



# SHOBNALL PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

## APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF HISTORY



*"History is who we are and why we are the way we are. History is not just the past.  
History is the present."*

**SEPTEMBER 2021**

Reviewed: [October 2022](#), [October 2023](#)

Review:

[September 2024](#)

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## INTRODUCTION

This approach outlines the teaching, organisation and management of history taught and learnt at Shobnall Primary & Nursery School.

This document has been drawn up because of staff discussion and its implementation is the responsibility of all teaching staff. The responsibility for monitoring and review rests with the history subject leader.

The main purposes of this approach are:

- To establish an entitlement for all pupils.
- To establish expectations for teachers of this subject.
- To promote continuity and coherence across the school.

## VISION

*“At Shobnall Primary & Nursery School, our vision is to enable children to have an excellent knowledge and understanding of people, events, and contexts from a range of historical periods and of historical concepts and processes. Our children display a desire to embrace challenging activities, including opportunities to undertake high-quality research across a range of history topics and a passion for history and an enthusiastic engagement in learning, which develops their sense of curiosity about the past and their understanding of how and why people interpret the past in different ways.”*

## PRINCIPLES

REFLECT	We believe our pupils should have the ability to think, reflect, debate, discuss and evaluate the past, formulating and refining questions and lines of enquiry. Pupils will have the ability to think critically about history and communicate ideas very confidently in styles appropriate to a range of audiences.
RESPECT	We ensure our children have a respect for historical evidence and the ability to make robust and critical use of it to support their explanations and judgements.
ROBUST	We aim for our pupils to have the ability to consistently support, evaluate and challenge their own and others' views using detailed, appropriate and accurate historical evidence derived from a range of sources.

## THEORY UNDERPINNING OUR PRACTICE AND PRINCIPLES

The study of history can bring pupils into a rich dialogue with the past and with the traditions of historical enquiry. The past and changing accounts of the past have shaped the identities of diverse people, groups and nations. Through history, pupils come to understand their place in the world, and in the long story of human development. The study of history challenges pupils to make sense of the striking similarities and vast differences in human experiences across time and place.

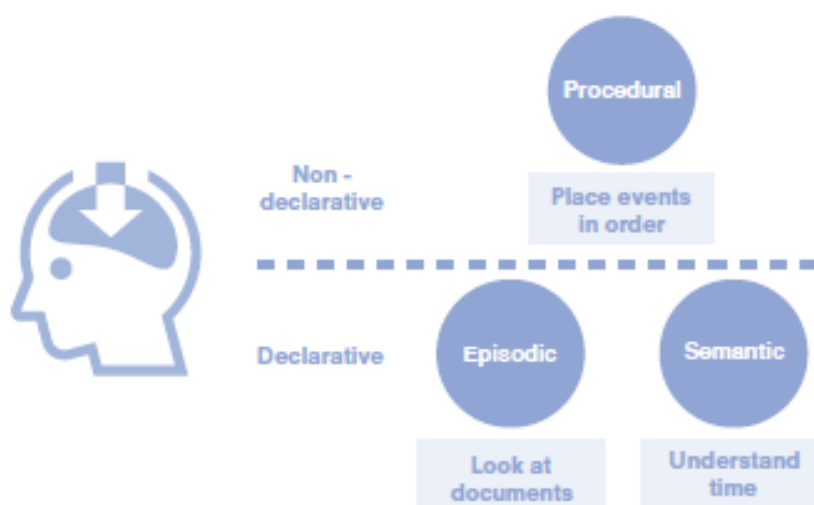
School history also shows pupils how accounts of the past arise and are constructed. Pupils learn how evidence for a claim can be constituted and the conditions under which valid claims can be made. They learn how historians and others construct accounts about the past, building on and challenging or refining the work of others. Pupils learn how argument and debate can be underpinned by shared principles of enquiry, and how this can drive and test new knowledge and insight about shared pasts.

As a school we scrutinised the best research available and we have determined that our **definition of learning** is a **change to the long-term memory**. This means that the way we implement our curriculum maps involves repetitive teaching of the key concepts or the 'big' ideas. Each unit has built in practise, retrieval and reinforcement of the key concepts to ensure knowledge sticks in the long-term memory. For learning to stick in the **long-term memory** we teach historical knowledge in meaningful contexts and in a connected way.

