

# History Policy



Date of Amendment: **October 2024**

Review Date: **October 2027**

## **Introduction**

History is a foundation subject in the National Curriculum. The fundamental knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject are set out in the National Curriculum programmes of study.

Our History curriculum is accessible to all learners, at a level appropriate to their needs.

This policy outlines the teaching, organisation and management of history taught and learnt at St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School.

The main purposes of this policy are:

- To establish an entitlement for all pupils.
- To establish expectations for teachers of this subject.
- To promote continuity and coherence across the school.

## **Intent**

History teaching at St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School has been planned to show a clear learning journey. Our aim is to stimulate and develop the children's natural curiosity about people and events in the past, to give them a sense of identity and to encourage them to think about how the past influences the present.

As a school, we want the children to engage fully in their learning, asking questions and developing as critical thinkers. Using a range of resources and experiences, we teach the children to develop a sense of chronology, to know where their learning fits into a chronological framework and encourage them to think about and appreciate change over time.

We teach children to be global citizens. By considering how people lived in the past, they learn to value their own and other people's cultures in a modern, multi-cultural Britain as well as understanding how Britain is part of a wider European culture.

History makes a significant contribution to the citizenship education in our school and we want to show how Britain has developed as a democratic society. We teach children to understand the significance of events in the past and how they have shaped the way we live our lives today. In doing so we aim to develop skills of enquiry, analysis, interpretation and problem-solving.

Our History curriculum has been designed to cover the areas of study and the key elements set out in the National Curriculum. It is organised to show progression in the skills, knowledge and vocabulary to be taught in EYFS, Key Stage One, Lower Key Stage Two and Upper Key Stage Two. Chronological Understanding, Historical Understanding, Historical Enquiry, Interpretations of History, Organisation and Communication are all mapped out to ensure that the children build on their previous knowledge and skills, make links to other areas of learning and embed key concepts into their long-term memory.

When covering these strands, the content is carefully organised across the primary school in a long-term plan. Content knowledge, vocabulary and skills are planned in greater detail in the medium-term plan. History is delivered through subject-specific teaching, whilst meaningful links to other curriculum areas are made where possible to strengthen connections and understanding for the children.

## **Access and Entitlement**

At St Thomas' Primary School, 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 interests will ensure that every child will have equal access to history learning regardless of ability, gender, cultural, intellectual or social differences.

Our history teaching focuses on enabling the children to think as historians and will be as interactive and practical wherever possible. We place an emphasis on examining high quality historical artefacts and primary sources such as photos, pictures, paintings, narratives, books, video clips, historical maps and the internet. We teach the children to handle these correctly, showing care and consideration. The artefacts are sourced for each topic and are used to support understanding and develop historical enquiry skills. Visiting sites of historical significance are planned for where appropriate and we look to encourage visitors into school to talk about their own experiences of events in the past. We recognise the value and importance of stories in history teaching and regard this as an important way of stimulating interest in the past. We focus on helping children to 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 actively encourage discussion and questioning and, throughout the process, we promote the skills of observation, questioning and research that are so essential to historical enquiry. Contributions from all children is encouraged, respected and valued. 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. 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.
- Giving opportunities for the children to work independently, in pairs and in groups of different sizes, both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Grouping children by ability in the room and setting different tasks for each ability group.
- Providing resources of different complexity depending on the ability of the child.
- Using LSAs and other adults in the room to support children individually or as a group.

Emphasis is placed on the development of skills and a historical perspective alongside factual knowledge. A variety of teaching approaches are used:

- Teacher presentations, role play, drama and story-telling.
- Question and answer sessions, discussions and debates.
- Individual and group research.
- Investigating artefacts and sources of evidence.
- Field work and trips of historic interest.
- Drama groups and guest speakers.

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The Programmes of Study for history are taught across the primary school in order for the children to make progress in the 6 key areas of historical learning. The key areas are:

- Know and understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative.
- Know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world.
- Gain an understanding of abstract terms such as 'empire', 'civilisation'
- Understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections, develop questions and draw conclusions.
- Understand the methods of historical enquiry
- Gain historical perspective

A range of teaching and learning strategies will be used to develop pupil's historical knowledge, skills and enthusiasm. Progression is built into each unit. Children will learn in a variety of ways: as a whole class, in smaller groups and individually, depending on the activity.

Carefully planned lessons will build on prior knowledge and teach new knowledge. All learning will start by revisiting prior knowledge. This will be scaffolded to support the children to recall previous learning and make connections. Staff model explicitly the subject-specific vocabulary, knowledge and skills relevant to the learning to allow the children to integrate new knowledge. These are also included on classroom learning walls and displays, along with key questions, facts and examples of the children's work, and are added to throughout the topic.

A unit of work will always begin with a key question or line of enquiry. Each lesson is structured to have a clear skill-based learning objective which is shared with the children, success criteria to scaffold learning and an activity with three levels of challenge to ensure clear adaptation, and a plenary which assesses learning and informs future planning.

## Implementation

### Subject Content and Organisation:

At St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School, we operate a 2-year rolling programme within KS1 (Year 1 and 2), Lower KS2 (Year 3 and 4) and Upper KS2 (Year 5 and 6).

