

MERE SCHOOL

History Policy

Rationale

History fires pupil's curiosity about the past in Britain and the wider world. Pupils consider how the past influences the present, what past societies were like, how these societies organised their politics, and what beliefs and cultures influenced people's actions. As they do this, pupils develop a chronological framework for their knowledge of significant events and people. They see a diversity of human experience, and understand more about themselves as individuals and members of society. What they learn can influence their decisions about personal choices, attitudes and values.

In history, pupils find evidence, weigh it up and reach their own conclusions. To do this they need to be able to research, sift through evidence, and argue for their point of view – skills that are prized in adult life.

In teaching History, we aim:

- To provide activities which nurture enjoyment, excitement and interest.
- To solve real problems using knowledge of history to support decisions.
- To develop effective independent enquiry skills.
- To know where an event fits into the “bigger picture” of world history.
- To learn about key events and people from a wide range of historical periods.
- To understand the legacy of key events and people, including the effect upon contemporary society.
- To record and share historical findings confidently in a variety of ways for different purposes and audiences.
- To make comparisons between attitudes and behaviour throughout world history.
- To use historical evidence and to understand the difference between primary and secondary sources and to put events into chronological order.
- To show respect for world religions, cultural beliefs and different ways of life beyond personal experiences.

Organisation

Children in the Foundation Stage begin to differentiate and learn about past and present events in their own lives and those of their families and other people they know; through talking, play, asking questions and stories. They develop an understanding of growth and decay and changes over time through activities such as growing plants, sequencing photographs of themselves since birth and observing the changing seasons. They learn to use time related words in conversation, eg yesterday, a long time ago and make plans for the short term future.

During KS1, children learn about people's lives and lifestyles. They find out about significant men, women and children and events from the recent and more distant past. They listen to stories and use sources of information to help them ask and answer questions. They learn how the past is different from the present.

In KS2 children learn about significant people, events and places from both the recent and more distant past. They learn about change and continuity in their own area, in Britain and in other parts of the world. They look at history in a variety of ways, for example, political, economical, technological, scientific, social, religious, cultural and aesthetic perspectives. They use different sources of information and a wide variety of artefacts to help them investigate the past, both in depth and in overview. Children use dates and historical vocabulary to describe events people and developments. They also learn that the past can be presented and interpreted in different ways.

The school has a long term plan to ensure breadth and balance across the school (Appendix 1).

Effective Teaching and Learning in History

Foundation Stage: Children in the reception class are taught history following the Early Years Foundation Stage Practice Guidance, Knowledge and Understanding of the World Time Section (see Appendix 2).

KS1, KS2: A progression of key skills has been devised across the school (appendix 2) to ensure that children achieve the objectives set out in this policy. These skills are split into five areas – Chronological Understanding, Knowledge and Understanding of Events, People and changes in the past, Historical Interpretation, Historical Enquiry, Organisation and Communication. Whilst the National Curriculum states the topics for study in KS2 and makes suggestions for appropriate study in KS1, our Key Skills in History provides flexibility for study unit choices within the different year groups. Class teachers understand the skills which their children must have acquired by the end of the unit to support achievement in historical skills.

Planning: Effective teaching will occur if activities are differentiated and matched to the learning styles and levels of understanding of the children within an individual class. Medium term plans have been produced for all topic areas, showing suggested activities and relevant history skills to address the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. The class teacher makes short term lesson plans which effectively take account of their children's needs, the progression through the key skills and their starting knowledge of the topic. The progression of key skills allows teachers to see the historical journey which their children have made previously, the level they should be working at, and the next stage in their journey. Accurate assessment of key skills is therefore vital for planning and teaching to be effective in addressing the needs of the class and develop their historical skills further.

