

History

Rationale of KS3 curriculum

The pursuit of History should allow students to both pursue the subject in a pure sense, developing the skills of the historian in the process and acquiring the understanding of the past that can help them at KS4 and KS5, but also should allow students to follow their own areas of interest as far as possible, giving them a contextual understanding of the world around them. Currently the History National Curriculum is unable to meet these twin aims as it is either too rigid in determining what topics should be studied, thereby flattening interest of some of the most able students or too ephemeral and therefore difficult to incorporate common assessment.

In order to address this, we have developed a flexible curriculum that develops from the three key themes we feel run through History, one that has a solid core of subjects that can be taught in a responsive way and on which can be hung expansion topics to go into certain subjects in greater depth, either as the interests of the class or teacher dictate or in response to current events. The three key themes of Power, Equality and Progress can be seen to run throughout the course, allowing thematic study to run alongside chronological balance as well as enabling the incorporation of social history properly into a course that traditionally focuses on politics. This should then allow each year to include elements related to the study of gender, local issues and ethnic and geographic diversity. The structure of the course is built around a Core of 60% of lessons per year, divided into four key studies. From these topics will be drawn the common assessments for each year group.

The remaining 40% of the course will be made up of a series of optional expansion topics, allowing depth studies, areas of special interest or cross-curricular work to take place. These will allow for experimentation without the risk to the core or progress through assessments.

The order of the Core Curriculum will be prescribed, but the undertaking of the Expansion Topics will be at the discretion of the classroom teacher, allowing them to stagger assessments across the year to lessen the load on marking.

Overall, it is hoped that the curriculum will provide more opportunities for meaningful cross-curricular work, as well as encourage in students both an understanding of the world they live in as well as a love of History that will remain with them whether or not they opt to study it beyond KS3.

In Year 7, the core course provides a clear grounding in the skills and processes of the study of the subject, including ideas related to evidence, interpretations and partiality. Lessons begin with a focus on the History of Parmiter's School to orient the students with a common topic as well as develop these skills. That is followed by a study of Roman Britain and the changing relationship between people and authority with the arrival of the Normans.

In Year 8, students consider the changing role of the monarchy under the Tudors and Stuarts, including the Civil War, and then the impacts of the Industrial Revolution.

In Year 9, all students undertake our Africa study before moving on to twentieth century conflict and a genocide depth study, then finishing with a social history of Britain.

History is a very popular option at GCSE and classes are taught in mixed ability. The new course considers Germany 1919-1939, the Cold War c1941-1991, Henry VIII 1508-40 and Crime and Punishment Through Time. The core content is delivered in a flexible manner, providing opportunities for independent enquiry, alongside traditional methods.

Study is enhanced by a number of extra-curricular activities, refining subject-specific skills and encouraging individual learning. These include a lower school trip to the battlefields of World War 1 and there is also a GCSE visit to Berlin.