



The  
Historical Association  
The voice for history

**Historical Association  
Survey of History in  
English Primary Schools  
2019**

## **Introduction**

### **The nature of the survey**

The Historical Association (HA) is a charity incorporated by Royal Charter, founded in 1906 to further the study and enjoyment of history. The HA has close to 8,000 full members, largely made up of schools and individuals with a professional interest in history: teachers, academics, museum educators and archivists. Of these, nearly 3,000 are primary members.

Following successful biennial Primary Surveys from 2010–2017, the HA recognised the need for a new national survey in 2019 to continue to build up an accurate picture of the status of history in primary schools. Following radical reform and the introduction of a new history curriculum in 2014, the 2015 survey gathered evidence relating to the National Curriculum introduced in 2014. The aim of both the 2017 and 2019 surveys was to find out how the 2014 curriculum has been embedded in primary schools, what impact it has made and what issues still remain. The 2019 survey was carried out before the new Ofsted inspection framework became statutory. However, responses to the 2019 survey already represent shifts that may be a result of the draft framework, and the HA will continue to monitor these changes in subsequent surveys.

The findings reported here are based on the responses of primary history teachers in England to an online survey sent to all schools in England teaching children in the five-to-11 age range. The survey was conducted during the spring/summer term 2019. Responses were received from 369 primary history teachers and educators in total, around 320 of whom are currently practising primary teachers. While all levels of experience were represented, 58% of those based in school indicated that they had been teaching for ten years or more. This is slightly up on 2017, where 53% indicated experience of ten years or more. Over half (58%) also indicated that they held a subject leadership role, although 74% had held this role for less than five years and 27% had held the role for less than one year, indicating the frequent turnover that happens in the subject leadership of history. Over one-third (38%) indicated that they held either a degree or postgraduate qualification in history. This is unrepresentative of primary teachers more widely and may indicate the interests of those responding to the survey.

Ninety-one per cent came from a white British background, slightly down on the 2017 figure of 92%.

Overall, the nature of respondents represents a broadly similar cohort to the 2017 survey and reinforces the fact that there is considerable movement in subject leadership.

The statistics within this survey should be applied with caution. Within any response set, it is important to apply accuracy filters. The survey contained responses from 49 respondents who, while involved in education, perhaps through consultancy or initial teacher education, were not currently teaching in a primary school. These responses were subject to skip logic, which rendered those who were not currently teaching in a primary school unable to answer questions related to curriculum or provision in schools. Skip logic was also applied to questions directly aimed at the subject leader, so as to ensure that only subject leaders were able to answer these questions.

While some questions required an answer, respondents were able to skip other questions that they felt unable to answer. Given this, plus the skip logic applied, response rates for each individual question varied. Each question indicates the number of people who answered it, and percentage calculations given throughout the survey relate to the number of people who answered each individual question, as opposed to a percentage of the overall total response, which was 369, of which 320 were currently teaching in school.

Some survey questions were revised and some new questions were added this year. Year-on-year comparisons are given where possible but are not given in the case of new questions. Several questions this year were more open-ended in a bid to gather more individualised opinions and answers without being led.

### **Key findings:**

- For the majority of primary schools, 2019 is a period of change and review for history. The influence of the Ofsted 2019 framework is clear, and there are possible indicators that this is increasing the status of history in primary schools.
- The time allocated to history is largely unchanged from the last survey, but where this has changed, the time allocation had increased more than decreased.
- Subject co-ordinator/leadership is moving towards more of a leadership role, though curriculum planning, organising resources, monitoring and supporting other teachers continue to play a key part.
- The organisation of history in school is shifting. The most popular approach is through topic or project work, with termly blocks next. Previous surveys revealed that topic work was less prominent and termly blocks more prominent. However, history is taught as a discrete subject in full or in part.
- While most schools are following the National Curriculum in full or in part, evidence points to a decrease in the number of schools fully following the National Curriculum, and many are ignoring some of the requirements, such

as to provide an overview of the early civilisations before studying one in depth and to provide a local study at Key Stage 1.

- Those following the National Curriculum at Key Stage 2 appear to be sticking to the non-statutory content examples listed on the programme of study, in order to teach units. This may indicate either a lack of knowledge, training and/or confidence to branch out, or a misplaced belief that the non-statutory examples are, in fact, statutory. It may also be indicative of better resourcing for the non-statutory examples. Conversely, at Key Stage 1, there is evidence of growing confidence and branching out from non-statutory examples.
- Overall, teachers seem less concerned over resources, although a number reported difficulties including the non-European topics. The best-resourced areas seem to be the current topics that have been retained from the pre-2014 National Curriculum. Local history resourcing appears more problematic.
- The assessment of progress has become more prominent among teachers but is rarely identified as a priority.
- Assessment is carried out in a number of ways, but the main one is the scrutiny of pupil work. Some use is made of targeted assessments, skills or progression checklists, learning walks, and direct observation and interaction with pupils. Responses continue to demonstrate a lack of confidence and of informed, coherent approaches to assessment.
- According to the 2017 survey, teachers appeared to have a broad understanding of diversity. However, responses to the 2019 survey indicate that it is not being translated into planning and teaching.
- Although training remains a significant concern, it seems that the level of concern has slightly fallen. However, budgets for primary history remain a major concern.
- The amount of training to teach history during initial teacher education remains very small and a barrier to developing the quality of history education in primary schools.
- Two-thirds of respondents state that they have undertaken little or no training since qualification as a teacher. Where it takes place, the main provider is the school's history subject leader, who often has had little or no training themselves, although half have used an outside agency. The most popular forms of CPD were face-to-face and twilight courses, although a growing number sought online and webinar options, possibly linked to concerns over teacher workload, cost and convenience.

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## Section 1: About you

This section is concerned with the level and nature of experience of the respondents.

### Q1: Do you teach in a primary school in England?

*Responses: 369*

The bulk of respondents work in a primary school in England (320 – 87%). Those who answered ‘no’ to this question were redirected to the end of the survey and did not contribute answers directly related to the teaching of history in schools.

### Q2: How long have you been teaching?

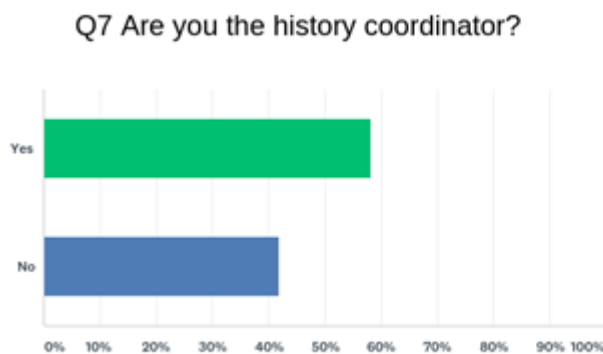
*Responses: 320*

Teachers had a range of experience. Nearly one-quarter (23.6%) had taught for more than 20 years, with most of the rest between five and 19 years. Just over one-fifth had been in the profession for fewer than five years, with a small number in their first year of teaching. Interestingly, slightly more responded to this question than the number who claimed to teach in an English primary school. The responses to this, however, represented a wide range of experience among respondents, with all levels of experience from NQT to over 20 years’ experience represented.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
– More than 20 years	23.75% 76
– 15–20 years	16.25% 52
– 10–14 years	18.44% 59
– 5–9 years	19.38% 62
– Less than 5 years	18.44% 59
– Less than 1 year	3.75% 12
TOTAL	320

### Q3: Are you the history subject leader?

Responses: 320



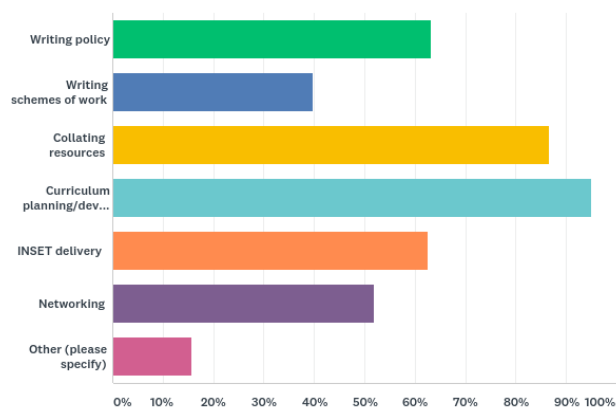
When asked, 58% said they were the history/subject leader in their school. It is unclear whether those who were not history/subject leaders held any other roles in school. Of the 186 who answered 'yes' to this question, 74% had held the role for fewer than five years, perhaps confirming trends that suggest a high turnover of history subject leads. The overall impression is that being the history subject leader may not be a long-term role. Only 1.7% had done the job for more than 20 years, compared with over one-quarter who had done it for less than one year. Only 26% had held the role for more than five years, and only 6% had held the role for 15 years or more. Responses also indicated a shift towards a preference for the term 'subject leader' as opposed to 'co-ordinator'. In future surveys, the HA will monitor whether history subject leaders also lead any other subjects and whether leadership of history is their first experience of a leadership role.

