

# ***Examining strategies for reducing racial prejudice in school***

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**Exploring cross-cultural encounters through historical consciousness: *How can this advance teaching and learning for race equality in Britain?***

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# The study

Draws on research and findings from my professional doctorate work and thesis entitled: **Examining experiences and perceptions of migration and settlement in Britain: How can this assist teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 history?** (Moncrieffe, 2017, University of Reading, Institute of Education).

The rationale for the study arrived by my critical analysis of the Key Stage 2 history curriculum (DfE, 2013a). I was particularly interested in the aims and contents of the document and how policymakers had framed teaching the story of Britain's past and **the role of migration and settlement** within this.

# The Key Stage 2 history curriculum

When looking for evidence of teaching directives in the Key Stage 2 history curriculum that inform learning about migration and settlement in the British Isles over the ages, the focus is exclusively on White European Saxon tribes and Viking **invaders** i.e. ‘Britain’s settlement by Anglo-Saxons’; ‘Scots **invasions** from Ireland to north Britain (now Scotland)’; ‘Anglo-Saxon **invasions**, settlements’ (DfE, 2013a, p.4). **My observations made me think about migration to the British Isles over the ages as being framed by tension and conflict between opposing ethnic or cultural groups in their initial encounters.**

# Ethnocentric history curriculum

I also saw it as a very narrow White European ethnocentric depiction of migration and settlement presented by the Key Stage 2 history curriculum for shaping children's learning about Britain's migrant past. When thinking about the wider ethnic and cultural diversity in Britain today that is indicative of migration and settlement, I also observed 950 chronological years explicitly missing from the contents of the Key Stage 2 history curriculum. The immediate question for me was: Why does the chronology of migration and settlement in the British Isles stop at 1066 for Key Stage 2 children? I investigated further and beyond the Key Stage 2 history curriculum; to secondary education and the 'History programmes of study: key stage 3' (DfE, 2013b). I discovered what I interpreted as a clearer teaching and learning statement on migration and settlement:

**a study of an aspect of social history, such as the impact through time of the migration of people to, from and within the British Isles' (DfE, 2013b, p. 5).**

However, I noted the statement being a 'non-statutory directive' which means that secondary schools and Key Stage 3 teachers of history do not have to be accountable for their teaching and learning coverage, unlike their Key Stage 2 counterparts who are obligated by Key Stage 2 history curriculum 'statutory' directives to teach about the arrival in the British Isles of White European Scots, Saxons and Vikings as being significant cultural and ethnic groups from the past that should be remembered in the present. My observations of what is compulsory teaching and learning for children's education at Key Stage 2 (White European migration) and what is optional teaching and learning at Key Stage 3 (other forms of migration) magnified my view of there being White European ethnocentricity concerning migration and settlement within the Key Stage 2 history curriculum.