The teaching of History is made more effective if the whole period of study is embraced, giving children a holistic rather than an insular view of the time. As a result, close cross curricular links are established in each topic unit. When studying World War II, for example, children understand the period in a much wider and more detailed context when it is linked to:

- exploring the feelings of children in air raids and evacuees through drama and story and responding through art work, poetry and movement to music.
- listening to music of the 1940's such as Glenn Millar's big band and learning how to swing dance.
- investigating the food of the time and the reasons and effects of rationing, and applying this knowledge to their own design and make food project.
- listening to memories of people who lived through the war.
- observing the work of key artists of the period and their reasons for producing work in this way (L S Lowry),
- creating a 1940's sitting room with artefacts of the time such as a wireless and rag rug where the children can read, play and imagine they were there at the time.
- celebrating the end of war with a street party making 1940's food and playing traditional party games.

Topics planned across the school reflect such cross curricular links and support our children in seeing the topic as part of a whole. Some of our literacy units are also related to the historical topic being studied.

Chronology: In developing chronological understanding, each class has a history timeline to show where the periods studied fit together. In KS2 children also create timelines to show key events of the period they are studying. This timeline is added to as the topic develops so children understand the events that are placed on the timeline. As a result a sense of chronology is developed and, as children pass through the school, they can identify patterns in how different cultures grow and decline and apply this knowledge to events in the news and behaviour in everyday life.

From interviewing children, memorable events such as parents and grandparents being invited in to talk about their own experiences, drama and role-play, stories, class visits, visitors and extraordinary experiences have proved to be a very successful and memorable way of developing a detailed understanding of the period and to have a longer effect on the children's knowledge of the areas being studied. Such activities are incorporated into medium term planning to ensure that effective learning takes place in History.

Our school also benefits from close links with the village museum. At school we have a display case of historical objects loaned from the museum which is changed twice yearly to enable the children to see a variety of objects and photographs on various themes. Children are also able to visit the museum and look at photos and artefacts related to their class themes, where the curator will talk to the children and answer questions. This is particularly valuable when studying some of the history of the village.

Assessment of History

Activities do not have to rely upon written methods to show understanding of key skills. In planning creatively, a range of strategies are employed to assess the level of children's knowledge and understanding of the topic area and of the key skills being developed. The session objective will always be understood by the children, this could be either at the beginning or a point within the session as appropriate to the task, and could be in the form of a question or by asking the children to reflect on their learning as well as the standard approach. Teachers assess history on a regular, informal basis against the history skills. Recorded work is marked in line with the marking policy.

Teachers record assessments on their planning and use them to inform future plans. An overall assessment against the skills will be made for each child at the end of each topic. These judgements will be used to form the basis for the annual report to parents.

A national curriculum level will be given to each child at the end of the summer term. These levels will be given to the co-ordinator so a view of progress and the standard of learning and attainment across the school can be assessed and monitored. A copy will also be given to the next class teacher to assist future planning and effective differentiation for individual's needs.

Gifted and Talented

History provides excellent opportunities to enhance the learning of gifted and talented pupils through the development of higher order thinking skills, creativity and self expression. In using the progression of key skills, teachers are supported in recognising children who have extra ability within History. Children with such ability are placed on the Gifted and Talented register and teacher's planning takes account of their needs.

SEN

Teaching history with a creative approach enables the children with SEN in Literacy to develop history skills. As with Gifted and Talented children by using the progression of key skills, teachers are supported in recognising children who have SEN in history. Children with SEN in history are placed on the SEN register and teacher's planning takes account of their needs.

Equal Opportunities

In teaching History, teachers should take specific action to respond to pupil's diverse needs by:

- creating effective learning environments,
- securing motivation and concentration,
- providing equality of opportunity through teaching approaches, and
- using appropriate assessment approaches

Resources

A variety of books and DVD's are kept in the library. School artefact resource collections are being developed to enrich the history teaching. These artefacts are usually kept in classrooms. Teachers also order resources, books, DVD's, CD's and artefacts from Wiltshire Learning Resources. Mere Museum also has artefacts that can be loaned to school.

Role of the co-ordinator

Please refer to job description

Summer Term 2008

Review Summer 2011

