

## Subject Curriculum Intent: History

### Definition of Subject

In History lessons at Ark Blake Academy, we believe that through the study of the phenomenon of society over time, and how people and societies behave, pupils acquire personal empowerment which enables them to 'deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world' (Shaull, 1970, p.34). For example, through the study of the Malian empire to the Brixton race riots, pupils will learn that racism is not part of human nature, it has been historically constructed, and therefore can be uprooted. Pupils will be empowered to build a substantive and essential body of both British and international history, playing an important role in a pupils' cultural literacy. Our curriculum ensures pupils are building the disciplinary knowledge of a historian's trade: studying conflicting interpretations of the past and learning and drawing conclusions from a diverse evidence base. In doing so, pupils develop their writing, debating and questioning skills, and have the confidence to peruse history beyond their time studying at Ark Blake.

We understand the importance of a balanced curriculum in 'future proofing' pupils so that they are confident in dealing with situations in the future, which they were not specifically prepared for. From the Malian Empire in the 1200s to the suffrage movement in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, pupils will build a deep knowledge base and broad range of skills, which is vital for equipping pupils to not only be able to interrogate the information they receive through the media, but to also understand the context of different communities in twenty-first century Great Britain and their own in Croydon.

### Nature of Subject

Pupils will develop an understanding of second order historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance. This is achieved through careful planning of enquiries for the desired outcomes of each Key Stage. For example, some enquires such as '*How did King Harold die?*' are presented as a history mystery for pupils to weigh evidence and analyse sources. Specific lessons within enquiries have also been designed to help pupils develop insights into values, beliefs and culture of the time, as well as encouraging their understanding of key processes. For example, *How did castles develop?* covered earlier in the academic year, *focuses* on the idea of change and continuity, which will enable year 7 pupils to become familiar with key concepts that they will then revisit in the Crusades later.

In the Norman Conquest, pupils are encouraged not only to identify and explore the impact of the Norman invasion, but they are also challenged to assess its significance. Pupils will have the opportunity to analyse and explain different historical interpretations of William the conqueror.

At Ark Blake, we see the study of History as a racetrack. The journey is important and taking any shortcuts would mean to miss a vital building block which acts as a proximal, making the next stage of the narrative (curriculum) possible. Key content is structured as a narrative over time. At KS3 (the beginning of the narrative), pupils furnish their memory with core vocabulary and concepts which enables them to resonate with events later in the narrative (KS4 and KS5). By familiarising pupils with the core vocabulary and concepts at the start of the narrative, these become instantly comprehensible later on, ensuring pupils do not overload their working memory.

### Purpose of Subject

Our History curriculum provides pupils with an extensive narrative of British and international history. It poses important questions for pupils' understanding of power, governance, religion, war, the rule of law, civil disobedience and the interplay of socio-economic factors that lead to major events in history. These core concepts are frequently revisited so that over time pupils build a broad and deep historical schema. When they enter KS4, pupils can confidently navigate complex vocabulary and themes due to this preparation. They can write with fluency and confidence; interrogate and interpret challenging source materials and reach well-articulated judgements about historical events. History is therefore not only fundamental for understanding the world in which we live but is vital for equipping pupils with the analytical and literacy skills essential for success in modern society.

Although our curriculum has been designed chronologically, we continually reference second-order concepts that help us organise the process of studying history, such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance. We use them to encourage pupils to make connections, draw contrasts, frame historically valid questions and create their own structured accounts. History will enable pupils to understand how evidence is used within a historical enquiry and explore how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed. For example, in Year 8, pupils assess the legacy of Oliver Cromwell, assessing whether his reputation is justified.

### Design of Subject

Our curriculum is vertically integrated in order to promote progression in learning. We believe in layering prior knowledge to build an extensive, secure schemata from studying a wide range of British, European and international history. Our Key Stage curriculum allows pupils to focus on the bigger questions shaping the narrative. All units are underpinned by the question 'how has x led to the world we live in today?' Each unit is given an enquiry question, which helps pupils understand the learning journey they are embarking upon.

Our curriculum is designed to embed key skills, concepts and terminology from the first lesson in Year 7 all the way to the end of Year 13. We introduce key concepts of change and continuity, causation, effect and chronology from Year 7 and revisit them frequently so that pupils can build deep historical schema. We view Key Stage 3 as a store for furnishing the pupils' memory with literacy, cultural, and historical words until such vocabulary is so second nature that pupils can 'move about' within it. The subtleties of using appropriate historical terms and how they may or may not be applied in any period are developed only over time and by their careful introduction, reinforcement and review.

We believe that literacy is essential for enabling success in history. As research has shown, pupils reading for pleasure builds the necessary confidence for giving 'meaning' to what they read. This will help pupils in History when analysing and comprehending historical interpretations. Confident readers will be able to identify different opinions and attach those opinions to their contextual understanding, which is a vital skill for success at GCSE. Therefore, within the History department we

have designed booklets for each unit, which includes pre-reading pupils can engage with outside the classroom.

Chronological knowledge is at the heart of our curriculum, both in terms of sequencing periods of history, and of having a clear sense of characteristic features of those periods. We have created imaginative work with timelines and overarching stories of change and continuity that require pupils to draw on prior learning, to make comparisons and contrasts to build their historical schema. We acknowledge that this takes time, and that the effect is cumulative. As pupils deepen their understanding of these concepts in a range of historical contexts, they progressively develop as historians. This knowledge is central to our schemes of learning and is revisited and reviewed to ensure that all pupils share a common language about the past.

In all lessons, pupils can expect a knowledge retrieval *Do Now*, and at least fifteen minutes of deliberate independent practice to help move newly acquired knowledge/skill from the working memory to the long-term memory. Although the curriculum is taught chronologically, key themes are regularly revisited across the years, making retrieval effortless whilst also deepening student understanding of their current module. Furthermore, all assessments have embedded retrieval practice and are part of a feedback and redrafting cycle, which is used to inform planning of following lessons. Moreover, knowledge organisers for each unit are used to prioritise key knowledge, and make all parties involved (pupil, parent, teacher) aware of what pupils must know and grasp by the end of each module. Knowledge organisers will represent residue that we want pupils to secure in their long-term memory. But they will not be the primary means by which we retain those reference points. Knowledge organisers also include a list of key vocabulary, which teachers teach explicitly, helping to build a schema that will be built upon as pupils move from Year 7 to Year 13.

### Extension of Subject

Our aim is to create pupils and young adults who are engaged in the world around them. We want to equip pupils with the confidence to take leading roles in the political and social sphere of society. We believe that the study of History will provide pupils with the transferable skills needed to succeed across multiple disciplines at university and beyond. These skills include (but are not limited to) the ability to carry out research and prioritise evidence to help inform decision making process; the confidence to carry out self-directed learning; logical thinking and the ability to analyse data (including numerical) to draw conclusions. Pupils will find their own identity whilst having a deeper understanding of the world, including the different cultures which have shaped what society looks like today. Finally, through the study of individuals and the factors which have brought about change, pupils will become the driving force for further change, helping to improve the national and international world we live in.