



# Blessed Robert Widmerpool Catholic Voluntary Academy

## History Policy

### Rationale

This policy details the provision we make for the learning and teaching of History at our school and in particular:

- The value the school attaches to the learning and teaching of History and working historically as an entitlement for all our pupils;
- To provide a framework of intent and terms of reference for all staff engaged in facilitating the learning and teaching of History with our pupils and in particular to ensure consistency of standards across the school;
- The intent is how the curriculum is organised to ensure breadth, balance, continuity and progression in subject outcomes;
- The preferred learning styles we encourage to engage and motivate pupils in History;
- How the curriculum is implemented, monitored and evaluated on a regular and ongoing basis;
- The impact is measured as pupils are routinely assessed through formative methods against objectives which define the outcomes they will achieve in each historical investigation they pursue;
- The performance descriptors used at the end of EYFS and Key Stage 1; Lower Key Stage 2 and Upper Key Stage 2 help staff to measure impact;
- To clarify that the implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all staff engaged in the learning and teaching of History.

### Intent

The purposes to this policy are to:

- History teaching at Blessed Robert Widmerpool aims to provide an outstanding history education for all our pupils that establishes a 'Culture of Excellence'.
- Highlight the importance and value our school attaches to pupils learning History and to developing as young historians;
- Recognise and establish an entitlement to learning and teaching in History for all our pupils as a statutory educational requirement;
- Make explicit our expectations in terms of subject outcomes and performance for pupils in History as they progress through the school;
- Ensure continuity and progression in terms of subject knowledge, skills application and the development of appropriate attitudes and values;
- Clarify how we will assess, record and communicate the performance of our pupils in History as they progress through the school;

- Outline the approach to learning and teaching History our school has adopted through outcomes focused and key question led enquiries which are relevant, meaningful and rigorous.

### **The value of History within our curriculum**

*Engaging children and young people in investigating questions about people and events in the past helps them to better understand their lives today, the contested nature of knowledge and prepares them for the future as more informed citizens.*

Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum 2009 Final Report

Engaging pupils with a relevant, exciting and challenging History curriculum which inspires curiosity and is appropriate for preparing them for an adult life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is essential since it:

- Helps the learner to understand the complexity of people's lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as the challenges of their time;
- Develops skills of critical thinking which means making reasoned judgements that are logical and well thought out and not merely accepting arguments and conclusions as they are presented but having a healthy, discerning and questioning attitude about new information;
- Supports the learner to appreciate that all knowledge is socially constructed and its objectivity and reliability is therefore open to challenge and question through asking perceptive questions, weighing evidence, sifting arguments and developing perspective and judgement;
- Builds a sense of identity and belonging on a personal, cultural, national and global level as learners come to appreciate the diversity of human experience and consequently understand more about themselves and as members of society;
- Enables the learner to understand core concepts and most notably cause and consequence, similarity and difference, continuity and change, change and progress/regression, significance, evidence, chronology, empathy, context, diversity, perspective, interconnectivity and validity which have broad relevance and significance in the modern world;

### **Implementation: organisation and planning**

#### Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Within the EYFS History is integral to the Early Learning Goal of *Understanding the World* where pupils are encouraged and supported to "talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members". In addition pupils "learn about similarities and differences" in relation to "objects" and "talk about changes" they observe. Within the EYFS an awareness of the concepts, vocabulary and key terms of History is encouraged through planned purposeful play and through a mix of adult led and child initiated activity. For example:

- Recall, retell and sequence stories – *chronology, cause and consequence, evidence;*

- Read and discuss stories with different interpretations or explanations of the same events – reflect on the behaviour, motivation and intent of different characters – *perspective; significance, similarity and difference;*
- Distinguish between the past, present and future and recall moments from the past using language relating to time e.g. past tense - *chronology, similarity and difference, historical narrative;*
- Identifying and comparing features of artefacts from the past and present – *continuity and change/change and progress, evidence, significance;*
- Sequence familiar objects and events in their own lives/family – *chronology, significance.*

### Years 1 – 6

In Key Stage 1 and 2 each year group undertakes six half termly enquiries in History and these are outlined in the **Long Term History Plan Years 1-6**. Each of these enquiries is informed by a detailed **Medium Term Plan or Scheme of Work** which details the objectives, vocabulary, learning and teaching activities and methods of assessment and recording adopted each half term. This medium term plan informs teacher planning on a session by session basis throughout each half term. The History co-ordinator maintains a portfolio for each enquiry which includes evidence of pupil's achievement in each investigation and is used for moderation purposes and to monitor and evaluate that anticipated pupil progress in History is occurring as planned.

