

Subject Policy

History

Reviewed by: Sarah Bailey and Jenny Hatch

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INTENT: At Debden Church of England Primary Academy, all of our curriculum disciplines are used to underpin our school vision, which is to ensure that the children in our care:

- Progress exceptionally well academically, across a broad and knowledge-rich curriculum;
- Develop into confident compassionate, well-rounded individuals, in a safe, caring, Christian environment;
- Become equipped with the learning skills needed to deal with future challenges;
- Create happy, positive memories of their childhood.

Our history curriculum has been carefully constructed through close consideration of both the expectations of the National Curriculum and the vision and contextual requirements of our school and its children. Through our history curriculum, we aim for children to:

- Develop a curiosity and fascination about Britain's past, considering its impact on (and how it has been impacted by) the wider world;
- Develop a coherent and precise chronology of Britain's history, from the Stone Age to the present day, examining how people have influenced and shaped its culture over time, while making meaningful connections to what was occurring in other parts of the world.
- Develop a deep understanding of global societies through the study of ancient civilisations, empires, conflicts, and achievements, drawing comparisons and contrasts both between these societies and with Britain's historical development.
- Enhance their knowledge of the history of the local area, through studying settlements, buildings and people in north-western Essex from across time.
- Promote an inclusive curriculum by ensuring children learn about diverse people and stories from a range of backgrounds. During Black History Month, this is further strengthened through whole-school assemblies and focused classroom learning

We have written schemes for each unit, and a progression of skills map to plot an ambitious rate of development for the children throughout their time at Debden. Teachers use these key documents throughout every stage of planning, implementation and assessment. Our curriculum map shows the units that children study in each term – this has been carefully considered to ensure that children are given a rich understanding of Britain's past, and (in alignment with study in Geography) a base level understanding of historical civilisations across different continents. Cross-curricular links, in addition to the rich diet of texts that children are exposed to throughout the curriculum, ensure that children's knowledge of history concepts is enhanced.

At the heart of each unit is an enquiry question, which children should be able to answer in depth by the end of the

unit (it makes up part of their end of term assessment – see ‘impact’). Within each unit, children develop key disciplinary skills — including change and continuity, significance, similarity and difference, interpretation, cause and consequence, and the use of sources and evidence. Certain lessons and units place a stronger emphasis on certain skills to allow for deeper understanding. These are carefully mapped across the year to ensure full coverage, and the skills map supports teachers in securing clear progression of these skills within each key stage phase.

IMPLEMENTATION:

History is generally taught in ‘blocks’ for 3-4 weeks at the beginning of the first half term in each full term (the other blocked subjects are Geography, Art, DT, and Music, although they receive different time allocations depending upon the depth and breadth of curriculum content). We have found that this allows us to immerse children in a greater depth of study.

We have designed our own schemes and series’ of lessons to fit the needs and context of our curriculum and our children. However, we some recommended resources that teachers may use to support planning or resourcing, including the Historical Association.

As with all lessons, teachers apply our agreed Debden pedagogical strategies, including:

1. Using the ‘Principles of Instruction,’ (e.g. regular review, small steps material) ‘Teach Like a Champion’ (e.g. cold calling, talk partners) and other research-approved pedagogical strategies to maximise children’s engagement and progress and to continuously assess understanding.
2. Taking every opportunity to develop children’s reading skills and vocabulary, through the use of a range of model texts and vocabulary-building strategies (which are displayed in every classroom);
3. Incorporating daily, weekly and monthly recall activities in order to ensure that children’s understanding of important concepts is remembered and strengthened.
4. Encouraging children to develop their learning skills, such as resilience and independence, through models, guided learning practice, effective support and self-help strategies (see right).
5. Tailoring learning to the needs of the children, adapting plans in the moment if necessary, based on continuous and accurate assessment for learning.

In addition to this, in history, all teachers aim to:

- Work to simultaneously develop children’s substantive and disciplinary knowledge;
- Begin new learning with enquiry questions, which are then explored and reflected upon throughout our lessons.
- Place a heavy emphasis on chronology, enabling children to link periods of study and build a ‘mental timeline.’

IMPACT:

Outcomes in topic and literacy books - In addition to information gathered from student conversations and learning outcomes (see assessment below) evidence a broad and balanced history curriculum and demonstrate the children’s acquisition of identified key knowledge. Some form of independent, extended piece of work is completed by children at the end of each unit (ordinarily an extended piece of writing, a presentation, or a test) in order for children to demonstrate their understanding of the knowledge covered.

Whole-Class Feedback – In addition to the verbal feedback that is provided within each history lesson, teachers are expected to complete at least one whole-class cycle within each history block. This includes highlighting strengths, identifying misconceptions and next steps, and commenting upon the children's presentation. A 'blue sticker task' (the call to action) should be utilised to address misconceptions and learning that has not been secured.

End of Unit Assessment – Children complete one of our Debden Foundation Subject Assessments at the end of each learning unit. These assessments, marked out of 15 (as with all Foundation Assessments). Children's scores are tracked via our 'Insight' monitoring system, to enable us to understand the progress that they are making throughout the school, and to tailor our approaches accordingly. The assessment papers are written by the subject leader and the Head of School, and test the knowledge as prescribed in the organisers, through progressively more complex questions (utilising Blooms Taxonomy). The questions should also enable students to showcase the skills in the appropriate area/s of the skills map.

Monitoring – 2-3 times per year, subject monitoring of history takes place, which is normally carried out by the subject leader (at times, this may be a senior leader). The link governor will participate in the learning walk or be provided with feedback following the visit. The subject monitoring process includes:

- Lesson visits;
- Book look;
- Student chats;
- Checking of student understanding of information on knowledge organisers;
- Viewing classroom displays;
- Conversations with teachers;
- Analysis of assessment data;
- Subject leader 'deep-dive' questions and review of key subject documents (when with link Governor).

The information gathered from teachers is fed back in a timely fashion via our subject leader monitoring reports.

REVIEW:

This policy will be regularly reviewed by the Subject Leader and the Head of School. The maximum period between reviews is two years.