

St. John's C.E. Academy History Policy

Introduction/Rationale

At St John's we are historians! The ultimate aim of our history curriculum is to allow our pupils to know more, remember more and understand more about the world they live in.

We want to empower our pupils to go out into the world with a sense of pride in their own identity and an appreciation of their place and time. We believe it is essential that our pupils have a coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain's past and that of the wider world. We encourage our pupils to be curious and ask questions about the process of change; the complexity of people's lives; the diversity of societies and the relationships between different groups.

By the time they begin their secondary education, we want our children to love history; to have no limits to what their ambitions are and create a culture of high aspirations in line with our school mission, "Guided by God to be the best we can be". We aim to give our students a platform to learn about careers related to history in the wider community with specialist skills and knowledge, ensuring that they are well prepared for the next steps of their education. We firmly believe that childhood should be a happy, investigative and enquiring time in our lives where there are no limits to curiosity and where all children are exposed to new experiences and knowledge through a varied curriculum, regardless of barriers to learning. In pursuit of this, we hope to fulfil the church's vision for education with, 'life and all its fullness at its heart,' John 10:10.

Aims

History helps us to **understand** the immense complexity of our world and enables us to cope with the problems and possibilities of the present and future. **History** provides **us** with a sense of identity. It is important to develop a sense of collective past and how historical events have made **us** what **we** are today.

At St. John's CE Academy, the aims of our history curriculum are:

- To provide the children with an experience of history, which is both relevant and stimulating.
- To enable children to gain an understanding of the past with relation to themselves, their families, their communities and the wider world.
- To encourage a lively and questioning approach to history, which promotes enjoyment of the subject, confidence and understanding.
- To encourage an awareness that, though there are links between history and other subject areas, the study of the past is a separate and important discipline.
- To understand historical enquiry, including how evidence is used to make historical claims.
- To formulate appropriate questions, develop research skills and evaluate material to inform opinions.
- To know and understand the significant aspects of the history of the wider world.

Curriculum design

We believe that our pupils need to be actively involved in making sense of their learning and therefore an enquiry approach has been implemented to encourage higher-order thinking and allowing our children to explore in a way that is meaningful to them. Within each year group, history learning is revisited in a progressive manner to ensure knowledge, skills and concepts are firmly embedded and subject specific vocabulary is used in context.

Our history curriculum enables our pupils to develop their understanding of the key historical concepts of chronology, change and development, cause and effect, and significance and interpretation. In every year group, our pupils visit a museum or have a school visit to bring their history learning to life. We want our children to remember their history fieldtrips, to cherish these memories and embrace the opportunities they are presented with.

At St John's CE Academy, our history curriculum is ambitious. It fulfils the statutory requirements of the EYFS Framework and the National Curriculum for History at Key Stage 1 and 2. Our school context is at the heart of our

thinking when designing our curriculum, has been carefully crafted to ensure our pupils develop a sense of who they are locally, nationally and globally.

Our **long-term plan** maps the units studied by each year group to ensure coverage and progression.

Our **medium-term plans** provide an overview of curriculum coverage, progression of knowledge, skills and concepts, detail assessment opportunities, and outline details for enhancement opportunities e.g. trips, visitors and fieldwork.

Our MTPs feed into **individual lesson plans**. These are formed on a weekly basis by reviewing and expanding on the MTPs rather than creating a separate document.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Our EYFS curriculum provides a wide variety of rich experiences central to the Early Learning Goals, specifically, Understanding the World - Past and Present. Pupils are encouraged to talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society; to know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class. Children understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

Years 1-6

In Years 1 to 6, three history units are taught each year - one per term, through a weekly history lesson. Every history unit has a big question to encourage the use of historical enquiry, as well as a focus on the acquisition and application of key subject knowledge, concepts and vocabulary. Links are made within and across the units to support pupils in making connections. Within each year group, history learning is revisited in a progressive manner to ensure knowledge, skills and concepts are firmly embedded and subject specific vocabulary is used in context. Within each unit there is time for the pupils to think deeply about an area of learning in a topic before they move on to the next one. They will have many opportunities to ask questions, discuss, communicate understanding and revise their ideas. This approach has led to the selection of some areas of knowledge in more depth within an area of study rather than trying to cover everything at a surface level.

Teaching and Learning

Progression of skills, knowledge and understanding

Our history curriculum is structured to develop students' historical thinking in a systematic manner. The chronological sequence of our history units facilitates the acquisition and application of key subject knowledge, concepts and vocabulary throughout. Skills, knowledge and understanding in history progress from Year 1 to Year 6 and is taught, developed and applied throughout our schemes of work. A range of opportunities are provided to enable all pupils to communicate their knowledge and understanding of the subject. An overarching timeline is displayed in the communal area of the school and timelines are regularly referred to in each classroom. Vocabulary is intrinsically linked to academic success and therefore, key vocabulary is displayed in each classroom. Additionally, 'big question' sentence starters reference history terms to ensure pupils can think, verbalise and record using subject specific terminology. By exposing pupils to subject specific vocabulary and ensuring the understanding of words in context, we aim to overcome any vocabulary deficit. At the beginning and end of lessons, quick quizzes are used to recap previous learning and to consolidate new learning.

Questioning

Enquiry is a key focus in our whole school curriculum and each history unit has an over-arching 'big question'. Questions are used to open conversations, inspire deep intellectual thought, and promote student-to-student interaction. These questions focus on eliciting the process, i.e. the 'how' and 'why, as opposed to answers, which simply detail 'what.' The use of this questioning creates opportunities for students to analyse their own thinking as

well as that of their peers. Pupils' knowledge and skills are built up through small questions in each lesson. They construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection and organisation of relevant historical information. These responses feed into the over-arching 'big question'.

Research Skills

Our history lessons facilitate research skills, including physical and digital. We enable pupils to use a wide range of sources to collect information such as music, paintings, films, poems, story books, novels, travel accounts, brochures, magazines, TV, DVD and newspapers. Pupils understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources and are encouraged to explore the reliability of sources of information. Within each unit there is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' chronological understanding. Whilst studying one unit, pupils are required to consider other events, people and societies occurring at the same time locally, nationally and globally. A whole school timeline is displayed to support chronological understanding.

Visits and Visitors

Visits and visitors are an integral element of our history curriculum. We have strong links with the education officer at our local Head of Steam Museum who provides us with a free pass for a family to visit the museum each week. The pass is awarded in our weekly celebration assembly. We add a rich layer of experience to our units with visits to our local museums, which include The Captain Cook Birthplace Museum; Beamish Living Museum of the North and The Jorvik Centre. We have a Stone Age workshop as well as workshops run by The Oriental Museum to enable children to engage with objects and artefacts, bringing the learning to life. Links with our local Tees Valley Museums provide loan boxes to support our learning with several units including Greeks, Egyptians and Romans.

Marking, Feedback and Assessment

Teachers assess pupils continuously on an informal basis. These assessments inform the teacher of the pupils' current achievements and guide the teacher in planning the pupils' future learning. This provides accurate information upon which teachers can plan future short and long term learning. At the end of each unit, children's learning is assessed against the age-related expectation bands that are based on the 2014 National Curriculum statements for history. Our assessment document tracks progress from EYFS through to Year 6. It is completed at the end of each unit and is informative for both the current teacher as well as the next. We maintain appropriate and manageable systems of record keeping, assessments and reporting, which are accessible and meaningful to pupils, parents, staff and other related agencies. Our assessment tool tracks attainment across the school. Planned assessment activities provide equality of opportunity and scope for children to demonstrate their learning.

At St John's, we strive to adopt and construct a curriculum that is ambitious and aspirational; designed to give all learners and groups of learners, including the most disadvantaged and those with SEND and higher levels of needs, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in their future lives. Consideration is given to how greater depth will be taught, learnt and demonstrated within each lesson, as well as how learners will be supported in line with the school's commitment to inclusion. We continually strive to make adaptations and reasonable adjustments to enable all our pupils to access our school curriculum and we aim to provide a range of enhancement opportunities to engage all children in their learning. We recognise that all pupils are entitled to a quality of provision that will enable them to achieve their full academic and personal potential.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of history is carried out by the subject lead through learning walks, regular monitoring of the schemes of work, planning and assessment tools, book scrutinies, and pupil discussions to ensure progression and continuity of learning through the school. The subject lead makes an annual report to the leadership team and the lead governor who will report key findings as necessary and recommendations to the full governing body.