



# Godalming Junior School

**Subject: History**

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## *Our curriculum intent for History at GJS*

At Godalming Junior School we offer an exciting and comprehensive curriculum in History. Our curriculum is carefully designed to equip pupils to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, and develop perspective and judgement. By the end of Key Stage 2 students are expected to be able to demonstrate knowledge, application and understanding of the subjects they have learned during their journey that far.

In accordance with the History [national curriculum](#) we aim to,

- Provide learners with an understanding of the chronological narrative of how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world.
- Teach significant aspects of the history of the wider world including the nature of ancient civilisations; the expansion and dissolution of empires; characteristic features of past non-European societies; achievements and follies of mankind.
- Deploy a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as ‘empire’, ‘civilisation’, ‘parliament’ and ‘peasantry’.
- Instil an understanding of historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically-valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analysis.
- Explain methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed.
- Gain historical perspective by placing students growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history; and between short-term and long-term timescales.

We intend for our children to grow their understanding of the world that has existed and how it influences life today through internal and external enrichment activities and **10 enrichment weeks**.

We make every effort to teach a **language rich** history curriculum - it is an excellent subject for children to develop an extended vocabulary. We aim to explore specific subject related vocabulary as well as interpreting historic records which often contain words which are not commonly encountered in contemporary literature.

Underpinning our aims for our curriculum organisation is the use of [evidence based research](#) and [curriculum research reviews](#) to constantly check and enhance our provision in History.

## *How we implement the curriculum at GJS*

History lessons are taught to all year groups for around 2 hours once a week for either one or two academic terms each year. For consistency, the lessons are planned for the whole year group and delivered by the class teachers.

Children are encouraged to engage in enquiries to deepen their understanding of key historical events and themes, honing their research and analytical skills. Alongside the national curriculum, we have developed a **Progression of skills, knowledge and understanding framework**, which ensures that children have clear pathways of progression within their learning throughout their time at GJS. The children are regularly taught as to how their learning **Builds On** and **Leads To** (“**BOLTS**”) topics taught in previous and future year groups.

History units are taught chronologically to ensure children obtain an understanding of the order of historical events and make meaningful connections between them.

We use learning journeys in every lesson to demonstrate the knowledge and skills children will gain throughout the unit. Each lesson, children are presented with a compelling “big question” that ignites their curiosity and drives their exploration of historical concepts. These questions often reference change, cause, similarity, difference, and significance between events, fostering critical thinking and enquiry skills.

We provide opportunities for children to apply their historical knowledge and vocabulary to written work through cross-curricular writing tasks. These tasks not only reinforce historical concepts but also develop children's writing skills and their ability to communicate effectively.

Children learn a combination of **procedural** and **substantive** knowledge (the ‘what’ and the ‘how’) throughout their time at GJS and are given opportunities to collect, present and analyse data whilst scrutinising the validity of the data and reach conclusions.

To encourage and develop children's understanding of different vocabulary we have developed 'Never heard the word' sheets to familiarise and define newly encountered words. Teachers also model these words clearly to children and use multiple examples of how the words can be used so children understand the correct context of the vocabulary. Children are given the opportunity to go on a range of school trips including to Haslemere museum to learn about the Ancient Egyptians and to Godalming Museum where they are able to explore the history of the local area and carry out a local history study.

To immerse children in History, we offer themed experience days; these days allow children to engage in hands-on activities and interact with artefacts, providing a memorable learning experience. Experience days include Egyptian Day, Ancient Greek Day, Viking Day and WW2 day. That, coupled with the activities provided in various **10richment weeks** (for example learning about Alan Turing in **Heroes Week** or the role of Women in War in **Remembrance Week**) means that GJS children regularly engage with history in a tangible and meaningful way.

Teachers use a range of questioning and assessment tools to address misconceptions and deeper children's understanding. As well as this, teachers regularly assess each lesson through set tasks.

Children are taught how to self-assess and peer-assess effectively in order to further accelerate their and their peer's learning.

The Subject lead monitors planning to support and ensure all plans are up-to-date based on research. As well as this, the subject lead monitors children's work regularly through book looks to ensure there is clear progression.

### ***The impact of our History curriculum at GJS***

GJS **10richment weeks** have been very successful in teaching and extending children's understanding of the past. Children have commented on how they enjoyed varied learning opportunities in History - in particular Remembrance Week and Heroes Week are rated highly by the pupils.

**Learning Journeys** are successful in helping children understand their learning and its purpose. This document is on display, put in their books and revisited every lesson. As well as this, it is displayed on the classroom-working wall. Children have said they know what they are learning each week and how they have developed their conceptual understanding of the unit studied.

There is clear opportunity for progression; this is reflected in the children's books. When self-assessing and / or peer-assessing the vast majority of children regularly comment on how confident they are with their understanding and learning.

Children have commented on how school trips have helped develop their learning and they have been highly engaged. Whilst capturing pupil voice, children expressed their excitement for History and proudly share work and articulate their learning.

Through the assessed tasks and class discussions and debates, it is evident that children reach their potential in History: they speak eloquently, with evidence of their collected knowledge and using the vocabulary.

### **Action Plan Review 2023-24**

<b>Intent</b>	<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Actual Impact</b>
Further develop humanities curricular to ensure it is 'language rich' and aligned to the school ambition.	Ensure 'big questions' are used as WALTs for some sessions and encourage discussion and debate  Classes to display topic based words within their humanities displays	Time	All teachers are now using the big question in lessons to encourage inquisitive learners. Improvement in levels of language rich discussion and answers in classroom discussion and in books.
To continue to explore effective and purposeful writing opportunities within units across the school	Review curriculum to extend writing curriculum and utilise 'space and time' within humanities sessions to achieve this Align writing opportunities within humanities to coverage within the English curriculum	Time	Ongoing project - impact should be visible more broadly across the school during the next academic year.

### **Action Plan for 2024-25**

<b>Intent</b>	<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Projected Impact</b>
To continue to explore effective and purposeful writing opportunities within units across the school	Review curriculum to extend writing curriculum and utilise 'space and time' within humanities sessions to achieve this. Align writing opportunities within humanities to coverage within the English curriculum.	Time	Improvement in writing (in History and English)
Curriculum balance of substantive and disciplinary knowledge across the school.	Joint learning walks and monitoring to be carried out with subject lead and SLT to explore effective teaching	Time	Feedback to teachers will improve quality of teaching in History.