# **‘whitewashing’ the curriculum**

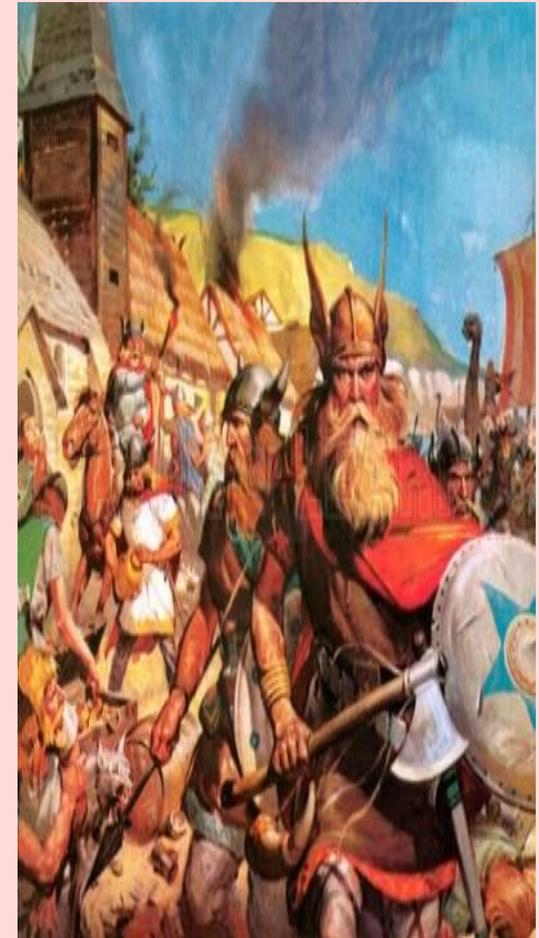
There was before the current Key Stage 2 history curriculum framework the possibility for Key Stage 2 children to study wider representations of migration and settlement in the British Isles. This came through a scheme of work exemplar: ‘Unit 13: How has life in Britain Changed Since 1948’ (DfES, 1999; QCA, 1998). With it, teachers could place emphasis on children’s learning about ethnic and cultural groups, other than White European people. However, even with that particular scheme of work exemplar, Gardner (2001) in his search for a multicultural curriculum asserted that a large body of knowledge on Black-British history was absent from the history of Britain taught in schools. This led him to pose the question: ‘Why is the Black presence in Britain missing from the curriculum?’ (Gardner, 2001, p. 21). The erasure from the national history curriculum of any clear possibilities for teaching and learning about British history involving non-White European people who have migrated and settled here is also argued via the work of Kapoor (2013) and Lander (2016).

# Seeking to connect histories

I am first generation Black-British born of Afro-Caribbean immigrant parents. My mother and father were child immigrants from Jamaica in the 1960s. They followed my two sets of grandparents who came to Britain from Jamaica in the 1950s and lived in Brixton, London. As a child, I visited Brixton regularly with my mother and my siblings to see my grandmother and my extended family of aunts, uncles and cousins. My reflections on this have triggered my conceptions of a theme for teaching and learning about Afro-Caribbean migration and settlement in Britain – Brixton 1981, commonly known as ‘the riots’ but also described as an uprising (Fryer, 2010) in which post World War Two migrant and immigrant minority-ethnic group Afro-Caribbean people; their children and grandchildren who settled in that part of London are well known for their struggles and violent encounters with an oppressive dominant White British system (Gilroy, 1992; Phillips and Phillips, 1998; Scarman, 1981). I was interested in developing my own perceptions of Brixton 1981 in relation to Afro-Caribbean migration and settlement and the Black-British experience of this, to see the extent to which it could enhance my own awareness of potential approaches to practice for teaching about broader forms of the migration and settlement experience via the Key Stage 2 history curriculum. I took this forward via the theme of **‘struggles and violent cross-cultural encounters’**.

# Struggles and violent cross-cultural encounters

It is observable that the Key Stage 2 history curriculum already instructs teachers to focus children's learning on extremely **violent cross-cultural encounters** i.e. 'the 8<sup>th</sup> century Viking/Anglo-Saxon struggle. Those struggles are written in history as **violent cross-cultural encounters** between migrant Vikings (**new minority-ethnic groups aiming to establish themselves**) and Anglo-Saxons (**majority ethnic group already established**) (DfE, 2013, p.4).



# Struggles and violent cross-cultural encounters



I perceived there to be some similarities in the Key Stage 2 national curriculum phrase 'the struggle' in association with the **20<sup>th</sup> century minority-ethnic group Afro-Caribbean 'struggle' against the oppressive dominant majority-ethnic group White British system i.e. 'Brixton 1981'.**

# Struggles and violent cross-cultural encounters



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are a reoccurring phenomena in history, with themes of struggle, treaties of peace and tolerance in the quest for equality.



