

History

Extended Curriculum Overview 2026-27

At Cleaswell Hill, chronological age determines the History experiences pupils encounter. Individual starting points determine the level of cognitive demand, communication, support, specialist approaches and independence through which pupils access those experiences. History is a knowledge-rich subject, so teachers carefully identify and revisit the essential knowledge that makes each period and enquiry meaningful. This enables Extended Pathway pupils to encounter the same broad, age-respectful curriculum while reducing barriers created by memory, language and background knowledge and building the historical understanding needed for meaningful progress.

Intent

Our History curriculum is ambitious, age-respectful and designed to give every pupil meaningful access to the past. Pupils build secure knowledge of people, events, places and periods while learning how historians ask questions, use evidence and construct accounts. The curriculum develops chronological understanding, historical vocabulary, communication, curiosity, reasoning and an increasingly connected understanding of local, British and world history.

History can place significant demands on memory, language and background knowledge. Adaptation therefore reduces unnecessary literacy and memory load without reducing the ambition or subject identity of History. Teachers prioritise the essential knowledge pupils need for each enquiry, make it meaningful through rich and concrete encounters with the past, and revisit it so that pupils can use what they know rather than complete disconnected activities.

Implementation

A three-year thematic spine sets out the age-related History experiences taught from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 4. Across these themes, pupils repeatedly develop secure chronological knowledge, topic and period knowledge, recurring substantive concepts and disciplinary knowledge about evidence, historical enquiry and interpretations.

Progression is built through repeated encounters with meaningful historical examples. Teachers establish the context and core knowledge needed before expecting pupils to make historical judgements. Visual timelines, photographs, artefacts, maps, stories, visits, oral rehearsal, symbols/AAC, explicit vocabulary teaching and retrieval are used where appropriate to make knowledge accessible and memorable. The disciplinary threads are taught through the history itself: chronology, similarity and difference, change and continuity, cause and consequence, significance, evidence and interpretations.

Impact

Pupils develop richer and more connected knowledge of the past from their individual starting points. They increasingly locate learning within chronological frameworks, remember and connect important people, events and concepts, use sources purposefully, explain historical relationships and communicate supported conclusions. Over time, pupils require less prompting and apply prior historical knowledge more independently in new topics, local-history experiences and relevant community or vocational contexts.

What pupils learn

The curriculum distinguishes the substantive knowledge pupils need about the past from the disciplinary knowledge through which they learn to think historically. These are taught together: pupils need secure knowledge of a time and place in order to ask meaningful questions, use evidence and construct historical accounts.

Substantive knowledge - what pupils know	Historical practice - what pupils learn to do
Chronology and period knowledge: past and present; sequence; dates and periods; broad	Place people and events within chronological frameworks; use increasingly precise time

chronological frameworks; the characteristic features of the times and places studied.	language; establish narratives and make connections across periods.
People, events, places and context: the important people, events, developments, beliefs, values and conditions needed to understand each topic.	Use secure contextual knowledge to ask and answer historically valid questions rather than make unsupported guesses or everyday judgements.
Recurring terms, concepts and phenomena: for example power, monarchy, church and religion, conflict, settlement, protest, industry, crime and punishment, medicine and exploration, encountered through specific historical contexts.	Identify and explain similarity and difference, change and continuity, cause and consequence, significance, connections and trends using meaningful examples.
Sources, evidence and interpretations: different forms of evidence; what sources can reveal; how historians use evidence; and how accounts of the past can differ.	Use sources to find and infer information, select and connect evidence, compare accounts and interpretations, and communicate increasingly well-supported historical conclusions.

Age-related curriculum experiences: three-year thematic spine

The three-year spine sets the experiences pupils encounter by chronological age. Within each theme, pupils work at the appropriate point on the cognitive progression below, so that the context remains age-respectful while substantive knowledge, disciplinary knowledge, communication and independence are built from individual starting points.

