



Barnfields Primary School: History Subject Rationale

History Subject Quest at Barnfields:

To develop a better understanding of the world in which we live by studying historical events and trends, allowing us to develop a much greater appreciation for current events today.

Knowledge Types in History

Substantive



Disciplinary



History Intention

At Barnfields, we are committed to providing a rich and engaging history curriculum that fosters a deep chronological understanding of Britain and the wider world. Through the study of local, national, and internationally significant events and individuals, pupils develop important evaluative skills by considering fact and opinion from multiple perspectives. They investigate and interpret the past through the critical assessment of historical sources and artefacts, weighing evidence, sifting arguments, and forming well-informed opinions about life in the past. By exploring key events, periods, and concepts, our curriculum cultivates curiosity and critical thinking, encouraging pupils to ask meaningful questions and reflect on the relevance of the past to the present.

We believe that developing a strong sense of time enables pupils to understand how the past has shaped the present and continues to influence the future. Our curriculum is thoughtfully designed to build connected and substantive knowledge over time, enabling children to study a broad and ambitious range of historical periods. Substantive concepts such as monarchy and power, invasion and conflict, settlement and community, economic systems, and culture and civilisation are revisited throughout the curriculum to deepen understanding. In tandem, pupils develop disciplinary knowledge by learning how historians construct interpretations, evaluate evidence, and form historical arguments.

We strive to inspire a lifelong passion for history, fostering inquisitive minds capable of thinking critically and drawing meaningful connections between past events and contemporary issues. Through rich encounters with the past, every child has the opportunity to engage deeply with history and develop a nuanced understanding of the world.

Provision, Planning and Delivery

Provision

At Barnfields Primary School, history is delivered through a carefully sequenced and knowledge-rich curriculum that balances both substantive and disciplinary knowledge. Pupils build deep chronological understanding through repeated encounters with key concepts such as monarchy and power, invasion and conflict, culture and civilisation, economic systems, and settlement and community. These substantive concepts are developed across year groups with increasing complexity, enabling pupils to construct a coherent understanding of the past. Disciplinary knowledge—how historians investigate and interpret the past—is taught through focused enquiry questions that drive each unit, allowing children to critically engage with sources, interpretations, and evidence. The curriculum is underpinned by clearly defined progression, vocabulary development, and local, national, and global historical contexts. Lessons are enquiry-led, fostering curiosity and critical thinking while encouraging pupils to make connections between historical events and contemporary life, thereby inspiring a lifelong interest in history.



Planning

Following the History Subject Road Map, pupils at Barnfields access a carefully sequenced, balanced, and ambitious curriculum that builds knowledge and understanding year on year. From Year 1 onwards, children engage with key substantive concepts including monarchy and power, invasion and conflict, culture and civilisation, economic systems, and settlement and community. These concepts are revisited throughout the curriculum in increasingly complex contexts to help pupils build coherent historical understanding.

Alongside this, children develop disciplinary knowledge by answering enquiry questions framed around second-order concepts such as cause and consequence, change and continuity, similarity and difference, significance, evidence, and interpretations. Teachers use the Barnfields Knowledge Progression Grid, which outlines both the substantive and disciplinary content for each year group, to inform their Medium-Term Plans (MTPs) and ensure progression across units and key stages.

Delivery

The History curriculum in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is delivered every term during discrete History lessons. To enable the children to be immersed in their study, lessons are organised into one lesson per week for the term.

Progression

At Barnfields, we ensure progression in history by delivering a carefully sequenced curriculum that systematically builds pupils' knowledge over time. We understand that progression means children knowing more, remembering more, and being able to do more with their historical knowledge. To achieve this, we have designed a curriculum that develops both substantive knowledge—the key concepts, people, places, and events of the past—and disciplinary knowledge—the methods historians use to construct and interpret the past.



Progression begins in the Early Years, where children develop an understanding of the past and present through meaningful experiences, stories, and discussions. This lays the foundation for future historical learning by introducing vocabulary and concepts that support early chronological thinking.

In Key Stage 1, pupils begin to build their understanding of time, change, and continuity through the study of significant individuals, events, and local history. This stage focuses on helping children develop a secure chronological framework and a sense of how the past relates to the present.

In Key Stage 2, children revisit and deepen their understanding of substantive concepts such as monarchy and power, invasion and conflict, culture and civilisation, economic systems, and settlement and community. They study a wider range of historical periods and civilisations, both British and global, and are encouraged to make connections across time and place to develop a more coherent and nuanced understanding of the past.

Throughout their journey, pupils are guided by enquiry questions that frame each unit and provide opportunities to apply disciplinary concepts such as cause and consequence, change and continuity, similarity and difference, historical



significance, sources and evidence, and interpretations. This approach enables pupils to think critically, analyse historical evidence, and form well-reasoned conclusions, supporting their development as young historians.

