

# History Policy



Date of Amendment: January 2020  
Review Date: January 2023

## Rationale

History is the study of the past including the interpretation and analysis of evidence about human experience. It is one of the fundamental ways in which a society transmits its cultural heritage from one generation to the next. Pupils consider how the past influences the present, what past societies were like, how these societies organise their politics, and what beliefs and cultures influenced people's actions. As they do this, pupils develop a chronological framework for their knowledge of significant events and people. They see the diversity of human experience, and understand more about themselves as individuals and members of society. Through the study of history, pupils should develop the skills which enable them to interpret current and past events with a critical awareness, thus helping them prepare for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life.

## Intent

The aim of history teaching at St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School is to stimulate the children's interest and understanding about the life of people who lived in the past. We teach children a sense of chronology, and through this they develop a sense of identity and a cultural understanding based on their historical heritage. Thus they learn to value their own and other's cultures in modern multicultural Britain and, by considering how people lived in the past, they are better able to make their own life choices today. In our school history makes a significant contribution to citizenship education by teaching about how Britain developed as a democratic society. We teach children to understand how events in the past have influenced our lives today; we teach them to investigate these past events and, by so doing, to develop the skills of enquiry, analysis, interpretation and problem solving.

The aims of history in our school are:

- ❶ To foster in children an interest in the past and to develop an understanding that enables them to enjoy all that history has to offer;
- ❷ To enable children to know about significant events in British history and to appreciate how things have changed over time;
- ❸ To develop a sense of chronology;
- ❹ To know and understand how the British system of democratic government has developed and, in so doing, to contribute to a child's citizenship education;
- ❺ To understand how Britain is part of a wider European culture and to study some aspects of European history;
- ❻ To have some knowledge and understanding of historical development in the wider world;
- ❼ To help children understand society and their place within it, so that they develop a sense of their cultural heritage;
- ❽ To develop in children the skills of enquiry, investigation, analysis, evaluation and presentation.

## Access and Entitlement

We aim to develop a positive attitude towards history, enabling children to see it as a fascinating and enjoyable subject. The classroom ethos will be such that there is an expectancy of quality in children's thinking skills, speaking and listening and in the variety of outcomes produced. Contributions from all children will be encouraged, respected and valued. Careful planning and awareness of children's needs and interest will ensure that every child will have equal access to history learning regardless of ability, gender, cultural, intellectual or social differences.

History teaching focuses on enabling children to think as historians. We place an emphasis on examining historical artefacts and primary sources. We also give children the opportunity to visit sites of historical significance when appropriate. We look to encourage visitors to come into school and talk about their experiences of events in the past. We recognise and value the importance of stories in history teaching and we regard this as an important way of stimulating interest in the past. We focus on helping children understand that historical events can be interpreted in different ways and that they should always ask searching questions, such as 'How do we know?', about information they are given.

We recognise the fact that in all classes there are children of widely different abilities in history and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this by:

- ✓ Setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- ✓ Setting tasks of increasing difficulty. Not all children complete all tasks;
- ✓ Grouping children by ability and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- ✓ Providing resources of different complexity depending on the ability of the child;
- ✓ Using Teaching Assistants to support children individually or in groups.

The Key Stage 2 programme of study will be taught in order for children to make progress in the 6 key areas of historical learning. These key areas are:

1. To understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative.
2. To gain knowledge and understanding of significant aspects of the history of the wider world.
3. To gain and deploy a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as 'empire', 'civilisation', 'parliament' and 'peasantry'.
4. To understand historical concepts and use them to make connections, develop questions and draw conclusions.
5. To understand the methods of historical enquiry.
6. To gain historical perspective.

A range of teaching and learning strategies will be used to develop pupils' historical knowledge, skills and enthusiasm. Progression is built into each unit and Upper School units naturally extend the skills developed through the Lower School. Children will be learning in a variety of ways: as a whole class, in small groups and individually depending on the activity to be followed (see scheme of work).

Each lesson should be structured to have clear skill based learning objectives which are shared with the children, success criteria to scaffold learning, an activity with three levels of challenge to ensure clear differentiation and a plenary which assesses learning, and informs future planning. Work is presented in a variety of ways with each unit ending with a quality product that demonstrates what the children have learnt.

## **Implementation**

### **Organisation:**

At St Thomas' we operate a two year rolling programme within Lower School (Year 3 & 4), and within Upper School (Year 5 & 6). It is expected that in terms where a History topic is taught, teachers will use between one and two hours of their flexi-time per week to cover the curriculum.

In the Lower School, the children study Ancient Egypt, Stone Age to Iron Age and Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings.

In the Upper School the children study The Ancient Maya, The Rise and Fall of the British Monarchy and Ancient Greece. Upper School children also study a local history topic in a special themed week entitled 'The Horrible History of Brentwood'.

Pupils are taught in mixed ability classes with differentiation including extension and support. We use the national curriculum programmes of study for History as the basis for our curriculum planning, but have adapted this to our local context by building on the successful units of work already in place.

We carry out curriculum planning in history in 3 phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long term plan maps the History topics studied in each term during Key Stage 2; the History Curriculum Leader works this out in conjunction with teaching staff in each year group.