The largest group – nearly half – had been involved for fewer than five years, suggesting that three-quarters had spent fewer than five years in the role.

#### Q4: As the subject leader, what does your role involve?

Responses: 179

If you are the history coordinator/subject coordinator, what does your role involve? Please tick all that apply



\*2019

As in the 2017 survey, respondents to this question were asked to tick the boxes against all the aspects listed in the questionnaire that applied to them. Monitoring teaching, curriculum planning and development, advising on/producing resources, and supporting other teachers scored most highly. This pattern reflects closely the developments in recent years, where there has been an increasing emphasis on subject leadership as opposed to a more traditional subject co-ordination approach.

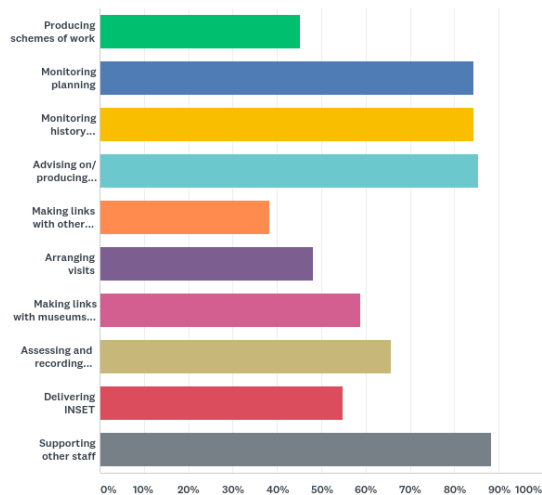
Respondents were asked to select all the responses that applied to their role. Categories had been slimmed down from ten in 2017 to six named areas and an additional 'other' category added in 2019. The most popular response in 2019 was curriculum planning and development, with 94.97% (170). The second most popular was collating resources, with 86.59% (155). Overall, the results mirrored the trend of recent years towards a stronger emphasis on the leadership rather than the management nature of the subject leader's role. These results should also be considered within the context of the revised Ofsted inspection framework under discussion at the time of the survey. It's possible that to prepare for the anticipated requirement for greater expertise within the role, some respondents included in the other section how they had undertaken their own history CPD – for example, attending courses or conferences or working towards accreditations like the Quality Mark or Chartered Teacher of History accreditation.

The separate monitoring and assessment category had been removed from the 2019 survey. However, respondents listed many of their duties as those necessary to carry out this aspect of their role effectively, for example, book scrutiny, setting and collating questionnaires, observing lessons, etc. It is evident that a small group of



subject leaders carry out a role that involves them leading change, not just within but even beyond their school – for example, running networks and participating in workshops and conferences. One respondent noted that they carried out teaching in Key Stage 2 as part of their role, which may be interpreted as evidence of a move towards specialist teaching within their school.

Q7 As the history coordinator, what does your role involve? Please tick all that apply



\*2017

### Q5: Are you or your school a member of the Historical Association?

Responses: 148

A small majority of respondents (52%) said that they were individual or corporate members of the HA. The remaining 48% said that either they were not members or they didn't know whether they were members.

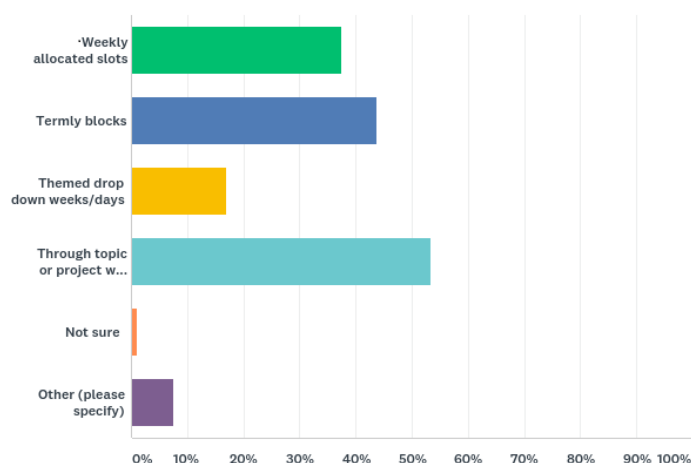
## Section 2: Curriculum teaching and learning

This section is concerned with how the history curriculum is devised, designed, organised and delivered in school.

## Q6: How is history organised in the school?

Responses: 301

How is history organised in the school? Please tick all that apply



Respondents were given a list of options from which to choose and were able to select more than one option if they so wished. Schools sometimes organise history teaching in different ways to take account of the needs of a key stage/pupil age group, or where a specific history topic lends itself to a more cross-curricular approach, so respondents were given the flexibility to reflect this in their responses. In some schools it is left to teachers to decide how to organise their history teaching, opening up the possibility that different approaches are used right across the school.

The most popular choice was through topic or project work, at 53.16%, suggesting perhaps a more thematic or cross-curricular approach to teaching history for at least some of the time. However, it should also be noted that the term 'topic' can be interpreted in diverse ways in different schools. 'Topic' was also the most popular choice in 2017. A total of 43.85% of respondents stated that history in their schools was taught through termly blocks, and 37.54% stated that history was taught through weekly allocated slots. In 2017, weekly allocated slots had been a more popular choice than termly blocks, but in 2019, this is reversed. Both of these options point to history being taught as a discrete subject, perhaps for some age groups. Other approaches suggested by respondents included themed drop-down weeks/days (16.94%), half-termly blocks and, in one instance, through separate weekly history lessons taught by a specialist teacher. Interestingly, three respondents weren't sure how history was organised in their schools!

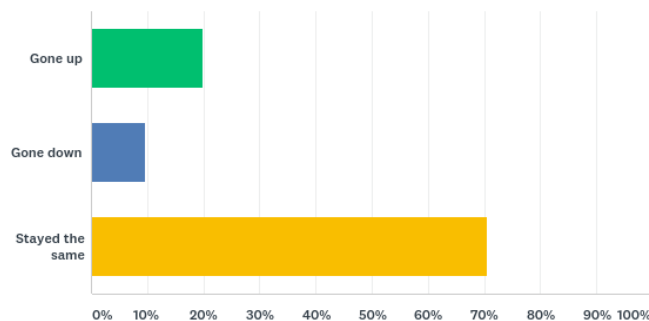
While it is clear that the term 'topic' is interpreted differently across primary schools, overall the responses here could point to shifts in the way in which history is organised in schools. Previous surveys had pointed to a growth in schools reporting

that time was allocated to history in weekly slots, although this trend is now diminishing. Topic work represented only 27% of responses in 2015, but has shown growth in both 2017 and 2019. This could mean a shift in the way in which history is organised in schools away from discrete teaching, or it could point to a shift in the meaning of the term 'topic' for schools, which may now include discrete teaching of subjects within a timetabled slot reserved for topics outside of the core.