### **Inclusion, equality of opportunity and differentiation**

History forms an integral and statutory element of a pupil's entitlement to learning and at our school we ensure that all pupils can engage with historical learning and develop as young historians irrespective of their race, cultural background, gender, sexual identity, religion, creed, level of intellectual ability or physical and emotional circumstances. Mutual respect and the fostering of empathy and community understanding at local, regional, national and global scales lies at the heart of the study of History and at our school we model this in terms of the inclusive nature of the learning and teaching we provide.

Ensuring differentiation is a fundamental and core element of inclusion. As such we plan and resource our learning, in line with our whole school policies, to enable all pupils to make good and sustained progress in History including those with special educational needs, those with disabilities and those identified as Able Gifted and Talented for one reason or another; and those with English as an additional language. In our differentiation planning we take due regard of factors such as classroom organisation, learning materials and the learning environment and ensure that we plan for extra support and challenge where needed.

### **Expectations of outcomes – Progression Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) – Year 6**

At our school an important objective is for all pupils to develop as young historians and we achieve this by recognising and planning for what becoming better at History entails – progression - and consequently challenging and supporting our pupils to work historically in a more rigorous manner as they progress through the school. To enable this to happen we have established an outcomes driven curriculum which recognises the crucial importance of identifying not just what we want our

pupils to know and do in History but also the intellectual outcomes we intend them to achieve through their learning. As pupils progress as historians this involves developing historical perspective through:

- Wider, more detailed and chronically secure knowledge;
- More focused and precise methods of enquiry and communication of understanding;
- A deeper understanding of more complex historical issues and concepts;
- Pursuing historical valid questions to achieve the following subject outcomes:

Recognise  
Identify  
Describe  
Observe  
Select  
Categorise  
Classify  
Sequence  
Connect and make links  
Compare and Contrast  
Recall  
Reason/Speculate  
Summarise  
Synthesise  
Construct informed responses  
Interpret and explain  
Demonstrate understanding  
Empathise  
Reach Informed Conclusions  
Make reasoned Judgements  
Reflect  
Justify  
Apply  
Evaluate  
Critique  
Hypothesise – devise historically valid enquiry questions

### EYFS and Key Stage 1

Whilst we recognise that our expectations of pupil outcomes must never be confined by their stage of learning we nevertheless ensure that in the EYFS and at Key Stage 1 our expectations enable pupils to establish and begin to apply the principles of working as an historian and in particular to:

- Use everyday language related to time;

- Order and sequence events;
- Describe main story settings, events and principal characters;
- Talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members;
- Develop an awareness of the past;
- Use common words and phrases relating to the passing of time;
- Fit the people and events they have studied into a simple chronological timeline;
- Use basic subject vocabulary in their oral and written narratives;
- Ask and answer questions and understand some of the ways in which historians find out about the past;
- Use simple sources of evidence to identify and describe relevant historical information and know that information can be retrieved from written sources such as books and also from visual sources like paintings and photographs as well as computers;
- Record their growing knowledge of the subject and communicate this in appropriate ways;
- Question why things happen and offer reasons;
- Be aware of similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions;
- Recognise and describe special times or events for family and friends;
- Identify similarities and differences between ways of life at different times;
- Identify, describe and offer basic reasons for why people did things in the past and what happened as a result;
- Make simple observations about different types of people, events and beliefs in the past;
- Construct simple historical accounts relating to people and events they have studied.
- Achieve the following subject outcomes in History which are reflected in the relevant **performance descriptors** for pupils at our school for the end of **Key Stage 1**:

