



History Progression

Our History curriculum helps children understand the past and how it has shaped people's lives and the world around them. Children build a sense of chronology, investigate evidence, explore different perspectives and explain the significance of people, events and changes.

How learning develops

Phase	Progression in learning
Early Years	Talk about personal experiences, family stories and familiar events. Notice differences between past and present, explore old objects and photographs, and begin to order events.
Years 1 and 2	Explore life within and beyond living memory. Sequence events, ask questions about sources and describe the importance of significant people and events.
Years 3 and 4	Connect historical periods and explain causes, consequences and changes. Investigate ancient societies and British history, using evidence to support ideas and recognising different viewpoints.
Years 5 and 6	Make connections across periods and societies. Evaluate sources and interpretations, consider motives and consequences, and construct increasingly detailed historical arguments and accounts.

Our values in historical learning

History provides opportunities to practise respect, creativity, resilience and responsibility. Children consider lives and experiences different from their own, ask thoughtful questions and develop explanations that are supported by evidence.

Planning, monitoring and reflecting support historical enquiry. Children consider what they already know, choose sources that may help them and review how the evidence supports or changes their ideas.

Reading the progression

The following tables summarise the skills and key knowledge in the supplied progression from Nursery foundations to Year 6. Nursery describes the early experiences on which Reception learning builds. Historical examples illustrate the learning and are not a termly teaching timetable.

Strands connect across enquiries. Children revisit chronology, evidence, comparison, cause and consequence, continuity and change, and significance with increasing depth. A dash means that no separate statement is given for that year in that strand.



Everyday life and power

Children move from personal memories and stories to explaining how society, leadership and conflict have affected people's lives.

Stage	Everyday life	Hierarchy and power
Nursery foundations	Talk about special times and events that are important to them.	Talk about the actions of kings and queens in stories.
Reception	Talk about past and present events in their own lives and those of important people. Recognise that families and their experiences are different.	Explore pictures, stories and information about royalty. Recognise kings and queens as rulers and begin to discuss their decisions.
Year 1	Describe an aspect of everyday life within or beyond living memory, including schools, homes, shopping and leisure in the Victorian period and the 1950s.	Describe the role of a monarch. Understand that a monarch is a king or queen.
Year 2	Describe everyday life in a past period, including differences between the experiences of passengers and crew on the Titanic.	Describe the hierarchy of a past society, considering rulers, landowners, workers and enslaved people.
Year 3	Describe life in the Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages, and in ancient Rome. Explore changes in tools, farming, homes, trade, beliefs and the Romanisation of Britain.	Describe tribal communities, social roles and power in past societies. Explore differences in wealth, Roman government and the army, and resistance such as Boudicca's rebellion.
Year 4	Describe Romanisation and its influence on technology, culture and beliefs. Use artefacts to investigate everyday life in ancient societies, including homes, cities, work and leisure in ancient Sumer and Egypt.	Describe social hierarchies and roles in ancient civilisations, including Sumer and Egypt. Recognise that gaps in evidence can leave uncertainty about leadership.
Year 5	Explain continuity and change in everyday life in ancient civilisations. Explore examples from Minoan and Athenian society and the Shang Dynasty.	Describe the significance, impact and legacy of power. Explore who could participate in Athenian democracy and how status shaped people's opportunities in ancient societies.
Year 6	Evaluate how war, oppression, conflict and rebellion affected everyday life, including experiences of enslavement and the First and Second World Wars.	Explain how resistance and rebellion can change societies. Consider leadership, motives, the abolition of slavery and the purpose of remembrance.



Civilisations and British history

Children build knowledge of historical societies and connect developments in Britain with events and achievements in the wider world.

Stage	Civilisations and their achievements	British history
Nursery foundations	—	Talk about things that happened in the past.
Reception	—	Listen to and discuss stories about significant events from the past.
Year 1	—	Describe a significant event in British history, such as the Great Fire of London in 1666.
Year 2	—	Describe the importance of significant achievements and their wider influence, including aviation pioneers and the development of powered flight.
Year 3	Describe development through the Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages. Explore Roman and Greek achievements and how inventions changed life, including metalworking, roads, aqueducts and other technology.	Explain causes and consequences of invasion and settlement, including the Roman invasion. Describe lasting influences such as ironworking, farming, trade, roads and religious change.
Year 4	Explain Roman invasion and migration and later power struggles. Construct accounts of ancient societies, including Sumer, Egypt and the Indus Valley, considering their features and achievements.	Explain the impact of invasion and settlement, including Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and their legacy. Link events through themes such as religion, language, law and changing power.
Year 5	Investigate an ancient civilisation in depth. Explore ancient Greek and Chinese achievements, beliefs, government, art, technology and trade, including cultural exchange along the Silk Road.	Create an in depth study of an aspect of British history beyond 1066, such as monarchy, technology, exploration, disease or changes in everyday life.
Year 6	Study a past society in depth, including African kingdoms such as Benin. Compare leaders' motives and consider the significance of achievements, exploration and technological developments.	Explain the significance of people, events, discoveries and inventions in British history. Explore Britain's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade, the world wars and economic change.