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# Making connections

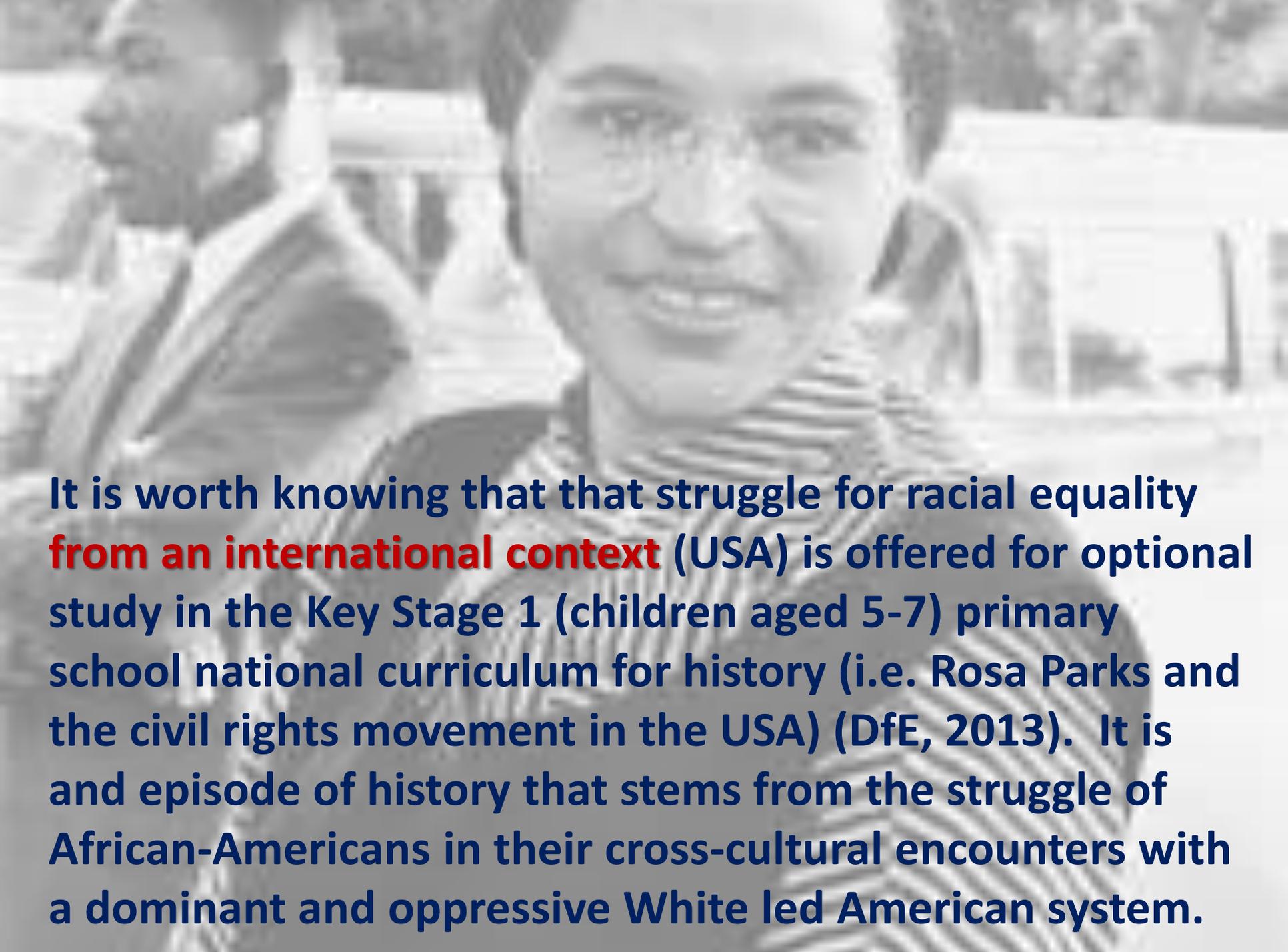


Vikings generally  
invaded and settled  
in the British Isles



Afro-Caribbean people  
were invited to settle in  
the British Isles

This study juxtaposed a dominantly taught episode of Britain's migrant past against an episode of British history that has been marginalised from the Key Stage 2 history curriculum aims and contents. The aim of the study being to explore trainee-teachers orientations in their historical thinking about migration and settlement in the British Isle over the ages, thus seeking to advance thinking, learning and teaching about conflicts, struggle, peace, tolerance for racial and ethnic equality in Britain.



