

An Introduction to History

Intent

It is the intention of the History Department at the Abbey School to ensure that pupils develop an understanding of the past that has both breadth and depth. The KS3 syllabus covers a time period of 2300 years and incorporates topics ranging from the Roman Empire to The Tudors to the struggle for Civil Rights in the USA. Key historical concepts such as change, continuity, significance, inference etc. are introduced and developed throughout KS3 as they are the cornerstones of pupils' development as historians. It is the intent of the department to challenge and build resilience, with lessons following a line of enquiry that piques pupils' curiosity and encourages them to analyse, evaluate and debate at all possible opportunities. The skills developed during KS3 are put to use at KS4 with the Edexcel exam board selected as it allows us to continue teaching a broad range of history in terms of chronology and geographical location. This is evident when it is considered that the Anglo-Saxons and Normans, The Cold War, Medicine through time and Weimar and Nazi Germany are all studied. Furthermore, these topics are all covered briefly at KS3, ensuring that pupils have a basic knowledge upon which they can build and which facilitates more detailed study during KS4. The conceptual skills developed at KS3 are built upon and honed during KS4 to ensure pupils are thoroughly prepared for their public examinations, with pupils having been assessed using similar question stems and concepts from the beginning of the GCSE. The same reasoning has been applied to course selection at KS5, with the Edexcel GCSE developing skills in evaluation of interpretation and source analysis which are fundamental aspects of the Edexcel A level we have chosen. Germany 1918-1989 has been selected alongside Fascist Italy as the units mutually support each other, with comparisons drawn between two Fascist dictators enhancing the understanding of both. Furthermore, both allow a narrow time period to be studied in significant depth. The British Empire has been selected as a Year 13 unit because it allows pupils to re-engage with a more topographically and chronologically diverse topic having been more narrowly focussed on 20th century Europe in Year 12. Finally, The Germany and Empire units allow further development of the spiral curriculum, adding further depth to pupils' understanding of these topics already studied at KS4 and KS3 respectively.

Implementation

The following ensure effective delivery of the curriculum in line with the Intent delineated above:

- At KS3 each term covers a period/era/topic of history. This ensures that a significant range covered by the end of KS3.
- Lessons at KS4 go on a topic by topic basis as follows: Medicine through Time; Anglo-Saxons and Normans; Weimar and Nazi Germany; and then Superpower Relations Year 11 used to review all topics and exam skills relevant to each specific paper.
- Knowledge organisers facilitate learning as basic overviews are provided of each term's topic and also allow pupils who have missed any learning to be able to participate in all aspects of the lesson
- At both KS3 and 4 there are termly assessments for both substantive knowledge and written examination skills, the latter of which always utilise the question stems of the relevant examination papers.
- Each written assessment is followed by a PIT lesson during which students respond to the in depth written feedback of their teacher and use the developmental points to re-write part/all of their responses. The fact that two members of the department are/have been history examiners for Edexcel ensures quality of feedback and developmental points.
- Termly knowledge quizzes and challenging homework are used to support the learning of each term's topic at KS3.
- At KS4 homework is primarily, revision for assessments, examination style questions and the development of revision resources.
- All lessons are differentiated with extension work to challenge the most able and scaffolding to support those of a lower ability or with a specific need.

Impact

As a result of the intent and implementation highlighted above we improve outcomes for all pupils regardless of background or need as well as ensuring they are more aware of the historical context of the society in which we live.

The following ensure this aim is achieved:

- Termly assessments all of which are tracked on Pupil Progress with clear QLA allow staff to track attainment and identify trends over time, as well as identifying areas of weakness or any pupils who require extra support.
- The diverse range of historical topics, many of which are challenging and contentious will enhance our pupils' ability to become global citizens and increase their exposure to different cultures and perspectives.
- The frequent use of debate and discussion about relative significance, change and continuity, cause and effect etc. builds our pupils' resilience and ensures that they are ready and confident to successfully embark upon their lives outside of the school setting.
- A focus on key terms, spelling and grammar supports pupils' literacy and has a cross-curricular impact.
- Greater awareness of British values, SMSC and protected characteristics due to these elements being highlighted/referred to where relevant in the units of work across all key stages.