History Policy

Reviewed September 2025

The Stour Academy Trust

Vision

At The Stour Academy Trust, our History curriculum embodies a vision that fosters curiosity and exploration, empowering pupils to understand and engage with the past through diverse historical perspectives. We aim to provide pupils with a comprehensive understanding of history, encompassing significant events, individuals, and societies, while exploring the interconnections between these elements. This comprehensive approach enables pupils to appreciate how history shapes our world and informs our present and future.

Our curriculum focuses on developing essential historical skills such as critical analysis, source evaluation, and chronological understanding, empowering pupils to engage critically with historical narratives and the information they encounter. We foster respect and understanding of different cultures and societies, promoting global citizenship by exposing pupils to diverse historical contexts, which helps them appreciate the role of history in shaping human identity and societal development.

In addition, we instil a sense of responsibility towards understanding our shared heritage and encourage sustainable practises, teaching pupils about the importance of learning from the past to inform our actions today. Promoting a culture of inquiry is central to our approach, as we encourage pupils to investigate historical concepts and their relevance to everyday life, nurturing critical thinkers who are equipped to ask questions and seek answers about their world.

Our curriculum emphasises the interconnectedness of knowledge by integrating history with subjects such as geography, science, and literacy, enriching the learning experience and highlighting how different fields of study inform one another. Ultimately, we aim to create a dynamic and engaging History curriculum that not only informs but also inspires pupils to become informed global citizens who appreciate the complexities of our shared history.

Intent

1. **Fostering Curiosity and Inquiry**:
    - Encourage pupils to ask questions and explore historical narratives, developing their unique historical perspectives.
    - Provide opportunities for investigation and research, allowing pupils to discover historical concepts through hands-on experiences.
2. **Building Historical Skills**:
    - Equip pupils with a solid foundation in essential historical skills, including source analysis, chronological thinking, and contextual understanding.
    - Introduce pupils to various historical techniques and tools, ensuring they understand the historical context of the events they study.
3. **Enhancing Critical Thinking and Reflection**:
    - Promote critical evaluation of historical evidence and case studies, enabling pupils to articulate their thoughts and feelings about historical issues.
    - Encourage reflective practises through discussion, self-assessment, and peer feedback, fostering a growth mindset.
4. **Promoting Collaboration and Communication**:

- Design projects that require teamwork and collaboration, allowing pupils to learn from one another and share ideas.
- Encourage open dialogue about historical processes and outcomes, enhancing pupils' ability to communicate their thoughts and interpretations effectively.

5. **Supporting Personal and Social Development**:
    - Recognise the role of history in promoting well-being and cultural awareness, providing a safe space for pupils to explore their feelings and experiences related to the past.
    - Encourage pupils to engage with their community through historical projects and initiatives, fostering a sense of belonging and responsibility.

Implementation

Curriculum Design

1. **Thematic Learning**:
    - Each unit is structured around key themes that connect historical concepts to real-world issues, ensuring relevance and engagement. Themes may include "Ancient Civilizations," "The Impact of War," "Social Movements," and "Local History."
2. **Skills Development**:
    - The curriculum emphasises the development of historical skills, including source analysis, critical thinking, and the use of historical inquiry methods. Pupils will progressively build these skills throughout their learning journey.
3. **Interdisciplinary Connections**:
    - History will be integrated with other subjects, such as geography, science, and art, to provide a holistic understanding of topics. This approach allows pupils to see the connections between different areas of knowledge.
4. **Progression and Sequencing**:
    - The curriculum is designed to build upon prior knowledge, with clear progression maps outlining how concepts and skills will be developed over time. Each unit revisits and deepens understanding of previously taught content.
5. **Cultural Awareness and Sustainability**:
    - Pupils will explore diverse cultures and historical issues, fostering respect for global citizenship and an understanding of sustainability in the context of historical development.

Implementation Strategies

1. **Sequencing of Learning**:
    - Lessons will be sequenced to ensure continuity and progression, allowing pupils to build on their foundational knowledge before moving onto more complex ideas and techniques. This approach will help pupils connect new learning to existing knowledge, as emphasised in the Cornerstones framework.

2. **Cross-Curricular Links**:
    - Where appropriate, we will make cross-curricular links with other subjects to enhance pupils' understanding and application of historical concepts. For instance, integrating elements of geography or science into history projects will foster a deeper appreciation for the context of historical phenomena.
3. **Cornerstones Lesson Resources**:
    - **Align Resources with Learning Objectives**: Identify goals and ensure that resources directly support these goals.
    - **Adaptation**: Tailor tasks to cater to diverse learning needs and implement resources in small groups or pairs for collaborative learning.
    - **Integrate Resources into Lesson Planning**: Plan structured activities and introduce resources by connecting them to real-world applications or previous lessons.
4. **Encourage Active Engagement**:
    - Incorporate interactive elements and hands-on activities that allow pupils to apply what they've learned in a practical context.
5. **Use Resources for Assessment**:
    - Utilise resources as tools for formative assessment, providing timely feedback and encouraging pupils to reflect on their learning.
6. **Promote Reflection and Discussion**:
    - Facilitate class discussions to review answers and clarify misconceptions, reinforcing learning and promoting critical thinking.
7. **Monitor Progress and Adapt**:
    - Keep records of pupils' performance to monitor progress over time and be flexible in adapting resources as needed.