It is worth knowing that that struggle for racial equality **from an international context** (USA) is offered for optional study in the Key Stage 1 (children aged 5-7) primary school national curriculum for history (i.e. Rosa Parks and the civil rights movement in the USA) (DfE, 2013). It is and episode of history that stems from the struggle of African-Americans in their cross-cultural encounters with a dominant and oppressive White led American system.

# But why did policymakers not endorse the British equivalent of the Rosa Parks story for inclusion in the new national curriculum?



I see the story of civil rights activist Rosa Parks and that of the Bristol Bus Boycott led by civil rights activist Paul Stephenson both during the 1960s as examples of struggles for race equality emerging from **cross-cultural (including ethnic and racial) encounters**.

# Key consideration

Can struggles involving violent cross-cultural encounters from past and recent episodes of migration and settlement in the British Isles be connected for teaching and learning about the development of racial and ethnic equality i.e. 'mutual respect' and 'tolerance' of ethnic and cultural differences in Britain?

# Methods

The study used a semi-structured questionnaire and worked with a sample of twenty-one White British and predominantly female Key Stage 2 trainee-teacher history specialists. Questions related to the aims and the contents of the Key Stage 2 history curriculum; the trainee-teachers' impressions on themes of migration and settlement within the document; the purpose of teaching and learning about British history and the background identities of these trainee-teachers i.e. education, social, family, economic. The aim was to understand the extent to which 'habitus' and socialisation (Bourdieu, 1986) was influential to the trainee-teachers' historical thinking i.e. their orientations with historical consciousness (Rüsen, 2006). Follow up semi-structured interview questions were on themes of migration and settlement in the British Isles over the ages and teaching about that in the classroom.

# Methods of Analysis

Rüsen's (2006) **'traditional', 'exemplary', critical'** and **'genetic'** types of **'historical consciousness'** are theories of historical thinking applied by the study to allow for an understanding of how Key Stage 2 trainee-teacher history specialists orientate themselves in their thinking about migration and settlement to the British Isles. These types of **'historical consciousness'** offer frameworks for **orientating the past with the present for considering future possibilities** on thinking, teaching and learning.

# Typologies of historical consciousness

## The 'Traditional' Type

making 'the past significant and relevant to present actuality and its future extension as a continuity of obligatory cultural life patterns over time' (Rüsen 2006, p.71).

## The 'Exemplary Type'

sees 'Tradition' moving 'within a rather narrow frame of empirical reference' and 'viewed as a past recollected with a message or lesson for the present, as didactic' (Rüsen, 2006, p.73).

## The 'Critical Type'

sees history functioning as 'the tool' by which the continuity of the traditional and exemplary is 'ruptured, deconstructed, decoded – so that it loses its power as a source for present-day orientation' (Rüsen, 2006, p.75).

## The 'Genetic Type'

sees that 'change is of the essence, and is what gives history its sense' (Rüsen, 2006, p.76).

# Questionnaire and interview findings

Data indicated that **Key Stage 2 trainee-teachers specialising in history with a 'socialisation' indicative of a multi-ethnic British background** led them to discuss clearly **their awareness of cultural, ethnic and racial diversity** within the story of Britain's migrant past. It positioned their thinking via pluralist and multicultural lenses and with Rüsen's (2006) **'critical'** and **'genetic'** types of **'historical consciousness'**.

Conversely, **Key Stage 2 trainee-teachers specialising in history with a 'socialisation' indicative of a mono-ethnic White-British background** produced innately **White-British majoritarian thinking** (Gillborn, 2008). Their thinking can be positioned with dominant and traditional discourses of migration and with Rüsen's (2006) **'traditional'** and **'exemplary'** types of **'historical consciousness'**.

# Personal narratives as Focus-group artefacts



The personal narratives written by my mother and I were used as artefacts in a **follow up Focus-group discussion** for consideration with the Key Stage 2 history curriculum aims and contents (DfE, 2013a). The aim was to generate responses from **Key Stage 2 trainee-teacher history specialists of a mono-ethnic White-British background**, particularly on **whether the artefacts could help them to re-orientate their thinking** about British history, Britain's migrant past and teaching and learning about the struggle for racial and ethnic equality in Britain from past and recent times i.e. for teaching and learning about the notion of **fundamental British values** including 'mutual respect' and 'tolerance' of ethnic and cultural differences (DfE, 2014, p.5).

