

# **Brockwell Junior School**

## **History Policy**

How do you know who you are unless you know where you have come from? How can you tell what is going to happen, unless you know what's happened before? History isn't just about the past. It's about why we are who we are – and about what's next."

Tony Robinson

### **INTRODUCTION**

The study of history involves firing pupils' curiosity, and engaging them in investigating questions about people and events in the past in order to enable them to better understand their lives today and for a future as more informed and enlightened citizens. History helps them to understand the complexity of people's lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time. Through the study of history, pupils become detectives, finding and evaluating evidence, and they develop a wide range of critical thinking skills, which enable them to understand the contested nature of knowledge and to distinguish between 'fact' and subjectivity when it comes to reaching conclusions and making judgements about the past. What they learn can influence their decisions about personal choices, attitudes and values.

### **AIMS**

With this in mind, we have blended historical knowledge, skills and concepts to establish a school curriculum plan for history as an entitlement for all pupils that is:

- Motivational and enjoyable so that our pupils look forward to their history lessons and develop a life-long love of learning;
- Aspirational in terms of instilling in our pupils a desire to achieve the highest levels of success by providing them with the opportunities to excel, in terms of their acquisition of long-lasting knowledge and understanding and mastery of core historical skills, which will be invaluable for future study and employment;
- Logical, and broad and balanced in terms of the areas of subject content we have selected, which reflect the guidance and the demands of the National Curriculum. For example, we have ensured that content includes representative investigations of British history spanning the period from the Stone Age to the Norman invasion of 1066, as well as enquiries focusing on the achievements of ancient civilizations such as the Maya, Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece;
- Chronologically sequenced as pupils progress through the school, which allows them opportunities to evaluate both change and progress from one historical period to another, and to build on previous knowledge and understanding as they tackle more complex and demanding enquiries;

- Relevant in terms of the careful consideration that has been given to the selection of historical enquiries that extend the knowledge and understanding of pupils beyond 1066 e.g. evaluating the significance of the Battle of Britain, and the impact of changing working conditions for children during the Victorian Era;
- Progressively more challenging through the key stage, both in terms of the complexity of the subject knowledge we want our pupils to acquire and also the critical thinking skills we support them to utilise in order to ensure they understand the significance of that knowledge;
- Effective in its teaching by developing pupils' historical knowledge and historical thinking in a way that enables them to communicate their historical understanding in an increasingly sophisticated way;
- Rich in subject language, which is built upon and extended throughout the curriculum to further enhance knowledge and understanding;
- Built upon and has continuity with the provision for history established in Key Stage One;
- A link between "Now Knowledge" which is needed to make immediate learning flow and come to life (focusing on particular people, places and moments) and the enduring "Hereafter Knowledge" which gives us our chronological framework, enriches our historical language and our grasp of history's key concepts.
- Inclusive in terms of delivering the same curriculum to all of our pupils irrespective of specific learning needs or disabilities, and differentiating where necessary.

## **SUBJECT CONTENT**

Our progression map shows how knowledge, key skills and concepts outlined in the National Curriculum are revisited and developed throughout the key stage in order to turn our pupils into young historians. This occurs through the teaching of the British, local and world history outlined below so that pupils understand both the long arc of development and the complexity of specific aspects of the content.

Through an enquiry-led approach, our children will be taught about:

- changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age
- the Roman Empire and its impact on Britain
- Britain's settlement by Anglo-Saxons and Scots
- the Viking and Anglo-Saxon struggle for the Kingdom of England to the time of Edward the Confessor
- a local history study ~ Eyam and the plague

- a study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066 ~ how the lives of (working) children changed during the Victorian Era
- a study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066 ~ how the Jewish nation was persecuted as a result of Hitler's rise to power
- the achievements of the earliest civilizations – an overview of where and when the first civilizations appeared and an in-depth study of Ancient Egypt
- Ancient Greece ~ a study of Greek life and achievements and their influence on the western world
- a non-European society that provides contrasts with British history ~ the Maya civilization c. AD 900

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

We adopt an enquiry focused approach to learning and teaching in history which develops our pupils as young historians. Through enquiry, our pupils not only build subject knowledge and understanding but become increasingly adept at critical thinking, the use of specialised vocabulary and their grasp of subject concepts. “Now Knowledge” which is needed to make immediate learning flow and come to life (focusing on particular people, place and moments) leads to the enduring “Hereafter Knowledge” which gives us our chronological framework, enriches our historical language and our grasp of history’s key concepts. We structure learning in history through big question led enquiries about relevant historical topics, places and themes. Each enquiry, and indeed lesson, begins with a question to fire curiosity and to focus learning. As said by Heather Small, “...to question is how we grow.” Our curriculum is therefore ‘knowledge rich’ rather than content heavy as we recognise that if we attempt to teach historical topics, places, themes and issues in their entirety we restrict opportunities for pupils to master and apply critical thinking skills and achieve more challenging subject outcomes. We adopt a policy of immersive learning in history that provides sufficient time and space for our pupils not only to acquire new knowledge and subject vocabulary but also to develop subject concepts and understand the significance of what they have learned. This also allows for the development of a range of historical terms in their appropriate context, eg. the use of emperor rather than king. Our learning and teaching in history is interactive and practical, allowing opportunities for pupils to work independently, in pairs and also in groups of various sizes both inside and outside of the classroom. Wherever possible, we provide our pupils with contemporaneous historical evidence including narratives, paintings, photographs, artefacts, and data in the form of censuses and films to analyse and from

which to reach conclusions and make judgements. Stories are used to educate pupils and help them to understand about sensitive issues such as the Second World War and the Holocaust, and consequently to develop empathy. For example, books written by Michael Morpurgo, Tom Palmer and Morris Gleitzman ~ 'Friend Or Foe', 'After The War' and 'Once' ~ take children into the story and then, in the words of Michael Morpurgo, "they know." We provide varied and differentiated ways for pupils to record the outcomes of their work, including the use of PowerPoint, concept mapping, annotated diagrams, improvised drama and the application of a variety of writing genres. Only in this way will knowledge become embedded and 'sticky' and ensure that our pupils can build on what they know and understand from one year to the next. Knowledge organisers, which are produced at the beginning of each enquiry, help to focus and contextualise learning, as well as foster a positive home-school partnership. Similarly, children are encouraged to undertake learning challenges at home, which are linked to their current enquiry.