Lesson Structure for EYFS

Theme-Based Learning:

- **Cornerstones Themes**: History lessons will be integrated into the Cornerstones themes, ensuring that historical concepts are explored within a broader context. Each theme will provide opportunities for pupils to investigate and learn about different historical events, cultures, and figures.
- **Example Themes**: "The Enchanted Woodland," "The Magic Toymaker," and "Why Do We Love to be Rude?" will serve as contexts for historical exploration.

Learning Objectives:

- **Clear Objectives**: Each lesson will have specific, measurable learning objectives that focus on key historical concepts such as understanding timelines, significant events, and the use of various historical tools.

- **Alignment with EYFS Framework**: Objectives will align with the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, particularly the “Understanding the World” area of learning.

Engagement Activities:

- **Hands-On Exploration**: Lessons will begin with engaging, hands-on activities that stimulate curiosity. This may include outdoor exploration, sensory play with historical artefacts, and interactive demonstrations related to the theme.
- **Use of Resources**: Incorporate a variety of resources such as timelines, historical images, and digital media to enhance learning experiences.

Vocabulary Development:

- **Focus on Vocabulary**: Each lesson will introduce new historical vocabulary relevant to the theme. Teachers will model language through storytelling, songs, and discussions, reinforcing understanding through repetition.
- **Visual Aids**: Use visual aids, such as word walls and picture cards, to support vocabulary acquisition and retention.

Investigative Learning:

- **Enquiry-Based Approach**: Encourage pupils to ask questions and make predictions related to their historical explorations. Provide opportunities for them to experiment with different historical tools and record observations.
- **Structured Investigations**: Design structured investigations that allow pupils to explore historical concepts through guided inquiry, fostering a sense of curiosity and discovery.

Reflection and Assessment:

- **Reflective Practises**: At the end of each lesson, pupils will engage in reflection activities, such as sharing what they learned about historical concepts or discussing their findings from investigations.
- **Informal Assessment**: Teachers will assess understanding through observation and discussions, ensuring that misconceptions are addressed and that all pupils are making progress in their historical skills.

Inclusive Practises:

- **Differentiated Activities**: Lessons will be tailored to meet the diverse needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. Differentiated tasks and support will be provided to ensure every pupil can engage meaningfully with the history curriculum.
- **Collaborative Learning**: Foster a collaborative learning environment where pupils can work together, share ideas, and support each other in their historical explorations.

Lesson Structure Year 1

Introduction (10 minutes)

- **Engage**: Show pupils a variety of historical images and artefacts from different periods and ask how these items make them feel. Discuss feelings associated with different historical contexts (e.g., ancient times = adventure, modern history = familiarity).

- **Explain**: Introduce the concept of key historical terms (e.g., timeline, event, figure) and explain how these elements can be found in different parts of history.

Main Activity (40 minutes)

Demonstration (10 minutes):

- Show how to create a simple timeline, pointing out key features such as dates and significant events.
- Use a large timeline to demonstrate locating different historical events, allowing pupils to see the process.

Practical Task (30 minutes):

- Pupils will create their own simple timelines of a familiar event (e.g., their birthday or a family event) using symbols to represent different milestones.
- Encourage pupils to think about how they want to represent their event and what symbols they will use.
- Walk around the classroom to offer support and encouragement as pupils create their timelines.

Enhanced Provision Activities:

- **Historical Artefacts Exploration**: Provide replicas of historical artefacts for pupils to handle and discuss, enhancing their sensory experience and understanding of history.
- **Mood Timeline**: Set up a station where pupils can create a mood timeline that represents different feelings associated with various historical events (e.g., celebrations for victories, sombre reflections for losses).
- **History Gallery Walk**: Create a mini gallery in the classroom where pupils can display their timelines. Encourage them to walk around and discuss their peers' timelines, focusing on the use of symbols and representation.

Plenary (10 minutes)

- **Share**: Invite pupils to share their timelines with the class, describing the symbols they used and what events they represent.
- **Reflect**: Discuss as a class how different historical events can evoke different feelings and how they can use this in their future historical explorations.

Assessment:

- **Formative Assessment**: Observe pupils during the practical task, providing encouragement and feedback on their timeline-making techniques and symbol choices.
- **Summative Assessment**: Evaluate the final timelines based on creativity and the effective use of symbols to represent historical events.

Adaptation Strategies:

- **For Advanced Learners**: Encourage them to create more complex timelines that include additional events and a key to explain their symbols.