Recognise

Identify

Describe

Observe

Select

Categorise

Classify

Sequence

Connect and make links

Compare and Contrast

Recall

Reason/Speculate

## Key Stage 2

In Years 3 through 6 our expectations of pupil outcomes build on what has already been achieved at EYFS and Key Stage 1 and in particular we support pupils to:

- Continue to develop a sense of chronology and a secure knowledge of history;
- Identify connections, contrasts and historical trends over time in relation to the people and events that they investigate;
- Use an increasingly sophisticated and specialised subject vocabulary and use of historical terms;
- Begin to suggest and devise their own lines of historical investigation in addition to pursuing lines of enquiry which have been planned for them;
- Understand how knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources and that such sources may not be entirely objective or trustworthy;
- Select and organise information from historical sources;
- Understand that different versions of the past may exist and provide explanations for why this may be the case;
- Describe and make links between events within and across different historical periods;
- Explain why some people and events in the past may be considered more historically significant than others.
- In Years 3 and 4 we focus on pupils being able to master the skill of distinguishing between providing basic reasons for historical events and changes they have studied and demonstrating understanding through reaching explanations by synthesising evidence from an increasingly wide range of historical sources. At the same time we expect greater alacrity in language from our pupils and we plan accordingly for the use of more specialised subject vocabulary and terms. In particular we aim to achieve the following subject outcomes in History which are reflected in the relevant **Performance Descriptors** for pupils at our school for the end of **Lower Key Stage 2**:

Summarise

Synthesise

Construct informed responses

Interpret and explain

Demonstrate understanding

- At Upper Key Stage 2 our expectations in History are that pupils will more regularly and consistently apply information that they have learned from one context to another, make links and identify patterns in their historical learning and to recognise and understand the contested nature of historical evidence. We challenge them to reach conclusions and make judgements about historical events and changes and to evaluate and critique evidence and to generate questions of their own. In particular our aim is to achieve the following outcomes in Years 5 and 6 which are reflected in the relevant **Performance Descriptors** for pupils at our school for the end of **Upper Key Stage 2**:

Empathise

Reach Informed Conclusions

Make reasoned Judgements

Reflect

Justify

Apply  
Evaluate  
Critique

Hypothesise – devise historically valid enquiry questions

### **Learning and teaching through enquiry**

In History learning is facilitated through pupils pursuing a key question led enquiry approach, which encourages them to take increasing responsibility for their learning, think independently and achieve challenging subject outcomes. At our school therefore we seek to encourage pupils to learn their History through big question led enquiries about significant events, people and changes which allows them sufficient scope and time to really engage in high order subject skills such as developing explanations (even though there are very often no 'right' answers to questions in History), reaching conclusions, making judgements, evaluating, applying information learned in one context to another and generating their own ideas and questions to investigate through hypothesising. Whilst knowing more subject information as the pupils progress through the school is important we are careful in our planning to ensure that there is always a balance between new content and the development of important subject skills and the ability of children to think critically about what they are learning and why. This approach is reflected in all of our planning. We are very careful to be selective about the subject content we use to ensure that a balance is achieved between knowing more content and the development of key subject skills and outcomes.

Rather than attempting to teach historical periods, societies, events or significant individuals in the past in their entirety, we ask insightful questions about them, which in turn supports pupils to delve deeply into aspects of historical topics. Our historical enquiries are carefully planned to enable pupils to construct knowledge, master subject concepts and generate questions of their own through the application of a range of critical thinking skills. This approach is summarised in the following flow diagram:

*Applying skills and processes to finding, organising, selecting, analysing, critiquing and interpreting primary and secondary sources of evidence*



*Pursuing a line of enquiry to answer a relevant and engaging question*



*Constructing and communicating new knowledge and understanding*



*Mastering key concepts, generalisations and abstract ideas*



*Achieving progressively more challenging subject outcomes*



*Generating further questions to investigate*

In line with the school's learning and teaching policy, in History teachers:

