking, all of which they will have practiced in their studies.

### **Key Stage transition**

To ensure the transition between the key stages runs smoothly, both summative and formative assessments take a similar format. Key Stage 3 assessment questions look similar to those that appear in Key Stage 4. Likewise, the feedback style is similar. This enables students to reflect on their progress in the same way as they would approaching Years 10 and 11. The curriculum has been designed to ensure mastery throughout, with consolidation of previous learning evident in each topic. Students develop and master historical skills and utilize the writing frames to produce their own educated and accurate opinions. The terminology and contextual factors learnt in Years 7-9 continue to be developed in Years 10 and 11.