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Our Place in History – 'geography explained' factsheet

	Key ideas	Key facts
Lesson 1: Setting the scene	The terms 'local' and 'history' differ depending on the context.	It is useful to define the terms local and history at the start of the unit so that pupils can think about the variable nature of these terms and the parameters for this unit. They should also be encouraged to think about why these parameters have been chosen.
		The local nature of the unit will depend on the settlement in which the school is based. For example, if located in a city or large town it might be appropriate to focus the study on part or the whole settlement. However, if the school is located in a small town or large village it might be more appropriate to expand the locality to include other villages and small towns in the local area. The definition of local may also change throughout the unit. When investigating the locality during the lesson on fieldwork, it is probably best for pupils to engage with a small area, perhaps 1 or 2 km in diameter. However, for other activities, such as that on landscape archaeology, it is easy and probably more appropriate, to investigate a much larger area of several tens of kilometers. This fluid definition of local is worth engaging with before moving on to looking at what is meant by history .
		The definition of history in this context is mainly a practical one. Whilst a large majority of settlements have their origins in Anglo-Saxon Britain, the vast majority of information available is from the past 200 years. Having said this, it is worth highlighting that the term history may well change, as the term local does, throughout the unit. For example, when investigating the names of settlements and landscape archaeology, we are probably looking at evidence hundreds or even thousands of years old. However, when looking at the lesson on education this is likely to focus on much more recent history - depending on the school maybe even only a couple of years.
	There are many sources of evidence which can be used to investigate local history.	This discussion, particularly of the definition of history , leads nicely on to an examination of the different sources of evidence which can be used to investigate local history. Pupils should be encouraged to think critically about the different sources of evidence to assess their usefulness. When were they produced? What was their purpose? Are they factual accounts or people's opinions? How much information do they provide? How accurate is it likely to be? It is likely that pupils may have come across such critical questions within their study of History. Also, with the growth of the internet, many documents and pieces of information can be accessed easily. However, it is worth remembering that other sources of evidence, whilst harder to access, may be very valuable and provide vast amounts of data.
		The following links may be useful as sources of information: The <u>Vision of Britain website</u> provides the information for the main activity 'How has our local area been described in the past?' The <u>BBC website on local history</u> gives lots of useful information about local history in general but also about sources of evidence.

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Lesson 2: Local people	The population of an area can change over time.	The first real census in the UK was the Domesday book of 1086 which contained records for over 13,000 settlements in England (see <u>The Domesday Book Online website</u> for more information). However, in more modern times the census , which was first carried out in 1881 and has been carried out every ten years since, provides a fairly accurate assessment of the population of different settlements. Whilst the threat of a £1000 fine for non-completion of the census should ensure that it is accurately completed by the whole population, this is not the case. In 2001, 390,000 people responded that their religion was 'Jedi' (there are two articles on the BBC News website about this: Jedi makes the census list and <u>Census returns of the Jedi</u>). Also, in 1991 due to the controversial poll tax, over 1 million people were 'missed' as they mistakenly thought that by completing the census return they would be added to the poll tax register (see the following article on the Independent website: 'Missing million' indicates poll tax factor in census). Having said this, the census generally does provide us with a fairly accurate assessment of population from 1801 onwards.
		Useful links for investigating the census and population data for the local area include: The <u>GENUKI website</u> , which provides population data from about 1801 for particular settlements. The <u>Office for National Statistics website</u> , which provides information on the history of the census. Another section of the <u>Office for National Statistics website</u> contains population pyramids and other data from the census. The <u>National Archives website</u> , which can be searched for free. A small charge is payable to view transcripts and download images of census entries.
		The reasons behind the population trends of a local area will be dependent on its context but the most common reasons are covered in the starter activity. A brief search on the internet or a visit to the local museum should highlight the main reasons for the growth or decrease in population at particular times in the settlement's history. For example, Aylesbury's population grew slowly, due to natural change – there were slightly more births than deaths – until 1839 when the London to Birmingham railway opened. Following this, came printing, brewing and condensed milk processing industries and these two factors, combined with the town's proximity to London turning it into a commuter town, caused the population to grow from 21,240 in 1951 to 55,000 today. The population of the area is set to grow rapidly in the future as the town has been earmarked for massive development – the government target is for 65,900 houses to be built in Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale by 2021 - due to the national need for more housing (see the following article from the BBC News website: <u>Blueprint for 211,000 new homes</u>).
	People's experiences of an area may change over time.	In this section of the lesson it is oral history which is most important and the activity not only provides pupils with information about the local area but also hones their interviewing skills. Information on how to carry out an oral history can be found on the <u>Oral History Society website</u> and it should be highlighted that pupils should plan their questions prior to the interview. Another important point is that the pupil's own personal geographies, including their experiences of how the area has changed over time, are as valuable and interesting as any other source of information. Pupils should be given an opportunity to discuss their experiences in the plenary activity.