**Q7: In the last 12 months, has the time allocated to history at your school: gone up, gone down, stayed the same?**

*Responses: 301*

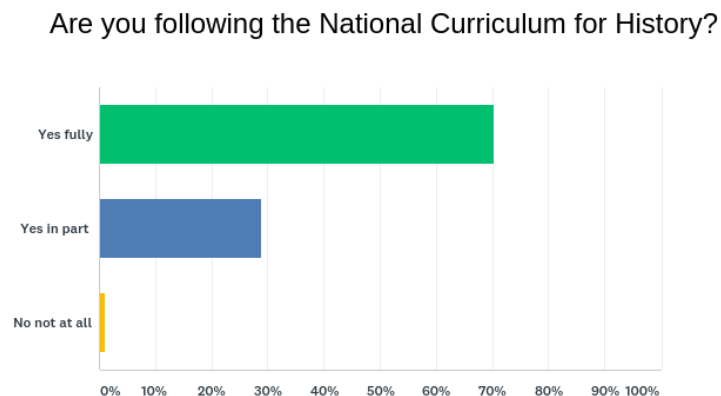
In the last 12 months, has the time allocated to history at your school:



A total of 71.76% of respondents said that the time allocated to history at their school had stayed the same over the past 12 months. An increase in time allocated to the subject was reported by 19.6%, while 9.63% reported a decrease. Those indicating that time had decreased are fewer than in 2017 (15%). Respondents weren't asked to quantify or account for the change in the time given to history in their schools. This is something that will be taken up in future surveys.

## Q8: Are you following the National Curriculum for history?

Responses: 301



In this survey, no attempt was made to differentiate between Key Stage 1 and 2, so a direct comparison cannot be made with the results of the previous 2017 survey, where 91% of respondents at Key Stage 2 stated that they followed the history National Curriculum in full, compared to 83% at Key Stage 1. The nearest equivalent figure in the 2019 survey is 70%. This still suggests a significant fall in the number of teachers following the National Curriculum in full over the past two years, and could be worth further investigation in a future survey. However, overall, 99% of respondents stated that they followed the National Curriculum in full or in part, pointing to the considerable influence that it still has over what is taught in primary schools.

## Q9: If you do not follow the National Curriculum, please tell us more about what you teach in history.

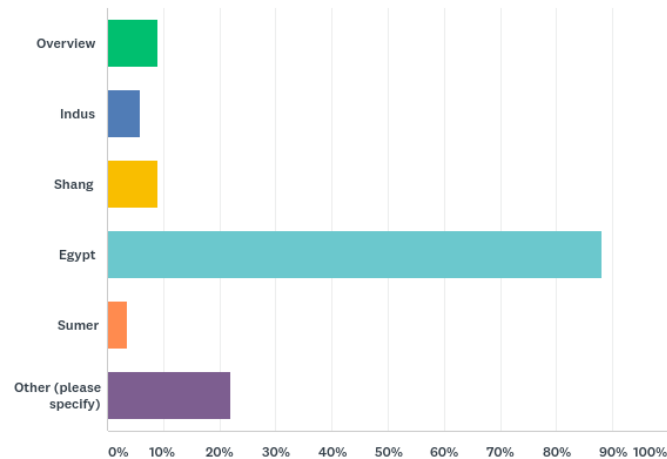
Responses: 2

Sadly, very few chose to add detail here. Both respondents to this question, with one being a private school, stated that they followed their own curriculum for history.

## Q10: Which ancient civilisation history topic are you teaching in your school?

Responses: 167

Which ancient civilisation history topic are you teaching in your school? Tick all that apply



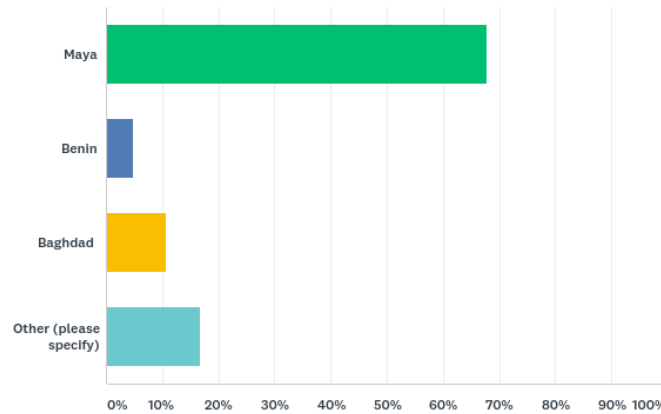
Once again, Ancient Egypt is by far the most popular ancient civilisation topic taught in primary schools (88% of respondents taught this compared to 85% in the 2017 survey). As with the previous survey, the continued popularity of this topic can probably be explained by its longevity in the primary history curriculum, going back to at least 1991, and by the fact that it is already very well-resourced and familiar to primary teachers. Options such as the Shang Dynasty, Ancient Sumer and the Indus Valley lag well behind. Only 22% of respondents stated that they taught an ancient civilisation not listed, such as the Aztecs, the Maya, the Romans or the Ancient Greeks – the last three appear elsewhere in the National Curriculum, so are not part of this specific statutory requirement. The wording of the survey question (*'Which ancient civilisation history topic are you teaching in your school? Tick all that apply'*) may have inadvertently encouraged teachers to list these here, possibly in addition to some of those specified in the question. A very small number of schools appeared to have chosen to teach more than one ancient civilisation.

The requirement that pupils are taught an overview of where and when the first civilisations appeared, as well as studying a specific ancient civilisation in depth, appears to be largely being ignored by schools if the results in this survey can reflect a wider picture – only 9% of respondents claimed to be doing this. However, what is not clear is whether those who selected other units, like ancient Egypt for example, may have also been including an overview within their teaching. This will need further breaking down in future surveys.

### Q11: Which non-European society do pupils at your school study?

Responses: 167

Which non European Society do pupils at your school study? Please tick all that apply



Again, the Maya is the most popular world history topic taught in schools according to the data from the survey, with 67% of respondents opting for this. This topic was also the most popular option in the 2017 and 2015 surveys, most probably for reasons similar to those potentially explaining the popularity of Ancient Egypt in the ancient civilisations options. Only 16% of respondents specified 'other' in the survey, with the Aztecs, Native American Indians and 'no non-European study taught' mentioned a number of times. A very small number of schools appeared to have chosen to teach more than one non-European society.

## **Q12: Which post-1066 chronological unit(s) of study do pupils study?**

*Responses: 167*

This was an open question in which respondents were asked to specify the topics taught. The most popular post-1066 chronological units of study, by a large margin, are significant events/turning points in British history, such as the First and Second World Wars, periods such as the Tudors and Victorians, and a longitudinal study around crime and punishment through time. Some of these topics date back to previous versions of the National Curriculum, which may help to explain their popularity. A few schools have developed intriguing thematic units such as conflict over time, the history of protest, protest and democracy, pastimes and leisure over time, the movement of people, and exploration, transport and travel. In addition to crime and punishment, some of these themes appear in GCSE units of study. A small number of schools have chosen to teach more than one post-1066 topic. In 2017, the Roman and Greek legacy was the most popular post-1066 topic listed in the National Curriculum document, and it is not clear why this barely gets mentioned by the respondents to the 2019 survey. This time around, crime and punishment, leisure and themes related to World War II are mentioned far more often. This may be indicative of some curriculum development.

**Q13: Within the statutory British topics at Key Stage 2, we are interested to know what is taught. Please tell us briefly who and what you teach as part of the following topics:**

***Stone Age to Iron Age***  
***Roman Empire***  
***Anglo-Saxons and Scots***  
***Local study***

*Responses: 167*

This question was an open question inviting individual responses.

***Stone Age to Iron Age***

In the main, this topic is taught in Years 3 and 4, though not all respondents specified the age group in their answers to this question. In addition, a very small number stated that this topic was not taught in their schools or didn't know. In general, the responses in relation to the content taught were rather brief, and most referenced at least some of the non-statutory examples provided in the National Curriculum programme of study, such as Skara Brae, Stonehenge, and social, technological and agricultural changes over time. A few schools interestingly linked this topic to their localities, and there were a couple of other interesting examples of enquiry questions focused on the role of archaeology, on the impact of significant

developments/turning points, and on making a comparison to life in Ancient Egypt at the time.