Chronology and change over time

Children develop a secure sequence of the past and use it to explain continuity, change, causes and consequences.

Stage	Chronology	Changes over time
Nursery foundations	Relive past experiences through role play and retell events in order.	Notice similarities and differences between pictures of the past and the present.
Reception	Put familiar events in chronological order using pictures and discussion.	Explore aspects of life in the past through books, stories and pictures, including clothes, homes and machines.
Year 1	Order information on a timeline, recognising that it shows events from earlier to later. Sequence events such as the Great Fire of London.	Describe changes within or beyond living memory. Explore Victorian schools, transport, industry and changes in children's lives.
Year 2	Sequence significant information in chronological order.	Describe how an aspect of life has changed, such as flight from early experiments to modern aircraft.
Year 3	Sequence dates and information from several historical periods on a timeline, including the Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages and Roman Britain.	Summarise changes in British or world history, including government, work, health, culture, everyday life and technology.
Year 4	Sequence significant dates within a period and use timelines to understand complex events and relationships. Place invasions and changes of rule in order.	Ask and answer valid questions about change and plan ways to investigate them. Explore how farming and invention changed life in early civilisations.
Year 5	Sequence and connect periods of world history, including ancient Greece and Chinese dynasties. Identify developments that overlap or follow one another.	Frame questions about continuity and change and construct informed responses, considering developments and decline in ancient societies.
Year 6	Present a clear chronological account within and across periods studied, including African kingdoms and the First and Second World Wars.	Describe and explain causes and consequences of significant events. Explore interacting factors in abolition, the world wars and their aftermath.



Artefacts and historical sources

Children learn to ask questions of evidence, compare viewpoints and judge what sources can and cannot tell us.

Stage	Investigating artefacts and evidence	Viewpoints and reliability
Nursery foundations	Comment and ask questions about objects from the past.	Notice that old objects can look different from those used today.
Reception	Observe objects and artefacts such as toys, clothes and vehicles, making links with everyday life.	Recognise that objects and pictures help us learn about the past and that museums preserve them.
Year 1	Use historical artefacts and sources to find out about the past. Explore objects, photographs, paintings and written accounts.	Express an opinion about a source. Begin to recognise that people's accounts of the same event may differ.
Year 2	Examine an artefact and suggest what it is, where it came from, why it was made and who owned it.	Use sources to begin to identify viewpoints. Understand a viewpoint as someone's way of thinking about an event or issue.
Year 3	Make deductions and draw conclusions about sources and artefacts. Explore evidence such as archaeological finds, hoards and the Vindolanda tablets.	Identify different viewpoints in primary and secondary sources. Begin to consider reliability and distinguish evidence from a witness from later accounts.
Year 4	Explain how an artefact's materials, design and decoration may provide evidence about its owner's wealth or status.	Identify bias and interpret primary sources in context. Consider how a writer's experiences, beliefs and purpose influence an account.
Year 5	Use a range of sources and artefacts to build a picture of a person or event, including archaeological and written evidence.	Find evidence from different sources, identify bias and form balanced arguments. Consider the intentions and interpretations behind both primary and secondary sources.
Year 6	Ask perceptive questions to evaluate artefacts and sources, considering creator, date, purpose and comparison with other evidence.	Identify types of bias, including political, cultural and racial bias, and explain their effect. Evaluate usefulness in relation to the question being investigated.



Communicating historical understanding

Children progress from sharing stories to presenting structured accounts and arguments using precise historical language.

