

History Policy



Swansfield Park
Primary School

POLICY

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The National Curriculum states that:

“A high-quality history education will help pupils gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain’s past and that of the wider world. It should inspire pupils’ curiosity to know more about the past. Teaching should equip pupils to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, and develop perspective and judgement. History helps pupils to understand the complexity of people’s lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time.”

At Swansfield Park Primary School, we recognise that is important to understand the events and peoples of the past to better appreciate the multi-cultural society we live in today. The study of History allows us to understand how the British democratic system of government and rule of law developed over time and – in so doing – informs our shared British values. Through a rich and engaging History curriculum, children will appreciate that Britain is part of a wider European culture and that societal influences cross territorial boundaries, seas and oceans; allowing children to not only gain an appreciation and understanding of British society and culture, but those of our neighbours and of countries further afield.

Aims:

In line with the aims of the National Curriculum for History, at Swansfield Park Primary School, we aim to enable our children to:

- Know and understand the human history of the British Isles as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the Neolithic period to the modern day. Children will

understand how people's lives have shaped the nation and how Britain has influenced and, in turn, been influenced by the wider world.

- Know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world, such as ancient civilizations, the expansion and dissolution of empires, the features of past non-European societies, and the achievements and mistakes of mankind.
- Understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, and difference and significance. Children will use these terms to make connections between events, draw contrasts between societies and lives of people (including themselves), analyse trends within societies and in the broader national life of Britain. Children frame their questions historically and create their own accounts using written narratives, analyses and other genres.
- Understand and use the methods of historical enquiry. Children will be taught not to blindly accept any and all information which they see, read or hear as fact, but will instead learn how evidence is used to make historical claims and how – and why – contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed; better allowing them to make informed, independent judgements about what they see and hear in the future and in the present day.
- Gain a historical perspective about their lives by placing their growing knowledge in different contexts, understanding the connections between: local, regional, national and international history; cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history; and between short and long-term timescales.

Planning:

At Swansfield Park Primary School, we believe that children learn best when learning activities are well planned, stimulating and challenging, ensuring progress in the long, medium and short-term.

Planning is undertaken on three levels:

Long-term planning

History is taught as part of a two-year topic-based approach to teaching and learning. Annually, teaching teams will review their History topics and plan for the future year, which then informs the medium term plans from Years 1 to 6. The History Subject Leader will review these plans for curriculum coverage to ensure



full statutory coverage. Work undertaken within the Foundation Stage is guided by the requirements and recommendations set out in the Understanding of the World section of the Early Years 'Development Matters' EYFS document. A set planning pro forma is used by all staff when completing long-term planning and teachers are responsible for making sure that these are available on their class' Curriculum Information page of the school website.

Medium-term planning

Medium-term planning is carried out half-termly (or sometimes termly in the shorter Spring Term). As with long-term planning, teachers work in teams to identify and select specific learning objectives and outcomes using the National Curriculum or the EYFS Development Matters document. Teachers are encouraged to interweave the term's topic into other curriculum areas as much as possible to give the children greater opportunities to meet the learning objectives and outcomes. In their teams, teachers are responsible for generating medium-term planning overviews using the school's set pro forma and ensuring that these are available on their class' Curriculum Information page of the school website.

Short-term planning

Short-term planning is carried out on a weekly basis. Individual teachers are responsible for the planning of thoughtful, stimulating weekly lessons for their class. The school does not have a set pro forma for short-term planning, but it is expected that staff will detail the intended learning of each lesson, the teaching activities to be used as well as the learning outcomes.

Planning across the curriculum

At Swansfield Park Primary School, we believe that elements of History can provide the framework for lessons in other curriculum areas as it is an ideal opportunity for children to demonstrate mastery; either, for example, mastery of English and Maths in History, or vice versa. It is important that our children are provided with opportunities to apply their Historical knowledge and skills of critical enquiry in as broad a range of subjects as possible so that children understand they are not discrete learning outcomes unique to History lessons; rather they are tools which can be used to broaden overall learning and intellectual development.

Educational Visits and Fieldwork

At Swansfield Park Primary School, we recognise that children learn just as much through direct hands-on experience with the world around them as they do in the classroom. As a result, during the planning process teachers identify sites



for educational visits which will provide children with this knowledge and which also allow them to study their local history (for example, the AIn Valley Railway, Craggside, the Grace Darling museum, Segedunum etc.). During these visits, children develop and use their fieldwork skills by questioning what objects were used for, what processes were involved, what happened and – crucially – asking ‘why’.

Teaching and Learning Strategies:

At Swansfield Park Primary School, we use a variety of age-appropriate teaching strategies to cater for the varied learning styles of our children.

In the Early Years, teachers use the Development Matters document as a guide to provide positive relationships and enabling environments to promote children’s understanding of people and communities, and an understanding of the world. Children are given opportunities through stories, play and other creative endeavours to broaden their understanding; and, at Swansfield Park Primary School, teachers link these activities to important occasions that children may have experience of outside of the classroom – such as Bonfire Night – so children gain an appreciation of the cultural significance of those events.

