

WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL, HEDGEHOGS NURSERY & SUNBEAMS CLUB



HISTORY POLICY 2026–2027

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Introduction

At Woodlands Primary School, history is an important part of our broad and rich curriculum. It helps children understand their place in the world, develop a sense of belonging and encounter the experiences of people from different times, places and communities. We encourage curiosity, thoughtful questioning, empathy and respect, alongside the confidence to explain ideas and listen to others.

Intent

Our curriculum develops secure, connected knowledge of British, local and world history. Meaningful experiences and well-chosen links help learning become memorable. Historical content and enquiry remain the basis for planning, so that children learn history in depth within our cohesive curriculum. Four golden threads connect our history curriculum: LOCAL AREA, MONARCHY AND POWER, INVENTIONS, and INVASION AND WARFARE. These recurring themes help children connect new knowledge with earlier learning and deepen their understanding over time.

We place particular emphasis on chronological understanding. Children build a mental timeline, locate new learning in relation to periods already studied and develop an understanding of the features of different societies. They revisit important knowledge and vocabulary so that earlier learning supports increasingly challenging ideas.

Children learn both about the past and about how knowledge of the past is constructed. They explore evidence, ask historical questions and encounter different accounts. We aim to equip all pupils with the knowledge, language and confidence to engage with history at Key Stage 3 and to participate thoughtfully in the wider world.

Our aims

- Develop curiosity and enjoyment through rich encounters with the past.
- Secure knowledge of people, events and societies and make connections across time and place.
- Use historical vocabulary and evidence to explain ideas, recognising that accounts may differ.
- Provide ambitious, accessible learning for every pupil and respond to gaps in understanding.

Implementation

Curriculum organisation and progression

History is planned through our Cycle A and Cycle B curriculum. Progression documents identify the knowledge and historical understanding to be developed across phases. Teachers use these collaboratively developed documents as working plans, refining teaching for their cohorts while retaining agreed coverage and ambition.

Medium-term plans, knowledge organisers and INSIGHT objectives reflect the same intended learning. Each unit identifies the golden thread, enquiry question, essential knowledge, prior learning, vocabulary, relevant sources and intended outcomes. Teachers plan sufficient time to teach, revisit and assess this content. Planning identifies the relevant golden threads and the specific knowledge pupils will revisit and develop in each unit.

Ready – Respectful - Safe

In KS1, children study change within living memory, significant events beyond living memory, significant individuals and local history. KS2 broadens understanding of British history, ancient civilisations and societies, and local history through the school's mapped units. The curriculum overview and progression documents specify the content used to meet the National Curriculum programmes of study.

Golden threads of the curriculum

Our four golden threads run through Cycle A and Cycle B. Teachers make purposeful links where the content supports them, using specific historical examples to build understanding. Each thread becomes more detailed as children encounter different times, places and societies. The threads support the breadth of our curriculum.

LOCAL AREA Children explore how places and communities have changed and how local experiences connect to wider history. Learning about Ellesmere Port, Liverpool and the surrounding area develops a sense of place and belonging. Pupils use local sources, buildings and accounts to connect changes in everyday life, work and transport with national and international developments.

MONARCHY AND POWER Children explore who holds power, how it is gained and exercised, and how this affects different people. Across relevant units, pupils encounter monarchs, rulers, empires and forms of government. They compare examples of authority, participation and rights, recognising that monarchy and power have operated differently across societies and periods.

INVENTIONS Children consider how inventions, technologies and new ideas have changed people's lives. They explore developments in tools, communication, travel and other aspects of society within the units studied. Teaching examines why developments emerged, how they were used and their consequences, including how change affected different groups.

INVASION AND WARFARE Children explore the causes and consequences of invasion and conflict, including changes to territory, settlement, leadership and everyday life. Through relevant studies, including Roman and Anglo-Saxon history and local wartime experiences, pupils consider different perspectives, resistance and lasting effects. Teaching is age-appropriate and connects conflict with its impact on communities. Teachers revisit earlier examples through retrieval, timelines and discussion, helping pupils explain both similarities and important differences.

EYFS

In the early years, foundations for history develop through Understanding the World, communication and language, stories, play and first-hand experiences. Children talk about their lives and familiar people, explore photographs and objects, and notice similarities and differences between the past and now. Adults model language such as before, after, yesterday, today, old and new, and introduce meaningful ideas about homes, work, travel and community.

Chronology and prior learning

Each new unit is introduced in chronological context. Children use the large corridor timelines, classroom timelines and individual timelines in their books to relate the period to familiar learning. Maps help locate the places studied. Teaching explores how people lived and how periods connect, as well as the order and duration of events.

Circle maps identify prior knowledge and misconceptions at the start of a unit. Teachers use this information to adjust explanations and support. Short retrieval activities revisit significant knowledge within lessons, across a unit and in later units. Responses guide reteaching and further practice.

Teaching and learning

Teachers use clear explanations, historical narratives, carefully chosen images, artefacts, texts and digital resources to make unfamiliar contexts understandable. New learning is modelled and broken into manageable steps. Enquiry and independent work follow sufficient teaching of the relevant background knowledge.

Knowledge organisers support teaching, vocabulary and retrieval. Discussion, drama, practical exploration and written work are chosen for their contribution to historical learning. Visits and visitors have specific curriculum purposes, with preparation and follow-up that help pupils connect the experience to their learning.

Historical enquiry and communication

Learning how the past is studied

Historical enquiry is taught through the content of each unit. Pupils gradually develop understanding of sources and evidence, historical interpretations, cause and consequence, change and continuity, similarity and difference, and significance. Teachers select specific examples and questions that are appropriate to pupils' knowledge and stage of learning.