Our history teaching is also embedded in the development of a creative curriculum. Whilst it is taught as a discrete lesson, opportunities for children to further develop historical knowledge and understanding will be maximised through links with other subjects, eg. English and art.

## **DIFFERENTIATION**

We recognise the fact that we have children of differing ability and needs in all our classes and we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability and needs of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies:

- setting tasks that are open-ended and can have a variety of responses
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty, where not all children complete all tasks
- grouping children by ability and setting different tasks for each group
- providing a range of challenges with different resources
- having adults or peers support the work of individual children or small groups.
- providing a suitable learning environment

## **CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION**

History is delivered by following a series of sequences throughout the key stage. We have identified the key knowledge, concepts and skills for each enquiry; each year group has

clear learning goals, and consideration has been given to ensure continuity and progression across enquiries throughout each year group across the school. Our history progression map shows how our pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed each year, and highlights the range and depth of work covered.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Each enquiry which forms our programme of learning and teaching in history sets clear objectives and outcomes for the pupil in terms of knowledge and understanding and skills acquisition. The schemes of work also suggest a range of ways in which the teacher can assess whether a pupil has achieved these outcomes. We ensure that when assessing pupils, evidence is drawn from a wide range of sources to inform the process, including interaction with pupils during discussions and related questioning, day to day observations, practical activities such as model making and role play drama, the gathering, presentation and communication of fieldwork data and writing in different genres. Tasks to develop retrieval and recall skills (sticky learning), such as 'Super Six', 'Follow Me' cards, 'Exit tickets', 'Buy one, get one free', Kahoot and other quizzes are regularly used during each learning challenge. The outcomes of each enquiry serve to inform the teacher's developing picture of the knowledge and understanding of each pupil and to plan future learning accordingly. We do not make summative judgements about individual pieces of pupil work but rather use such outcomes to build an emerging picture of what the pupil knows, understands and can do.

At the end of each year we make a summative judgement about the achievement of each pupil against the subject learning goals for history in that year. At this point teachers decide upon a 'best fit' judgement as to whether the pupil has achieved and embedded the expected learning goals, exceeded expectations or is still working towards the goals. These decisions are based on the professional knowledge and judgement that teachers possess about the progress of each pupil, developed over the previous three terms, which allows an informed and holistic judgement of attainment to be made. Achievement against the learning goals for history at the end of the year is used as the basis of reporting progress to parents.

## **CELEBRATION AND DISPLAY**

Children's work and resources related to enquiries are displayed within classrooms and throughout the school. Teachers often set creative homework tasks or research based on an enquiry, and the children's work may be displayed either in their classroom or within school and on Seesaw and the school website, (inc. X where appropriate). History work may also be celebrated in year group assemblies.

## **MONITORING**

Monitoring by the humanities coordinator includes the reviewing of termly plans, regular discussions with pupils (Pupil Voice) and colleagues (both in school and from our cluster group), observations of teaching and learning, and book and display scrutiny. This is to ensure that our intent and the appropriate continuity and progression are being implemented and maintained. Judgements are made regarding impact in the subject, and feedback will be given to the Headteacher, the SLT and the Governors of the school. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in their teaching, being informed about current developments in history and providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject in the school.

## **RESOURCES**

Resources are centrally located as well as in individual class areas. The range includes non-fiction books, posters, pictures, paintings, photographs, DVDs, artefacts, documentation, costumes and ICT software. The school library also has appropriate and recently-updated resources for children to use. Fiction books help to personalise historical events, themes and periods and to develop empathy. Our learning and teaching in history also recognises the importance of the local area, with a number of our investigations involving observation, recording, presentation, interpretation and the evaluation of historical information outside of the classroom, e.g. the Urban Studies Centre, National Holocaust Centre and Eyam. History also 'comes alive' through visitors into school, including 'History Van' and the Young Shakespeare Company. Themed days add further enrichment to our history curriculum.

## **END POINTS**

Our vision is to provide a coherent, progressive and rigorous learning experience for our pupils in order to reach the following end points:

- to equip our pupils with the historical skills and knowledge that will enable them to ready for the curriculum at Key Stage 3;
- to develop their cultural capital in order to inspire them and prepare them for life as an adult in the wider world;
- to ensure that our pupils have been engaged and motivated by their learning in history, therefore encouraging them to see the world through the eyes of young historians ~ understanding how events in the past have contributed to shaping the world in which they live today and how gaining such awareness can contribute to building a more informed and sustainable society in the future.

In a nutshell, our mantra is 'learn, love, look after' ~ we will only love something if we learn about it, and if we love it, we will look after it.

## **POLICY REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

Hayley Brown  
Humanities Coordinator  
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To be reviewed October 2025.

“Everyone has a history. What you do with it is up to you. Some repeat it. Some learn from it. The really special ones use it to help others.” John Mark Green.