It is expected that a history topic will use between one and two hours of flexi-time per week to cover the curriculum.

**KS1** – history is taught every week for half a term.

**KS2** – history is taught every other week for 9 lessons

Pupils are taught in mixed ability classes.

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**KS1** - There are 4 units of study.

These are organised into the following topics:

## Cycle A

Autumn 2	Spring 2	Summer 2
1-week mini topic: <b>First World War Remembrance</b> (Events beyond living memory that are commemorated annually) 5 weeks: <b>Toys Then and Now</b> <i>(Changes within living memory)</i>	<b>Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole</b> <i>(Significant individuals)</i>	<b>The Great Fire of London</b> Events beyond living memory

## Cycle B

Autumn 2	Spring 2	Summer 2
1-week mini topic: <b>Gunpowder Plot</b> (Events beyond living memory that are commemorated annually) 5 weeks: <b>Victorian Schools</b> (How schools have changed and the history of <b>our school</b> ) <i>(Changes within living memory and Local history – CROSS-REF geography)</i>	<b>Famous Explorers</b> <i>(Significant individuals)</i>	<b>The Moon Landing</b> <i>(Changes within living memory)</i>  <i>Local history – St Thomas of Canterbury – our Patron Saint's feast day – July</i>

## Lower KS2 (Years 3 and 4)

### Cycle A

Autumn	Spring	Summer
The achievements of early civilisations: Ancient Egypt	Britain's Settlement Anglo-Saxons and Vikings	

### Cycle B

Autumn	Spring	Summer
Changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age	The Roman Empire and its impact on Britain	

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### Upper KS2 (Years 5 and 6)

#### Cycle A

Autumn	Spring	Summer
<b>A non-European society that contrasts with British History: Ancient Mayan</b>		<b>British History The Changing Power of the Monarchy</b>

#### Cycle B

Autumn	Spring	Summer
<b>Ancient Greece Greek life and their achievements and influence on the western world</b>		<b>A Local history study History of Brentwood</b>

### 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 and the children are also encouraged to locate specific information from non-fiction texts. Children develop oracy through discussing historical questions or presenting their findings to the rest of the class and listening and responding to the thoughts of others. Drama and role play activities play a significant part in the delivery of the History curriculum as children are encouraged to use language and actions to explore and convey historical situations, characters and emotions. They develop their writing ability by composing non-narrative writing, non-chronological reports, diaries, letters, note-taking and skim reading. As a school, we are very clear about implementing tiered subject-specific vocabulary throughout the curriculum.

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, sequencing events and 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 are also encouraged to support learning and communicating findings.

PSHE and Citizenship - History contributes significantly to the teaching of personal, social, health and citizenship education. Children develop self-confidence by having opportunities to explain their views on a number of social questions such e.g. 'Why was Florence Nightingale discouraged from becoming a nurse?' Or 'How should society respond to homelessness and poverty?' They discover how to be active citizens in a democratic society by learning how laws are made and changed, how to recognise and challenge stereotypes and to appreciate that racism is a harmful aspect of society. They learn how

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society is made up of people from different backgrounds and cultures and start to develop tolerance and respect for others.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development - In our teaching of History, both in class and in whole school worship, we contribute, where possible, to the children's spiritual development, for example, 'What are we remembering on Remembrance Day?' We also provide children with the moral questions of what is right and wrong, for example, the role of nurses in the time of Florence Nightingale.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

We teach History as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception classes are part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the history side of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). History makes a significant contribution to developing a child's knowledge and understanding of the world and reception class children begin by considering change in their own lives.

Through imaginative play, stories and discussion, they will look at all aspects of themselves as a baby, including appearance, toys, clothes and food, and consider how they differ today. They will start to develop a sense of chronology by sequencing stories, picture cards, photographs, objects, events, the days of the week and daily routines in school and at home, discovering the meaning of vocabulary (e.g. 'old' and 'new') in relation to their own lives.

### **Mastery in History**

We want the children to understand the knowledge so that it becomes embedded. This will ensure that the children can build on what they know and understand from one year to the next. Continuous references to key facts and significant individuals are used to review learning as a topic progresses and questions are asked to check that the children know more and remember more. We want the children to be able to talk about their learning, to remember key facts, names and dates, and to apply the skills that they have learned to other areas of the curriculum.

Effective mastery in History encourages all pupils to think critically about the past and evaluate the impact of historical events on the modern world. Higher order questioning during lessons ensures that pupils can deepen their understanding by empathising with people in 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.

A great amount of time is spent developing historical skills such as interpretation and enquiry. We encourage the most confident children to select the most appropriate source of evidence, evaluate its reliability and form their own opinions about historical events from a range of sources.

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

### **History and inclusion:**

At St Thomas' Primary School, we teach history to all children, whatever their ability or individual needs. We aim to provide exciting, relevant and interesting learning opportunities that enable all children to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Appropriate ideas and provision for able learners and those identified as having special educational needs (including disabilities and EAL) are built into the planning and adaptation and

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differentiation will be achieved through the accessibility of resources, complexity of tasks, expectations of outcome and level of support.

In line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, we are committed to providing a teaching environment that is conducive to learning. Each child is valued, respected and challenged regardless of race, gender, religion, social background or disability.

We ensure that history learning offers equal interests and opportunities to girls and boys to help prepare them for adult membership of a multi-ethnic and multicultural society.

When progress falls significantly below expectations, different or additional action is taken to enable the child to learn more effectively. This may include support from a variety of people, adapted teaching materials, flexible classroom organisation, differentiated activities and alternative teaching styles. On-going assessments are made by the class teachers to ensure that our teaching is matched to each child's needs.

We enable children to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning History. Where children are to participate in activities outside of the classroom, for example a trip to Colchester Castle, a risk assessment is carried out prior to the activity to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all children.

### **Resources**

The History Curriculum leader will ensure that staff and pupils have access to materials that will excite and facilitate good practice in History teaching and learning. The resources for each unit are kept in labelled boxes (KS1 – Kenya Room, KS2 – Shelves in the hall). These include a range of books, pictures, photographs, recordings, artefacts, DVDS etc. We also have access to a range of online resources relating to the units and encourage the use of other computing resources such as the internet, iPads and laptops. Lesson overviews, plans, presentations and resources to support the teaching of the subject are kept on the school network. School trips and drama groups are arranged to support and extend the work in the classroom and we welcome visitors into school to share their experiences and expertise.

### **Assessment**

Assessment opportunities are integral to history teaching. Classteachers will be informally assessing children during each History lesson through a process of close observations, listening and questioning, and the marking of children's work. Retrieval feedback is verbally built into the beginning of each lesson, with specific topic related questions which revisit and build upon previous knowledge. At the end of each unit this is in the written form of 'Flashback 4' - four questions designed to assess knowledge of the topic and also previous topics covered.

Children indicate which challenge they have attempted in their work by recording C1, C2 or C3 in the margin. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher marks the work and ticks the LO to indicate how well it has been met, in line with the whole school feedback policy. Alongside teacher assessments, children will also take an active role in evaluating their own learning and progression using the RAG traffic light system. This informs the classteacher how well they believe they have achieved the learning objective and helps the pupils to recognise their own strengths and weaknesses and appreciate how they can improve their future work.



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Teachers record the progress made by the children against the learning objectives for their lessons. E.g. What have the children learned? What skills have they developed? The classteacher uses this information to assess the impact of previous learning and to plan future work.

At the end of the academic year, teachers use the history subject statements to make a judgement as to whether the children are working at, below or above age-related expectations. This data is collated on Insight for analysis.

EYFS teachers assess the children against the ELG criteria for the 'Past and Present' strand at the end of the academic year.

### **Monitoring and review**

The quality of teaching and learning is monitored by the history subject lead. The role of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of history, being informed of developments in the subject and providing a strategic lead and direction for the school. The history curriculum lead with monitor, advise, promote confidence and model good practice amongst staff and pupils.

### **Role of the Governing Body**

There is a named governor for history who supports the curriculum subject leader and keeps up to date with policies, strategies and procedures. Through regular visits, the governor becomes familiar with history provision across the whole primary school and monitors the history teaching and learning through lesson observations and talking to children and staff. The role of the governor is to promote levels of accountability, to challenge and to support. Following a visit, a written report is submitted to the subject leader and the Headteacher and feedback is given to the governing body.

## **Impact**

The quality of teaching and learning at St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School is measured in the following ways:

**Book Scrutiny** – This happens every term. The subject leader checks a selection of books from each class to ensure that a range of quality activities are being taught in line with the schemes of work and that children are acquiring knowledge, skills and vocabulary in an appropriate sequence. There should be evidence that the children have made progress from their individual starting points, in line with the skills progression map, and that challenges and extension activities are given for those children working at greater depth. Marking across the school should be consistent with the school's Feedback Policy and the challenge attempted and pupil's self-assessment (RAG traffic lights) should be evident to inform the teacher as to how well pupils believe they have achieved the learning objective for the lesson.

**Pupil Voice** - At St Thomas', 'Pupil Voice' shows how children are confident to talk to other children and adults in school about what they have learned, using subject-specific vocabulary, the skills they have used and which aspects of the topic they have enjoyed. Recall of their learning over time will show an awareness of where different aspects of their learning fit into a chronological framework.

**Data** - It is the role of the History Subject Leader to analyse the data across each class/year group/key stage to ensure that enough pupils are achieving the expected levels of achievement and to identify any gaps in teaching and learning or adaptations needed to planning and resourcing.

**Displays** –When walking about the school, working walls and time lines should be up to date and vocabulary on display.

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**Lesson drop-ins** - Lesson observations show that children are motivated and engaged and can access the tasks. There is evidence of children taking ownership of their learning by asking their own questions and following lines of enquiry.

**Staff Voice** - Staff Voice is an informal questionnaire that gives each teacher (usually towards the end of the academic year) an opportunity to feedback to the subject leader, highlighting particular successes and also any resources, changes or amendments needed, or other ideas.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years or as new guidance becomes available from the Department of Education (DFE).

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