

History

Substantive and Disciplinary Knowledge at Oakdale

Substantive Knowledge (What pupils learn – the historical content)

Substantive knowledge refers to the **facts, events, people, places, and historical periods** that pupils study.

At Oakdale, this includes:

1. People and Events Across Historical Periods

- A wide range of significant individuals and groups from different eras.
- Historical events spanning local, national, and international contexts.

2. Historical Contexts

- Understanding life in different historical periods.
- Exploring how societies, cultures and civilisations developed and changed over time.

3. Local, National and Global History

- History begins with what is familiar (local area) and expands to national and global contexts as children progress through the school.

These substantive elements come from the Chris Quigley Essentials Curriculum and its Milestones, which guide what pupils learn at each stage.

Disciplinary Knowledge (How pupils think and work as historians)

Disciplinary knowledge is the knowledge of the processes of history—how historians investigate, interpret and communicate the past. At Oakdale, disciplinary knowledge is taught through the four key skill areas that appear in every History unit:

1. Investigating and Interpreting the Past

Pupils learn how to:

- Use a range of sources (artefacts, texts, photographs, accounts) to ask and answer questions.
- Consider how reliable or useful sources are.
- Recognise that evidence can be incomplete or interpreted differently.

2. Understanding Chronology

Pupils develop:

- A sense of time and historical eras.
- Understanding of timelines, ordering events, and placing periods in relation to one another.
- Awareness of duration, change over time, and historical sequence.

3. Building an Overview of World History

Pupils understand:

- The broad narrative of the past – how civilisations rise, interact and develop.
- Connections, contrasts and trends across different periods.
- How local events fit into national and global history.

4. Communicating Historically

Pupils learn to:

- Use historical vocabulary accurately.
- Present their ideas clearly through writing, discussion, debate or visual forms.
- Construct arguments using evidence.
- Reflect on and challenge differing interpretations of the past.

How Substantive and Disciplinary Knowledge Work Together at Oakdale

- The substantive content (e.g., Romans, Ancient Egyptians, Great Fire of London, World War II) provides the knowledge base.
- The disciplinary skills (e.g., interpreting sources, constructing arguments, analysing change) enable pupils to think critically, question evidence and understand that history is interpreted.
- Through revisiting threshold concepts across Milestones 1–3, pupils deepen both kinds of knowledge over time.