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Lesson 3: Mapping change	Growth of an area and change over time can be mapped. Similarities and differences between the local area in the past and today can be identified.	Most place names, up to about the 14 th century, reflected the local environment. Their suffixes and prefixes largely depended on the dominant group of people in the settlement. For example, Roman language and Celtic language dominated the naming of places between 50BC and 400AD (see the <u>Domesday Book Online</u> website). The first Ordnance Survey map was completed in 1801 (coincidentally the same year as the first modern census). It was of a 1 inch map of Kent and took over 6 years to complete (see the <u>Ordnance Survey</u> website for more details). Since then, the Ordnance Survey has worked tirelessly to produce accurate maps of different scales for public consumption. However, it is not just the Ordnance Survey which has produced historical maps of parts of the UK, and examples through history can be found in local museums and on the internet. For example, the <u>Old Maps website</u> is a useful source of historical maps which could be used for some of the activities in this lesson. Maps can provide important clues to a settlement's past. By comparing an old map with a more recent one, similarities and differences in terms of growth and land use can be identified. Landscape archaeology is a fascinating area of study, in which clues to the lives of past groups of people are identified in the landscape. On his <u>British Archaeology website</u> , Peet Fowler highlights that "Landscape archaeology can be carried out in any part of Britain, so long as you acquire the right frame or mind to do it. If you accept that a landscape can be 'read', rather like a page of music, then you can learn to read it. Your view will change; instead of seeing you: we will find yourself looking at landscape; instead of seeing yout we will find yourself looking at landscape; instead of seeing yout will find yourself looking at landscape; instead of seeing yout will find yourself looking at landscape; instead of seeing yout will begin to elucidate patterns. This applies in towns and cities just as much as countryside.""
Lesson 4: Religious buildings	Religious buildings can provide clues to what the local area was like in the past.	Religious buildings have been part of both the urban and rural landscape in the UK for centuries and consequently they can provide important clues as to what the local area was like in the past. Religious buildings are frequently at the centre of our communities and have had this role for many years.

