

History

Statement of Intent

The History curriculum at Nishkam High School is built upon a faith-inspired and virtues-led approach. We believe that the questions of virtue and vice belong in the classroom, and our department would argue that the history classroom is one of the best places for this. We believe that a faith-inspired and virtues-led curriculum is an important moral and pedagogic duty for teachers- and something which makes history richer than just the exams that pupils will eventually sit. It will help students to understand the world they live in, the modern-day conflicts that plague us and prepare them for life outside the classroom. This is balanced with an awareness that history should not succumb to presentism, and that the study of history must also retain its own disciplinary rigour; we can learn about today through history, but we do not seek to judge history through the lenses of today.

The history curriculum at Nishkam High School is built upon the core principles of teaching and testing powerful knowledge, centering enquiries around history's fundamental disciplinary concepts, and interweaving a virtue-centric approach to historical enquiry. The first of these three principles, the teaching and testing of powerful knowledge, involves working backwards from what we need pupils to know in order to thrive in A Level history, and the substantive knowledge which we consider relevant and important for all pupils to know. As such, our Key Stage Three curriculum is developed around three thematic strands, one for each year of the Key Stage, by the end of which pupils cover a broad, diverse, and challenging array of historical content. With regard to enquiries built around disciplinary concepts, students are conversant in the disciplinary language of history, which particularly questions: cause and consequence, change and continuity, similarity and difference, the use of historical evidence, and the interrogation of historical interpretations. Using these terms explicitly with pupils and ensuring that our enquiries are clearly oriented towards answering questions about these types of analysis, helps pupils develop as thinkers and history writers.

In history we prioritise reading to allow pupils to access the full curriculum. We focus on not only historical debate but also personal stories as a way for students to access knowledge; 'what was it like to live in the British Empire, as told by those who lived through it?' We prioritise teaching topics such as slavery by using the voices of those who experienced it, not only does this give a voice to the voices who traditionally have not been heard through history, but it allows all students to access the curriculum through reading.