

Chalfont St Peter Infant School
'Learning Together and Celebrating Success'

History Policy

Aims and objectives

The aim of History teaching at our school is to stimulate the children's interest and understanding about the life of people who lived in the past. Through their work in History children learn to be Historians. 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 multi-cultural 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.

Our objectives in the teaching of history 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 about significant events in British history, and to appreciate how things have changed over time;
- to develop a sense of chronology;
- 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, evaluation and presentation;
- to develop the cross-curricular use of history in other subjects;

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 to support our Destinations Curriculum. 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 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 recognise that in all classes, children have a wide range of ability 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 tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty, some children not completing 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

History is a foundation subject in the National Curriculum. We use the national scheme of work as the basis for our curriculum planning in history, but we have adapted this to our local context through our Destinations Curriculum, building on the successful units of work already in place. We ensure that there are opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we plan progression into the scheme of work, so that the children are increasingly challenged as they move 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; the subject leader devises this plan in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each year group, and the children study history topics in conjunction with other subjects. We teach the knowledge, skills and understanding set out in the National Curriculum through the corresponding programme of study.

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We use the national scheme of work as the basis for our medium-term plans as well, which give details of each unit of work for each term. The subject leader keeps and reviews these plans on a regular basis.

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

The 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) which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. History makes a significant contribution to developing 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 vocabulary ('new' and 'old', for example) in relation to their own lives.

The contribution of history to teaching in other curriculum areas

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. 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

The teaching of history contributes to children's mathematical understanding in a variety of ways. Children learn to use numbers when developing a sense of chronology through activities such as creating time lines and through sequencing events in their own lives

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship

History contributes significantly to the teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship. 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. They learn how society is made up of people from different cultures, and they start to develop tolerance and respect for others.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

In our teaching of history, we contribute, where possible, to the children's spiritual development, as in 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.

History and ICT

Information and communication technology enhances our teaching of history, wherever appropriate. The children use ICT in a variety of ways, such as word-processing and finding information on the Internet.

History and inclusion

At our school, we teach history to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. This accords with the school's curriculum policy of providing a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our history teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details, see separate policies: Special Educational Needs; Disability Discrimination; Gifted and Talented Children; English as an Additional Language (EAL).

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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. Assessments made by teachers against the National Curriculum's attainment targets and level descriptors allow us to consider each child's attainment and progress in relation to the levels expected. This helps to ensure that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

Intervention through School Action and School Action Plus will lead to the creation of a provision map for children with special educational needs. This may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to history.

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

Assessment for learning

Children demonstrate their ability in history in a variety of different ways. For example, by acting out a famous historical event. Teachers will assess children's work by making informal judgements during lessons. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher assesses the work and uses this information to plan for future learning. Written or verbal feedback is given to the child to help guide his or her progress.

At the end of a whole unit of work, the teacher makes a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the National Curriculum level of attainment, and records the children's grades. 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, where there is a box of equipment for each unit of work. The library contains a good supply of topic books and software to support children's individual research.

Monitoring and review

The coordination and planning of the history curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader, who also:

- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in history and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- gives the Head teacher an action plan in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in history and indicates areas for further improvement;
- reviews evidence of the children's work, and observes history lessons across the school.