### ***Roman Empire***

As with the previous topic, this was taught mainly in Years 3 and 4, though in a couple of instances the Roman Empire was taught in Years 5 and/or 6. Some respondents did not specify the age group in their answers to this question. Again, most answers referenced some of the non-statutory examples provided in the National Curriculum programme of study, and the focus in most schools appears to be principally on the impact of the Roman conquest of Britain. A small number of schools had made links to Roman history in their localities and a few had taken an enquiry-based approach, e.g. *What did the Romans do for us? What made the Roman Empire so successful? Why did the Romans march through Co. Durham? How did life in Britain change when the Romans ruled? Why was the Roman army so good? How should we remember Boudicca?*

### ***Anglo-Saxons and Scots***

Most of the responses to this question suggest that that this topic is taught in Years 4 and 5, though not all the respondents provided this information. Most teachers appeared to focus their teaching around the non-statutory examples provided in the National Curriculum. Again, there were a few examples of schools taking an enquiry-based approach to this topic, such as *Why did the Anglo-Saxons invade Britain? How do we know about the Anglo-Saxons?*

### ***Local study***

A wide range of answers were provided for this question, although some were very brief, making it difficult to identify many widely established patterns or approaches to teaching local history except in broad areas of content. Local studies based on the Victorians, industrialisation and World War II were popular. Most schools had opted for a study of an aspect of history or a site dating from a period beyond 1066 that is significant in the locality. A few schools taught more than one local history topic, some of these as part of a broader British history topic.

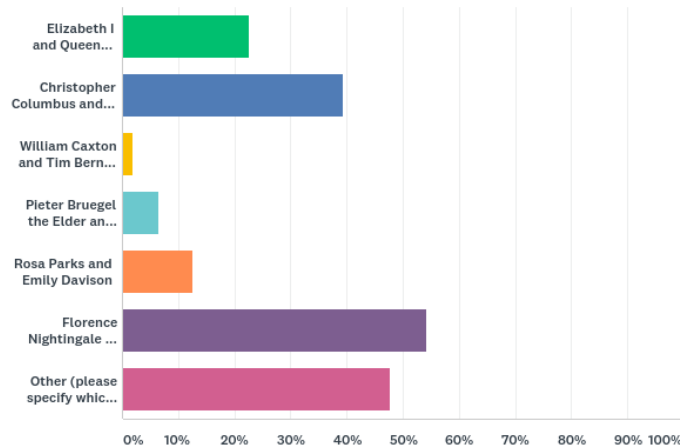
Overall, it was clear from responses that the majority of respondents were sticking to the non-statutory examples provided in the National Curriculum document. This may be indicative of a lack of knowledge or training in the teaching of these specified topics to feel confident enough to branch out, or of a misplaced belief that these examples are statutory. It may also reflect resourcing for primary history, in that resources for the non-statutory examples are easier to source.



## Q14: At Key Stage 1, which significant individuals do pupils study?

Responses: 167

At Key Stage 1, which significant individuals do pupils study?

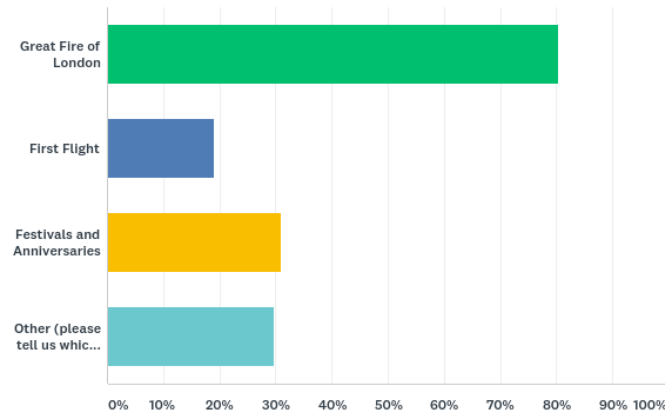


As in previous surveys, Mary Seacole and/or Florence Nightingale and Edith Cavell (54%) are once again the most popular choices from the options included in the National Curriculum programme of study, followed closely by Christopher Columbus and Neil Armstrong (40%). The survey data suggests strongly that most schools who took part study more than one significant individual (167 total responses and over 300 answers given). Significant individuals not specified in the National Curriculum were selected by nearly 50% of respondents, compared to just over 17% in 2017, and these included Samuel Pepys, Grace Darling, Walter Tull, Amelia Earhart, Nelson Mandela and Ernest Shackleton. Schools appear to be becoming more adventurous in their choices here, which is indicative of greater confidence in this unit and possibly better resourcing, offering greater choice.

### Q15: At Key Stage 1, which events beyond living memory do pupils study?

Responses: 167

At Key Stage 1, which events beyond living memory do pupils study?



Respondents were allowed to choose as many options as applied, and responses indicate that some schools are choosing to teach more than one event beyond living memory. The Great Fire of London is the most popular option by far, with a percentage of 80%, and this follows the pattern of previous surveys. Teachers' familiarity with this topic, which has featured in the National Curriculum since 1991, probably explains this. Events commemorated through festivals or anniversaries was the second most popular choice, with 31%. An event beyond living memory not specified in the National Curriculum was selected by nearly 30% of respondents, compared to 19% in 2017, suggesting a similar trend identified in the previous question, namely that some teachers are becoming more confident to branch out.

### Q16: At Key Stage 1, which changes within living memory do pupils study?

Responses: 167

This was an open question. Topics focused on toys were by far the most popular choice, followed at some distance by the seaside/holidays, transport, homes, technology, pupils' own lives/family life and local/school history. The most unusual topic mentioned was Harry and Meghan's wedding.

**Q17: At Key Stage 1, which significant people and events from their own locality do pupils study?**

*Responses: 167*

Again, this was an open question, inviting individual responses. A wide range of responses was provided, including individuals (e.g. Hereward the Wake, George Stephenson, Joseph Priestley, Alan Turing, Captain Cook, Annie Kenney), specific events (e.g. the Royton Train Crash, Remembrance Day, Evacuees and the Sheffield Blitz), and local places of significance (Portsmouth Dockyard, History of Wythenshawe – the development of Manchester airport, Huntley and Palmers Biscuit Factory). There was also some confusion around this question, with a number of 'don't knows, 'N/A's, and 'not sure', as well as answers that appeared to refer to other parts of the National Curriculum programme of study. This may be indicative for some of a misreading of the National Curriculum requirements at Key Stage 1 in terms of the requirement to include a local study.

**Q18: Are there any aspects of the content of the 2014 curriculum that you still feel you need support with or training to teach?**

*Responses: 131*

This was an open question, and some clear themes emerged. In most cases, teachers requested support and guidance on where to find resources for the newer aspects of the history National Curriculum, including the Stone Age to Iron Age unit, local history and the less familiar world history and ancient civilisations units. In addition, a number of teachers cited the need for guidance on assessment (progression and evidencing the less tangible aspects of learning in history) and chronology – in particular, how to combine depth and overview and make links between history topics. This may be reflective of needs arising from the Ofsted 2019 framework.

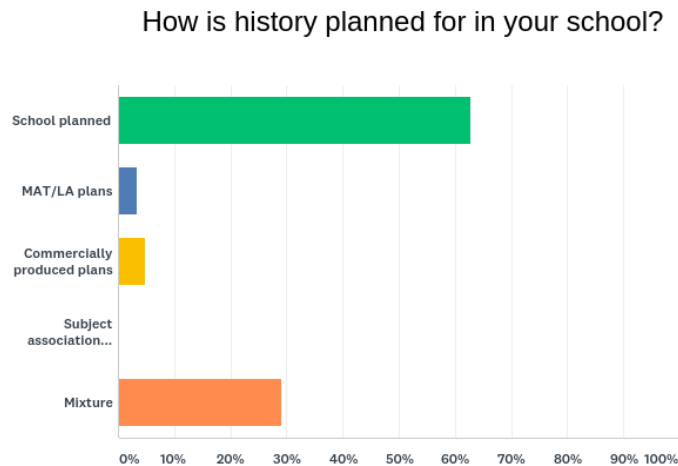
### **Section 3: Planning and assessment**

This section is concerned with how schools monitor and assess progress in history and how assessment is used to inform planning. The overall picture seems to be that assessment of progress in history has become more of an issue in a number of primary schools but is rarely identified as the major concern or priority. It is interesting to note, however, that some teachers did ask for support in this area in a previous question. A number of assessment methods are used in schools but the main one is the scrutiny of the work done by pupils. Other approaches that are adopted in schools include the use of targeted assessments, skills or progression checklists (school-devised or commercial), learning walks, and direct observation and interaction with pupils about their performance, such as pupil voice. This section

was not subject to skip logic, yet there were fewer responses to this section, which may possibly also be indicative of a lack of confidence and knowledge in this area.