Disciplinary Oracy

At Barnfields Primary School, history is an **enquiry-led subject**, and oracy is fundamental to its study. Talk is used as a tool for thinking, enabling children to explore the past, question evidence and communicate interpretations with clarity. Historical vocabulary is introduced explicitly and revisited throughout each lesson so that pupils can use key terms confidently when discussing people, events and changes over time. Carefully chosen sentence stems support pupils in forming coherent explanations, expressing viewpoints and responding to historical questions with precision.

In the EYFS, children develop early historical talk through clear teacher modelling and interactive routines such as '*my turn, your turn*'. New vocabulary and simple historical ideas are introduced orally, giving pupils the chance to rehearse language aloud before applying it independently. Children are encouraged to explain their thinking, answer questions verbally and justify simple ideas about the past, building confidence and laying strong foundations for later historical enquiry.

As pupils move through Key Stage 1, talk becomes more purposeful and structured. Sentence stems help children describe events, discuss significant individuals and talk about how things have changed over time. Pupils engage in guided discussions around historical sources, describing what they notice and beginning to infer what these sources reveal about life in the past. These routines support children in forming clear, well-reasoned responses and using historical vocabulary accurately.

Across Key Stage 2, oracy supports deeper historical thinking as the **enquiry questions continue to guide discussion**. Pupils take part in discussions that require them to compare interpretations, evaluate evidence and consider the reliability of different sources. Teachers model the language of historical reasoning, helping pupils articulate cause and consequence, continuity and change, and similarities and differences. Structured partner and group talk enables pupils to test ideas, refine explanations and build more sophisticated arguments.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment

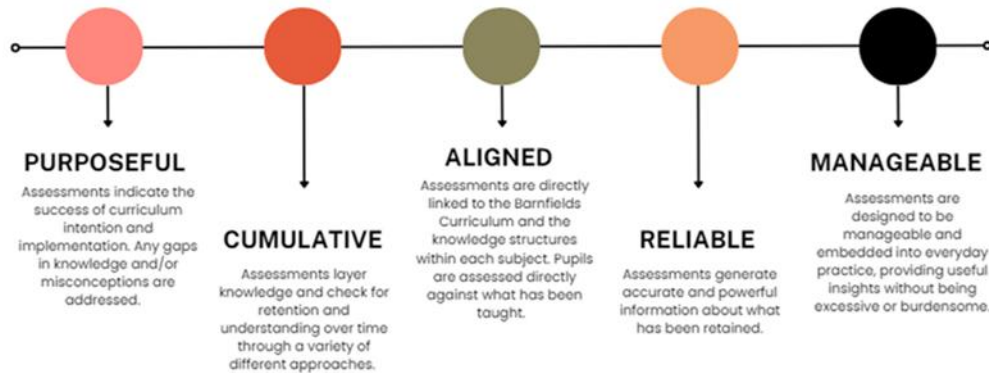
Assessment in History at Barnfields is guided by the school's five core principles for foundation subject assessment: purposeful, cumulative, aligned, reliable, and manageable. Teachers assess pupils' historical understanding through an ongoing, formative process that includes observing engagement in lessons, evaluating written outcomes, and listening to pupil voice through learning conversations.

Assessment strategies include questioning, discussion, self and peer assessment, marking, and the use of retrieval practice to check for long-term retention of key knowledge. These approaches support teachers in identifying gaps or misconceptions and provide valuable insights into pupils' grasp of both substantive and disciplinary knowledge. This continuous assessment informs planning and allows teachers to adapt the learning sequence to meet the needs of individuals and classes. As a result, teachers make informed decisions about when to revisit, consolidate, or extend learning within and across units to ensure progression and secure understanding over time.

In addition, each unit concludes with a carefully designed enquiry task, which provides pupils with the opportunity to apply their knowledge and historical thinking to a meaningful question. These summative tasks reflect the core knowledge and skills developed throughout the unit and allow teachers to assess pupils' ability to draw on evidence, explain significance, make comparisons, or evaluate change over time. Knowledge Organisers are used throughout each unit to support pupils in building and retaining 'fingertip knowledge', develop key vocabulary, and foster greater independence in enquiry and discussion.



ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES ACROSS THE FOUNDATION SUBJECTS AT BARNFIELDS



Recording

History learning is documented in children's purple History books.

Reporting

Teachers upload pupil attainment data onto Sonar at the end of each term, determining if a child is either below age-related expectation, age-related expectation or exceeding age-related expectation. The aim of this assessment is to provide an evaluation of how much knowledge pupils have learned and remembered. They enable leaders to identify whether specific curricular goals have been achieved. This, therefore, plays an important role in evaluating the impact of the curriculum.

Children's progress in History is formally communicated to parents annually through end-of-year reports. Additionally, informal updates are provided during any History exhibitions held and parents evening.

Supporting Research:

Ofsted (2023) Research review series: history