

Portreath School Subject Statement 2020

Subject: History

Leader: Lucie Clarke

Quote that guides us: 'A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.' Marcus Garvey

Why is it important to teach History?

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 complexities 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. (National Curriculum for History 2014)

Key Concepts:

- History is the study of past events involving humans.
- Events that happen before the evolution of the human race is pre-history.
- That change is a process that happens over time affecting people and places.
- That certain events within and beyond living memory are significant in the impact they have on current and further generations.
- That history is shaped by the people of the time (including ourselves).
- We learn about history through the study of primary and secondary sources including: word of mouth, artefacts, maps, photos etc.

What we do well as a school:

History within our school is taught mainly through a topic approach, however, we are very careful to make sure that children recognise the historical elements of the topics as a discreet subject and are able to talk about what history is as well as what it is like to be a historian. We provide rich, engaging teaching and learning opportunities encouraging the children to see themselves as historians and as history as a subject that is both fascinating and important. We endeavour to make history relevant to the children and to wherever possible explore local links rather than generic studies of particular time frames. For instance a KS2 history topic around the Tudor period homed in on the importance of Pendennis posing the question "Pendennis – Kings Castle or Military fort?" In Key Stage One there is a real focus on local history and famous people. The aim is on making it real to them e.g. looking at toys through history, local festivals etc. Sense of Place Units are used to explore local famous people e.g. Henry Tregrouse and Richard Trevithick.

As part of a whole school project on the local area a local photographer took photographs of places that had been photographed many years ago. This enabled the children compare the photographs to see change in the local area. The children were fascinated by these and it inspired lots of discussion. As a result of this, the past and present photographs were donated to the school and are now on permanent display. We also try to link our history teaching to fantastic literature – both fiction and non-fiction; a KS1 topic about the Great Fire of London was brought to life by the use of excellent story books. History is often brought into the classroom through children's own interests too – an example of this is when whilst studying the school's old log book the children were inspired to research why a significant number of boys appeared on role in early September 1940. We want history to be current, exciting and relevant and as well as ancient, elusive and mysterious.

Curriculum Design

For History we use a two-year rolling programme with at least two key history units being covered each year in every class. These units link to and build on the previous units. Due to mixed year groups we have put together a long-term plan that ensures each class covers the relevant material. To ensure clear sequences of learning we use the Crofty MAT progression documents to plan lessons. These give small steps that build towards key end points that link to the National Curriculum. These break down the National Curriculum statements into smaller steps. Vocabulary is a key focus and key tier 3 vocabulary is identified for each topic.

During the topic we are able to refer back to previous learning and help them to retrieve this knowledge. Briefly recapping on what we already know is a key feature of lessons. The history units include learning units focussing on angles of local, national and international historical points in time. It is linked to both other subjects and given a “real” context wherever possible e.g. we recently did a local project with the parish and county council as part of the Neighbourhood Development Plan that had huge links with both geography, History and art.

There is flexibility around the curriculum to reflect what is most relevant at that time. Therefore, the topics selected are likely to have a different focus cycle and can vary across the classes. For example the focus of UKS2 local history unit focussed on the stories of local people and family members who had been involved in WW1 as this coincided with the centenary to mark the end of WW1. Each term we tick off the end points and small steps for History to demonstrate coverage.

We make good use of visits and visitors and think carefully about the timing of this to ensure the most learning happens as a result. For example, last year 4,5 and 6 visited Pendennis Castle in the middle of their topic. It was organised for this stage in their learning so that they had some background knowledge but this then became the springboard for further learning and investigating of the big question “*Pendennis – why here? Why two castles?*”. For the local work with the Neighbourhood Development Plan, part way through the topic the children did a walk around the village with local experts and then at the end we delivered a showcase to parent. The local council came in to work with the Year 5/6, so they could understand the bigger picture. This topic was ‘real’ we were supporting the community with its development. A highlight was seeing the children’s work on display and engaging with the World Café event one weekend. They studied the local area in order to create real art- there was a purpose and it gave them the opportunity to apply their knowledge.

Resources

We have a large outside timeline chronicling the history of the British Isle that is on constant display and referred to when introducing a “new” period of history so that children develop a growing sense of what took place when. We have a very good range of both historical novels and historical non-fiction books in the library and in the classrooms. At least once a year the class reader for each class is linked to the history unit being taught. Research is supported by the use of both primary and secondary resources e.g maps, photographs, artefacts, newspaper, visitors experiences etc. We have a series of 12 photographs on permanent display which illustrate Portreath then and now. The next step is to purchase more non-fiction books for the topics to add research.

Knowledge Focused

Each class has a Knowledge Organiser for the History units. From September 2020 the children put a copy of these in a scrap book which acts as a record of their journey and as a resource to reactive and revisit learning. The KO is used regularly and sent home to ensure this key information is remembered and can be retrieved. Leaflets about the topic are also sent home so parents can support learning at home. Class novels are often been linked to the history topic and this helps make knowledge ‘sticky’, there is a reason for understanding and remembering the information. It also gives them the opportunity to apply what they have learnt.

Training

Over the last couple of years, we have had a number of training sessions in staff meetings and through twilights to explore fully the National Curriculum and design the sequence of learning. The sessions helped develop staff's subject knowledge. The head and assistant head attended curriculum training with the Crofty MAT. The teachers attended a conference by Faye Heming about how the curriculum and the importance of memory and how children learn. Teachers always research time periods they are about to teach and the history lead offers support and signposts staff to relevant resources. We are looking to have some further training through staff meetings.

What does monitoring tell us?

Discussion with children with their books and knowledge organisers show that children are able to articulate what they have learnt not just activities undertaken. The children demonstrated their enthusiasm and engagement with the topics. Recent monitoring with upper Key Stage 2 demonstrated that children could talk about a time period studied in depth and with great understanding. They could use and explain subject specific vocabulary. They also demonstrated that this study had lead on to them conducting their own research to deepen their understanding. SILC visits demonstrated that the children are able to talk about what they have learnt in detail, not just what they had done. Parents have given very positive feedback about the high engagement of their children for example with topics such as 'The Great Fire of London.' Displays around the school and books show quality work and progression across the school.

Next Steps

- **Ensuring the new curriculum is fully implemented**
- **Children being aware of key concepts, skills and vocabulary linked to history**
- **Purchasing new non-fiction books**
- **Ensuring a range of visitors and visits take place to enrich the curriculum**