### Q19: How is history planned for in your school?

Responses: 148



The majority of responses to this question (63%) indicated that history provision was planned at school level. However, a significant minority (37%) indicated at least some reliance on other materials.

### Q20: How confident do you feel in identifying when and how children are getting better at history?

Responses: 148

On a sliding scale from 0–100, respondents were asked to identify how confident they felt in being able to identify when and how children are getting better at history. There was a range of responses from low to high. The average was 49, which overall is indicative of a lack of confidence among respondents at being able to recognise what progression looks like in history. In 2017, the question was structured slightly differently, and 54% indicated that they were either very confident or quite confident.

**Q21: What methods are used to ensure that history is challenging and accessible to all pupils?**

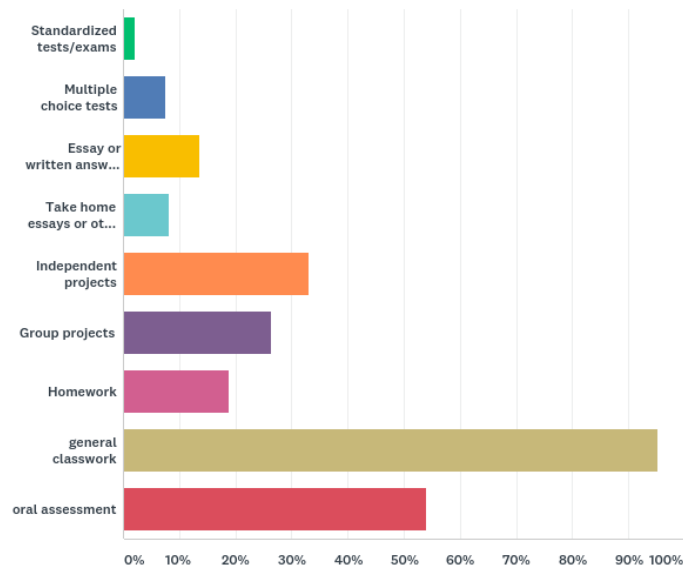
*Responses: 148*

This was an open question. Most responses did not refer to assessment directly, although several used the term in a generic sense without real detail, such as referring to assessment for learning, formative assessment or regular review. There were also a few references to book/work scrutiny (eight mentioned this) and the use of assessment or skills grids as a way of aiding progression (two responses), and four mentioned monitoring plans. One respondent referred to regular 'exams' to track progress, another to assessing prior knowledge and another to the information from pupil voice. There were also other responses that hinted at enrichment, such as choice of resources and visits to sites. In terms of accessibility, a number of responses also mentioned open-ended tasks, scaffolding of resources and differentiation.

## Q22: What are the most common ways in which history is assessed?

Responses: 148

What are the main/most common ways in which history is assessed? Please tick all that apply.



Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option, and answers indicate that many use a mixed economy. An overwhelming 95.3% referred to using the evidence from ordinary classwork. In descending order, 54.1% used some form of oral assessment; 33% assessed specific projects, 26.4% used group projects; 13.5% used an extended written response; 8.1% used an extended response done at home; 7.4% used some form of multiple choice assessment; and just 2% used some form of standardised test. While classwork still leads the way, there is evidence of a developing use of projects and extended written tasks to assess progress in history, and this is something that the HA will investigate further in our next survey.

A small number of respondents provided additional detail. For example, a small number used quizzes to assess knowledge, and one had devised specific criteria for each year group, against which they measured pupils or used a skills file, where the pupils themselves decide what they are capable of and what they have achieved. A small number used this question to admit that they had no formal assessment or were planning to do something next year – in one case, more low-stakes testing. One or two responses also referred to assessment grids or commercial assessment tools such as 'Insight', which is completed by the teacher termly. One or two others mentioned that they collected evidence in the form of photographs or recordings.

### **Q23: What evidence is recorded to demonstrate achievement?**

*Responses: 148*

This was an open question. The responses to this question reinforce earlier answers that the prime evidence is gathered from everyday work, especially in topic books. Eighty-one responses referred to this method (with varying degrees of frequency), with the next most popular being tangible evidence in photographs, videos or in displays (24). One school noted that this was particularly the case for Early Years, where other tangible evidence was less likely. Eighteen of the 148 referred to end-of-unit written tasks and one respondent mentioned giving grades for this. Another mentioned specifically the link between these assignments and the end-of-year report. Eleven claimed to use specific criteria or assessment sheets that noted history skills. One had skills stickers in pupils' books, which were ticked when something had been achieved. Pupil voice, in which pupils were interviewed orally, made up seven of the 148 responses. One noted the use of a specific questionnaire for pupils and another recorded the discussions. Three mentioned actual data, the same number noting direct observation and learning walks, with just two mentioning information in reports to parents. One noted that parents were encouraged to comment not just on the annual report but more regularly on a 'Thumbs Up Thursday'. Another put grades on the annual report.

This broad variety of responses indicates a less standardised approach to assessment in history in primary education. Responses also mask some specific comments. A small number admitted that not everything was finalised (in one case, the honest assessment was that there is 'very little at present'). In one case, end-of-unit tasks were still being developed for the most recent curriculum revision. A few others set September 2019 as their date for something more specific. Another simply replied laconically 'unsure'. Some went into detail as to what was recorded, e.g. 'whether expectations were met or the pupils were working toward it or working at greater depth'. However, these responses were not expanded to outline the basis for the judgements made. One school said that they used the HA Quality Mark criteria as their benchmark. One other school was keen to record both effort and achievement (one also identified a student of the year and a star of the week), and another kept a file showing the progression of the children. A few referred to checklists – commercial and home-grown, such as a 'See-saw portfolio'. A small number of respondents clearly supported a more interactive approach with the pupils – one encouraging self-reflection and another, as part of their marking, including discussion sticky notes.

## **Q24: How is teaching and attainment monitored through the school?**

*Responses: 144*

Again, this was an open question. Easily the most frequently cited method was work scrutiny (61 responses). Thirty-one referred to some form of observation such as classroom observation or learning walks. Twenty-one involved some form of interaction with pupils, mentioning either pupil voice or some form of interview – for example, one school noted a skills file where the children fill in what they believe they are capable of. Eighteen relied on some form of checklist as a tracking mechanism, such as a skills tick list, e.g. a target tracker or SOLO taxonomy. One or two referred to teacher mark books. Sixteen used the monitoring of plans to gauge teaching. Less popular were specific assignments such as end-of-topic or -year assignments (11) and the involvement of senior managers in some form of monitoring, such as classroom visits or reports sent directly to the headteacher and governors (eight), while seven mentioned the use of data. Much rarer were internal or cross-school moderation (five responses), such as work scrutiny with the federation of schools; evidence gathered from team teaching (two responses); and one school that merely responded with ‘general discussion’.

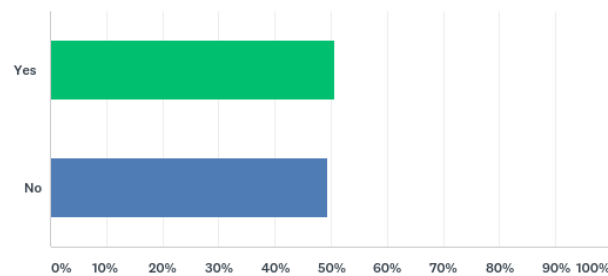
As with other questions about assessment, several noted a lack of progress: ‘it isn’t at the moment’, ‘none yet’ or ‘not very well’. Some noted that change was imminent – ‘no time yet but a new progression framework next term’. Where activity did take place, some added detail such as ‘dedicated half day for the subject leader to engage with work scrutiny, dropping in lessons, looking at lesson plans and reflection’. A small number referred to how frequently monitoring and recording took place, e.g. termly, completing a spreadsheet every term, recording on a shared database or using the ‘Insight system every half term to track progress’. Others referred more generally to day-to-day assessment or reliance on the teacher to use a best-fit mechanism to see that pupils are on track.



