
OUR LADY IMMACULATE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL HISTORY POLICY

Subject content

Foundation Stage

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, history is taught through the area of Understanding the World. The curriculum is carefully sequenced to start with children's own experiences and those of their families, enabling them to develop a secure sense of the past and an understanding of change over time. Through purposeful play, high quality adult interactions, stories, photographs, artefacts and first-hand experiences, children build early historical knowledge and vocabulary, including an awareness of past and present. This strong foundation supports children's curiosity, talk and thinking.

Key stage 1

Pupils should develop an awareness of the past, using common words and phrases relating to the passing of time. They should know where the people and events they study fit within a chronological framework and identify similarities and differences between ways of life in different periods. They should use a wide vocabulary of everyday historical terms. They should ask and answer questions, choosing and using parts of stories and other sources to show that they know and understand key features of events. They should understand some of the ways in which we find out about the past and identify different ways in which it is represented.

In planning to ensure the progression described above through teaching about the people, events and changes outlined below, teachers are often introducing pupils to historical periods that they will study more fully at key stages 2 and 3.

Pupils should be taught about:

- Changes within living memory – where appropriate, these should be used to reveal aspects of change in national life
- Events beyond living memory that are significant nationally or globally - the Great Fire of London.
- The lives of significant individuals in the past who have contributed to national and international achievements, some should be used to compare aspects of life in different periods [for example, Elizabeth I and Queen Victoria, Christopher Columbus and Neil Armstrong, William Caxton and Tim Berners-Lee, Pieter Bruegel the Elder and LS Lowry, Rosa Parks and Emily Davison, Mary Seacole and/or Florence Nightingale and Edith Cavell]
- Significant historical events, people and places in their own locality

Key stage 2

Pupils should continue to develop a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history, establishing clear narratives within and across the periods they study. They should note connections, contrasts and trends over time and develop the appropriate use of

historical terms. They should regularly address and sometimes devise historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity and difference, and significance. They should construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection and organisation of relevant historical information. They should understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.

In planning to ensure the progression described above through teaching the British, local and world history outlined below, teachers should combine overview and depth studies to help pupils understand both the long arc of development and the complexity of specific aspects of the content.

Pupils should be taught about:

- Changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age
- Changes in an aspect of social history, such as crime and punishment from the Anglo-Saxons to the present or leisure and entertainment in the 20th Century
- The legacy of Greek or Roman culture (art, architecture or literature) on later periods in British history, including the present day
- A significant turning point in British history – The Battle of Britain.
- The achievements of the earliest civilizations – an overview of where and when the first civilizations appeared and a depth study of one of the following: Ancient Maya, The Indus Valley, Ancient Egypt, The Shang Dynasty of Ancient China.
- Ancient Greece – a study of Greek life and achievements and their influence on the western world
- A non-European society that provides contrasts with British history – one study chosen from: early Islamic civilization, including a study of Baghdad c. AD 900; Mayan civilization c. AD 900; Benin (West Africa) c. AD 900-1300

Aims

The national curriculum for history aims to ensure that all pupils:

- Know and understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the earliest times to the present day: how people's lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world
- Know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world: the nature of ancient civilisations; the expansion and dissolution of empires; characteristic features of past non-European societies; achievements and follies of mankind
- Gain and deploy a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as 'empire', 'civilisation', 'parliament' and 'peasantry'
- Understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses
- Understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed
- Gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts: understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history;

between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history; and between short- and long-term timescales

Teaching and learning

History teaching in our school 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;
- Sometimes grouping children by ability, and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- Providing resources of different complexity, depending on the ability of the child;
- Using Learning Support Assistants to support children individually or in groups.

History curriculum planning

History is a foundation subject in the National Curriculum. History is one of the main drivers of teaching the foundation subjects. We ensure that there are opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we plan progression using our progression documents, so that the children are increasingly challenged as they move through the school. We use themes according to the children’s interests and take advantage of local and cultural opportunities where possible. The medium-term plans sequence the learning intentions into cohesive steps to ensure progression and coverage of the key objectives.

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 and presenting information. They can also use interactive time line software and they can make creative use of the digital camera to record photographic images. For example, they might manipulate an image by importing a digital photograph of themselves into a photo-editing program, along with a figure in period costume and some historical background scenery.

Assessment

We believe that effective assessment provides information to improve teaching and learning. We give learners regular feedback on their learning so that they understand what it is that they need to do better. This allows us to create detailed planning based on a sound knowledge of each pupil. We give parents regular written and verbal reports on their child's progress so that teachers, children and parents are all working together to raise standards for all our children.

We use a post assessment task at the end of each topic, to show the clear progress children have made within their topic.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Assessment, Marking and Feedback and Teaching and Learning policies.

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 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 the year teachers make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to taught objectives and skills relevant to their year group.

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

Resources

There are sufficient resources for all history-teaching units in the school. We keep these resources in area bases, appropriate to the topics being taught that year. The library contains a good supply of topic books and software to support children's individual research. Individual classes will build up banks of resources relevant to their topics.

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 the strengths and weaknesses in history are evaluated and the areas for further improvement are indicated;
- Uses specially allocated regular management time to review evidence of the children's work and to monitor and evaluate the progress made by children in history across the school.
- Learning walks, drop-in sessions, monitoring of planning and regular book scrutinies.

Approved: Spring 2026

Review: Spring 2028

The quality of teaching and learning in history is monitored and evaluated by the curriculum coordinator, curriculum leader and headteacher as part of the school's agreed cycle of monitoring and evaluation.