- Design enquiries to pursue which are relevant, engaging and appropriately challenging in terms of anticipated outcomes which help pupils answer significant questions about events, changes and the lives of significant individuals.
- Share with pupils what they are expected to learn and how they are expected to learn it;
- Ensure that objectives for lessons always define the outcomes to be achieved and are presented in the form of "key questions" that need to be answered; sometimes these are raised by the teacher, sometimes with pupils and sometimes independently;
- Key question led enquiries are structured to include a number of ancillary questions, the completion of which enable the pupils to progress gradually towards arriving at an answer to the overall big question;
- Provide a variety of learning activities that are used regularly, including observation, enquiry, investigation, games, mysteries, puzzles and problem-solving;
- Encourage pupils to evaluate critically information, ideas and different viewpoints;
- Provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to work as individuals, in pairs and in groups;
- Encourage discussion and insightful questioning so that pupils clarify their thinking;
- Set high expectations and use our performance descriptors at EYFS and Key Stage 1, Lower Key Stage 2 and Upper Key Stage 2 to aid this so that learning objectives and activities are always sufficiently challenging;
- Provide pupils with regular feedback about their work and about what they need to do next in order to improve;
- Use assessment, including the use of focused questions, to determine the pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding, before, during and after units of work;
- Expect pupils to record their work in a variety of ways, including diagrams, illustrations, pictures, letters, posters, annotated drawings and maps, reports, PowerPoints and oral accounts and presentations of their work.

### **Assessing impact**

The objectives for each historical enquiry identify the subject outcomes the pupils will achieve and these are detailed in the Knowledge, Skills and Progression documents. In our assessment (our evaluation of whether the pupil has achieved the subject outcome shown in the objective) the school ensures that a wide range of evidence is used when making judgements. It is critical that pupils are offered a wide range of ways in which to demonstrate what they now know can do and feel as a result of their learning. No pupil must be excluded from demonstrating their achievements through an over emphasis on just one or two methods of recording. This is particularly true when it comes to writing. Whilst writing is undeniably an important means by which a pupil can demonstrate achievement against one or more outcomes it is nevertheless just one of a myriad ways that this can be achieved. A careful balance therefore needs to be maintained EYFS – Year 6.

Consequently a range of assessment tasks involving written work, annotated sketches and diagrams, photograph interpretation, improvised plays, film animations, news reports, PowerPoint presentations, talks, discussions and questioning are used to assess the performance of pupils against objectives and to form the basis of reporting to parents which occurs in accordance with the school's whole school policy. In order to avoid an over emphasis on assessment to the detriment of learning in History a balance is maintained between ensuring we understand how a pupil is progressing and allowing sufficient time and space for progress to occur. To this end all of our routine day to day assessment is *Assessment for Learning* (judging where a pupil has reached at one moment in time and determining what they need to do next to progress) other than a summative statement of attainment which occurs only at the end of Key Stage 1, Lower Key Stage 2 and Upper Key Stage 2. Not the entire range of anticipated subject outcomes will necessarily be assessed for every pupil in every investigation. It is left to the discretion of the teacher as to what is most appropriate and relevant to assess for her or his pupils. The subject co-ordinator keeps evidence of pupil performance against subject outcomes for each stage of learning to ensure consistency of judgements across the school and to use for moderation purposes.

Routine day to day marking of work in History is guided by the school's marking policy which is in turn informed by the subject objectives. When marking work in History priority must be given to assessing how well a pupil has achieved the subject outcomes with consideration then being given to how improving aspects of literacy could enable the pupil to demonstrate to greater effect their knowledge and understanding, attitudes, values and judgements.

### **Measuring and recording progress against subject performance descriptors**

Teachers make routine formative assessments of pupil performance against the outcomes detailed in the objectives of each half termly enquiry and use these to make ongoing evaluations about progress in History based on their professional judgement. These judgements are generated from the scrutiny of a range of evidence generated by the pupil including oral responses and discussions, practical activities such as model making, graphical outputs like annotated diagrams, concept maps, drama pieces and PowerPoints as well as written narratives.