Stage 1 - Themes and experiences aligned with Key Stage 1			
Term	2026 - 2027	2027 - 2028	2028 - 2029
Autumn	The Gunpowder Plot	The Great Fire of London	War and Remembrance
Spring	Family - Past & present Belsay/ Beamish	King and Queens	Significant Explorers (Columbus)
Summer	Grace Darling - Discovery museum	Holidays - Past and present Beach	The history of electricity - Cragside

Stage 2 - Themes and experiences aligned with Key Stage 2			
Term	2026 - 2027	2027 - 2028	2028 - 2029
Autumn	Bronze Age Britain	Early Farming	World War I
Spring	Roman Empire - Caesar/ Boudicca Segedunum	Ancient Greeks	The Tudors
Summer	Anglo-Saxon settlement - Jarrow Hall	The Making of America: 1789-1900	Vikings - Lindisfarne

Stage 3 - Themes and experiences aligned with Key Stage 3			
Term	2026 - 2027	2027 - 2028	2028 - 2029
Autumn	Medieval Britain - What was society like? A Castle	The Stuarts - Civil war and restoration	World War 2 - Discovery museum
Spring	Russia - from the Tsars to the Communist rule	Factories and mines 1815 - 1851	Church - importance in British History?
Summer	How has popular protest changed the world? Emily WD - Morpeth	18th Century Crime and Punishment - Hexham Gaol	People who changed the world - A case study

Stage 4 - Themes and experiences aligned with Key Stage 4			
Term	2026 - 2027	2027 - 2028	2028 - 2029
Autumn	The Cold War	The Elizabethans: 1580-1603	WW2 - The British Home Front

Spring	Industrial Revolution	Living Under Nazi Rule: 1933-1945	The Roaring Twenties and the New Deal
Summer	Medicine through the ages	Crime and Punishment review	Holy Island case study focus on Religion

Cognitive progression: building historical knowledge and thinking from individual starting points

Progression is not tied to chronological age or a fixed pathway. It shows how pupils can develop increasingly secure and complex historical knowledge from their individual starting points. A pupil may be at different points in different aspects of History. The progression threads below are not generic skills taught in isolation: they represent disciplinary knowledge that is developed through secure substantive knowledge of specific periods and enquiries. Teaching moves learning forward through stronger recall, richer connections, more purposeful use of evidence, more precise historical language and increasing independence.

Chronology and connected knowledge - Progression moves from recognising past/present distinctions towards secure chronological frameworks, period knowledge and connected historical narratives.						
Skill thread	Explore & respond	Choose & communicate	Follow & apply	Explain, connect & reason	Enquire, justify & generalise	Assessment Framework anchor(s)
Past, present & time language	Attend to or respond to familiar past/present experiences, photographs, objects or stories.	Choose or match old/new, past/present or before/after; use or respond to simple time words.	Use common words and phrases relating to the passing of time and identify that events happened in the past.	Use increasingly precise historical terms, dates and period language to explain when events happened and how periods relate.	Use chronological language flexibly and accurately when reasoning across unfamiliar topics and long periods of time.	Prerequisite: • Talks about present and past events in own/family life KS1: Shows an awareness of the past using common words and phrases relating to time.
Sequence & chronological framework	Experience a simple sequence of two familiar events or stages.	Order two or three pictures, objects or events with support.	Order events chronologically and place studied people/events within a simple framework.	Sequence events across and within periods; use dates/centuries to establish clear chronological relationships.	Construct and use broader chronological frameworks to orient new learning and explain overlaps, duration and sequence.	Prerequisite: • Talks about similarities, differences, patterns and change KS1: Can order events chronologically. KS2: Can sequence events and make comparisons to other topics studied.

Period knowledge & narratives	Notice or communicate a familiar feature of a past time, person or event.	Identify a taught person, place, object or feature from a period.	Recall key people, events and features and retell a simple historical sequence or story.	Establish clear narratives within and across periods, including important developments and the broader features of the time/place.	Use secure period knowledge to explain complex developments and situate detailed enquiries within broader historical narratives.	KS1: Ask and answer questions about the past and know key features of events. KS2: Can establish clear narratives within and across periods studied.
Connections, trends & recurring concepts	Respond to a simple repeated idea such as ruler, home, work, travel, war or change.	Match or compare a familiar concept across two examples.	Identify a simple connection, contrast or change between taught examples.	Recognise connections, contrasts and trends over time and use recurring concepts meaningfully in different contexts.	Trace longer-term developments and explain how recurring concepts or phenomena change meaning across different historical settings.	Prerequisite: • Talks about similarities, differences, patterns and change KS2: Can recognise connections, contrasts and trends over periods of time.