Long-term memory involves three main areas:

1. Procedural memory where procedures such as placing events in order and other skills are stored. Procedures, once fluent, become automatic and are referred to as non-declarative.
2. Semantic memory where facts and their meaning is stored.
3. Episodic memory where the activities to learn the processes and facts are remembered and act as memory cues.

Both semantic and episodic memory involve conscious thought and are therefore referred to as declarative.



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We have used the research around **cognitive load** and how children learn most effectively, to determine our approach to implementing the curriculum. Research has shown that If you teach children too many new concepts at once their short-term memory becomes overloaded and none of the knowledge will stick and move into the long term. We take an approach of **spacing** out new knowledge combined with interleaving and plenty of retrieval practise to ensure learning sticks. With **repetition, interleaving and retrieval**, research we use suggests that the more often children have to remember knowledge the more likely it just to be cemented into the long-term memory.

Pupils make progress in history by developing:

- their knowledge about the past (this knowledge is often described as ‘substantive knowledge’)
- their knowledge about how historians investigate the past, and how they construct historical claims, arguments and accounts (often described as ‘disciplinary knowledge’)

History teachers and history education researchers have long noted the complex interplay between substantive knowledge and disciplinary knowledge. Substantive knowledge being the ‘stuff’ of history and disciplinary knowledge being familiar with the ‘second order’ or procedural concepts that shape the way in which the ‘stuff’ or ‘substance’ is understood, organised, and debated, as well as the ways in which it is actually generated. This includes: cause and consequence, change and continuity, similarity and difference, significance, evidence, interpretations. None of these can be taught separately from the substance of history, but effective planning encompasses and addresses them all.

Deploying both substantive and disciplinary knowledge in combination is what gives pupils the capacity or skill to construct historical arguments or analyse sources. This is because knowledge of the past must be shaped by disciplinary approaches in order to become historical knowledge. Similarly, acquiring disciplinary knowledge is made purposeful and meaningful to pupils when it is related to particular historical problems where pupils have sufficient knowledge of the period, setting and topic to reason, to make inferences and to grasp the terms that others are using in any debate.

## INTENT

Curriculum drivers shape our curriculum breadth. They are derived from an exploration of the backgrounds of our pupils, our beliefs about high-quality education and our values. They are used to ensure we give our pupils appropriate and ambitious curriculum opportunities:

- Diversity – We believe in developing pupils’ understanding of British values and celebrating our unique and diverse community.
- Dreams – We promote ambition, high aspirations and foster pupils’ capacity to see the possibilities within the world today.
- Decisions – We encourage our pupils to make the right choices in order to stay safe, healthy and happy.

Cultural capital gives our pupils the vital background knowledge required to be informed and thoughtful members of our community who understand and believe in British values.

Curriculum breadth is shaped by our curriculum drivers, cultural capital, subject topics and our ambition for pupils to study the best of what has been thought and said by many generations of academics and scholars.

Our curriculum distinguishes between subject topics and threshold concepts. Subject topics are the specific aspects of subjects that are studied. Threshold concepts tie together the subject topics into meaningful schema. The same concepts are explored in a wide breadth of topics. Through this ‘forwards-and-backwards engineering’ of the curriculum, pupils return to the same concepts over and over, and gradually build understanding of them.

For each of the threshold concepts, three milestones (each of which includes the procedural and semantic knowledge pupils need to understand the threshold concepts) provide a progression model.

Knowledge categories in each subject give pupils a way of expressing their understanding of the threshold concepts.

Knowledge webs help pupils to relate each topic to previously studied topics and to form strong, meaningful schema. Cognitive science tells us that working memory is limited and that cognitive load is too high if pupils are rushed through content. This limits the acquisition of long-term memory. Cognitive science also tells us that in order for pupils to become creative thinkers, or have a greater depth of understanding, they must first master the basics, which takes time.

Within each milestone, pupils gradually progress in their procedural fluency and semantic strength through three cognitive domains: basic, advancing and deep. The goal for pupils is to display sustained mastery at the advancing stage of understanding by the end of each milestone and for the most able to have a greater depth of understanding at the deep stage. The timescale for sustained mastery or greater depth is, therefore, two years of study.

As part of our progression model we use a different pedagogical style in each of the cognitive domains of basic, advancing and deep. This is based on the research of Sweller, Kirschner and Rosenshine who argue for direct instruction in the early stages of learning and discovery-based approaches later. We use direct instruction in the basic domain and problem-based discovery in the deep domain. This is called the reversal effect.

Also as part of our progression model we use POP tasks (Proof of Progress) which show our curriculum expectations in each cognitive domain.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Our curriculum design is based on evidence from cognitive science; three main principles underpin it:

- Learning is most effective with spaced repetition.
- Interleaving helps pupils to discriminate between topics and aids long-term retention.
- Retrieval of previously learned content is frequent and regular, which increases both storage and retrieval strength.

In addition to the three principles, we also understand that learning is invisible in the short term and that sustained mastery takes time.

Our content is subject specific. We make intra-curricular links to strengthen schema. Continuous provision, in the form of daily routines, replaces the teaching of some aspects of the curriculum and, in other cases, provides retrieval practice for previously learned content.

Pupils study history for 6 hours per term. This time can be organised into 'blocks' where pupils will study history for a number of sessions before studying another subject.

Cross curricular outcomes in history are specifically planned for, with strong links between the history curriculum and morning literacy lessons enabling further contextual learning. The local area is also fully utilised to achieve the desired outcomes, with extensive opportunities for learning outside the classroom embedded in practice. Planning is informed by and aligned with the national curriculum. In addition, staff have access to the Curriculum Companions and accompanying resources, however, teachers lesson design is not limited by this and is informed by national agencies, including the History Association, of which the school is a member of.

## **IMPACT**

Because learning is a change to long-term memory, it is impossible to see impact in the short term. We do, however, use probabilistic assessment based on deliberate practice. This means

that we look at the practices taking place to determine whether they are appropriate, related to our goals and likely to produce results in the long run.

We use comparative judgement in two ways: in the tasks we set (POP tasks) and in comparing a student's work over time.

We use lesson observations to see if the pedagogical style matches our depth expectations.

Pupils attainment and progress in history is measured against the objectives set in the national curriculum and recorded by teachers using Sonar Tracking to inform parents and future teaching and learning activities.

### EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HISTORY

Effective teaching ensures that pupils retain knowledge they have learned in the long term. This is supported by opportunities to revisit and practise with prior knowledge. Pupils are more likely to retain knowledge when they have engaged analytically with the content they study. Teachers can support learning through clear exposition, which takes into account what pupils already know and understand. Disciplinary knowledge in history is highly distinctive and is likely to require distinctive teaching approaches (i.e. use of models and analytical language). However, wider educational research offers a strong basis for a range of effective teaching approaches in history. These are often reflected in our lessons and will include:

- **Teaching for memory** - evidence suggests that teachers can support pupils' long-term learning by drawing attention to particularly important terms and expressions, precise phenomena and broader frameworks in their teaching.
- **Artefacts** – providing pupils with an opportunity to examine historical artefacts and primary sources, including the opportunity to visit sites of historical significance as planned for.
- **Recall** - recalling previously taught content (retrieval practice) and revisiting content in lessons (spaced practice) have also been shown to be effective in securing pupils' knowledge over time.
- **Clear exposition that considers pupils' prior knowledge** - teachers' exposition is likely to be most effective when it is clear and carefully designed to account for pupils' existing knowledge.
- **Narrative and story** - storytelling is a powerful vehicle for learning. It is likely that historical stories are an effective way of teaching new content in history. Stories are likely to be particularly effective when teachers draw pupils' attention to particularly important content within them.
- **Developing pupils' knowledge of historical contexts** - pupils' learning within a topic is heavily supported by their knowledge of the historical context. Dawson highlighted the importance of pupils' 'sense of period' and Hill suggested approaches to 'world-building' to develop a rich knowledge of past places and societies. Both authors share a range of approaches to developing pupils' knowledge of a historical context, including the use of visuals, maps and aspects of material culture.
- **Teaching chronological knowledge** - using timelines in class may support pupils to organise their knowledge of events and periods, particularly when they connect elements of pupils' prior knowledge, secure coherent overviews or narratives and enable pupils to 'orientate' their knowledge in time through chronological markers or period characteristics.
- **Reading extended texts** - extended texts are likely to be a common feature of history lessons. Summaries of texts might be a useful tool for contextualising reading and supporting comprehension. Background knowledge is likely to be a major influence on pupils' capacity to read and understand a text and so using texts effectively will depend on pupils' knowledge. This knowledge might include general vocabulary, knowledge of



