

# HISTORY IN THE CURRICULUM

## OVERVIEW

— Jacqui Dean and the Nuffield Primary History Project

### Introduction

History is a foundation subject within the English National Curriculum, and as such is part of every child's entitlement. As a distinct subject discipline, history is:

- a process of enquiry
- an evidence-based interpretation and construction of the past
- a debate about interpretations of the past
- the exercise of informed imagination
- the study of the human condition in all its richness and complexity.

### Why teach History?

What can a study of the past contribute to young children's education?

The English National Curriculum Orders for History make explicit history's distinctive contribution to the school curriculum.

### The Nuffield Primary History Project view – NPHP

- 1 History is an irreplaceable resource for gaining insight into and critically examining the human condition and the ways in which societies work.
- 2 We all come out of the past, and what happened there influences what happens here and now - we need to know so we can understand the world today.
- 3 Through history, we can help children to understand how human beings behave and why people act as they do. By getting inside the past, we can help children to respect and value each different period and society in its own terms.

The English National Curriculum's Programme of Study for History has three related components:

- knowledge, skills and understanding (KSU),
- breadth of study, and
- the attainment target

### Organising history within the curriculum

How history is organised and taught in your school will depend on the school's size, philosophy, priorities, development plan, budget and staff expertise.

Over the seven years of primary schooling, a school must plan for teaching the full Programme of Study for History. How is this best done?

### Key Stage 1 (ages 5-7)

In years 1 and 2, history can form a major part of integrated topics such as *Flight* or *Toys and Games*. As long as you address the knowledge, skills and understanding (KSU) and give children a chance to develop a sense of period, you can deliver children's entitlement to history.

In schools where just one QCA scheme of work per year is taught, KS1 children's experience of history is reduced and narrowed. The KS1 Breadth of Study allows for a range of topic choices, moving from the local to the British and world stages. Schools have the freedom to use their local area and

the interest and expertise of teachers (and others) to develop a broad, rich KS1 history curriculum.

### Key Stage 2 (ages 7-11)

How do you fit the six history studies into the four years of KS2? You could do one history topic a year for two years, and two a year for the other two years. Or, you could break up or add to history units, so that the pupils experience history at least twice every year. Alternatively, you could combine some units to give a total of four, that is, one a year – see below.

Planning should take fully into account transition to the next Key Stage, KS3.

### Combining History Study Units

- Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings in Britain *can combine with* local history
- Britain and the wider world in Tudor times *can combine with* local history; World History study: Aztecs
- Victorian Britain or Britain since 1930 *can combine with* local history; world history study: Benin
- European history study: Ancient Greece *can combine with* Ancient Egypt (to some extent)

But, bear in mind that you can combine almost all topics within the freedom that the English National Curriculum for History gives.

### History and other subjects

Traditionally history has been linked with geography. This makes sense, as all history is concerned with place as well as with time. Maps and plans and patterns of human settlement are an intrinsic part of history.

- History Study Units can combine equally well with art, design & technology, drama, ICT, music, numeracy, religious studies and science. Literacy is always integral to the teaching of history and is the subject history works most closely with, see p. 32; also PH 41 on story and PH 56 *'Doing History'* with printed and written sources.

For example,

- **Design & technology:** One of our Year 4/5 classes built working models of ancient boats, a design & technology project as much as a history one.
- **Science:** Most exciting are our lessons on Greek science, starting with pupils 'doing science' today, and then considering the problems and issues facing science in Greek times.

### References and Internet Links

These are included in a full version of this article that can be downloaded from the Historical Association website

Jacqui Dean and Jon Nichol co-direct the Nuffield Primary History Project