

Onslow Infant School

History Knowledge & Skills

Reception—Year 2

Curriculum Intent

At Onslow Infant School, history inspires children's curiosity and confidence, grounded in our core values of friendship, respect, and responsibility. Our carefully sequenced curriculum develops essential historical knowledge and enquiry skills through engaging, enquiry-based learning. We connect local, national, and global contexts to build children's chronological awareness, understanding of cause and effect, and critical thinking. Progression is carefully planned from EYFS to Key Stage 1, ensuring children master foundational concepts before moving on. History lessons foster empathy and respect for diversity, encouraging children to appreciate different perspectives and cultures. This approach supports children's personal development by promoting independent thinking, curiosity, and a sense of responsibility. By linking new knowledge to prior learning, we help pupils build increasingly complex mental models that deepen their understanding of the past. Ultimately, our history curriculum nurtures confident, reflective learners who appreciate their place in the wider human story and are well prepared for future learning.

Curriculum Implementation

We prioritise historical enquiry by posing questions and problems that children investigate using their developing knowledge and skills. This enquiry-led approach supports cognitive development and fosters critical thinking, enabling children to make connections between past and present. Each lesson begins with revisiting prior learning, reinforcing knowledge retention and helping children build a coherent understanding over time.

Our curriculum is aspirational, designed to nurture confident, curious historians who enjoy learning about the past and appreciate its relevance to their lives today. It is tailored to be accessible for all pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, through differentiated tasks, scaffolding, modelling, and clear explanations. This ensures that every child can engage meaningfully with history, reflecting our commitment to inclusion and the celebration of diversity within our school community.

Curriculum Impact

By the end of KS1, children have developed a secure chronological understanding starting from personal histories to national and global events. Our enquiry-based curriculum helps children develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills, preparing them with essential skills for KS2.

This vision aligns with our school's improvement priorities by supporting subject leaders in refining curriculum content and sequences, thus enhancing teaching quality and pupil outcomes in History and across the curriculum.

Assessment is based on observation, pupil voice and evidence in books. We encourage the children to talk - in pairs, small groups or through class discussion, to share ideas and reflections. Summative and formative assessments are recorded on Tapestry, often with photographs of children's products in different stages of the design and making process. Data is analysed and acted upon by subject leaders and staff to ensure progress and development for all. Monitoring includes work scrutiny, learning walks and pupil interviews.

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**In curriculum design, knowledge and skills are not interchangeable in the sense that they are directly synonymous, but rather interconnected and interdependent. Knowledge serves as the foundation for developing skills, while skills require knowledge*

Reception

Content	Pupils will learn		Retrieval (Last lesson, unit, year)	Key Vocabulary
	Knowledge	Skills		
How have I changed since I was a baby?	• Know the subject character 'History Hedgehog • That humans change over time. • How they have grown and changed in their life so far.	• To talk about events in their own life using the past tense.	*Pre-unit questioning: what do they know already?*	*History, past, change*
Bonfire night	• That bonfire night celebrates something that happened a long time ago before they were born. • Bonfire night is celebrated every year.	• Talk about their own experiences.	Who is History Hedgehog?	*celebration, bonfire night*
What is the past?	• That past events are anything that has happened before now. • Events that happened this morning, yesterday, last week are all in the past.	• Use vocabulary to describe the passing of time: yesterday, last week, last month, last year.	Changes since I was a baby. What is bonfire night?	*Yesterday, last week, last month, last year.*
What was your favourite memory of being in Reception?	• A memory is something that happened to me in the past.	• To recall and discuss events in their own living memory in greater detail.	What is the past?	*memory*

Reception skills and knowledge developed through continuous provision across the year:

- Reading stories and retelling events in the correct order, using language such as first, next, then. Traditional stories set in different eras.
- Sharing past events from home on Tapestry and describing them to the class; using past tense.
- Retrieval of past learning; and understanding of things that have already happened.
- Using high quality small world toys e.g. to retell stories in the correct order, to retell events that have happened in their lives, such as going on holiday or visiting a farm.
- Role play opportunities – re-enacting real-life events, such as going to the supermarket, cooking food at home.
- Daily visual timetable – used to understand sequencing of time and events.
- Using visuals to talk about their daily and weekly routines.
- Using sand timers and stopwatches to notice the passing of time e.g. how many things can you do in 1 minute.
- Exploring and discussing images from the past using computers or iPads to research.
- Drawing, writing and painting about events that they have experienced.
- Talking about transition and what they are looking forward to in Year 1 (future).
- Exploring their own interests which have historical links e.g. dinosaur play.
- Visiting the library weekly and taking out books about history.
- Reading area – stories and non-fiction about historical events. Previously read books kept out for recapping.
- Learning days of the week and months of the year.
- Home corner – artifacts from homes long ago e.g. telephones, old technology.
- Bring in and display their baby photos – discussing how they have changed since they were a baby.
- Songs, rhymes and poems related to historical events like 'Remember, remember the 5th November'.
- Using senses to explore and describe the world around them (including during Big Talk lessons).
- Visits from people from other cultures to talk about past events.
- Researching facts about the historical events using iPads and computers
- Woodland school lessons – observing how the world around us changes over time.
- Noticing changes over time e.g. seasons, plants growing, and weather.