history-specific content and also knowledge of disciplinary conventions, including historical writing genres. To support pupils in reading the work of academic historians, Foster emphasises the importance of pupils' disciplinary knowledge, for example pupils' knowledge of these texts as a mode of historical argument.

### SUPPORTING PUPILS IN HISTORY, INCLUDING PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND/OR DISABILITIES (SEND)

We recognise that in all classes children have a wide range of ability in history. There is a lack of specific research on pupils with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) and history education. However, findings into what makes an effective history curriculum provides some suggestions regarding effective support for pupils with SEND.

All pupils are entitled to a broad history curriculum. Any adaptations made to support pupils' learning in history usually should not be to the overall curriculum content but rather to how the content is taught. In the case of pupils with the most complex learning needs, there may be occasions when it is appropriate to modify the curriculum. However, this will be the exception.

Ensuring that all pupils otherwise encounter the same content is particularly important given the role that hinterland information has in facilitating learning in history. This suggests that significantly reducing content or complexity for some pupils might in fact limit their access to content or limit their ability to learn. It is likely that pupils will benefit most from support that combines extra attention to securing the most generative knowledge, while ensuring that all pupils are able to learn about events and periods in a rich context and through meaningful examples.

Support for pupils with SEND focuses on their ability to access the breadth and depth of the curriculum over time, rather than their ability to complete the immediate task. This includes making sure that all pupils are secure in their knowledge of the important content and concepts that help them make sense of the later curriculum.

### PROMOTING KEY SKILLS IN HISTORY

Through our teaching of history, we provide opportunities for pupils to develop the key skills of:

- **Communication**, through reading and responding to a range of sources of information, when planning and carrying out historical enquiries, through taking part in discussions, and presenting findings in a variety of ways.
- **Co-operation**, through planning and carrying out historical enquiries that are classroom based or take place on a visit to a museum, gallery or site.
- **Improving their own learning and performance**, through reviewing their work at regular intervals, setting targets for improvement and assessing their achievement.
- **Problem-solving**, through finding out about the past by investigating a specific question or issue, deciding what information they need to know, identifying relevant sources of information and discussing their conclusions.
- **Thinking skills**, through work on processing and evaluating information, describing and explaining events and actions, and carrying out investigations of past events.
- **Application of number**, when using dates to calculate the length of time between events, or the average life span of people living in the local area from headstones, and through carrying out calculations from databases as part of historical enquiries into trends and developments.
- **Financial capability**, through developing pupils' understanding of the economic factors that affect people in different classes of society and of the impact of economic and technological development on societies at different times in the past.



- **Education for sustainable development**, through developing pupils' skills of enquiry, critical thinking and communication, and knowledge and understanding of how past actions, choices and values may have an impact on future societies, economies and environments.

## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Early years explore historical themes and content through the 'Understanding of the World – People, Culture & Communities' strand of the EYFS curriculum. This involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places and time. They are assessed according to the Progress Models determined by the school in accordance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## KEY STAGE 1

Pupils develop an awareness of the past, using common words and phrases relating to the passing of time. They are taught 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 use a wide vocabulary of everyday historical terms. They 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 are taught some of the ways in which we find out about the past and identify different ways in which it is represented.

To ensure the progression described above, in planning, through teaching about the people, events and changes outlined in the national curriculum, teachers are often introducing pupils to historical periods that they will study more fully at key stages 2 and 3. Pupils are taught about changes within living memory, events beyond living memory that are significant nationally or globally, the lives of significant individuals in the past who have contributed to national and international achievements and significant historical events, people and places in their own locality.