Summative judgements of pupil attainment are made on just three occasions during the course of a pupil's progress through the school:

- At the end of Key Stage 1
- At the end of Lower Key Stage 2
- At the end of Upper Key Stage 2

Summative judgements based on a **'best fit'** evaluation are made against performance descriptors and are based on the accumulated professional judgement of teachers built up over the preceding two years of facilitating learning in History with the pupils. At these three points such this professional judgement will be used to make a considered decision as to whether a pupil has:

- Achieved the **expected** level of achievement for History outlined in the relevant performance descriptors;
- **Exceeded** the expectations of achievement of the performance descriptors;
- **Yet to achieve the expected measure** of achievement in History, for this stage of learning.

### Performance descriptors for the end of Key Stage 1

At the end of Key Stage 1 our expectation is that all pupils will possess an awareness of some of the ways in which historians find out about the past. They will have shown as well that they can ask and answer simple questions about historical sources to help them learn about people and key features of events that they have studied. Pupils will also demonstrate that they can use simple and appropriate historical words and phrases correctly and have established a sense of chronology and change both in relation to their own lives and that of the country of the United Kingdom.

- In relation to changes within living memory our pupils will know some of the significant events, people and changes which in Britain in the 1960s and recognise the main similarities and differences between children's toys and games of the 1960s and now;
- In relation to events beyond living memory our pupils will be able to give valid reasons for the Great Fire of London and show understanding of the consequences
- In relation to the lives of significant people who have contributed to national and international achievements our pupils will be able to describe the accomplishments of Grace Darling and Mary Seacole
- In relation to significant historical events, our pupils will:
  - Know why the sinking of the Titanic was a significant event, what life was like for people living at that time and be able to describe some of the ways in which life in Britain has changed in the last hundred years
  - Know the reasons for the Gunpowder Plot and gain insight into the plotters' options and motivations

### Performance descriptors for the end of Lower Key Stage 2

At the end of Lower Key Stage 2 our expectation is that all pupils will have developed a more sophisticated knowledge of the events and the lives of people in the past that they have studied, compared with that at Key Stage 1. In particular they will have shown that they can use a broader range of historical sources of evidence to help them construct and organise knowledge and to begin to explain (rather than just suggest reasons for) the processes of change and the actions of people and the causes of events. In doing so it is our expectation that our pupils will learn and apply appropriate and increasingly specialised subject vocabulary and phrases correctly to make informed responses and demonstrate a stronger sense of chronology and sense of identity.

In relation to changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age our pupils will be able to:

- Explain how archaeologists have used a variety of artefacts to understand how Ancient Britons might have lived and some of the ways that life changed for people during this period;
- Identify and describe typical Bronze Age stone monuments and explain why mystery surrounds their exact purpose;

- Describe a variety of Iron Age artefacts and explain how they reveal how ways of life in Iron Age Britain were different to that in the Bronze Age;

In relation to the Roman Empire and its impact on Britain our pupils will be able to explain why the Romans invaded Britain in AD 43, why subsequently they were almost defeated by Boudica and how we know so much about the places in which they lived;

In relation to Britain's settlement by Anglo-Saxons and Scots our pupils will be able to explain why the Romans abandoned Britain in AD 410, understand some of the important ways in which life changed in Britain afterwards and why the discovery at Sutton Hoo is considered to be one of the greatest archaeological finds in Britain;

In relation to the Viking and Anglo-Saxon struggle for the Kingdom of England to the time of Edward the Confessor our pupils will be able to explain who the Viking Norsemen were, why they invaded Britain and understand why subsequently King Alfred came to be known as 'The Great';

#### Performance descriptors for the end of Upper Key Stage 2

At the end of Upper Key Stage 2 our expectation is that all pupils will have demonstrated that they can interpret and evaluate more complex sources of evidence to reach conclusions and make judgements, which they can justify, about events and the actions of people in the past. In doing so they will understand and apply correctly specialised subject vocabulary. In constructing knowledge pupils will indicate that they understand that different arguments and perspectives surround the changes caused by events or people in the past and that the meaning or significance that people attach to such changes will vary.