Historical enquiry and evidence - Progression moves from curiosity and supported source use towards historically valid enquiry and evidence-supported accounts.

Skill thread	Explore & respond	Choose & communicate	Follow & apply	Explain, connect & reason	Enquire, justify & generalise	Assessment Framework anchor(s)
Ask & answer historical questions	Show curiosity about a person, object, picture or story from the past.	Choose between simple questions or indicate what they want to find out.	Ask and answer simple questions using taught knowledge and accessible sources.	Address and sometimes devise historically valid questions about a specific period or problem.	Frame increasingly precise historical enquiries and identify the knowledge and evidence needed to answer them meaningfully.	Prerequisite: • Is curious about people and shows interest in stories KS1: Can ask and answer questions about the past. KS2: Can address and sometimes devise historically valid questions.
Recognise & use sources	Attend to or explore an object, photograph, picture, recording or account linked to the past.	Choose or match a source to a familiar person, event or question.	Use pictures, artefacts, stories and accounts to find out about the past; recognise different source types.	Use a range of sources to investigate questions and understand that knowledge of the past is constructed from evidence.	Select sources purposefully for a particular enquiry and explain how different bodies of evidence can contribute to historical claims.	KS1: Can use pictures and artifacts to find out about the past; knows there are different types of evidence and sources. KS2: Understands how knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.

Retrieve & infer	Notice a concrete feature of an object, image or account.	Identify or communicate one thing a source shows.	Retrieve explicit information and make a simple inference using source detail and taught context.	Combine source detail with contextual knowledge to make and explain reasonable inferences.	Make nuanced inferences by integrating source content, context and relevant knowledge, distinguishing what evidence supports from what remains uncertain.	KS1: Chooses and uses parts of stories and other sources to show knowledge and understanding. KS2: Constructs informed responses by selecting relevant historical information.
Evaluate & corroborate evidence	Notice that two pictures, objects or accounts may be different.	Choose whether two sources show the same or different information.	Compare simple sources and identify where they agree, differ or provide different information.	Explain how source type, creator, context and purpose affect what can be learned; compare evidence without reducing evaluation to 'spotting bias'.	Corroborate and weigh evidence in relation to a specific historical question, explaining the contribution and limitations of different sources.	KS2: Understands how knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.
Construct evidence-supported accounts	Communicate a simple response to a past event or source.	Select a picture, object, word or symbol to support a simple historical statement.	Use taught facts or source details to give a simple supported answer.	Select and organise relevant historical information to construct an informed response.	Construct coherent historical claims or accounts in which evidence is selected because it is relevant to the question and situated within secure contextual knowledge.	KS2: Can construct informed responses by selecting and organising relevant historical information.

Historical concepts - Progression moves from noticing simple relationships in the past towards increasingly secure explanations of similarity, change, causation and significance.

Skill thread	Explore & respond	Choose & communicate	Follow & apply	Explain, connect & reason	Enquire, justify & generalise	Assessment Framework anchor(s)
Similarity & difference	Notice or respond to a simple same/different contrast between familiar lives, objects or experiences.	Match or choose a similarity or difference between two examples.	Identify similarities and differences between ways of life, people, events or periods studied.	Explain similarities and differences using secure contextual knowledge and relevant historical vocabulary.	Compare societies, experiences or developments across contexts and explain why similarities and differences matter to the enquiry.	Prerequisite: • Talks about similarities and differences KS1: Can identify similarities / differences between periods. KS2: Notes connections and contrasts over time.

