SS Peter & Paul Catholic Primary School

History Knowledge and Skills Progression

What our children know and can do, from Reception to Year 6 · 2026–27

Strand	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Chronology	Talks about their own past; orders familiar events.	Uses past, present, before and after correctly; places two or three events on a simple timeline.	Uses decade and century correctly; places events on a timeline spanning more than one century.	Uses BCE and CE confidently; places events on a timeline spanning thousands of years; makes simultaneous history comparisons.	Constructs and interprets timelines spanning multiple centuries; identifies periods of change and continuity.	Places events on a world timeline from BCE to the present; traces the colonial thread across three units.	Maintains a coherent world chronology from prehistory to the mid-twentieth century; traces all three golden threads.
Historical enquiry	Asks questions about old objects and photographs.	Asks simple questions about people and events; handles artefacts and photographs, describing what they show.	Asks and answers questions about sources; explains why a source is useful for finding out about the past.	Distinguishes primary from secondary sources; uses them to support a claim; begins to explain their limitations.	Evaluates sources — author, purpose, perspective, limitation; builds an argument from several; conducts an oral history interview.	Evaluates sources with full critical awareness, including bias; constructs justified arguments from several sources.	Corroborates sources, using one to test another; evaluates evidence produced under duress or for propaganda; defends an argument in debate.
Interpretation	Understands that stories can be about long ago.	Understands the past is shown through pictures, objects and stories, made by someone for a purpose.	Describes similarities and differences between periods; explains why Pepys's diary is useful and where it is limited; begins to understand that history involves interpretation.	Compares two civilisations; explains what a source tells us and what it does not; sees that historical knowledge can be incomplete.	Constructs multi-causal explanations; compares two societies systematically; connects Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Viking Britain.	Engages with genuinely contested history — the Benin Bronzes debate, Drake's slave trade, the Titanic class statistics; traces the long-term consequences of decisions (Henry VIII's Reformation → Gunpowder Plot → Civil War).	Engages with morally complex history — the Holocaust, the terrorist question, the Benin Bronzes and Elgin Marbles parallel; understands that historical labels are politically constructed.
Change, continuity, similarity & difference	Compares old and new toys and objects.	Describes one way life was different in the past and one way it was the same.	Compares London before and after the Great Fire, and early flight with air travel today.	Compares prehistoric Britain, Ancient Egypt and Roman Britain, identifying what each left behind.	Compares Anglo-Saxon and Viking society; traces how leisure changed across the twentieth century.	Traces continuity and rupture across Benin, Tudor England and Victorian Merton.	Compares Athenian democracy, Stuart monarchy and twentieth-century dictatorship, and asks why some things changed faster, and for whom.
Significance	Talks about people who are important to them and their family.	Names a significant individual and explains one reason they are remembered.	Explains why an event such as the Great Fire mattered, and what changed as a result.	Explains why a civilisation is studied — what it achieved and what it left to us.	Reaches a judgement on significance and justifies it — 'Did Alfred deserve the title the Great?'	Weighs the significance of events with contested legacies — the Reformation, the Armada, the Industrial Revolution.	Understands that significance is not fixed but changes as perspectives change, and can argue why an event matters now.
Local and world history	Knows the name of our school, town and country.	Knows that people travelled from our area to the Victorian seaside by train.	Knows the story of Wimbledon and tennis from 1877, and its effect locally.	Knows that Roman Britain included settlements and roads near where we live.	Knows how Anglo-Saxon and Viking settlement shaped the place names of England.	Knows the Surrey Iron Railway, Merton Abbey Mills and William Morris; studies Benin as a major non-European civilisation.	Connects local to national and global — Merton in wartime, and a visit to Parliament.
Writing like a historian	Talks about the past using new words.	Talks about what they have learned using simple vocabulary; describes one way life was different.	Writes simple accounts using key vocabulary to describe change over time.	Writes structured accounts of a period; constructs simple cause-and-effect explanations.	Writes extended arguments using evidence; presents a justified historical judgement.	Writes with nuance on contested questions; uses statistical evidence as historical argument.	Writes fully justified arguments that answer counter-arguments; expresses a moral commitment arising from historical study.

Expected standard is the secure floor for each year group. Greater depth is reached when pupils reason rather than recount — weighing evidence, acknowledging another interpretation, or questioning the reliability of a source. Support-plan pupils access the same curriculum through adapted sources, scaffolded stems and pre-taught vocabulary, not a reduced offer.