Year 1 historical skills and knowledge developed through continuous provision across the year:
Understanding the past • Using daily routines, visual timetables and calendars to develop an understanding of past, present and future. • Opportunities to sequence familiar events and experiences in chronological order. • Using vocabulary such as past, present, old, new, before, after, then and now during play and discussion. • Sharing photographs, objects and stories to encourage children to talk about events from the past. • Opportunities to discuss changes within children's own lives and experiences. • Sequencing pictures, stories and events to develop an understanding of chronology. • Using classroom and school events to discuss how things change over time.
Using historical sources • Continuous access to old and modern objects, photographs and images for children to observe and compare. • History investigation tuff trays containing artefacts, magnifying glasses, photographs, question prompts and clipboards. • Sorting objects and images into old and new and explaining choices. • Comparing toys, homes, clothing, transport and everyday objects from the past and present. • Opportunities to handle replica artefacts and discuss what they may have been used for. • • Drawing, labelling and creating models of objects from the past. • Encouraging children to notice similarities and differences between past and present. • Encouraging children to ask questions about artefacts and photographs. • Encouraging children to use evidence to explain their ideas during play and discussion.
Changes within living memory • Exploring changes in toys, homes, schools, transport, technology and everyday life. • Role-play opportunities linked to homes, shops and schools from the past. • Comparing familiar objects from the past and present. • Using family photographs and stories, where appropriate, to explore change over time.
Significant people and events • Access to books, photographs and information about significant people from the past. • Using stories and role play to explore the lives and achievements of significant individuals. • Opportunities to sequence key events from a person's life or a historical event. • Exploring significant historical events and people through stories and dress up days.
Historical enquiry and curiosity • Providing opportunities for children to ask and answer simple questions about the past. • Encouraging the use of questions such as: What is it? Who used it? What was it used for? Is it old or new? How do we know? • Using mystery objects and photographs to encourage observation, discussion and prediction. • Opportunities to record historical ideas through drawings, labels, simple sentences and timelines. • Encouraging children to share and explain their ideas using historical vocabulary. • Using fiction and non-fiction texts to develop curiosity about people, places and events from the past. • Supporting children to make simple connections between their own lives and the lives of people in the past.

Year 1: Changes within living memory

Content	Pupils will learn		Retrieval (Last lesson, unit, year)	Key Vocabulary
	Knowledge	**Skills**		
How have bikes, planes and cars changed over time (see *Global events*)	• That my parents' and grandparents may have travelled in vehicles that look different to the vehicles we use today.	• To question grandparents about what transport was like when they were 6 years old. • Make connections and draw contrasts.	How have you changed since you were a baby?	*Old, modern,*
What was your favourite memory of being in Year 1?	• That I continue to change.	• To question their family about what their life was like when they were 6 years old.	What was your favourite memory of being in Reception?	

Year 2: Changes within living memory

Content	Pupils will learn		Retrieval (Last lesson, unit, year)	Key Vocabulary
	Knowledge	**Skills**		
Changes to Onslow school.	• Onslow Infant School has changed since it opened over 50 years ago.	• Learn about the school from someone who was here in the past.	What was your favourite memory of Onslow?	*Similarities, differences*

Year 1: Lives of significant individuals in the past who have contributed to national and international achievements

Content	Pupils will learn		Retrieval (Last lesson, unit, year)	Key Vocabulary
	Knowledge	Skills		
Who were the Wright brothers and what did they achieve? (see global events)	• That the Wright brothers invented, built and flew the world's first successful aeroplane.	• Identify reasons how this invention changed the world we live in today. • Use stories, photographs and videos to understand key features of events.	Name a person you've heard of that that lived in the past? How have bicycles changed over time?	*Invented, invention*
Who was William the Conqueror? (see national events)	• That William the Conqueror was the King of England in 1066. • That William the Conqueror lead and fought in the Battle of Hastings. • That William the Conqueror built lots of castles in England including Arundel Castle.	• Use the past tense to discuss the life of William the Conqueror.	What did the Wright Brothers invent?	*King, William the conqueror, 1066*