Change & continuity	Respond to something that has changed or stayed the same in a familiar example.	Choose what is different or the same between 'then' and 'now'.	Describe a simple change or continuity across a taught sequence.	Explain patterns of change and continuity across a period, including pace, extent or turning points where appropriate.	Analyse longer-term change and continuity, recognising that different aspects of life may change at different rates and in different ways.	Prerequisite: • Talks about patterns and change KS1: Learns about changes within living memory. KS2: Recognises trends over periods of time.
Cause & consequence	Experience or respond to a simple because/what happened next relationship in a historical story.	Choose a simple reason or result from supported alternatives.	Identify one or more reasons why an event happened or what changed as a result.	Explain multiple causes or consequences and make connections between them, distinguishing short- and longer-term factors where appropriate.	Construct and justify explanations that weigh the relative importance and interaction of causes or consequences within a secure context.	KS2: Addresses historically valid questions about change and cause.
Significance	Show recognition or interest when a person, place or event is presented as important.	Choose why a familiar person/event is remembered from simple supported options.	Give a simple reason why a person, event or development is historically important.	Explain that historical significance is attributed and may depend on impact, remembrance, perspective or later developments.	Evaluate and justify significance in relation to a defined historical question, recognising that judgements can vary across time and between groups.	KS1: Learns about significant historical events, people and places. KS2: Uses historically valid questions about significance; no separate

Interpretations and communication - Progression moves from recognising representations of the past towards understanding how historical accounts are constructed and communicating justified conclusions.

Skill thread	Explore & respond	Choose & communicate	Follow & apply	Explain, connect & reason	Enquire, justify & generalise	Assessment Framework anchor(s)
Past & representations	Respond to a photograph, story, object, picture, film clip or reconstruction about the past.	Recognise that a picture, story or reconstruction is showing or telling us something about the past.	Distinguish between the past itself and a story, picture, account or representation of it.	Explain that representations select and organise information about the past for particular purposes or audiences.	Analyse how different forms of representation shape accounts of the past and relate them to the evidence and questions from which they were constructed.	KS1: Understands some ways in which we find out about the past and identifies different ways it is represented.
Different accounts & interpretations	Notice that two accounts or pictures of the same event may look or sound different.	Choose a simple difference between two accounts.	Identify that there can be different versions or accounts of the past.	Compare interpretations and explain differences using knowledge of emphasis, evidence, questions, perspective or context.	Evaluate contrasting interpretations as reasoned historical constructions rather than treating difference as proof that one account is simply 'biased' or untrustworthy.	KS2: Understands that there may be different versions of the past and reasons for this.

Historians & historical claims	Recognise that people find out and tell us about the past.	Match familiar roles or activities to finding out about history, such as museums, archives or historians.	Understand that historians use different kinds of evidence to answer questions about the past.	Explain that historians select, connect and interpret evidence within established forms of historical enquiry.	Understand that historical claims and arguments are constructed through disciplined enquiry and can change when questions, evidence or approaches change.	KS1/2: Knowledge of the past is constructed from sources.
Historical vocabulary	Respond to familiar time words, names or topic vocabulary.	Use or select simple historical words linked to the topic.	Use a widening vocabulary of everyday historical terms and taught topic words.	Use period-specific and conceptual vocabulary accurately, including dates, centuries and relevant substantive concepts.	Select precise historical language to communicate complex ideas and distinguish meanings that vary across periods and contexts.	KS1: Uses a wide vocabulary of common historical terms. KS2: Develops appropriate use of historical terms, including B.C., A.D. and century.
Select & organise information	Choose a relevant picture, object, word or symbol from a small set.	Group or sequence familiar information about a topic.	Select relevant details from taught material to answer a simple question or retell a sequence.	Organise relevant historical information into a clear narrative or explanation.	Select, prioritise and structure information according to the demands of an enquiry, distinguishing relevant evidence from background detail.	KS1: Chooses and uses parts of stories and other sources. KS2: Constructs informed responses by selecting and organising relevant historical information.
Communicate & justify conclusions	Communicate a preference, recognition or simple fact about the past through speech, AAC, gesture, symbol, object or mark-making.	Give a simple supported historical response using an accessible communication method.	Give a simple explanation or answer using taught facts, vocabulary or source details.	Communicate a structured historical account or explanation and support points with relevant knowledge or evidence.	Construct and justify a coherent conclusion that directly answers the enquiry and draws appropriately on substantive and disciplinary knowledge.	KS1: Asks and answers questions using stories and sources. KS2: Constructs informed responses.