- **For Struggling Learners**: Provide templates with pre-drawn symbols to help them focus on applying symbols rather than drawing from scratch.
- **For Pupils with SEND**: Work closely with the SENCO to identify specific needs and provide additional support, such as using assistive technology or tailored resources.

Extension Activities:

- Create a class historical events chart displaying the different events explored by pupils.
- Explore the work of a local historian and create a piece inspired by their style.

Lesson Structure Year 2 – 6

Below is a structured framework for teaching History using the Cornerstones Curriculum, focusing on engagement, skill development, and critical thinking. Each lesson is designed to last approximately 60 minutes, with specific timings for each component:

1. **Learning Objectives (5 minutes)**
    - **Clear Goals**: Begin the lesson by presenting specific learning objectives that outline what pupils should know and be able to do by the end of the lesson. Communicate these objectives clearly to set expectations and motivate pupils.
2. **Introduction (Engage) (10 minutes)**
    - **Hook Activity**: Start with an engaging question, artefact, or demonstration that captures pupils' interest. This could involve showcasing a historical artefact, a timeline, or a thought-provoking theme related to history.
    - **Activate Prior Knowledge**: Encourage pupils to share what they already know about the topic or historical events. This helps to connect new learning to existing knowledge and prepares them for deeper exploration.
3. **Direct Instruction (Explain) (15 minutes)**
    - **Clear Explanations**: Provide concise and clear explanations about the specific historical concepts being taught. Use visual aids, exemplars, or demonstrations to illustrate key points and ensure pupils understand the expected outcomes.
    - **Model Techniques**: Demonstrate historical skills or processes, making abstract ideas concrete and accessible. For example, show how to read a timeline or interpret historical data.
4. **Main Activity (Explore & Create) (20 minutes)**
    - **Hands-on Creation**: Allow pupils to engage in hands-on exploration and creation of their own historical projects. Encourage them to apply the skills demonstrated during direct instruction.
    - **Guided Practice**: Circulate around the classroom, providing support and guidance as pupils work. Use formative assessment to monitor progress and offer constructive feedback.
    - **Pupil Choice**: As pupils gain confidence, provide opportunities for them to make choices about their themes, materials, and methods, fostering a sense of ownership in their learning.
5. **Reflection (Evaluate) (5 minutes)**

- **Class Discussion**: Facilitate a reflective discussion where pupils share their projects and the processes they used. Encourage them to articulate their thoughts about what worked well and what they found challenging.
- **Peer Feedback**: Promote a culture of respect and constructive criticism by allowing pupils to give and receive feedback on each other's work.

6. **Assessment & Closing (5 minutes)**
    - **Constructive Feedback**: Provide individual feedback, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement. Set targets for future work to encourage continuous development.
    - **Wrap-up**: Reinforce the learning objectives and connect the lesson to upcoming topics or projects. Encourage pupils to think about how they can apply what they learned in future lessons.

Impact

The implementation of this structured framework for teaching History at The Stour Academy Trust is designed to have a profound impact on pupils' learning experiences and outcomes. By clearly defining learning objectives, engaging pupils with thought-provoking activities, and providing direct instruction in historical skills, we aim to foster a deep understanding of history.

Impact:

- **Enhanced Historical Skills**: Pupils will demonstrate improved proficiency in various historical techniques and concepts, leading to a greater understanding of the world around them.
- **Increased Engagement**: A structured and engaging curriculum will motivate pupils to participate actively in lessons, fostering a love for history and exploration.
- **Critical Thinking Development**: Through reflection and peer feedback, pupils will enhance their ability to think critically about historical issues and their implications.
- **Stronger Communication Skills**: Pupils will develop the ability to articulate their historical ideas and evaluations effectively, facilitating meaningful discussions about their work and the work of their peers.
- **Greater Inclusivity**: The inclusive nature of the curriculum will ensure that all pupils, regardless of background or ability, feel valued and capable of engaging with historical content.
- **Cultural Awareness**: Exposure to diverse historical contexts and cultures will broaden pupils' perspectives, fostering empathy and appreciation for different ways of life.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our History Policy reflects the principles of the Cornerstones curriculum, ensuring a comprehensive approach to history education that meets the diverse needs of our pupils. We foster an environment that values inquiry and exploration, aligning with our commitment to providing a 21st-century education.

This policy emphasises both technical proficiency and innovative thinking, nurturing critical skills while encouraging individuality in historical exploration. By integrating technology and contemporary practises, we engage pupils in meaningful learning experiences.

We recognise the importance of enhanced provision activities to cater to various learning styles, promoting an inclusive environment where every pupil can thrive. Our commitment to ongoing reflection and adaptation ensures that our practises remain relevant and effective.

Through this History Policy, we aim to inspire a lifelong appreciation for the past, equipping pupils with the confidence to explore and engage with their world. Together, we will cultivate a vibrant learning community that celebrates diversity and fosters a passion for history.