

History Policy

1 Aims and objectives

1.1 The aim of history teaching here at Rosslyn 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. 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.

1.2 The objectives of teaching 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 about significant events in British history, and to appreciate how things have changed over time;
- to develop a sense of chronology;
- 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 have some knowledge and understanding of historical development in 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, evaluation and presentation.

2 Teaching and learning style

2.1 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.

2.2 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.

3 History curriculum planning

3.1 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, 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.

3.2 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; Principal and Key Stage 2 coordinator devises this plan 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.

3.3 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 Principal and Key Stage 2 coordinator 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.

3.4 The class teacher writes a plan for each history lesson (short-term plans). The class teacher keeps these individual plans, although s/he and the subject leader often discuss them on an informal basis.

4 The Foundation Stage

4.1 We teach history in our Kindergarten and Reception classes as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the Kindergarten and 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.

5 The contribution of history to teaching in other curriculum areas

5.1 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 are historical in nature. For example, in Key Stage 2 we may use the book *Smith*, by Leon Garfield, to enhance the children's knowledge and understanding of life in Victorian Britain. Children develop their speaking and listening skills 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.

5.2 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. Children also learn to interpret information presented in graphical or diagrammatic form. For example, they may study the impact of the plague by analysing population statistics.

5.3 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, 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 they start to develop tolerance and respect for others.

5.4 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, when studying topics such as child labour in Victorian Britain. The history programme of study enables children to understand that Britain's rich cultural heritage can be further enriched by the multi-cultural British society of today.

6 History and ICT

6.1 Information and communication technology enhances our teaching of history, wherever appropriate, in all key stages. This more than meets the statutory requirement for children to use ICT as part of their history work in Key Stage 2. The children use ICT in a variety of ways, such as word-processing, finding information on the Internet. This is to be developed with the advent of the new computer suite. They can also make creative use of the digital camera to record photographic images. For example, they might do some image manipulation by importing a digital photograph of themselves into a photo-editing program, along with a figure in period costume and some historical background scenery. Role-playing software can engage children in visual scenarios which they can direct themselves.

7 History and inclusion

- 7.1** 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 Non-Discrimination and Access; Gifted and Talented.
- 7.2** 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, 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 ensure that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.
- 7.3** 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.
- 7.4** 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, for example, a visit to Lunt Fort, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

8 Assessment for learning

- 8.1** Children demonstrate their ability in history in a variety of different ways. Younger children might, for example, act out a famous historical event, whilst older pupils may produce a presentation based on an investigation. 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. Older children are encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own work.
- 8.2** 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 uses this for assessing the progress of the child. Each class teacher now has a 'Records of Achievement' book for their year group in which to make a more formal assessment of children's learning. This is being trialled at present and will be fully implemented in September 2005. This information will be passed onto the next class teacher

9 Resources

- 9.1** There are sufficient resources for history teaching units in the school and this area is to be developed to provide a wide variety of artefacts for each topic covered. These resources will be kept in a central store where there will be a

box of equipment for each unit of work. The library is also to be developed and will contain a good supply of topic books and software to support children's individual research.

10 Monitoring and review

10.1 Monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in history is the responsibility of the Principal and Key Stage 2 coordinator. The work of the Principal and Key Stage 2 coordinator also involves supporting colleagues in their teaching, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. It is intended that the Principal and Key Stage 2 coordinator will have a 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.

10.2 This policy will be reviewed in every 2 years.

Signed:

Date: