

Willoughby Primary School

'Learning for Life'



History Policy

1. Aims and objectives

1.1 The aim of history teaching at Willoughby Primary School 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. 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. 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 to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, and develop perspective and judgement.

1.2 The aims of history in our school follow the National Curriculum for History to ensure all pupils:

- 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.

2. Teaching and learning style

2.1 History teaching focuses on enabling children to think as historians. In each key stage we give children the opportunity to make visits to support their work in history. E.g. Charnwood Museum, Nottingham Castle Museum, Great Central Railway and Wollaton Hall. We invite visitors to come into the school and bring artefacts and their knowledge of the past. E.g. Victorian toys, Ancient Egypt drama enactments supported by 'Divisions', a theatre group. 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. (These will often feature in our assemblies.) At KS1 pupils look at the lives of significant individuals in the past and some are used to compare aspects of life in different periods (e.g. Edith Cavell/ Florence Nightingale & Neil Armstrong/George Stephenson). 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.

2.2 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, some children not completing all tasks;
- grouping children by year group in the room and where appropriate, setting different tasks to each group;
- using Teaching Assistant to support the work of individual children or groups of children.

3. History curriculum planning

3.1 We follow the requirements of the National Curriculum for history, using the subject content as the basis for our curriculum planning.

3.2 Our curriculum planning is in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). Our long-term rolling programmes show the history topics studied in each year during each key stage. We combine the study with work in other subject areas (e.g. through art, music and Maths & English as appropriate).

3.3 Our medium-term plans give details of each topic. Because we have mixed-age classes, we organise the medium-term planning on a two-year rotation cycle in KS1 and a four-year cycle in KS2. In this way we ensure that children have complete coverage of the National Curriculum but do not have to repeat topics.

3.4 Each class teacher has a plan for each lesson. These lessons have specific learning objectives.

3.5 Children of all abilities have the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit. We offer them an increasing challenge as they move up the school.

4. Foundation Stage

4.1 We teach history in Foundation as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. Our Foundation children are part of Class 1 (with Year 1 & 2), so they may sometimes touch on aspects of the KS1 topic. We relate historical aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). History makes a significant contribution to the EYFSP of 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 new and old in relation to their own lives.

5. Teaching history to children with special educational needs

5.1 At Willoughby Primary 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.

5.2 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, and 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.

5.3 Intervention through extra support will lead to the creation of an Extra Support Plan (ESP) for children with special educational needs.

5.4 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, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

6. Assessment and recording

6.1 We assess the children's work in history by making informal judgements as we observe & listen to the children during lessons. Only information of exceptionally gifted or below national expectations is kept, otherwise it is assumed that national expectations are being achieved.

6.2 Class teachers keep the children's history work in a topic folder or book.

7. Resources

7.1 We review resources in our school to be able to teach all the history units in the National Curriculum. We keep many of these resources in the One-to-One room. We also keep a variety of history reference books in the classrooms. The Internet is used to support children's individual research in the classes and recommended websites are used. We also purchase the help of the Schools Library Service, which provide an excellent and invaluable source of books for specific topic areas.

8. Monitoring and review

8.1 We have a named teacher as History co-ordinator and a named Governor. Governors will visit to observe the teaching and learning of History in line with the Programme of Governors' visits. As we are a small school every teacher wears many hats, so we have a team approach to responsibility for the standard of children's work and the quality of the teaching.

This policy will be reviewed during the Summer Term 2024.

Policy Updated 6/7/2016 & May 2020