

Whitchurch Combined School

History Policy



Intent

Our main objective in the delivery of history at Whitchurch Combined School is to stimulate the children's interest and understanding about the life of people who lived in the past. Three of our values are to 'Be Curious', 'Be Respectful' and 'Be Proud'. 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 people'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 also teach them to investigate these past events and, by so doing, to develop the skills of enquiry, analysis, interpretation, organisation and communication.

At Whitchurch School we follow the statutory guidance for history as stated in the New Primary Curriculum 2014.

- *know and understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the earliest times to the present day: how people's lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world.*
- *know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world: the nature of ancient civilisations; the expansion and dissolution of empires; characteristic features of past non-European societies; achievements and follies of mankind.*
- *gain and deploy a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as 'empire', 'civilisation', 'parliament' and 'peasantry'.*
- *understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically-valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses.*
- *understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed.*
- *gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections between local, regional, national, and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history; and between short- and long-term timescales.*

Through the programmes of study, the children acquire and develop the key knowledge that has been identified within each unit and across each year group. Key skills are also mapped for each year group and are progressive throughout the school. The curriculum is designed to ensure that children are able to acquire key historical knowledge through practical experiences; access to primary and secondary sources of evidence, building arguments and explaining concepts confidently. The school's approach to history takes account of the school's own context, ensuring access to people with specialist expertise and places of historic interest as part of the school's commitment to learning outside the classroom. Cross-curricular opportunities are also identified, mapped, and planned to ensure contextual relevance. Children are encouraged to ask questions and be curious about the past and a love of history is nurtured through a whole school ethos and a varied history curriculum.

Implementation

The enjoyment of history is evident around the school. In classrooms, teachers create a positive attitude to history learning through displays and a classroom environment where children are encouraged to be curious, respectful and proud of their heritage. Our whole school approach to the teaching and learning of history involves the following.

- History is taught in planned and arranged topic blocks by the class teacher which incorporates a project-based approach wherever possible. This is a strategy to enable the achievement of a greater depth of knowledge.
- Existing knowledge is checked at the beginning of each topic. This ensures that teaching is informed by the children's starting points.
- Through planning, teachers involve problem solving opportunities that allow children to apply their historical knowledge and skills to find out answers for themselves. Children are encouraged to ask their own questions and be given opportunities to use their skills and research to discover the answers. This curiosity is celebrated within the classroom. Planning involves teachers creating engaging lessons, to aid understanding of conceptual knowledge. Teachers use precise questioning in class to test conceptual knowledge and skills and assess pupils regularly to identify those children with gaps in learning, so that all pupils keep up. Tasks are selected and designed to provide appropriate challenges to all learners.
- We build upon the knowledge and skills development of the previous years, using our history Skills and Knowledge Progression Map. History skills are embedded into lessons to ensure that skills are systematically developed throughout the children's school career and new vocabulary and challenging concepts are introduced through direct teaching.
- Children are offered a wide range of extracurricular activities, visits, trips and workshops with experts to complement and broaden the curriculum. These are purposeful and link with the knowledge being taught in class.
- At the end of each topic, key knowledge is reviewed by the children and rigorously checked by the teacher and consolidated as necessary.
- Each history lesson begins with a history flashback where children answer quick questions to revise knowledge from a lesson in the current topic, one from the previous topic and one from a previous year. The aim of this is to continually revise what they have learnt so that they can remember more.
- Children are encouraged to ask their own questions and be given opportunities to use their skills and research to discover the answers. This curiosity is celebrated within the classroom.
- Teachers ask a range of questions which enable all children to take part, listening carefully to answers and taking learning forward, using open and closed questions and allowing children time to think.

Developing a greater sense of curiosity is linked to our teaching of key skills alongside the knowledge-based objectives of the curriculum. We use a variety of teaching and learning styles in history lessons. Sometimes whole class teaching, while at other times we engage the children in group, paired or individual enquiry-based activities.

In each lesson, children are guided towards the learning objective, through the use of success criteria and differentiated opportunities. The LO and success criteria are shared at the beginning of the lesson and reviewed by children (teacher in KS1 and EYFS) at the end. This supports teacher assessment whereby a review work of children's work is made and individual target areas identified.

We recognise that there are children of very different abilities in all classes, and we ensure that we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by using differentiated activities, resources etc. and by using the TAs to support the work of individual children or groups of children.

EYFS

In the Reception class 'Knowledge and Understanding of the World' is one of the strands of the EYFS. History is an integral part of this strand. The children progress and develop their skills through cross curricular work, and they are assessed against the Early Learning Goals. In particular children are encouraged to make sense of their own life-story and family's history by talking about the lives of people around them and their roles in society. They begin to identify some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class and understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

KS1

History is taught, as far as possible, from a position of first-hand experience, encouraging an awareness of the past, and using common words and phrases relating to the passing of time. Children are taught where the people and events they study fit within a chronological framework and to identify similarities and differences between ways of life in different periods. They are encouraged to ask and answer questions, choosing and using parts of stories and other sources to show that they know and understand key features of events. They are also taught to understand some of the ways in which we find out about the past and identify different ways in which it is represented.

KS2

Children continue their history journey with opportunities to build on their existing knowledge and to develop their understanding of concepts and skills. They continue to develop a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history, establishing clear narratives within and across the periods they study. They are taught to make connections and identify contrasts and trends over time and develop the appropriate use of historical terms. They are encouraged to devise historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity and difference, and significance. Teachers use a range of strategies including access to artefacts, to engage pupils and encourage them to make connections to themselves and the past.

Impact

History at Whitchurch enables children to see themselves as historians who enjoy learning about the past and its effects on modern day life. These historians are curious and respectful, reflective, and proud of their heritage. Through carefully planned topics, children are able to ask questions and have learnt key skills to find answers to their questions. Through various workshops, trips and interactions with experts, children have the understanding that history has affected our lives. Children learn about the possibilities for careers in history. Through our broad and varied curriculum our children ask questions and seek to find answers in inquisitive, imaginative and analytical ways.

Assessment

As part of the introduction to each new history topic, teachers review what the children know already and identify what they would like to learn. This informs the programme of study so that it takes account of children's starting points as well as their specific interests.

Lessons are planned to ensure that key knowledge is developed over time, over the course of each history block and in the correct sequence. Key knowledge is reviewed by the children and consolidated by the teacher at the end of each unit of work. Lessons within each unit are also planned to ensure the systematic development of the key identified skills across the school.

By the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the skills and subject knowledge specified in the relevant programme of study as set out in the National Curriculum. These are set out as statutory requirements.

Children receive effective feedback through ongoing teacher assessment, both orally and through written feedback in line with the success criteria. Children are guided towards achievement of the main objective through the use of process-based 'success criteria', provided by and explained by the teacher. Children refer to these during the lesson and they precede outcomes of work in children's books. The success criteria are used to identify areas of difficulty by children and teachers when reviewing and assessing work.

Ongoing assessment also includes:

- Observing children at work, individually, in pairs, in a group, and in classes.
- Questioning, talking and listening to children
- Considering work/materials / investigations produced by children together with discussion about this with them.

In EYFS, we assess the children's Understanding of the World according to the Development Matters statements.

Planning and Resources

Key knowledge and skills, in line with the National Curriculum are mapped on the whole school 'History Knowledge and Skills Progression Map' and this shows the key knowledge and skills of each unit and how they build through the school. The school's own context is also considered and opportunities for learning outside the classroom, including the use of specific school resources such as the local area and relevant educational visits, are included on the map and are planned by teachers. Cross curricular links are also mapped to further support the contextual relevance of the history curriculum.

High-quality history resources to support the teaching of all units and topics from EYFS to Y6, are used consistently and maintained by the subject leader. These are kept in a central store and are labelled and easily accessible to all staff. As well as these, the EYFS classes have a range of resources for easy access to children during exploration. The library contains a rich and varied supply of history topic books to support children's individual research and all classes have access to these during their weekly allocated library slot.

Organisation

Within the academic year, children study history in blocks, as outlined in the overall curriculum framework overview. This allows children to enhance their historic knowledge and develop historical skills throughout the duration of each block. Links are made with previous learning in history as well. English skills are also promoted through the use of linked texts and opportunities for pupils to write about their learning in a variety of genres. This model also promotes the achievement of a greater depth of understanding by the end of a unit.

Equal Opportunities

At Whitchurch Combined School, we are committed to providing a teaching environment which ensures all children are provided with the same learning opportunities regardless of social class, gender, culture, race, special educational need or disability. Teachers use a range of strategies to ensure inclusion and also to maintain a positive ethos where children demonstrate positive attitudes towards others.

Inclusion

History teaching considers the needs of different individuals and groups for learners and tasks are designed and differentiated as appropriate to ensure an appropriate level of challenge. Supporting adults are also deployed effectively to ensure focused support where this is necessary.

Teachers use a range of inclusion strategies, including paired work, open questions and direct, differentiated questioning and the activation of prior knowledge and contextual learning. This supports the inclusion and motivation of all learners ensuring that optimum progress is made throughout each part of the lesson.

Health and Safety

The National Curriculum requires teachers to promote amongst children a sense of personal responsibility for their health and safety. Children are given clear guidance when undertaking activities that may pose risks and are carefully supervised.

Resources

The majority of the school's history resources are kept in a central store area. The equipment is stored in labelled trays and cupboards. The library contains a good supply of history-related books to support children's individual research. Each class has an interactive whiteboard which has internet access. This gives teachers the opportunity to use websites where appropriate.

Role of the Subject Leader

The subject leader's responsibilities are:

- To ensure the high profile of the subject and provide a strategic lead and direction for history in the school.
- To maintain and ensure use of the central supply of history resources, in accordance with those specific to each year group and topic.
- To support colleagues in their teaching of history and provide CPD support where required.
- To ensure progression of the key knowledge and skills identified within each unit and that these are integral to the programme of study and secure at the end of each age phase.
- To monitor books and ensure that key knowledge is evidenced in outcomes, alongside and as supported, by SLT.
- To monitor planning and oversee the teaching of history.
- To lead further improvement in and development of the subject as informed by effective subject overview.
- To ensure that the history curriculum enables the progress and raises the attainment of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have low attainment.
- To ensure that the history curriculum takes account of the school's context, promotes children's pride in the local area and provides access to positive role models from the immediate and wider local area to enhance the history curriculum.
- To establish links with external agencies and individuals with specialist expertise to enrich teaching and learning in history.

14. Review

This document will be reviewed annually by the history co-ordinator, who will discuss any changes with the staff.

Date of Policy: April 2025

Policy Review Date: April 2026