## Q25: Have there been any significant changes in the last two years with regard to history planning and assessment?

Responses: 148

Have there been any significant changes in the last two years with regard to history planning and assessment?



Approximately half (50.7%) said that there had been some changes, with others noting that an overhaul was underway or imminent. In the majority of cases, though, the emphasis was on changes to curriculum planning rather than assessment. The vast majority of responses relating to planning indicated that the curriculum was being reviewed and overhauled and that either content topics were being changed or moved or, in some cases, the curriculum was being re-written. In other cases, respondents indicated that curriculum planning had changed in order to plan for and embed the skills of the National Curriculum. These responses are probably linked to the new Ofsted framework, which, while not statutory at the time the survey was conducted, was certainly in the public domain and may well have had an influence.

Where assessment was mentioned, it was often in very general terms – for example, ten simply noted changes to assessment without detail. Where there was some further information, five stated that they were introducing some form of grid (e.g. ‘a new assessment grid so that teachers know what each group needs to achieve by the end of the year’ or ‘we are developing progression documents’). Three specifically mentioned that they were introducing electronic versions. Another reported that they had moved from Target Tracker onto Flick and now onto Insight – presumably with each one being seen as an improvement. Other references included involving children more in the assessment process, introducing an end-of-unit assessment – testing aspects such as critical thinking and questioning – and ‘we are trying to find a new assessment system that will put learners at the centre of their learning journey’. One noted that ‘we never assessed non-core subjects until this year’ and another responded by stating that they wanted their assessment to be simpler. One was rather more ambitious: ‘assessment tasks planned into every lesson’. One had moved from a knowledge-based system to a more skills-based one, and another had moved to a ‘history-led rather than a literacy skills system’.

The occasional negative response also emerged. For example, one school noted sharply:

*'The National Curriculum doesn't specify assessment in foundation subjects. It's yet another fashionable bandwagon people are jumping on so there will be yet more paperwork for already overworked teachers. More forms to be made up and of no benefit to the kids. We should be bringing history to life and we have not got time to do that because we are filling in pointless pieces of paper.'*

Another referred to a significant deterioration following the appointment of a new senior leadership team. There was the occasional more cryptic response: 'we are changing our grade boundaries', a 'total revamp is in progress' or 'good ideas from some local CPD', without specifying what these were.

## **Section 4: Planning and resourcing**

### **Q26: Which topics do you feel are now well resourced in your school?**

*Responses: 145*

This was an open question and was a new addition within the 2019 survey. It was designed to highlight those areas where resourcing needs are met and those areas where need continues to be most acute. Respondents could list as many areas as they wished in their individual responses. It is unclear from the responses exactly how the term 'resources' was interpreted, and which types of resource are being used. The most popular choice of topic within the statutory areas of the National Curriculum was the Romans, with 41 responses, followed by the Ancient Greeks, with 25, indicating that these topics are better resourced. The least popular option among statutory topics in this area was local history, with only six responses. This response is not unexpected, as it is more difficult to resource local history adequately, as geographical areas and approaches vary so greatly. Within the option units in the National Curriculum, the Egyptians had the highest number of responses, with 39. Both Victorians, with 23 responses, and World War II, with 22 responses, were popular among the post-1066 options. The inclusion of all these topics in the pre-2014 National Curriculum may still have a positive impact on the level of resourcing within schools.

A small number of respondents made reference to specific commercially published resources, e.g. Collins Connect, Twinkl and the HA schemes of work. In previous surveys (2015 and 2017), resourcing had been highlighted as a major cause for concern by over 60% of respondents, so it is now more pleasing to see that 25 of the respondents considered all or most topics to be well resourced. This also correlates with teachers expressing less concern over resources this year.

However, less encouraging is that an equal number thought that none of the topics taught within their school were well resourced. Most responses focused on Key

Stage 2, topics with the Great Fire of London (six) as the only named topic at Key Stage 1 recorded. Only five respondents directly referred to Key Stage 1 topics being well resourced.

**Q27: Are there any topics that you still feel are under-resourced?**

*Responses: 146*

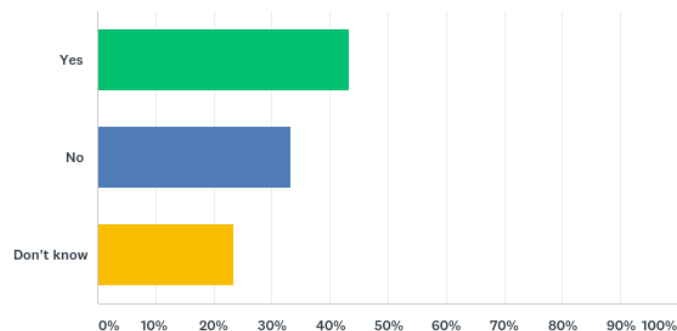
This was an open question, and respondents could record as many topics as they wanted. This led to a very diverse selection; however, the Maya was the most frequent answer, with 36 responses, indicating that, for a popular curriculum unit, resourcing is still an issue. There were also nine responses related to other non-European units, identifying this whole area of the National Curriculum as one of concern for resourcing.

These findings can also be cross-referenced with those of question 25, where only six respondents felt that the non-European units were well resourced. Nineteen respondents did feel that the Stone Age to Iron Age topic was under-resourced; however, most of these respondents also listed a number of other areas that they thought were equally under-resourced, and therefore this could be seen as part of a general resource problem within their school. Twelve respondents referred to local history, but this is unclear whether this was equally a problem within Key Stage 1 and 2 or just confined to one key stage. Almost all responses focused on topics in Key Stage 2. There were a small number of responses (five) that referred to issues with specific types of resources, and these focused on the accessibility of artefacts. The 23 respondents highlighting a need for better resourcing in all topics correlates closely with the responses of 25 respondents in question 25 for no topics being well resourced. The findings from this question would suggest that resourcing is improving within the statutory topics, but in the less familiar options there is still a demand for the production of good quality resources.

**Q28: Are there any history topics that are not taught in your school that you think should be?**

Responses: 150

Are there any history topics that are not taught in your school that you think should be?

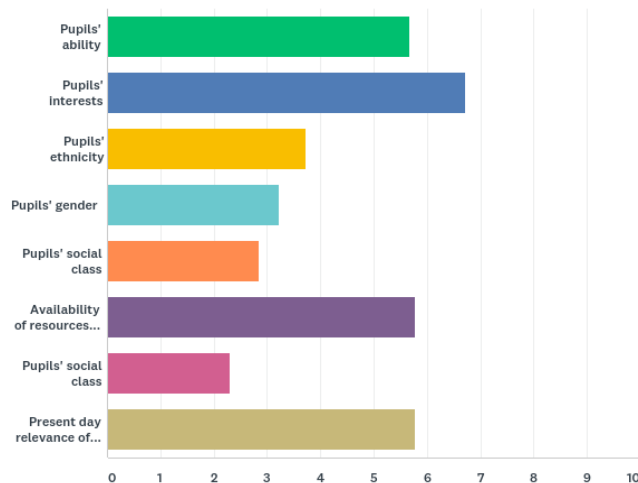


There were 150 responses to this question, with 43 % stating that there were topics not taught that they felt should be. This figure correlates with previous questions in which respondents indicated that they were making changes to their curricula. Thirty-three per cent were happy with the content of the curricula and a further 23% didn't know. Those responding 'yes' to this question mainly referred to changing the options within the National Curriculum taught in their school – for example, being able to teach the Shang or Benin rather than the current option. Some explained why they felt that this action should be taken – for example: *'We have a large group of children with West African heritage'*. A small number of comments indicated that they wanted to make more sweeping alterations to introduce changes beyond the National Curriculum – for example, a greater emphasis on more modern history. A small number felt that certain areas needed to be taught – for example, local history and the Ancient Greeks – that are statutory areas of the National Curriculum. Possibly this discrepancy arises due to these being academies or independent schools, where they don't have to follow the National Curriculum, or it may be that the school is not meeting NC requirements. A couple of respondents recommended a change of emphasis in the topics taught, particularly with regard to a more multi-cultural approach. As in the previous questions, the focus was very much on topics within Key Stage 2, and this may suggest that this key stage is more of a concern to teachers generally or possibly that those responding to the survey were Key Stage 2 teachers. However, a majority of respondents were history subject leaders who will have oversight of the whole school history curriculum.