## KEY STAGE 2

Pupils 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 note connections, contrasts and trends over time and develop the appropriate use of historical terms. They regularly address and sometimes devise historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity and difference, and significance. They construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection and organisation of relevant historical information. They understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.

To ensure the progression described above, in planning, through teaching the British, local and world history outlined below, teachers 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 are taught about changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age, the Roman Empire and its impact on Britain, Britain's settlement by Anglo-Saxons and Scots, the Viking and Anglo-Saxon struggle for the Kingdom of England to the time of Edward the Confessor, a local history study, a study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066, the achievements of some of the earliest civilizations, Ancient Greece and a non-European society that provides contrasts with British history.

## PLANNING AND RESOURCES

We use the National Curriculum scheme of work as the basis for our planning in history. 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. The long-term overview maps the history topics studied in each term during each key stage. We teach the knowledge, skills and understanding set out in the National Curriculum through the corresponding programme of study. The class teacher writes the lesson plans for each history lesson, often in the form of a flipchart or presentation. These plans list the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes for each lesson. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, although he or she and the subject leader often discuss them on an informal basis. Plans are stored on the staff shared drive for monitoring purposes and ease of access for the teachers and history subject leader.

There are sufficient resources for teaching all history units in the school. They are located in the shared resource area. The library contains a good supply of topic books and software and iPads are available to support children's individual research.

### **CROSS-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES**

Staff are encouraged to develop cross-curricular links with history and other subjects to provide a relevant and meaningful curriculum for pupils.

#### **English**

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 timelines and through sequencing events in their own lives. Children also learn to interpret information presented in graphical or diagrammatic form. They also study different number systems from past cultures, e.g. Roman numerals.

#### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)**

In our teaching of history, we also contribute to the development of the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding by looking at the establishment of multicultural Britain and the moral implications of the actions of historical figures. Children are therefore provided with many opportunities to discuss moral questions.

#### **Computing**

Wherever appropriate we use computing to enhance our teaching of history. The children use ICT in a variety of ways, such as word-processing, finding information on the Internet and presenting information through PowerPoint.

### **ASSESSMENT**

Assessment for learning is continuous throughout the planning, teaching and learning cycle. Key historical knowledge is taught to enable and promote the development of children's historical enquiry skills. Assessment is supported by use of the following strategies:

- Observing children at work, individually, in pairs, in a group and in class during whole class teaching.
- Using open-ended questions that require children to explain and unpick their understanding.

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- Providing effective feedback, including interactive marking to engage children with their learning and to provide opportunities for self-assessment, consolidation, depth and target setting.
- Book moderation and monitoring of outcomes of work, to evaluate the range and balance of work and to ensure that tasks meet the needs of different learners, with the acquisition of the pre-identified key knowledge of each topic being evidenced through the outcomes.
- Use of Proof of Progress (POP) tasks.
- Use of KWL grids ('what I know already, what I want to know and what I have learnt') throughout a unit, alongside specific and measureable learning objectives for each lesson.

Pupils attainment and progress in history is recorded by teachers using Sonar Tracking to inform parents and future teaching and learning activities.

### HEALTH AND SAFETY

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, teachers should be aware of health and safety issues. Risk assessments are undertaken prior to activities, to ensure that they are safe and appropriate for all pupils. Before undertaking a field trip, teachers are encouraged to visit the proposed area of study and fill in a risk assessment form. Further information can be found in the Health and Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Educational Visits Policy.

### SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

We seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- valuing them, listening to them and respecting them;
- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers;
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made;
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers;
- sharing information about concerns, with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately;
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

See JTMAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Shobnall Primary & Nursery School Procedures for Safeguarding and Child Protection for further information.

### MONITORING AND REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the history subject leader:

- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in history and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- to develop, implement and review an action plan for history;
- to monitor history throughout the school;
- to encourage staff to provide effective learning opportunities for all pupils;
- to develop valid activities, appropriate for children at different stages of development, which enable pupils to progress in the subject.

Monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in history is the responsibility of the history subject leader. The work of the subject leader also involves

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supporting colleagues in their teaching, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.

This approach will be reviewed at least every three years.