In relation to a local history study our pupils will be able to

- Know how the urban regeneration of Nottingham led to the building of Clifton estate and give reasons for some of the ways in which life in Britain has changed in the last hundred years
- Make links between local and national events and identify patterns in their historical learning and to recognise and understand the contested nature of historical evidence.
- Reach conclusions and make judgements about historical events and changes and to evaluate and critique evidence and to generate questions of their own.

In relation to a study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066 our pupils will be able to:

- Understand through the study a variety of historical portraits and iconic photographs that images are all created for a purpose. They realise that we can only understand the purpose behind the image when we know enough about the author and their motives and pupils will make reasoned judgements and evaluations about these images.
- Describe, explain and evaluate the relative significance of the factors which contributed to the changes in Crime and Punishment from Anglo-Saxons to the present day

- In relation to Ancient Greece our pupils will be able to order the main events of the siege of the city of Troy during the Trojan War and evaluate a range of sources of evidence to make and justify a judgement as to whether the existence of a Trojan 'Horse' is most likely to have been an historical fact, legend or myth;
- In relation to a non-European society that provides contrasts with British history – Mayan Civilization - our pupils will be able to weigh evidence to describe the design of the ancient cities of the Maya in Central America and reach a judgement as to both their possible purpose and eventual abandonment;

### **Connecting History to other areas of the curriculum**

In our planning we have made meaningful links between History and other subject areas of the National Curriculum and to Spiritual, Moral Social and Cultural Development (SMSC) where incorporating content and perspectives adds value to and extends the historical understanding of our pupils. Making such links is important because it highlights to pupils the interconnectedness and interdependence of the real world but when making such connections we must maintain subject rigour and appropriate expectations in History for each stage of learning. For example the primary objective of applying key literacy and numeracy conventions to History is to enable our pupils to achieve more and better in History – i.e. to develop as young historians. To this end we must ensure that high standards of literacy and numeracy when applied to History result in equally and appropriately high standards of historical subject attainment. In each of our historical enquiries links made to other subject areas are clearly documented and as a consequence many are able to deliver effectively substantial elements of the content of other disciplines in a cross-curricular manner.

### **Homework**

Homework in History is provided in line with whole school policy and as such is identified where appropriate within the documentation and planning for each historical investigation.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation and the role of the History subject co-ordinator**

All teachers at our school are responsible for monitoring standards in History but the History Co-ordinator, under the direction of the Headteacher, takes a lead in this. Monitoring activities are planned across the year and form part of the History Co-ordinator's leadership schedule. In summary, these are:

- Staff meetings to analyse samples of pupils' history work to moderate standards (attainment and progress against outcomes and end of stage performance descriptors) to ensure consistency and that colleagues are informed of subject developments at local and national levels with which the Co-ordinator has been involved;
- Lesson observations to ensure that learning and teaching is appropriately engaging and challenging and that the anticipated subject progress is being made by the pupils;
- The sampling of pupils' work every term to ensure that expectations in terms of subject outcomes are being maintained through the curriculum;
- Once per year the subject leader provides feedback to staff about the quality of History being taught and uses the History Portfolio of evidence to lead a discussion on standards being achieved within the subject;

- In collaboration with the Headteacher and teaching colleagues, the co-ordinator drafts and finalises a one year History Action Plan;

The History Co-ordinator has the responsibility to take a lead in developing History further across the school within the school's improvement plan; monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning; and the use of resources. Teachers and educational support staff can expect support from the History Co-ordinator arising from targets identified in the school improvement plan and from the outcomes of performance management and induction programmes.

To develop staff confidence and competence in teaching History the subject co-ordinator will:

- Attend subject professional development opportunities as they arise and in the context of the priorities of the whole School Improvement Plan together with the History Subject Development Plan;
- Identify and source staff training needs arising from the above and through induction programmes and performance management reviews;
- Arrange for relevant advice and information from professional development programmes, including courses, to be disseminated and where appropriate included in subject improvement planning;
- Where necessary lead (or arrange) school-based subject improvement training for colleagues.

### **Policy review**

This policy will be reviewed in line with the school's policy review programme and no later than the following date: September 2024