

History

The Humanities department is designed to encourage students to be creative, instil a curiosity about the world, develop empathy for different cultures and societies, and to grow as independent thinkers.

How is the curriculum planned?

In History, students develop a broad understanding of chronology, interpretation skills, source analysis and significance. They will learn to understand the importance of historical events and people and apply this to their learning. History teaching aspires to instil a passion for the past and develop independent learners with enquiring minds.

The knowledge and skills required for the National Curriculum is divided into KS3 and KS4. In key stage 3 students are given an introduction to history with a skills unit that then leads to a chronological series of topics focusing on the Medieval period through to World War. In KS4 the focus is on GCSE following the WJEC Eduqas exam board which looks at units on USA 1929-2000, Germany in transition 1918-1939, Medicine through time 500 AD to modern day and Elizabeth I 1558-1603. All assessment for both KS3 and KS4 follows the question style required for the GCSE exam and incorporates all skills necessary for them to achieve.

Throughout their studies, prior learning is revisited and emphasized through a variety of different methods including Personal Learning Check Lists, Quick Six and Starter for Ten activities focusing on knowledge and understanding. KS3 also touches upon the knowledge necessary for GCSE which develops a foundation for more progressively demanding concepts. Assessment, likewise, becomes progressively more difficult due to the withdrawing of scaffolds including starter strips used to develop the correct style of an answer in both KS3 and KS4. Marked reviews are commonly used in both KS3 and KS4 to assess knowledge recall and rag rating helps students identify their own areas of focus.

Where History compliments the learning of other subjects, key vocabulary and uniform approaches are explicitly built into schemes of learning to help strengthen core knowledge and skills. Glossaries are used throughout History and regularly referred to. Reading and the analysing of texts is an integral part of every lesson and aims to assist students in reaching the recommended reading age to access GCSE papers. Curriculum mapping in history aims to link similarities in subject matter to other subjects such as RE and English. Examples would be Linking the study of the Industrial age in history with texts from Charles' Dickens "A Christmas carol" or studying the religious aspect of the Holocaust alongside the persecution of the Jews in Nazi Germany. Links can also be made with Science and the study of Medicine Through Time.

All students (and especially the disadvantaged) need to acquire the cultural capital to help them be more successful in the future and so historical vocabulary is necessary to develop their understanding. There is also a heavy focus on multi culturism, racism, democracy, dictatorship and discrimination in many units studied which allows the student a chance to relate these historical issues to present day. Cultural Capital is further emphasised with the variety of trips and opportunities offered including looking back in time at the Weald and Downland Museum, taking in the solemnity of the WWI battlefield in Ypres and experiencing the horror of events such as the Holocaust by visiting Auschwitz in Poland.

How is the curriculum delivered/taught?

Pedagogical approaches in History focus on the development of skills including Chronology, Knowledge and Understanding, Interpretation, Source analysis and significance.

All lessons will use elements of these specific strands so that the student acquires a full understanding of the subject taught. There is a focus on excellent questioning to ensure that all students understand the concepts and the use of spaced learning so that prior knowledge is constantly revisited. A range of activities and styles are used when teaching history so that learning becomes memorable and different learning styles catered for. All lessons start with a quick 6 activity to allow reflection on the previous lesson and to allow knowledge to be embedded. This then means that there is a solid foundation for new knowledge to be taught and understood. All units will include knowledge recall tests, the use of Personal learning checklists to allow students to rate their own level of understanding, assessment questions based around the style of the GCSE exam and formal assessment. Students are given constructive feedback that allows them to be successful but also focuses on their next steps. The students will then be given time within lessons, following on from assessment feedback to reflect on their feedback and to act upon it. Independent learning is used weekly to further embed skills or knowledge attained in the lessons and so becomes relevant and helps with progression.

A glossary in all student's books helps with new key words and concepts and plays an integral part in their understanding. Sources are used within lessons to help with the understanding of literary texts within exams and reading aloud in class is regular and helps right misconceptions and clarifies difficulties that the students may encounter.

Students are encouraged to read more deeply on the subject studied.

The use of Chromebooks will become an integral part of our Schemes of learning. There will be opportunities to use them for knowledge retrieval quizzes, interactive games focused on current topics and for research purposes. Students will be able to access all lesson power points and resources as well as updating Personal Learning Checklists to ensure they are aware of gaps in their knowledge and prepare for exams. Independent Learning will also provide opportunities for the use of Chromebooks.

How is the curriculum assessed?

Assessment is regular and informs us about how the student is progressing. It can take the form of exam questions based around GCSE, presentations, group work, independent pieces of writing and discussion based questioning. However, GCSE style questions and Marked reviews make up the majority of this. Most topics include knowledge recall tests as well as longer written assessment. Trackers are completed so that all students can see how they are progressing. Feedforward is built into lessons to reflect on assessments so that students have the opportunity to improve their work. Assessment outcomes then inform future lessons taught. All misconceptions will be addressed and weaknesses become the focus for the following lessons. This allows the teacher to gain clarity and ensure that attainment grades give are rigorous.