Who were the Anglo-Saxons?

In this unit the children will learn:
- The Saxon way of life at different levels of society
- The coming of Christianity as an important development in our past
- The reign of King Alfred
- Saxon justice and its importance in British history
- How dark were the Dark Ages?

Timeline of Key Events:

410 A.D. - Romans left Britain: leaving it unguarded

497 A.D - The Kingdom of Wessex is formed

573 A.D. - The Kingdom of East Anglia was formed

586 A.D. - The Kingdom of Mercia was formed

597 A.D. - St. Augustine introduces Christianity

757 A.D.- Offa, King of Mercia, declares himself King of England

793 A.D. - Vikings attack Lindisfarne

871 A.D. - Alfred the Great rules

1066 A.D. - Battle of Hastings Normans defeated by Saxons

Historical Skills and Concepts:
- **Chronology** – key events in world history.
- **Questioning** – develop historical questioning skills.
- **Sources –** use a range of sources to explore our knowledge of the past.
- **Cause & Effect –** the impact of Historical events or developments.
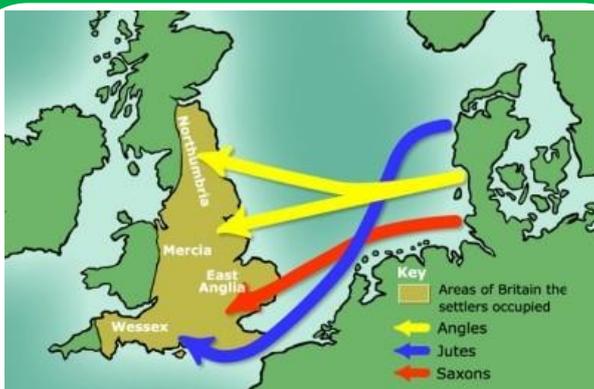- **Continuity & Change –** how life then compares to today

Key People:

St Augustine (c.530-604)
Augustine of Canterbury was a Christian missionary sent from Rome to convert people from Anglo-Saxon paganism to Christianity. He was considered to be responsible for the widespread adoption of the Christian faith throughout England.

King Alfred the Great (849-899)
King Alfred the Great fought the Vikings and defeated them in the Battle of Edington (878). This led to them making a joint agreement with them (Danelaw). He was known for improving the standard of living, legal and military systems as well as education.

Key facts:

The Romans left Britain in 410 due to fierce tribes attacking Italy and every soldier was needed back at home to defend the country. Without an army of its own, it left the country vulnerable to attackers. The Anglo-Saxons came from Denmark, Netherlands and Northern Germany across the North Sea in wooden boats. They conquered England but failed to conquer Scotland, Wales and Cornwall (an area of south-west England).

The Anglo-Saxon people were very superstitious. They believed in good and bad omens, lucky charms, spells and magic as they thought these things could influence what happened in different parts of their lives. The Anglo-Saxons were Pagans and believed in many different gods. There were many festivals throughout the year where Anglo-Saxons made sacrifices to their gods.

The name Anglo-Saxon comes from the two biggest invading tribes, the Angles and the Saxons.

In 1939, archaeologists discovered an Anglo-Saxon ship burial at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk. It helped historians understand what it was like during those times as many artefacts were uncovered which gave them clues about the life of an Anglo-Saxon.

Key Vocabulary:

Angles - People from Germany who invaded Britain around 410 A.D.

Anglo-Saxon - The name given to people who travelled from Germany and South Denmark and settled in Britain

Invaders – People who attack and try to take land from other people

Jutes - People from the Jutland peninsula (Germany and South Denmark)

Monastery – A religious building where monks live

Picts - Ancient tribes who lived in northern Scotland

Raiders – People who attack then take what they find away with them

Runes - Alphabet consisting of between 26-33 letters used to write Old English

Settler - People who migrate to a new place. When people start a community, this is a settlement

Sutton Hoo - Is the site of two early medieval cemeteries, it is vital in understanding the whole of the early Anglo-Saxon period

Transferable vocabulary and concepts:

- **Justice** - Just behaviour or treatment
- **Migration -** Movement from one place to another in order to settle there
- **Christianity –** The religion based on the teachings of Jesus Christ
- **Pagan -** A person who follows a religion that is not a major religion
- **Conversion -** Change