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The significance of religious buildings and their position in local history may change over time.	The first recorded Christian church in the UK was built in Glastonbury between AD63 and AD64. However, the oldest church currently in use is St. Martin's church in Canterbury which dates from before AD597. In the 12 th and 13 th centuries the church was the main focus of community life and many churches in England date from this period. Today there are around 16,000 churches in England and 43 cathedrals (see the <u>Church of England website</u> for more information). For more information on Christianity, visit the <u>Religion and Ethics section of the BBC website</u> .
	Islam was not legal in the UK until 1812, but Muslims were present in the UK before this. It is thought that during the 18th century, some sailors who worked for the British East India Company settled in port towns with local wives. Due to immigration to the UK from former colonies, such as India and Pakistan, the number of Muslims grew quickly from the 1950s with large Muslim populations developing in many towns and cities (see the <u>Wikipedia entry on Islam in the UK</u> for more details). It is thought that the first Mosque was established at 2 Glynrhondda Street, Cathays, Cardiff, in 1860. However, The Shah Jahan mosque, built by a Dr Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner in Woking in 1889 was, until the late 1960s, the main focal point for the London Muslim community. (see the <u>Shah Jahan Mosque website</u> and the <u>British Muslim Heritage website</u> for more information on Islam, visit the <u>Religion and Ethics section of the BBC website</u> .
	The first Jewish synagogue was built in Bayswater in 1879. It is thought that early architects designed synagogues to look like Christian churches so that they wouldn't draw attention (see the following article from <i>The Independent</i> newspaper: <u>Grade-1 listing for Britain's first truly Jewish synagogue</u>). It is thought that there are approximately 300 synagogues in England today. For more information about Judaism, visit the <u>Religion</u> and Ethics section of the BBC website.
	Buddhism first found its way into Britain in the 19th century through translations of scriptures from the east. In 1879 Sir Edwin Arnold compiled an epic poem, <i>The Light of Asia</i> , describing the Buddha's life. Wat Buddhapadipa was built in Richmond, London in 1965 and was the first Buddhist temple in the UK. In 1976, it was moved to Wimbledon (see the <u>website of the Buddhapadipa Temple</u>). For more information on Buddhism visit the <u>Religion and Ethics section of the BBC website</u> .
	The first Hindu temple in Britain was built in Slough. Although the idea to build this temple came about in 1963, it wasn't until 1981 that it idea became a reality. Today, there are approximately 180 Hindu temples throughout the UK. For more information on Hinduism, visit the <u>Religion and Ethics section of the BBC</u> website.
	79, Sinclair Road is a Georgian terrace in Shepherd's Bush, London and, from 1940 was Britain's first Sikh Gurdwara. Today there are over 200 Sikh temples in the UK with over 25% of them being located in

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		London. For more information on Sikhism, visit the <u>Religion and Ethics section of the BBC website</u> .
		As of the last census in 2001, there were 42 million Christians, 1.6 million Muslims, 0.5 million Hindus, 0.3 million Sikhs, 0.2 million Jews and 0.1 million Buddhists in the UK. 9 million people were noted as having 'no religion'.
Lesson 5: School history	Education has changed over time.	Education in the UK has a very long history and can be traced back to Anglo-Saxon times. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge have the longest histories, with Oxford (founded in 1167) being the oldest university in the English speaking world. However, prior to the 19 th century there were very few schools and those that existed were usually run by the church.
	The place of the school in local history can be investigated.	The Elementary Education Act of 1880 reformed education and meant that all children had to attend school from the ages of 5 to 10. Since then, the age of leaving has steadily risen so that, from 1973 it became compulsory for children to stay in education until the age of 16. Recent plans are in place to raise the leaving age to 18 from 2013. See the <u>Wikipedia entry on the history of education in England</u> for more information.
		The subjects studied have also changed dramatically over time. Prior to the 19 th century, as most schools were run by the church, religious education was the main subject studied. At the end of the 19 th century the three R's (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic) dominated and the main teaching style was through dictation. Visit <u>Channel 4's Victorian Children: Victorian Schools website</u> for more detail (you will see that geography is in there!). Today pupils are given the opportunity to study a variety of different subjects from Politics and Art History to Travel and Tourism and teaching styles are much more interactive.
Lesson 6: Going into the field	A number of fieldwork techniques can be used to investigate the local area.	Fieldwork has always been an essential component of geographical study and serves to motivate pupils and enable them to see for themselves what is happening in the 'real world'. The <u>Geographical Association's</u> <u>manifesto 'A Different view'</u> highlights the importance of fieldwork in the subject.
	All fieldwork has certain limitations which have an impact on the data.	However, it should be noted that all aspects of fieldwork will have limitations. It is impossible to investigate every aspect of a place and so a limitation may be that conclusions will be partial due to lack of evidence. It may be that the equipment used to investigate a particular aspect of the environment may not be accurate which again will affect the validity of conclusions. In this instance, it is likely to be the reliability of different sources of information which may affect the validity of conclusions.
Lesson 7: My place	I have a place within the local history. I can evaluate what I have	It is important to consider our own place within the context of the local area and also in time. People may live in a particular area but feel that they have little connection to it, or may feel that they have an affinity with a different place, for example the place in which they were born. With the rise of television programmes such
	learnt about the history of my	as Who do you think you are? , which asks celebrities to investigate their personal and family histories, there has been a real interest in discovering the past on a more local scale. For more information visit the
L	local area.	BBC's Family History and Who do you think you are? websites.