



# Whitby School

## History

### Our Intent

Whitby's place on the world stage has been significant, and the people from Whitby have been part of national and world events for centuries. The town itself is built on a prehistoric landscape that started as a home to Celts, Romans, and Vikings – in the seventh century St Hilda's abbey was visited by kings and peasants alike, seeking to gain her wisdom and council. It was St Hilda herself who encouraged Caedmon – author of the first English poem – to write. The Peasants' Revolt, the Civil War, the enslavement of people, the British Empire, and modern warfare all have left their mark on Whitby.

What this seaside town shows is that history is inescapable. It shapes who we are now and who we will become in the future – and to the ends of the earth.

History is part of our **world** discipline at Whitby School.

*"I will endeavour to be a person of great **character** who has the **courage** to realise my **ambitions**."*

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Courage</b> <b>Engaged</b></p>	<p>Children learn best when they are active in the classroom and enjoying history. Consequently, our teaching centres around getting pupils involved with active questioning and inquiry. We want children to learn to become argumentative, curious, and critical. This is to ensure they are drawn into the subject but also to become actively engaged in the debates and stories of history.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ambition</b> <b>Relevant</b></p>	<p>Whitby's rich past allows children to see how they are part of history, locally and nationally. Generations of our residents have felt the effect of world events – and taken an active part in them. Consequently, local history features in our curriculum design as connections are always made back to the lives of local people and the significance of historic events.</p> <p>In studying history, children appreciate its relevance, along with the power – and responsibility – individuals have to change the world.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Character</b> <b>Empathetic</b></p>	<p>History has the power to connect us to people and their experiences. It builds empathy and it depends on empathy as they attempt to understand the decisions, experiences, and consequences people faced in the past. We endeavour to ensure we interleave a range of historical sources not only to build balanced, reasoned arguments but also to include a range of voices and perspectives. We will also study where there are silences of the oppressed people in history to build a true understanding of the past.</p>

## Our teaching:

History is a subject that requires a high level of analysis and exploration and children will also write increasingly sophisticated responses to the topics studied. However, they will develop this analytical style in part through discussion and debate. Our lessons will involve discussing and questioning sources and ideas.

Pupils make progress in history by developing:

- their knowledge about the past (this knowledge is often described as ‘substantive knowledge’)
- their knowledge about how historians investigate the past, and how they construct historical claims, arguments and accounts (often described as ‘disciplinary knowledge’).

Using a combination of substantive and disciplinary knowledge gives pupils the skill to construct historical arguments or analyse sources. It helps them to solve problems as well as consider critically, for example, which historical sources may be more accurate or reliable.

**The substantive knowledge** that children will learn will be helpful in a range of contexts across their studies in history. For example, some knowledge might be particularly important for what pupils are learning in their current topic or lesson and be of particular use in examining a specific moment of time. Other historical moments or aspects of knowledge may have a longer-term relevance and be significant in helping children understand future learning – for example understanding the process of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles after World War One is vital to really appreciating Hitler’s rise to power and the causes of World War Two.

As a result, substantive concepts feature regularly throughout the study of history in a range of contexts. A pupil might come across the terms such as ‘monarchy’ or ‘empire’ at different stages throughout the Key Stages. This will allow them to repeatedly draw on their secure knowledge in a number of different areas and use this knowledge effectively.

**Disciplinary knowledge** is knowledge of how historians work to investigate the past, and how they build and evaluate historical claims, arguments and accounts. Developing pupils’ disciplinary knowledge is done alongside their study of the past. Disciplinary concepts are carefully sequenced so they are taught alongside topics where these skills can be shown explicitly and they are systematically revisited across their time with us. These concepts include:

- cause and consequence
- change and continuity
- similarity and difference
- historical significance

- sources and evidence
- historical interpretations.

A careful combination of substantive knowledge and disciplinary knowledge lies at the heart of the curriculum.

## Our curriculum

Our curriculum follows a chronological structure. By carefully sequencing and returning to key information and knowledge, we aim to ensure it is secure and well-organised in pupils' minds. This way, each unit we cover leaves a legacy of wider knowledge, such as a broad knowledge of the institutions of a period. This helps pupils over time to develop knowledge of key concepts or chronological knowledge. This knowledge will help them to become effective historians.

The curriculum is planned in this way to develop pupils' chronological knowledge in order to build their 'mental timeline' from Year 6 onwards – and so, for example, we begin with a unit that studies the theme of similarities and differences, and continuities and changes, from the ancient world onwards to consolidate and deepen their understanding from study at primary school. From here we move systematically through time, making the connections clear as the story of world history unfolds. This chronological approach ensures children develop:

- broad characterisations of particular periods
- understanding of general features of periods
- knowledge of the chronological order of broad periods
- knowledge of particular dates and events
- knowledge of broad developments, links or themes across periods.

By taking chronological knowledge into consideration, we ensure our pupils knowledge is connected and complete, whether they leave us in Year 9, in Year 11 or in Year 13. We endeavour to add meaning to their study by allowing them to make links to prior events, it helps their learning to be securely remembered and easily recalled and drawn on in future learning.

At Key Stages 3, 4 and 5, we believe that by thinking carefully about what we teach pupils and what the powerful knowledge is in our subject, we can help create young people who exhibit a further readiness to understand, absorb and be fascinated by the history their town, their country and their nation has been a part of.

At GCSE the department follows the Pearson/Edexcel B specification. At A-level, we currently follow the AQA Specification.

## How families can support

Parents can help by encouraging pupils to take an active interest in the world around them, by following the news (for which the BBC news app is helpful) or having discussions about their learning. This allows pupils to put their learning into a wider context and enables them to add extra details and comparisons into their work. There are also a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books, films, documentaries and podcasts that can engage all ages and deepen understanding. Additionally, supporting pupils with their homework is greatly appreciated and, if they are stuck or need further support, please encourage them to speak to their teacher.

Parents can also ask pupils about their studies and encourage them to discuss their opinions and reasonings behind them. Ensuring homework is completed to a good standard is also useful. Being aware of deadlines and helping pupils to be organised also aids learning and progress.