

History – Year 7

Curriculum Intent

In Year 7, students are introduced to History both as a story of the past and as a discipline. They learn how historians ask questions, use evidence, understand chronology, and construct judgements. Across the year, students study key periods that shaped Britain and the wider medieval world, developing an understanding of change, continuity, cause, consequence and significance, while building the foundations for future historical study.

What Students Will Study Across the Year

Autumn Term – What is History?

Students begin by exploring what history is and how we know about the past. Through enquiries such as the Tollund Man and archaeological discoveries on Dartmoor, they learn how historians use evidence, chronology and interpretation. These core skills are then applied to early case studies of invasion and settlement, including the Roman invasion of Britain and comparisons between the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings, introducing key ideas about power, conflict, and change over time that run throughout the course.

Autumn Term – The Medieval World: The Islamic ‘Golden Age’

Building on earlier work on invasion, settlement and power, students broaden their understanding of the medieval world beyond Britain. They study the rise of the Islamic Empire and explore why this period is often described as a ‘Golden Age’, focusing on Baghdad, trade along the Silk Roads, and developments in medicine, science and education. By comparing life in Medieval Baghdad and Medieval London, students develop a sense of global connections and contrasts, before considering why this Golden Age came to an end.

Spring Term – The Norman Conquest

Students then return to England to examine how power changed at home through conquest. The Norman Conquest of 1066 is studied as a key turning point, linking earlier ideas about invasion to the succession crisis, the Battle of Hastings and William’s claim to the throne. Students explore how William secured control of England and assess how Norman rule transformed law, language, the Church and everyday life, evaluating how far conquest brought disruption and change.

Spring Term – Power in Medieval England

Building directly on Norman rule, students explore how England was governed by the Normans and then the Plantagenets during the medieval period, and who *really* held power. Through case studies such as the Anarchy, Thomas Becket, Magna Carta and the Peasants’ Revolt, they examine ongoing tensions between monarchs, nobles, the Church and ordinary people. This unit develops students’ understanding of how power was challenged, limited and defended over time, preparing them to assess later monarchs.

Summer Term – The Tudors

Students finish the year by studying the Tudors, who came to power after centuries of conflict over authority. Building on their understanding of medieval power struggles, students examine how Tudor monarchs attempted to strengthen royal control, particularly through religion and government. They explore the Reformation under Henry VIII, the dissolution of the monasteries, and the contrasting reigns of Edward VI, Lady Jane Grey, Mary I and Elizabeth I.

Assessment and Progression

Students are assessed through extended written answers, source analysis and end-of-unit assessments that focus on explanation, analysis and judgement. By the end of Year 7, students will have a secure chronological overview and a strong foundation in historical skills, preparing them for more detailed and thematic studies in Year 8.