Year 2: Lives of significant individuals in the past who have contributed to national and international achievements

Content	Pupils will learn		Retrieval (Last lesson, unit, year)	Key Vocabulary
	Knowledge	Skills		
Who was Florence Nightingale and what did she change?	• That Florence Nightingale is the founder of modern nursing. • How Florence Nightingale improved hospitals. • That she challenged what was expected of women.	• To look at a range of sources and think about what clues they can give us about the past. • Ask and answer questions. • Think critically by comparing different sources to develop a perspective about life for Victorian women.	Who was William the Conqueror? How have you changed since you were born?	*Florence Nightingale, evidence, source, modern, first-hand*

Who was Mary Seacole and what did she achieve?	• She helped her mother to care for the sick at home. • Mary Seacole challenged prejudice due to her race (Mary Seacole had a Jamaican mother and a Scottish father).	• To look at a variety of sources and think about what clues they can give us about the past. • Identify the similarities and differences between Mary and Florence.	What was the battle called in 1066?	*Mary Seacole, prejudice, race*
What is Amelia Earhart remembered for?	• That Amelia Earhart was the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. • She attempted a solo flight around the world. • That she encouraged other women to pursue their dreams.	• Use parts of stories and other sources to show that they know and understand key features of events. • Think critically and compare evidence to develop an understanding about life in the past.	Who were the Wright Brothers and what did they achieve?	*Amelia Earhart,*
Who was Robert Scott and what did he do?	• That Scott was the first British explorer to reach the South Pole. • He is famous because he wanted to be the first to reach the South Pole. He did make it there, but wasn't the first. He died during the return.	• Use parts of stories and photographs and other sources to record key events of the polar expedition. • To sequence events chronologically.	Describe some key features of a castle? Why is Amelia Earhart remembered?	*Robert Scott, expedition, polar expedition*
Who was Neil Armstrong and what is he remembered for?	• That Neil Armstrong was the first man to walk on the moon. • It was one of the first world wide televised events, watched by millions of people around the world.	• To look at a range of sources and say what clues they give about the past.	Why is Robert Scott remembered?	*Neil Armstrong, televised,*
Who is Mae Jemison and why is she important?	• That she was the first African American woman accepted onto NASAs training programme. • That she was the first African American woman in space. • She faced adversity due to her race.	• To look at photographs, videos and first-hand accounts and say what clues they can give us about the past • Begin to understand how historical figures have not been accurately represented in the past.	Who was Mary Seacole and what did she achieve?	*Mae Jemison, NASA, adversity*

Year 1: National events beyond living memory

Content	Pupils will learn		Retrieval (Last lesson, unit, year)	Key Vocabulary
	Knowledge	**Skills**		
What happened at the Battle of Hastings?	• That a significant battle took place in 1066 which led to significant changes in castle building.	• Use common words and phrases related to the passing of time. • Use drama to show that they know and understand key features of events	Describe the Wright Brothers' plane.	*Battle of Hastings, invade, invasion*
What did the earliest castles look like?	• That the first hill forts were primarily made of wood. • What motte and bailey structures looked like and some of the disadvantages of wooden structures. • That the first Norman castles were made of stone. • That castles structures have changed over time.	• Identify changes to how castles are built • Show an understanding of when these changes were made by ordering pictures on a timeline.	How have cars changed over time? Why do we remember William the Conquer?	*Order, time, motte and bailey, hill fort*
The key features of a Norman castle.	• That castles were built for protection. • That Guildford Castle is a Norman castle. • The names of defensive castle features including: portcullis, barbican, moat, arrow slits, keep, inner bailey, outer bailey, draw bridge.	• To ask and answer questions. • To label features clearly. • Understand some of the ways in which we find out about the past and identify different ways in which it is represented.	Put these castles in order (choice of 3 images) What would life in a castle be like?	*portcullis, barbican, moat, arrow slits, keep, inner bailey, outer bailey, draw bridge.*
Trip to Arundel Castle	• That the use of castles continues to change over time.	• To find out about the past using artefacts, preserved buildings, paintings and experts. • Ask perceptive questions of an expert. • Understand historical concepts such as similarity • Show an understanding historical concepts such as continuity and change.	Why were castles built? Name four parts of a castle	*artefacts*

