

Nene Valley Primary School

History Policy

Aims and objectives

The main aim of history teaching here at Nene Valley 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. 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. 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.

The aims of 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 help children to know how history contributes to an understanding of citizenship;
- 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.

Teaching and learning style

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 recognize 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.

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 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. Not all children complete 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.

History curriculum planning

We use the National Curriculum for history as the basis for our planning in history and we have adapted this to the local context by 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 history and we build planned progression into the work so that the children are increasingly challenged as they move up through the school.

The history leader plans with teaching colleagues and the children study history topics sometimes in conjunction with other subjects. 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.

The class teacher writes the lesson plans for each history lesson (short-term plans). These plans list the specific learning objectives of each lesson. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, although s/he and the history leader often discuss them on an informal basis.

Early Years Foundation Stage

We teach historical understanding in reception classes as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage we relate the history side of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that underpin the curriculum planning. As part of their development of Knowledge and Understanding of the World children have the opportunity to begin to differentiate between past and present in their own lives and those of other people.

Assessment and recording

We assess children's work in history by making informal judgements as we observe them during each history lesson. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher marks the work

and comments as necessary. At the end of a unit of work, the teacher makes a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the National Curriculum level of attainment. We use these judgements as a basis for assessing the progress of the child and we pass this information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

Resources

There are sufficient resources for all history teaching units in the school. We keep these resources centrally where there is equipment for each area of study. The library contains a good supply of topic books to support children's individual research.

Monitoring and review

Monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in history is the responsibility of the history leader. The work of the history leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of history, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The history leader works in conjunction with the rest of the staff to provide history input to the Development Plan for School Improvement (DPSI) as appropriate. On request, the history leader should be able to provide a clear view of where the school is at in terms of standards, progress and achievement as well as a vision of where the subject is heading within a 3 year time scale. The history leader reviews samples of children's work and visits classes where time permits to observe teaching in the subject.

Role of governors

It is the role of the Learning Committee to monitor the policy and practice of all curriculum areas. This is carried out in line with the school's 3 year monitoring schedule. Governors liaise with the Headteacher and/or subject leaders to decide the best way to carry out this role before reporting back to the committee.

Reviewed : Spring 2009

Reviewed by: Teaching Staff, Governors

Next Review: Spring 2012