

Monuments of the Byzantine Empire

Year 4

This unit, looking at monuments of the Byzantine empire, also known as the Eastern Roman Empire, is a continuation of the work carried out in Spring B. The children revise what they know about ancient Rome and then learn about how the empire split in two, using the famous mosaic of Constantine and Justinian at the Hagia Sofia in Istanbul to discover how Constantine became the first Christian Roman emperor. They go on to learn in more detail about the history of the Hagia Sofia (built by Justinian, first used as a church, then a mosque and now as a museum) looking in detail at the richly coloured Byzantine patterns in it and creating their own similar patterns using watercolour and gold paint. They then study the renowned mosaics of Ravenna in Northern Italy which was for a few short years the centre of the Byzantine empire, focussing on depictions of Justinian and his wife Theodora. They create their own mosaic portraits using paper, focussing on how to show differing skin tones, revising work done in year 2 on self-portraits. Finally, they look at icons, first painted during the Byzantine period and still painted today, learning how these are used for prayer and reflection.