## Q29: Which of the following are considerations when you are planning history lessons?

Responses: 155

Which of the following are considerations when you are planning history lessons? Please rank in order of importance with 1 being the most important and 8 being the least important.

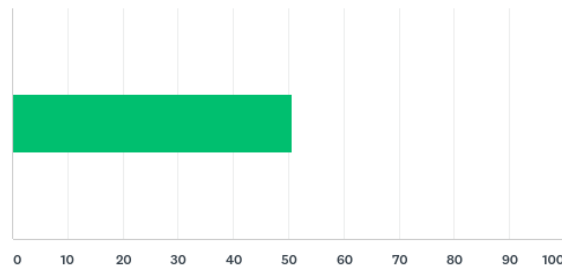


Respondents were asked to rank the options provided from 1 to 8 in order of importance. There was no option to enter other considerations beyond those listed. The most popular consideration was clearly the pupils' personal interests, with a score of 6.71 (7) for this area. Availability of resources, present-day relevance of topic and pupils' ability had virtually the same levels of consideration (6). The least popular area was a consideration of pupils' social class, with a score of only 2.30 (2). These responses suggest that teachers still place a great deal of emphasis on the nature of the pupils within their class; however, it would have been beneficial to facilitate a greater breadth in responses to provide insight into whether the recent focus on curriculum design due to the new Ofsted framework has had an impact on these considerations. This is something that the HA will investigate further in our next survey.

**Q30: How far does history teaching in your school cover the influence that other countries have had on Britain and vice versa?**

*Responses: 155*

How far does history teaching in your school cover the influence that other countries have had on Britain and British history and vice versa?



This question was asked for the first time in 2019. In 2017, we asked teachers about their understanding of the term 'diversity'. Responses indicated a broad understanding of the term but did not indicate how far this impacted upon teaching. In 2019, further questions were added to delve further into this aspect. Disappointingly, while, according to 2017 data, teachers have a broad understanding of diversity, it appears that translation of this into various aspects of teaching may be a little more hit and miss. The average score, when asked how far history teaching covered how different countries have influenced British history and vice versa, was only 51 out of a possible 100. Responses ranged from as low as 3% to as high as 99%. However, an overall score of only 51 is disappointing. This may be indicative again of a lack of knowledge or confidence in teaching this kind of content. These findings would suggest that teachers would benefit from further CPD on how to strengthen this aspect of the curriculum. It would be helpful to know whether those providing a low score regard this as a problem or a strength within their school and further, if it is regarded as a problem, why it is continuing to happen. It would be beneficial to know more about how those with a high score achieve this balance within their teaching. This will be something that the HA will delve more deeply into in our next survey.

### Q31: Which subjects do you most often make cross-curricular links to in history?

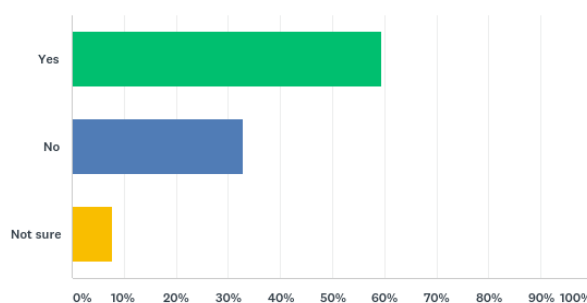
Responses: 155

Respondents were asked to list the two subjects with which they linked history most often. The question did not state that the two responses should be in order of preference; however, the findings would suggest that many interpreted the question in this way. English was popular, both as subject one (74) and two (31). This gave the subject an overall score of 105, placing it well ahead of geography, which was ranked second, with an overall score of 83. Art was the only other subject to have a significant number of responses, with 48 overall; however, 41 of these were as subject two. These findings reflect those of 2017, where English was clearly the subject most frequently linked with history, but the positions of art and geography have now been reversed. It is unclear why this is the case, as respondents were not invited to comment; however, it may reflect the way in which schools are interpreting the Ofsted framework and a misconception that they should place greater emphasis on the humanities as opposed to the arts. A small number of respondents misinterpreted the question and stated the history topic that they felt provided the most opportunities for cross-curricular links, e.g. Great Fire of London and Ancient Egypt.

### Q32: Have there been any significant changes in the last year with regard to history curriculum, teaching and learning?

Responses: 155

Have there been any significant changes in the last year with regard to history curriculum, teaching and learning?



The inclusion of this new question within the 2019 survey is in response to a sense that changes are occurring and a desire to examine whether this is the case in practice and, if so, exactly how this manifests itself within schools. Responses support the impression that 2019 has been a time of change for the majority of those teaching the subject, with 60% responding that there has been some change. Those who gave further comment suggest that this has been a positive move, with only

three comments that could be interpreted as negative. One teacher felt unhappy about the changes and another talked about changes being imposed on the staff by the head and staff being forced to use booklets in their teaching. Another referred to a 'significant deterioration' but it is unclear what this is. Twenty-one comments specifically referred to a review or changes to the curriculum, and many other comments referred to the impact of Ofsted's proposed changes to the inspection framework prompting many of the changes. Responses referred to curriculum reviews resulting in adopting a chronological approach, an emphasis on the development of skills and an enquiry approach. There is also evidence that a review of planning and teaching approaches has also resulted in a greater use of sources, including artefacts. When history is taught within the timetable has also been under scrutiny among respondents, with a variety of models being introduced to improve teaching and learning. Some teachers have moved to teaching history weekly, while others have moved to history weeks or the subject being taught fortnightly. However, previous questions about time allocation indicate that topic/theme or project work is still the most popular way of organising history. The meaning of 'topic work' may well be changing in many schools. The important factor here is how schools are going through the process of reviewing and considering how the delivery of the subject works within their school. This could be interpreted as indicating that the status of the subject has increased within schools, and there are one or two anecdotal comments to support this, such as that it is being taken more seriously.



### **Q33: Which of the following are concerns for history in your school?**

*Responses: 155*

Respondents were asked to rank the following areas from 1–4 relating to their level of concern:

- Time for history
- Training in history
- Resources
- Budget

Responses showed that 46% rated time for history as a level 3 or 4 concern. This is less than in 2017, when 58% rated it as a concern, and the level of concern has dropped back to similar levels seen in 2015 (47%). Again, this perhaps indicates a stabilisation of history's place in the primary curriculum and greater confidence in dealing with the demands of the curriculum. The influence of Ofsted may also be an influence in a growing status and time for history.

In terms of training, 52% indicated this as a level 3 or 4 concern. Despite the fact that other questions on the 2019 survey continued to reveal a lack of training for primary history teachers, this is a lower figure than in 2017 and 2015, when 63% and 61%, respectively, highlighted it as a concern. It is difficult to determine the reasons for this or the disparity between this and responses to other questions, where training is clearly identified as an issue.

Fifty per cent of respondents indicated that resources were a level 3 or 4 concern. This, again, is lower than in previous surveys, with 61% and 64% indicating it as a concern in 2017 and 2015 respectively. While responses to previous questions in this survey continued to reveal resource gaps, this may be an indication that, slowly, resourcing is becoming less of a concern than it was.

Fifty-five per cent indicated that budget for history was a concern. In the previous 2017 survey, 25% of respondents indicated that they had no budget for history. The fact that over 50% still see budget as a major concern seems to indicate that the situation is no better, and possibly worsening. With schools reporting regularly that budgets are being squeezed, and an impetus to review and refine curricula, resourcing, teacher knowledge, and teaching and learning, this is not surprising. This is a trend that the HA will continue to monitor closely.