Year 2: National events beyond living memory

Content	Pupils will learn		Retrieval (Last lesson, unit, year)	Key Vocabulary
	Knowledge	**Skills**		
The Great Fire of London	• That there was a great fire in London in 1666. • That the fire started in a bakery on Pudding Lane. • That London burned so quickly because the houses were made of wood. • That the fire spread really fast because the houses were all close together and it was windy. • It had been a hot and dry summer. • That London was rebuilt in brick with wide streets to prevent another great fire.	• Use sources to ask perceptive questions. • Understand historical concepts such as cause and consequence. • How to sequence the events of the Great Fire of London.	Would you rather live in Guildford Castle long ago or a modern home? Why?	*cause and consequence, great fire of London. 1666*
How do we know so much about the Great Fire of London?	• That Samuel Pepys wrote a diary (in code) that recorded the events of the GFOL. • That Pepys also wrote what life was like in 1666 London.	• Gain historical perspective - Understand some of the ways in which we find out about the past and identify different ways in which it is represented • Ask and answer questions,	Name and describe the use of 2 features of a Norman castle.	*Samuel Pepys, diarist*
What was the Gunpowder plot and why do we remember it?	• That there was a failed attempt to blow up the Houses of Parliament after James I came to power. • That Guy Fawkes was one of 13 Catholic men involved in the plot. • That we remember and celebrate the failed plot every year on 5th November.	• Sequence the events involved in the plot.	Describe the events of the great fire of London.	*Plot, Guy Fawkes, James I*
What is a chronological order?	• That chronological is the arrangement of events in in the exact sequence they happened over time.	• Sequence the Crimean War, Great Fire of London and Gun Powder Plot in chronological order.	Put these castles (images) in the order they were built.	*Chronological order*

Year 1: Global events beyond living memory

Content	Pupils will learn		Retrieval (Last lesson, unit, year)	Key Vocabulary
	Knowledge	**Skills**		
The history of the bicycle	• That bicycles were invented a long time ago • The first bikes were made of wood, had no pedals or brakes. • The names of the different bicycles including the 'Bone Shaker' and Penny Farthing • That we can learn about the past from photographs and videos.	• Use photographs and videos to learn about the past. • Sequence photographs of bikes from old to modern. • Identify similarities and differences between bikes now and in the past.	What do we learn in history? What are the differences between a farm today and a farm in the past?	*Invented, Sequence, timeline*
The history of the car	• That cars have changed over time, can be used for different purposes and have become more advanced. • That we can learn about the past from artefacts.	• Use artefacts, photographs, videos to learn about the past. • Sequence photographs of cars from old to modern. • Identify similarities and differences between cars now and in the past.	What was your favourite memory of being in Reception? Name 3 differences between a modern and an old bike	*time, artefact*
The history of the aeroplane	• That aeroplanes were invented by the Wright Brothers a long time ago. • That aeroplanes have changed over time and can be used for different purposes and have become more advanced.	• Use photographs and videos to learn about the past. • Sequence photographs of planes from old to modern. • Identify similarities and differences between planes now and in the past.	How have cars changed over time? How do we find out about history?	*Wright Brothers,*

Year 2: Global events beyond living memory

Content	Pupils will learn		Retrieval (Last lesson, unit, year)	Key Vocabulary
	Knowledge	**Skills**		
Why do we celebrate Remembrance Day?	• That we celebrate Remembrance Day to honour and show thanks to all who have served their country. • That we wear poppies and have 2 minutes of silence to remember those who lost their lives serving their country.	• Understand historical concepts such as continuity and change.	What is the symbol of Remembrance?	*Remembrance Day,*
What hospitals were like in the nineteenth century? (*see Lives of significant individuals in the past)*	• That hospitals in the nineteenth century may have been unhygienic and not have had beds.	• Suggest reasons why hospitals have changed. • Understand historical concepts by analysing similarities and differences between different periods using photographs and written accounts.	Find something in the room that is older than you and describe why you think this.	*nineteenth century*

Year 2: Significant historical events, people and places in our locality

Content	Pupils will learn		Retrieval (Last lesson, unit, year)	Key Vocabulary
	Knowledge	**Skills**		
How has Onslow Village changed over time?	• That the land use in Onslow Village has changed over time. • That we can use old photographs, maps and records to find out how Onslow Village has changed over time. • The key features of the village and how they have changed from the past.	• Develop an awareness of the past and understand where people and events fit within a chronological framework. • Observe clues on local buildings and road names. Use these road names and features as historical sources to understand what life may have been like in their locality in the past. • Engage in historical enquiry	Do you live in an old or modern home? How do you know it is old / modern?	*Lord Onslow, historical source*