SMSC and Fundamental British Values through History

SMSC and Fundamental British Values are developed naturally through encounters with different people, societies, beliefs, institutions and experiences across time. History gives pupils meaningful opportunities to consider how communities have changed, how rights and laws have developed, how people have exercised power and agency, and why the past can be interpreted in different ways.

SMSC / FBV area	What History develops	Expected History activities and applications
Spiritual	Curiosity and fascination about human experience; reflection on beliefs, values, identity and how people understood their world.	Encounter stories, objects, places and beliefs from different periods; explore why people acted as they did; reflect on how learning about the past changes understanding of self and others.
Moral	Understanding choices, consequences, justice and ethical questions in historical context; recognising that values and moral frameworks can change over time.	Explore decisions and consequences in topics such as war, protest, crime and punishment; distinguish explanation from approval; discuss moral questions while avoiding simplistic present-day judgement of the past.
Social	Understanding how people lived together, organised societies, cooperated, experienced conflict and participated in communities and institutions.	Compare roles and relationships in past societies; explore communities, work, class, protest and public institutions; collaborate in historical enquiry, visits and discussion.
Cultural	Knowledge of the diverse cultural, religious and social influences that have shaped local, British and world history and heritage.	Study local heritage and a range of British and world contexts; encounter different traditions, beliefs and experiences; use museums, historic sites and community resources to broaden cultural understanding.
Democracy	Understanding how power, representation, protest and participation have developed and how democratic institutions have been shaped over time.	Explore monarchy, parliament, civil war, popular protest, suffrage and changing political participation; consider whose voices were heard, excluded or contested in different periods.
Rule of Law	Understanding the historical development of law, justice, rights, responsibilities and public institutions.	Use topics such as crime and punishment, monarchy, government and social change to explore why laws exist, how they have changed and how legal institutions affect people's lives.
Individual Liberty	Understanding how freedoms, rights, choices and constraints have varied between people and across time.	Compare opportunities and restrictions in different societies; explore struggles for rights and freedoms; consider how gender, status, belief, class or political power shaped individual experience.

Mutual Respect & Tolerance	Respectful engagement with people whose beliefs, cultures, experiences and viewpoints differ from their own.	Study diverse societies and faiths; compare perspectives and interpretations respectfully; discuss sensitive or contested history using evidence and appropriate language; recognise the complexity of past experiences.
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Preparation for Adulthood through History

History supports Preparation for Adulthood through communication, research, sequencing, critical use of information, respectful discussion, community participation and understanding the institutions and heritage that shape modern life. These links are most meaningful when the historical learning remains clear and the activity also has an authentic adult-life, community or vocational purpose.

PfA outcome	What History develops	Expected History activities and applications
Employment	Communication, research, information handling, sequencing, teamwork, digital recording, presenting to an audience and using evidence to support a conclusion. History also introduces pupils to heritage, museum, archive, tourism and event-based roles.	Research and present a local-history enquiry; handle and catalogue sources; create displays or accessible guides; take purposeful roles during museum or heritage visits. Careers links may include museum assistant, heritage site guide, tourism assistant, drama/re-enactment support, event assistant, archival support worker and historical-records data entry.
Independent living	Organisation, following sequences, remembering key information, making choices, asking questions, accessing community venues and using information to orient themselves in time and place.	Use personal and family timelines; follow visit itineraries and routines; independently access appropriate information in museums, visitor centres or historic sites; make choices about exhibitions and communicate questions or preferences.
Health	Understanding that health, medicine, welfare and public responses to illness have changed over time, alongside safe and emotionally regulated participation in visits and sensitive historical learning.	Use topics such as Medicine through the ages to compare historical approaches with modern services; practise safe behaviour in community visits; use agreed strategies and communication to engage with challenging material and ask for support when needed.
Community inclusion	A stronger sense of local identity, heritage, remembrance, public institutions and the diverse people and experiences that have shaped communities.	Visit local and regional heritage sites such as Belsay, Beamish, Craggside, Segedunum, Jarrow Hall, Lindisfarne/Holy Island, Hexham Gaol and museums where appropriate; contribute to remembrance or local-history activities; share learning with familiar audiences.

Progression, accreditation and pathways: Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5

From Key Stage 4 onwards, pupils continue to develop historical knowledge, chronological understanding, enquiry skills and independence at a level matched to their individual starting point, communication needs, interests and intended destination. Progress is recognised through the school curriculum and linked assessment, supported by pupil discussion, source work, timelines, enquiry outcomes and other evidence of learning over time.

Where external accreditation becomes appropriate, the qualification is selected because it reflects the pupil's attainment and supports their next stage rather than determining the History curriculum. Careers learning introduces pupils to further study, vocational and technical routes, apprenticeships, supported internships and employment linked to heritage, museums, archives, tourism, events and historical records.

The supplied curriculum materials do not identify a current subject-specific History qualification at Cleaswell Hill. The qualification levels below therefore provide a progression guide rather than a statement of the school's current accredited History offer.

Progression point	Expected History learning	How progress is recognised
Progression point	Expected History learning	Recognition / possible next step
Pre-Entry Foundation /	Responds to people, objects, photographs, stories and simple past/present contrasts; recognises familiar people or events from the past; begins to notice sequence, change and similarity; communicates simple historical responses through speech, AAC, symbols, objects, gesture or supported recording.	Progress recognised through prerequisite History statements, photographs/video, practical sorting and sequencing, pupil communication and curriculum assessment evidence. Foundation or personalised accreditation could be considered where appropriate.
Entry Level 1	Participates in structured historical learning; identifies familiar people, events and objects from the past; uses simple time language; sequences a small number of events; retrieves simple information from pictures, artefacts or accounts and communicates a taught historical fact or preference.	Curriculum and Earwig-linked evidence. Entry Level 1 History, humanities or relevant vocational units could be considered where an appropriate qualification is available.
Entry Level 2	Uses familiar historical vocabulary with increasing confidence; sequences events and places them within a simple chronological framework; identifies similarities, differences and change; asks and answers simple historical questions; uses sources to find information and begins to explain simple causes, consequences or significance.	Curriculum assessment, source work, timelines, supported enquiries and recorded pupil responses. Entry Level 2 History, humanities or relevant vocational accreditation could support progression where appropriate.

Entry Level 3	Establishes clearer historical narratives; makes connections between people, events and periods; selects relevant information from sources; recognises that accounts of the past can differ; explains change, cause, consequence and significance with growing independence and supports conclusions with taught knowledge or evidence.	Increasingly sustained enquiry and curriculum evidence. Entry Level 3 History, humanities or relevant vocational accreditation could be considered in relation to the pupil's next steps.
Level 1	Develops secure chronological and period knowledge; uses historical terms accurately; investigates historical questions; selects and organises relevant information; compares sources and interpretations; explains connections, contrasts, causes and consequences and constructs increasingly sustained evidence-supported accounts.	Level 1 humanities or relevant vocational/technical qualification where appropriate. GCSE History grades 1–3 are Level 1 qualifications. Progression may include further study, vocational learning, community-based learning or heritage-related work experience.
Level 2	Works with greater independence to investigate historical questions; applies secure contextual knowledge when interpreting sources; analyses change, continuity, cause, consequence and significance; compares interpretations; selects and evaluates evidence and constructs coherent, well-supported historical explanations and judgements.	GCSE History grades 4–9 are Level 2 qualifications. Other Level 2 humanities or relevant vocational/technical qualifications could be considered where appropriate. This can support progression towards further education and more specialised study.
Post-16 / destination pathway	Builds on individual strengths in historical enquiry, communication, research and interpretation through purposeful study, community learning, heritage experiences, vocational opportunities and Preparation for Adulthood. Pupils increasingly apply historical knowledge and research skills in authentic contexts.	Personalised next-step planning through Preparation for Adulthood and careers guidance. Possible future contexts identified in the careers materials include museums, heritage sites, tourism, events, archives, historical-records work and other community or cultural settings.

Personalised progression: pupils do not need to move through these levels at the same rate or in a fixed sequence. History learning is matched to each pupil's attainment, communication, independence, interests, next steps and intended destination. Pupils who are not working towards an external qualification continue to make and evidence meaningful progress through increasingly secure historical knowledge, stronger chronological understanding, richer connections between periods, more purposeful use of evidence, greater independence in enquiry and clearer communication of historical understanding.