In Key Stage 1 and 2, our principal aim is to develop children’s knowledge, skills and understanding in History through a range of different activities. As such, children of all abilities and ages have the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and, through the planned progression and greater expectation of each Key Stage, they are offered increasing challenge as they progress through the school. Teachers use information and communication technologies to gain children’s interest in the subject, as well as using techniques such as engaging story-telling, drama, use of the outdoor environment, art and design technology, and hands-on opportunities (either on educational visits or use of artefacts in the classroom). At Swansfield Park Primary School, we believe that a rich, engaging curriculum involves the use of all of these methods throughout the year.

Mastery:

At Swansfield Park Primary School, we are working towards the goal of mastery in all of our curriculum areas. We believe that mastery is a journey, not a destination and that it is something that we, and our children, continually strive towards. The principals of mastery as it relates to History are as follows:

- The large majority of pupils progress through the curriculum content at the same pace and differentiation is achieved by emphasising deep knowledge and individual support.



- The questioning and scaffolding individual pupils receive in class as they work through new ideas will differ and pupils who grasp concepts rapidly are challenged to spot linkages with other areas of History; to identify any developing broader themes; or to compare and contrast events, periods or historical figures.
- A language rich environment is central to the teaching and learning process. Precise historical language is modelled in this context by teaching and support staff, and then by children either to their talk partner, the class as a whole or in their work.
- Teachers use precise historical questioning designed to give children opportunities to express their knowledge within a framework of historical enquiry, which also tests and promotes understanding.

Assessment:

Assessment is regarded as an integral part of the teaching and learning process at Swansfield Park Primary School. Whilst formative and summative assessments are both important in fully understanding the depth and extent of a child's knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, assessment in History is primarily formative due to the nature of activities and learning processes. However, it may take the form of a summative assessment at the end of a topic if the teacher feels that it is appropriate. At the end of each school year, the class teacher uses their professional judgement to complete the History progress sheet to assess the number of children in their class who are working towards, meeting or exceeding the National Curriculum's learning outcomes for their age; these numbers are then reported to the subject leader.

At Swansfield Park Primary School, the key sources of assessment in History are:

- Informal annotations on planning
- Discussions with and observations of individuals or groups of children
- Marking and feedback in children's books
- Photographs or videos of children's work
- Peer and self-assessment
- History progress sheets (Years 1 – 6)

Marking and feedback

A large proportion of the feedback given to children in History is verbal and given during a lesson to correct any misunderstandings or to clarify points. Discussion, feedback and questioning is vital so that children are able to continually develop their knowledge of events (and the reasons behind them) and hone their skills of historical enquiry. In addition to verbal feedback, children receive feedback in their books after each piece of



work. As teachers are encouraged to teach History using a range of different strategies, the extent and form of this feedback will differ depending on the type of work children have produced, but will guide the children to identify any misunderstandings they may have and where they can broaden their historical knowledge. When work is cross-curricular, written feedback may be given in children's books from other subject areas.

Resources:

History is resourced alongside the topic areas children are studying. These resources can be found in the subject cupboard and the subject leader is responsible for ensuring that current resources meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, the school's long-term planning documents, and that teachers have a bank of artefacts to draw on. These resources are audited, checked and updated annually, with areas of need identified and addressed using the school's subject bidding process.

The school has a central Learning Hub with 18 thin-client computers, a class set of iPads, and each individual classroom is equipped with a SMART board, projector and PC. Teachers use these modern technologies to help engage children and draw them into their lessons. Northumberland's Schools Library Service also provides each class with a box of topic books, and, during the planning process, teachers may identify story books from the school's library which may be used as class texts and which link to their History topic. Additionally, teachers are encouraged to work closely with Bailiffgate Museum who can often provide artefacts, clothes and other resources on loan to the school; as well as hosting local-interest exhibitions.

However, at Swansfield Park Primary School, we recognise that staff, parents and guardians, grandparents and other people in the wider community offer an unparalleled bank of human knowledge that can illuminate the past and bring it to life. Where possible, teachers place their History topic within a local context and identify people within the community who have living memory of the events being studied, and use this knowledge as a key resource. Furthermore, we celebrate important local dates (such as the anniversary of the school's founding) which not only centres the school within Alwick and Northumberland as a whole, but also demonstrates that History – as a subject – is very much alive and continually evolving.



Continuing Professional Development:

All staff are encouraged to develop, assess and improve their teaching of History. Where a member of staff feels a need for particular INSET, discussions should take place with their line manager as part of their Performance Management.

At Swansfield Park Primary School, we encourage staff to attend school-based INSET as well as external training courses advertised through the online E-Courier. We also involve staff with policy and decision making, as well provide opportunities for in-school coaching where staff can both work with, and observe other colleagues.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

It is the responsibility of the History subject leader to produce an annual action plan in order to effectively plan, monitor and evaluate the development of the subject across the school.

Within the classroom, monitoring of the standards of children’s work and the quality of teaching in History is the responsibility of both the History subject leader and the senior leadership team. It involves learning walks, book scrutinies, pupil interviews and planning reviews.

Review of the policy

This policy has been formally adopted by the governing body.

VERSION HISTORY		
VERSION	DATE	DESCRIPTION
This Version	January 2018	Adapted into Swansfield Park Primary School

APPROVAL AND AUTHORISATION				
	NAME	JOB TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE
Approved by	Jenny Smith	Headteacher		
Approved by	Bill Grisdale	Governor		

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW