# Wootton Bassett Infants' School

# History Policy

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## Introduction

At Wootton Bassett Infant school, we believe that the study of history is essential for our children as they develop into well-rounded global citizens because it gives the children a sense of their own place in time. Children develop their skills of enquiry, deduction, analysis, evaluation and inference whilst learning to question the world around them and starting to increase their understanding of the past, making links between civilisations and eras, as well as its relation and relevance to the present. We teach history so that the children can make sense of their world and understand that the past has shaped the world in which they live.

## Aims

Our history curriculum ensures that all elements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021) and the History programme of study for Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum (2014) are covered. At Key Stage 1 this will involve knowledge, skills, processes and understanding being taught through areas of study.

Our aims are:

- To provide a broad, balanced and inspiring history curriculum which balances key knowledge with the development of skills.
- To foster a curiosity about the past and an understanding of our place in the world.
- To develop a sense of chronology and a vocabulary for the passing of time.
- To provide every child with the opportunity to be inspired by history through provision of high-quality experiences and resources.
- To give children the opportunity to reflect, compare, question and investigate how life in the past was different so that children can identify differences between the ways of life at different times.
- To help the children develop a sense of their own identity through studying changes in their own lives and the lives of those around them.
- To learn about the way of life of different people from Britain and the wider world and of past events from the history of Britain and the wider world.

**Teaching and Learning Style in History**

We adopt an enquiry focused approach to learning and teaching in history which develops our pupils as young historian. Through enquiry our pupils not only build knowledge and facts (substantive knowledge) and understanding but become increasingly adept at critical thinking, the use of specialised vocabulary and their grasp of historical skills (disciplinary knowledge). We structure learning in history through big question led enquiries about relevant historical topics, places and themes. 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. We have identified key concepts which weave themselves into our history planning across all year groups (highlighted below):

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| Family and Belonging | Environment | Safety |
| Friendship | Exploration | Tradition |

These concepts reoccur in the history curriculum over time so that children develop a clear sense of their meaning in a range of different contexts.

**The Foundation Stage**

During the Foundation Stage the children are taught to develop an awareness of their place within their family and past events in their own lives through Development Matters (2021). Through both adult directed and play based activities, the children gain a sense of the past and the present. They are introduced to simple historical language such as yesterday, old, new, a long time ago. Children are taught about the past using real historical artefacts and visits whenever possible. The children compare pictures of people from the past and listen to stories about significant individuals from history. The children have experience of answering "Big Questions" in enquiry-based learning in preparation for Key Stage 1.

**Key Stage 1**

Long term planning ensures that some topics have a specific historical emphasis. Other topics will include more discrete activities based on using historical evidence. There is a focus on five key elements of history study: chronology, knowledge and understanding or events, people and places in the past, historical interpretation and enquiry and organisation and communication. Practical experiences will support the teaching of history where possible. We aim to maximise opportunities for links in our curriculum. History

is taught with a thematic approach and supports and encourages our creative and cross curricular approach to learning, including use of English sessions, Art sessions and multimedia technology. However we are always clear of our purpose and focus – ensuring that the key historical attitudes and skills from the National Curriculum programme of study do not become consumed by the demands of another discipline.

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 and interpretative 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. Similarly, we provide varied and differentiated ways for pupils to record the outcomes of their work including use of computer technology, play activities, verbalised group work, improvised drama and the application of a range 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. The planning for each historical enquiry highlights both the objectives and anticipated outcomes of the investigation. They are also carefully structured using smaller questions, to enable pupils to build their knowledge and understanding in incremental steps of increasing complexity until they reach the point where they can answer the question posed at the beginning of the investigation. Our learning and teaching in history also recognises the importance of the local area with several of our investigations involving observation, recording, presentation, interpretation and the evaluation of historical information outside of the classroom e.g. significant people, places and events locally.

**Equal Opportunities and Inclusion**

All pupils are provided for in lessons, regardless of gender, race, disability or, in the case of external visits and visitors to the school, financial considerations. We avoid stereotypical assumptions about the abilities and aptitudes of children.

History forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. We recognise the fact that in all classes there are children of different abilities in history and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the capability of the child.

Our aim is for all children to achieve as highly as they can in history according to their individual abilities. More able children are identified and suitable learning challenges provided. We are also aware of the school's demographic and provide opportunities for children to celebrate diversity by studying people from different backgrounds, cultures and communities.

**Health and Safety**

All school trips with a history emphasis will follow the procedures of the school health and safety policy. A risk assessment form will be completed and on the day of the trip the children will be supervised in small groups using teachers, teaching assistants and parent helpers.

## 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. 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 writing in different genres. 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 National Curriculum Statements. 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. Teachers use the History End Points document and "Four Squares for Learning" visual aids to support their judgements, ensuring the children can demonstrate both substantive and disciplinary knowledge. Assessments are shared with parents in the end of year annual reports.

## Monitoring of Subject Provision

The subject leader monitors the teaching and learning of history throughout the school. This includes learning walks, planning and work scrutiny and pupil voice. The results of these findings are fed back to staff in staff meetings and to the Senior Leadership team. Targets for history provision are created on an annual basis in the subject leader action plan/ foundation subject action plan, based on termly assessed results and feedback. The history subject leader is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of history, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The history policy is evaluated and reviewed by the individual subject lead and senior management and agreed by governors. The subject leader also provides the governors with an annual report evaluating the subject provision and the impact of actions undertaken.