Stage	Reporting and drawing conclusions	Historical communication
Nursery foundations	Explore people and events from the past through books and photographs.	Begin to use words about the passage of time when recalling past events.
Reception	Share stories and talk about events in the past, including significant achievements such as the Moon landing.	Order a familiar event using words such as yesterday, last week, before and then.
Year 1	Create stories, pictures, writing and role play about historical events, people and periods.	Use words and phrases such as now, then, yesterday, last year, years ago and a long time ago.
Year 2	Present historical information in a simple report, piece of writing, chart, model, fact file, quiz, story or biography.	Use year, decade and century accurately to describe time.
Year 3	Choose suitable ways to present historical accounts, such as a narrative, report, timeline, fact file, reconstruction or presentation.	Use terms including millennia, era, BC, AD, BCE and CE. Ask well composed questions about everyday life, cause and effect, continuity and change.
Year 4	Select relevant information and present it thoughtfully in a report, historical fiction, in depth study or responses to historical questions.	Use increasingly complex historical vocabulary to explain ideas, including civilisation, culture, hierarchy, infrastructure, invention, religion, trade and writing.
Year 5	Check the validity of historical reports using books, technology and other sources. Recognise that accounts vary in accuracy and perspective.	Organise historical information and detailed accounts using topic vocabulary and concepts such as civilisation, peasantry, rebellion and revolt.
Year 6	Think critically, weigh evidence, examine arguments and present a perspective on a historically important issue.	Use abstract historical terms accurately, including colonisation, empire, enslavement, rebellion and resistance.



Local history and historical comparison

Children connect familiar places with wider history and compare the experiences and characteristics of different periods and societies.

Stage	Local history	Comparing and contrasting
Nursery foundations	Explore photographs showing changes in the school or locality.	Begin to notice similarities and differences between life now and in the past.
Reception	Explore and talk about important events in the history of the school or locality.	Describe similarities and differences between past and present, including toys, clothing, vehicles and everyday objects.
Year 1	Describe important events in the school's history, such as celebrations and anniversaries.	Identify similarities and differences between ways of life within or beyond living memory.
Year 2	Describe the importance of local events, people and places, using evidence such as monuments, photographs and newspapers.	Describe what it was like to live in a different historical period.
Year 3	Analyse historical information to explain how a national or international event affected the locality.	Explain similarities and differences between two periods, considering themes such as food, shelter, warmth, power and technology.
Year 4	Describe and explain how a past society affected a local settlement or community, including people and language.	Compare and contrast two civilisations and recognise links between ancient societies and life today.
Year 5	Investigate local history or a local site dating from beyond 1066, including architectural influences where relevant.	Compare an aspect of history across two or more periods, such as rulers, everyday life, innovation, beliefs or military power.
Year 6	Present an in depth study of a local town or city and explain how suitable primary and secondary sources could be obtained.	Compare leadership, beliefs, lifestyles and significant events across periods, explaining shared features and important differences.



Significant events and people

Children move from recognising personal importance to making reasoned judgements about historical significance, choices and consequences.

Stage	Significant events	Significant people
Nursery foundations	Make sense of their own life story and family history through significant events and celebrations.	Comment and ask questions about significant people seen in books and photographs.
Reception	Listen to stories and discuss significant events from the past.	Share stories about significant people and recognise that actions and achievements can change how people live.
Year 1	Identify key features of a significant event beyond living memory, such as the Great Fire of London.	Explain why a significant person is important. Examples include Samuel Pepys, Samuel Wilderspin, Helen Keller, Anne Sullivan and Louis Braille.
Year 2	Explain why an event from the past is significant, including developments in flight.	Make judgements about significance and describe a person's impact, using studied examples such as Captain James Cook and aviation pioneers.
Year 3	Explain causes and effects of a significant event, such as the eruption of Vesuvius and its impact on Pompeii.	Devise or respond to valid questions about a significant person and suggest ways to answer them. Examples include Mary Anning and Roman emperors.
Year 4	Explain in detail the multiple causes and effects of significant events, including struggles for the English throne in 1066.	Construct a profile of a significant leader using a range of sources. Examples include Athelstan, Augustine and rulers of ancient Egypt.
Year 5	Explain why an aspect of world history is significant, including the influence and legacies of ancient Greece and China.	Explain how religious, political, scientific or personal beliefs influenced a significant person's actions. Examples include Hippocrates, Greek thinkers and leaders, Fu Hao and Confucius.
Year 6	Present a detailed historical narrative about a significant global event, using evidence to explain its importance and effects.	Examine a significant individual's decisions, consider the options available and make an overall judgement supported by evidence, for example when studying Antarctic exploration.