Overall, the responses this year seem to indicate lower levels of concern about history among teachers overall, which could be indicative of greater levels of confidence now that the 2014 curriculum has had five years to embed.

## Section 5: Support and training

This section examines the extent of teacher knowledge and the level of support and training that teachers receive in order to teach history.

### Q34: To what level have you studied history?

*Responses: 148*

Primary teachers come into teaching via a variety of routes. Many are not subject specialists and very few subject specialisms remain in the BA education courses. However, it is interesting to note that the majority of respondents to this survey have studied history to at least degree level, with 38% indicating that they have either a degree or a postgraduate qualification in history. This is unusual among primary teachers more widely, and perhaps indicates that those who have responded come from a more subject-specialist point of view. The same response was also elicited in the 2017 survey. This could have a potential influence on the responses and is unlikely to reflect primary teachers more widely.

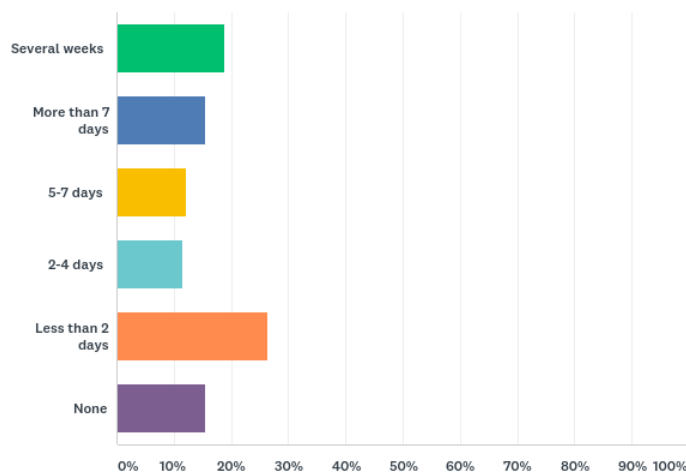
ANSWER CHOICES–	RESPONSES–
– Key Stage 3 14	13.51% 20
– GCSE 16	25.00% 37
– A-level 18	22.30% 33
– Degree	31.08% 46
– Postgraduate degree	6.76% 10
– International equivalent	1.35% 2
TOTAL	148

### Q35: How much training did you receive to teach history during your initial teacher training?

Responses: 148

In 2017 when we asked this question, 61% said that they had received little or no training to teach history during their initial teacher education. In 2019, we wanted to delve deeper into this to find out more about exactly how much training was being given in initial teacher education. A huge 42% indicated that they had either received no training or less than two days' training to teach history during their initial teacher education. A further 11% received less than five days training to teach history. Only 19% of respondents indicated that they had received several weeks of training to teach history, and a further 15.5% indicated that they had received more than seven days' training. While of course primary teachers are expected to teach all subjects, the fact that well over 50% of new teachers are receiving less than the bare minimum of training in order to effectively teach history is a matter of great concern, and appears directly at odds with the requirements of the new Ofsted framework. This provides an interesting basis to delve deeper in future surveys to consider how much teaching of history (with or without training) those in initial teacher education are expected to undertake and the extent to which this differs dependent upon where they are studying and whether they have undertaken a subject-specialist route.

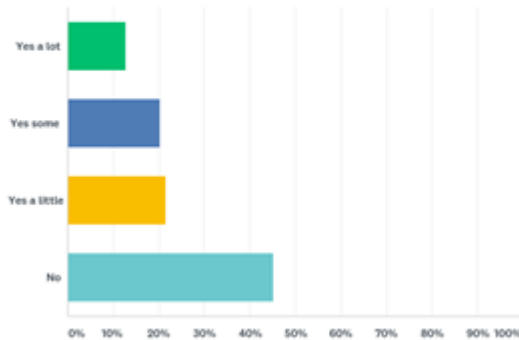
How much training to teach history did you receive during your initial teacher training?



### Q36: Have you undertaken any training in relation to primary history teaching since you qualified as a teacher?

Responses: 148

Have you undertaken any training in relation to primary history teaching since you qualified as a teacher?

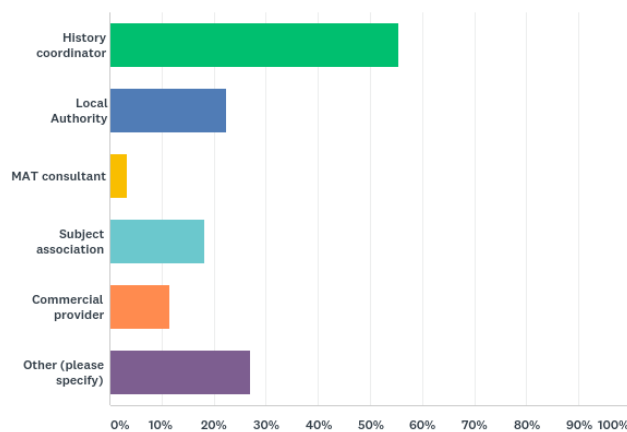


This question was aimed at those who were beyond their initial teacher education. In 2017 when we asked this question, 63% of those who answered the question indicated that they had done little or no CPD in history since qualification as a teacher. In 2019 this figure is showing no improvement, and in fact the picture has worsened, with 67% now indicating that they have undertaken little or no training since qualification as a teacher. Given that a significant number of respondents are experienced teachers, this is a concerning picture and appears not to match the increase in training requests received by the Historical Association in recent months, probably as a response to the new Ofsted framework. This could be to do with the type of training being undertaken. It may be that more teachers are having training in history but that this is more focused on curriculum and planning, rather than teaching and learning as the question suggests. It may also be that the current upsurge in training requests to the HA may be reflected in responses to future surveys. This is something that the HA will continue to monitor.

### Q37: Who are the main history CPD providers for you and your school?

Responses: 148

Who are the main history CPD providers for you and your school?

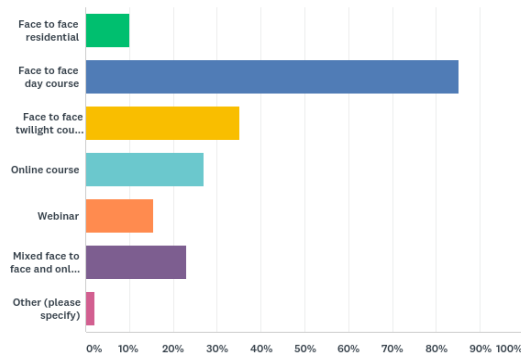


Respondents were asked to tick as many options as applied to their school. The subject leader continues to be the provider of most in-school training (55%). This is a concern given the fact that, according to previous questions, many had not held the role for very long, and they may have received little or no training in history themselves. In total, 52% indicated the use of an outside agency of some kind, whether the local authority, subject association or another commercial provider or consultant. Interestingly, 27% also indicated 'other', and the comments by far revealed that those who selected this option did so because there was no training offered or available and no budget, rendering it impossible for them to choose any of the other answer options.

### Q38: What is your preferred method of receiving CPD?

Responses: 148

What is your preferred method of receiving CPD? Please tick all that apply



As in previous years, face-to-face day and twilight courses were by far the most popular option, with 85% (80% in 2017) selecting a face-to-face day course and 35% selecting face-to-face twilight courses. Interestingly, a growing number (42%) selected online and webinar options. This is more than double the number who selected these options in the 2017 survey. This may be a reflection of budgetary constraints making it difficult for teachers to access a face-to-face day course and also a reflection of concerns over teacher workload, as these options often offer shorter bursts of input that can be accessed by the teacher when it is convenient. The reasons for the growth in those selecting online training options will be investigated further in future surveys.

### Q39: What (if any) challenges do you face in terms of being able to participate in history-focused CPD?

Responses: 148

This was an open-ended question that invited individual responses. The vast majority of comments pointed to lack of availability, time or budget or it not being prioritised in school to allow for release as the greatest barriers. One or two comments focused on the lack of local opportunities.