Pupils learn to ask what a source can tell us about a particular question, who produced it, when and for what purpose. As their knowledge develops, they compare evidence, identify limitations and explain a claim using examples. Teachers avoid presenting sources as simply reliable or unreliable: their usefulness depends on the question and context. Pupils recognise that incomplete evidence and different questions or perspectives can lead to different accounts.

Historians archaeologists and eyewitnesses

During 2026–2027, we will embed a planned progression of people who have recorded, investigated or interpreted the past. Each example is connected to the taught unit and to a method, source or interpretation. The purpose is to understand how historical knowledge develops, rather than simply remember a list of names.

Teachers distinguish eyewitness testimony and surviving evidence from later historical scholarship. Ancient writers such as Tacitus and Herodotus are explored within their own contexts; they are not treated as modern researchers.

Vocabulary and oracy

Historical vocabulary is explicitly taught, modelled and revisited in context. Recurring ideas such as settlement, power, trade, civilisation, empire and democracy are explored through concrete examples so that understanding becomes more detailed over time.

Structured talk helps pupils rehearse explanations, ask questions, listen carefully, build on ideas and disagree respectfully. Teachers model how to justify a view using evidence. Sentence stems, partner rehearsal, visual prompts and vocabulary banks support participation. Feedback on spoken explanations helps pupils improve both communication and historical reasoning.

Local history and wider connections

Where the planned units provide opportunities, learning draws on Ellesmere Port, Chester, Liverpool and the surrounding area. Local buildings, docks, archives, museums and community accounts help children connect local experiences to national and international developments. Historical links with

Ready – Respectful - Safe

English, geography, RE, art and computing are used where they strengthen understanding of the historical content.

Inclusion and personal development

Ambitious access for all pupils

All pupils are entitled to a broad and rich history curriculum. Teachers identify barriers to participation and learning for pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, pupils with English as an additional language and any child with gaps in prior knowledge. Current data informs initial priorities, which are reviewed through current classroom evidence and termly assessment.

Adaptation retains the core historical learning while providing suitable routes to understanding. This may include pre-teaching vocabulary, revisiting prerequisite knowledge, simplified source extracts, visual timelines, concrete objects, chunked instructions, modelled examples and additional guided practice. Support is reviewed and reduced when pupils are ready for greater independence.

Pupils may demonstrate historical understanding through spoken explanations, supported recording, sequencing, annotation, practical responses or written work. Individual starting points and the level of support are considered when evaluating progress.

Pupils ready for further challenge deepen their explanations, compare evidence and interpretations, make connections and consider alternative explanations within the taught content. Challenge is planned through depth of thinking and understanding.

Respect diversity and school values

In line with the Woodlands ethos, history encourages respect for different experiences, beliefs and cultures. Children encounter individuals and communities from varied backgrounds, including people whose experiences have been less represented in familiar historical accounts. Resources are selected carefully to avoid stereotypes and provide accurate, age-appropriate context.

History contributes to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through curiosity about human experience, discussion of choices and consequences, collaborative enquiry and exploration of cultural heritage. Pupils consider fairness, rights, responsibilities and belonging while recognising that people in the past lived within different circumstances.

Relevant units develop understanding of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance. Children consider how participation and rights have changed over time and whose voices were included or excluded. These ideas are explored through the historical evidence and context being taught.

Sensitive content and enrichment

Topics involving conflict, persecution, discrimination or loss are taught with care for pupils' age, needs and experiences. Teachers establish respectful discussion and choose appropriate sources. Activities always preserve the dignity of the people studied.

Visits, visitors and access to artefacts enrich the curriculum and are planned inclusively. Staff follow school arrangements for safeguarding, educational visits, accessibility and safe handling of resources. Digital material is checked for historical accuracy and suitability before use.

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Assessment feedback and record keeping

Assessment checks the specific historical knowledge and understanding that pupils have been taught. Teachers use questioning, observation, discussion, retrieval, source-based activities and work samples to identify what is secure and what needs further teaching. End-of-unit responses to the enquiry question alongside reviewed circle maps helps to show how knowledge connects. Assessment is proportionate and informs the next teaching decisions.

Teacher assessments are recorded termly on INSIGHT against the agreed history objectives. Judgements draw on a range of evidence and reflect the support pupils need.

Feedback and marking

Feedback follows the whole-school Feedback, Marking and Assessment Policy. It is timely, accessible and linked to the Can I learning intention and success criteria. Teachers use live feedback, conferencing, whole-class feedback, written comments and supported self- or peer-assessment as appropriate. Children have time to act on feedback, and teachers use identified misconceptions to adjust later teaching.

Impact

Pupils develop increasingly secure and connected historical knowledge, enjoy learning about the past and are prepared for their next stage of education. Evidence should show that pupils can:

- Recall and explain important content from current and previous units, using appropriate vocabulary.
- Place learning within a chronological framework and connect local, British and world history.
- Use relevant evidence to support explanations and begin to understand how accounts are constructed.
- Discuss differences in human experiences with curiosity and respect.

For pupils with identified needs, impact includes progress from individual starting points, more secure essential knowledge and increasing access to subsequent learning.

Impact is evaluated through INSIGHT, representative work, pupil discussions, learning walks and curriculum checks. Leaders compare the planned, taught and remembered curriculum. Outcomes are checked over time.

Pupil discussions also explore how children use the golden threads to make accurate connections between periods and societies, supported by examples from their learning.

Leadership monitoring and review

The subject leader, Dani Megginson, works with teachers and senior leaders to maintain progression, support subject knowledge and evaluate history provision. Class teachers plan and teach the agreed curriculum, adapt provision, assess learning and respond to gaps. Senior leaders support appropriate time, resources and professional development. Governors consider the resulting evidence through submitted reports.