# Examples of Focus-group data

## *'Riots and change and stuff like that'*

Diana: ...the Viking raids and invasions. They are quite ... and then Anglo-Saxon laws and **justice** and invasions, death and resistance and **all of those sorts of words might be associated with... with riots and change and stuff like that** and so **you have got this chance to contrast.**

Catherine: It's all migration I suppose isn't it?

Diana: Yeah.

Catherine: Well. Like the settlement of Anglo Saxons you can... Like when they (parent and child) are talking about... Brixton Erm... being the ethnic minority... settlement. They settled there. And you could almost say like where did Anglo-Saxons settle...

Diana: Settle (in synchrony with Catherine).

Catherine: ....**and you can kind of make relations that way.**

# Examples of Focus-group data

## *'Yeah, that's Britishness.'*

- Catherine: On page 4 line 35 where the child says “stood up for their rights”, that’s a kind of freedom of speech.
- Anne: **Yeah, that's Britishness.** Because it’s about being able to do that; being able to express what you want and protest without having any backlash from the government which I don’t know is always 100% true. But that to me is what is all about living in a country where you should be allowed to say what you want.
- Catherine: **So maybe... Equality. Yeah maybe the equality side of it.** Like: “Why just us?” Like: “Why not that person as well?”
- Anne: Yes. You could say that is a protest because you’re being discriminated against and you’re protesting against.
- Catherine: Yeah.
- Diana: Yeah and **I think like if we are going to be talking about ‘tolerance’ and ‘equality’, if we are going to be teaching those British values, then we are going to need to have multicultural perspectives within the curriculum.**

# Focus group findings

From considering the potential of using artefacts from marginalised episodes of British history, **Key Stage 2 trainee-teacher history specialists of mono-ethnic White-British backgrounds** who **had originally positioned** their thinking about the story of Britain's migrant past **with traditional** and **exemplary** types of historical consciousness **re-oriented their views as 'critical' and 'genetic' types of historical consciousness (Rüsen, 2006, p.76)**. **Their re-positioning** allowed them to make new and broader connections with migration and settlement stories from past and recent British history involving struggles and violent cross-cultural encounters. It also helped them to connect more coherently with notions of fundamental British values i.e. via the words 'tolerance' of ethnic and cultural differences and 'justice', all related to racial and ethnic equality (DfE, 2014).

# Conclusion

My argument is that the voices of Key Stage 2 trainee-teacher history specialists in this study indicate **a need for government history curriculum policymakers to include more explicitly culturally diverse accounts of British history concerning migration and settlement within the aims and contents of the Key Stage 2 history curriculum.** It will help to advance Key Stage 2 teachers' thinking and approaches to practice concerning the teaching and learning about fundamental British values and **how they have emerged via history** i.e. 'mutual respect' and 'tolerance' of racial, ethnic and cultural differences (DfE, 2014).

Promoting teaching about the story of Britain's migrant past involving struggles for racial and ethnic equality and the lessons we are continuing to learn from those varied cross-cultural encounters over the ages would therefore be a positive step.

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# Reflective thought and question



Which episodes of British history do you think should be used in the Key Stage 2 classroom for teaching and learning about the fundamental British values of ‘tolerance’ and ‘mutual respect’ in aiming to make the notion of racial and ethnic equality in Britain more coherent?



Department  
for Education

## History programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2

### National curriculum in England

#### Purpose of study

A high-quality history education will help pupils gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain's past and that of the wider world. It should inspire pupils' curiosity to know more about the past. Teaching should equip pupils to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, and develop perspective and judgement. History helps pupils to understand the complexity of people's lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time.

#### Aims

The national curriculum for history aims to ensure that all pupils:

- know and understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the earliest times to the present day: how people's lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world
- know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world: the nature of ancient civilisations; the expansion and dissolution of empires; characteristic features of past non-European societies; achievements and follies of mankind
- gain and deploy a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as 'empire', 'civilisation', 'parliament' and 'peasantry'
- understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically-valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses
- understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed