

St Alban's C of E Academy

In Association with:
Manor Multi-Academy Trust



History Policy

Rationale

The aim of history teaching here at St Albans's C of E Academy 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 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 and problem-solving.

The aims of history in our school are:

- 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;
- to enable children to know and understand about significant events in British history from the earliest times and to appreciate how things have changed in National life over time.
- to enable children to know about significant historical events, people and places in their own locality.
- to enable children to know about the lives of significant individuals in the past who have contributed.
- to National and International achievements.
- to develop a sense of chronology and understand the concepts of cause and consequence
- 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;
- to understand how Britain is part of a wider European culture and to study some aspects of European history;
- to know and understand significant aspects of the historical development of the wider world;
- to help children understand society and their place within it, so that they develop a sense of their cultural heritage;
- to develop in children the skills of enquiry, investigation, analysis, connections evaluation and presentation.
- to gain and use a gain and deploy a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as 'empire', 'civilisation', 'parliament' and 'peasantry'

Teaching and learning style

History teaching focuses on enabling children to think as historians. We place an emphasis on examining historical artefacts and primary sources. In each key stage we give children the opportunity to visit sites of historical significance. We encourage visitors to come into the 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 in the room and setting different tasks for each ability group; providing resources of different complexity depending on the ability of the child;
- using classroom assistants to support children individually or in groups.

History curriculum planning

We use the national scheme of work for history as the basis for our curriculum planning in history. We ensure that there are opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit and we build planned progression into the scheme of work so that the children are increasingly challenged as they move up through the school.

We carry out curriculum planning in history in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the history topics studied in each term during each key stage; the history subject leader works this out in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each year group and the children study history topics in conjunction with other subjects, especially at Key Stage 1. Some topics have a particular historical focus and in Key Stage 2 we place an increasing emphasis on independent historical study. We teach the knowledge, skills and understanding set out in the National Curriculum through the corresponding programme of study.

As the basis for our medium-term plans, we use the national scheme of work which gives details of each unit of work for each term. The history subject leader keeps and reviews these plans on a regular basis. Because we have some mixed-age classes, we carry out the medium-term planning on a two-year rotation cycle. By so doing, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the National Curriculum, but do not have to repeat topics.

The class teacher writes the lesson plans for each history lesson (short-term plans). These plans list the specific learning objectives of each lesson. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, although s/he and the history subject leader often discuss them on an informal basis.

Foundation Stage

We teach history in reception classes as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is 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) by using the school's Building Blocks

Assessment tool. History makes a significant contribution to the developing of a child's knowledge and understanding of the world through activities such as dressing up in historical costumes, looking at pictures of famous people in history or discovering the meaning of new and old in relation to their own lives.

The contribution of history to other subjects 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 that we use in the Literacy Hour are historical in nature. For example, in Key Stage 2 we use the book *Smith* by Leon Garfield to enhance the children's knowledge and understanding of life in Victorian Britain. Children develop oracy through discussing historical questions or presenting their findings to the rest of the class. They develop their writing ability by composing reports and letters and through using writing frames.

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 using time-lines. Children learn to interpret information presented in graphical or diagrammatic form, for example they study the impact of the plague by analysing population statistics. Children learn about number systems from Ancient Civilisations from across the world.

Information and communication technology (ICT)

We use ICT in history teaching where appropriate and we meet the statutory requirement for children to use ICT as part of their work in history at Key Stage 2. Children use ICT in history to enhance their skills in data handling and in presenting written work, and they research information using the Internet and Encarta. Children have the opportunity to use the digital camera to record and use photographic images and they communicate with other children in other schools and countries by using e-mail.

Personal, social and health education (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.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

When teaching history, we contribute to the children's spiritual development where possible, for example, with the Key Stage 1 unit of work, 'What are we remembering on Remembrance Day?' We also provide children with the opportunity to discuss moral questions, or what is right and wrong, when studying topics such as child labour in Victorian Britain. Children learn about the role of the church in Tudor times and they find out how British society has changed over time. The history curriculum enables children to understand that Britain's rich cultural heritage can be further enriched by the multi-cultural British society of today.

Teaching history to children with special educational needs

At our school we teach history to all children, whatever their ability. History forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our history teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

Intervention through School Action and School Action Plus will lead to the creation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children with special educational needs. The IEP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to history.

We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning history. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a visit to an archaeological dig, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

Gifted & talented Learners

In History staff will develop differentiated weekly plans to ensure pupils who are identified as gifted in History and achieving exceptionally high levels of achievement are catered for. For these pupils accelerated learning experiences are accessed by the pupils through investigative work, or enrichment activities. Open ended investigations are planned for to link to the History unit being covered. Support from the school Gifted & Talented co-ordinator/ science co-ordinator can be sought to support this process.

Assessment and recording

We assess children's work in history by making informal judgements as we observe them during each history lesson. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher marks the work and comments as necessary. At the end of a unit of work, the teacher makes a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to National expectation and records the children's grades in a mark book. We use these grades as a basis for assessing the progress of the child and we pass this information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

The history subject leader keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio. These demonstrate what the expected level of achievement is in history for each age group in the school.

Resources

There are sufficient resources for all history teaching units in the school. We keep these resources in a central store. The library contains a good supply of topic books and software to support children's individual research.

Monitoring and review

Monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in history is the responsibility of the history subject leader and senior management team of the school. The work of the history subject 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 subject leader has specially-allocated time in which to fulfil this role by reviewing samples of children's work and visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject. Senior management team will also monitor and review history teaching and learning across the school.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by staff and governors