



Ball Green Primary School

History Policy

1 Aims and objectives

1.1 The aim of history teaching here at Ball Green Primary School is to stimulate the children's interest and understanding about the life of people who lived in the past. We teach children a sense of chronology, and, through this, they develop a sense of identity, and a cultural understanding based on their historical heritage. Thus, they learn to value their own and other people's cultures in modern multi-cultural Britain and, by considering how people lived in the past, they are better able to make their own life choices today. In our school, history makes a significant contribution to citizenship education by teaching about how Britain developed as a democratic society. We teach children to understand how events in the past have influenced our lives today; we also teach them to investigate these past events and, by so doing, to develop the skills of enquiry, analysis, interpretation and problem-solving.

1.2 Our objectives in the teaching of history are:

- to foster in children an interest in the past, and to develop an understanding that enables them to enjoy all that history has to offer;
- to enable children to know about significant events in British history, and to appreciate how things have changed over time;
- to develop a sense of chronology;
- to know and understand how the British system of democratic government has developed and, in so doing, to contribute to a child's citizenship education;
- to understand how Britain is part of a wider European culture, and to study some aspects of European history;
- to have some knowledge and understanding of historical development in the wider world;
- to help children understand society and their place within it, so that they develop a sense of their cultural heritage;

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- to develop in children the skills of enquiry, investigation, analysis, evaluation and presentation.

2 Teaching and learning

History teaching focuses on enabling children to think as historians. We place an emphasis on examining historical artefacts and primary sources. In each key stage, we give children the opportunity to visit sites of historical significance. We encourage visitors to come into the school and talk about their experiences of events in the past. We recognise and value the importance of stories in history teaching, and we regard this as an important way of stimulating interest in the past. We focus on helping children to understand that historical events can be interpreted in different ways, and that they should always ask searching questions, such as 'how do we know?', about information they are given.

We recognise that in all classes, children have a wide range of ability in history, and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this by:

- setting tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty, some children not completing all tasks;
- grouping children by ability in the room, and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- providing resources of different complexity, depending on the ability of the child;
- using classroom assistants to support children individually or in groups.

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3 History curriculum planning

History is a foundation subject in the National Curriculum. We use the National Curriculum as the basis for our curriculum planning in history and crosslink it with topics. We adapted these themes to local circumstances of our school, but we have adapted this to our local context, building on the successful units of work already in place. We ensure that there are opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we plan progression into the scheme of work, so that the children are increasingly challenged as they move through the school.

We carry out curriculum planning in history in two phases (long-term and medium-term). The long-term plan maps the history topics studied in each term during each key stage; the subject leader devises this plan in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each year group, and the children study history topics in conjunction with other subjects, especially at Key Stage 1. Some topics have a particular historical focus, and in Key Stage 2, we place an increasing emphasis on independent historical study. We teach the knowledge, skills and understanding set out in the National Curriculum through the corresponding programme of study.

4 The Foundation Stage

We teach history in reception classes as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the history side of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. History makes a significant contribution to developing a child's knowledge and understanding of the world, through activities such as dressing up in historical costumes, looking at pictures of famous people in history, or discovering the meaning of vocabulary ('new' and 'old', for example) in relation to their own lives.

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5 The contribution of history to teaching in other curriculum areas

Literacy

History contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Children develop oracy through discussing historical questions, or presenting their findings to the rest of the class. They develop their writing ability by composing reports and letters, and through using writing frames.

Mathematics

The teaching of history contributes to children's mathematical understanding in a variety of ways. Children learn to use numbers when developing a sense of chronology through activities such as creating time lines and through sequencing events in their own lives. Children also learn to interpret information presented in graphical or diagrammatic form. For example, they study the impact of the plague by analysing population statistics.

SMSC

History contributes significantly to the teaching of social, moral and spiritual skills. Children develop self-confidence by having opportunities to explain their views on a number of social questions, such as how society should respond to poverty and homelessness. They discover how to be active citizens in a democratic society by learning how laws are made and changed, and they learn how to recognise and challenge stereotypes, and to appreciate that racism is a harmful aspect of society. They learn how society is made up of people from different cultures, and they start to develop tolerance and respect for others.

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6 History and ICT

Information and communication technology enhances our teaching of history, wherever appropriate, in all key stages. This more than meets the statutory requirement for children to use ICT as part of their history work in Key Stage 2. The children use ICT in a variety of ways, such as word-processing, finding information on the Internet, consulting Encarta and presenting information through PowerPoint. They can also use interactive timeline software, and they can make creative use of the digital camera to record photographic images. For example, they might do some image manipulation by importing a digital photograph of themselves into a photo-editing program, along with a figure in period costume and some historical background scenery. Role-playing software can engage children in visual scenarios which they can direct themselves. They can also e-mail children in schools abroad.

7 History and Inclusion

At our school, we teach history to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. This accords with the school's curriculum policy of providing a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our history teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, and differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. Assessments made by teachers against the National Curriculum's attainment targets and level descriptors allow us to consider each child's attainment and progress in relation to the levels expected. This helps to ensure that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

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Intervention through School Action and School Action Plus will lead to the creation of a pupil passport for children with special educational needs. The passport may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to history.

We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning history. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, e.g. a visit to an archaeological dig, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

8 Assessment for learning

Children demonstrate their ability in history in a variety of different ways. Younger children might, for example, act out a famous historical event, whilst older pupils may produce a PowerPoint presentation based on their investigation, for example, of voyages of discovery. Teachers will assess children's work by making informal judgements during lessons. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher assesses the work and uses this information to plan for future learning. Written or verbal feedback is given to the child to help guide his or her progress. Older children are encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own work.

At the end of a whole unit of work, the teacher makes a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the National Curriculum level of attainment.

The history subject leader keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio. These demonstrate what the expected level of achievement is in history for each age group in the school.

9 Resources

There are sufficient resources for all history teaching units in the school. We keep these resources in a central store, where there is a box of equipment for each unit of work.

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10 Monitoring and review

The coordination and planning of the history curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader, who also:

- Supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in history and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- Gives the headteacher an annual summary report in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in history and indicates areas for further improvement;
- Reviews evidence of the children's work, and to observe history lessons across the school.

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