### **Cross-Curricular Links:**

**English** History contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Some of the texts we use in English are historical in nature. Children develop oracy through discussing historical questions or presenting their findings to the rest of the class. They develop their writing ability by composing non-narrative writing, non-chronological reports, diaries, letters, note-taking and skim reading.

**Mathematics** History teaching contributes to the teaching of mathematics in a variety of ways. Children learn to use numbers when developing a sense of chronology through doing activities such as timelines, looking at Roman numerals. Children learn to interpret information presented in graphical or diagrammatic form, for example when analysing population statistics.

**Computing** Children use computing in history to enhance their skills in data handling and in presenting written work, and they research information using the internet and other

software/apps. Children have the opportunity to use the iPads to record and use photographic images. The use of other communication devices such as digital Dictaphones will also be encouraged to support learning and recording.

**PSHE and Citizenship** History contributes significantly to the teaching of personal, social, citizenship and health education. Children develop self-confidence by having opportunities to explain their views on a number of social questions such as how society should respond to poverty and homelessness. They discover how to be active citizens in a democratic society by learning how laws are made and changed, and they learn how to recognise and challenge stereotypes and to appreciate that racism is a harmful aspect of society. They learn how society is made up of people from different cultures and start to develop tolerance and respect for others.

### Mastery in History

Effective mastery in History encourages all pupils to think critically about the past and evaluate the impact of historical events on the modern world.

Pupils are encouraged to compare and contrast customs and beliefs from one society to another.

Higher order questioning during lessons ensures that pupils can deepen their understanding by empathising with people of the past and analysing their motivation and decisions. In addition, children are encouraged to ask their own deep thinking questions and are given opportunities to reflect, discuss and debate with their peers.

Greater time is spent developing historical skills such as interpretation and enquiry. The most confident children: select the most appropriate source of evidence; evaluate the reliability of sources and form their own opinion about historical events from a range of sources.

As a result of this, pupils will have comprehensive understanding of the past and develop critical thinking skills.

### Teaching History to Children with Special Educational Needs (SEND)

Differentiation will be achieved through accessibility of resources, complexity of tasks, expectation of outcome and support. Ideas for differentiation are built into the scheme of work. Thus, able pupils and those with SEND are provided for.

We ensure that historical learning offers equal interests and opportunities to girls and boys and that it prepares them adequately for adult membership of a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society. In choosing resources teachers will be guided by the school policies on equal opportunities.

We aim to make appropriate provision for pupils identified as having special educational needs. The most effective teaching in the classroom for children with SEND is the same as for all children, teaching which is relevant and will encourage, interest and motivate. Alongside

the lesson differentiation, an important element in the learning support which is provided is the encouragement given to children to increase confidence and self-esteem.

### Disability Equality Scheme

At St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School we recognise our duties and responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act as outlined in our Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan. (December 2007). It is our aim that through specific and accurate planning, resource allocation, differentiated teaching and use of adult intervention and support ( where necessary), that every child irrespective of disability, will have full access to the curriculum and feel and be enabled to participate actively in developing to their full potential their skills, knowledge and understanding. We will ensure that all 'reasonable adjustments' are made to help both children and adults with identified special needs and disabilities to participate in the history curriculum.

### Assessment and Recording

Assessment opportunities are integral to historical teaching. Assessment will be ongoing and will include observation, questioning and marking of work. Weeks have been set aside in the scheme of work for each topic for informal assessment to evaluate and record pupil progress within the Upper or Lower School. Evidence of coverage and standards will be retained by the History Curriculum Leader and curriculum coverage and individual attainment will be reported to parents, colleagues and schools in the next phase. Alongside teacher assessments, children will also take an active role in evaluating their own learning and progression. At the end of the academic year teachers use the history subject assessment statements to make a judgement on whether children are working above, at, below or significantly below age related expectation. These are recorded on Target Tracker and reported to parents via the end of year report, where children are also given a grade (a, b or c) for effort.

### Resources

The History Curriculum Leader will ensure that staff and pupils have access to and experience of materials that excite and facilitate good practice in History. The resources at St. Thomas' are kept in labelled topic boxes, one for each unit. These include a range of books, pictures, photographic material, tape recordings etc. Artefacts for each topic are kept in separate labelled boxes while DVDs are located on shelving in the Lower and Upper schools. We also have access to a range of online resources relating to the history curriculum and encourage the use of other computing resources e.g. internet, iPads and laptops. Lesson plans, presentations and resources to support the teaching of the subject are kept on the school network. School trips are also arranged to support and extend the work of the classroom, and we welcome visitors into school to share their expertise and experience.

### Monitoring and Review

Monitoring of the standards of children's work and the quality of teaching in history is the responsibility of the History Curriculum Leader. The role of the History Curriculum Leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of history, being informed about current

developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The History Curriculum Leader will monitor, advise, promote confidence and model good practice amongst staff and pupils.

#### Role of the Governing Body

Every Governor takes a special interest in at least one curriculum area or focus in the school. At present there is a named governor for History who supports the curriculum subject leader and keeps up to date with policies, strategies, procedures etc. through regular visits. These visits are used to become familiar with history provision and monitor history teaching, observe lessons first hand and to promote levels of accountability, challenge and support. Following a governor visit, a written report is submitted to the History Curriculum Leader/Headteacher.

#### Review

The policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years, or as new guidance becomes available to schools from Department of Education (DfE)

Policy reviewed: January 2020

Next policy review date: January 2023