



ST. PATRICK'S NATIONAL SCHOOL

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History

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CONTENTS

1. Introduction	3
1.1 Introductory statement	3
1.2 Rationale	3
2. Vision and aims	3
2.1 School characteristic spirit / ethos	3
2.2 Aims and objectives	3
3. Content of History plan - curriculum	4
3.1 Skills and concepts development	5
3.2 Strands and strand units	6
3.3 Approaches and methodologies	6
3.4 Linkage and integration	7
3.4.1 Linkage	7
3.4.2 Integration	7
3.5 Assessment and record keeping	7
3.6 Children with different needs	8
3.7 Equality of participation and access	9
4. Content of History plan - organisation	9
4.1 Timetable	9
4.2 Homework	9
4.3 Resources and ICT	9
4.4 Health and safety	10
4.5 Individual teachers' planning and reporting	10
4.6 Staff development	11
4.7 Parental involvement	11
4.8 Community links	11
4.9 Places of historical interest	12
5. Success criteria	12
6. Implementation	12
6.1 Roles and responsibilities	12
6.2 Timeframe	12
7. Review	13
7.1 Roles and responsibilities	13
7.2 Timeframe	13
8. Ratification and communication	13

1. Introduction

1.1 Introductory statement

This SESE (History) policy was formulated through staff collaboration co-ordinated by the principal, along with a member of the ISM team, in consultation with the Board of Management and parent representatives. It was reviewed and updated following the development of facilities and resources in the school in 2020.

1.2 Rationale

We should view history as an attempt to reconstruct and interpret the past, rather than the past itself. We must understand history as encompassing two inseparable aspects: the interpretation of what are considered to be significant human activities in the past and the process by which these activities are selected, investigated and analysed (ref *Primary Curriculum Teacher guidelines*, p2)

In developing this policy, our school aims to reflect these two important points,

- history as a record, and
- the process of being an historian.

2. Vision and aims

2.1 School characteristic spirit / ethos

The History programme in our school seeks to help the children to develop a sense of history and to learn to work as an historian by selecting activities for investigation and analyses,

As noted in the school's *Mission Statement*,

Pupils are encouraged to reach their full educational potential, by developing intellectual skills combined with a spirit of inquiry and the capacity to analyse issues critically and constructively, while developing expressive, creative and artistic abilities. Children are encouraged to be active in their own learning.

2.2 Aims and objectives

We endorse the aims and objectives of the *Primary School Curriculum, History* (pp12-13), our aims being

- to develop an interest in and curiosity about the past;

- to make the child aware of the lives of women, men and children in the past and how people and events have had an impact upon each other;
- to develop an understanding of the concepts of change and continuity;
- to provide for the acquisition of concepts and skills associated with sequence, time and chronology, appropriate to the development stages of the child;
- to allow the child to encounter and use a range of historical evidence systematically and critically;
- to provide opportunities for the child to communicate historical findings and interpretations in a variety of ways;
- to foster sensitivity to the impact of conservation and change within local and wider environments;
- to help the child recognise and examine the influences of the past on the attitudes and behaviour of people today;
- to foster a willingness to explore personal attitudes and values and to promote an openness to the possibility of changing one's own point of view;
- to encourage the child to recognise how past and present actions, events and materials may become historically significant;
- to enable the child to acquire a balanced appreciation of cultural and historical inheritances from local, national and global contexts.

3. Content of History plan – curriculum

A broad understanding of history is essential if a child is to become a confident, informed, critical and responsible adult member of society. (*Primary Curriculum*, p 6)

The History Curriculum is for all children in the primary school from Junior Infants to Sixth Class and is presented in two distinct sections.

A skills and concepts section, entitled *Working as an historian*, describes the historical skills and concepts that children should develop as they encounter topics in history, including:

- Time and chronology
- Change and continuity

- Cause and effect
- Using evidence
- Synthesis and communication
- Empathy.

It also includes strands that outline the historical periods, including:

- Myself and my family
- Story
- Early people and ancient societies
- Life, society, work and culture in the past
- Eras of change and conflict
- Politics, conflict and society
- Continuity and change over time

3.1 Skills and concepts development

Various strategies are used by each class to develop the child's skills to work as a young historian.

Junior and Senior Infant classes (ref *Curriculum* p 18)

- Time and chronology
- Using evidence
- Communication

First to Sixth classes (ref *Curriculum*, p 26, pp 40-41, pp 60-61)

- Time and chronology
- Change and continuity
- Cause and effect
- Using evidence
- Synthesis and communication
- Empathy

In planning, teachers address the need to balance skills development and the acquisition of knowledge in implementing the curriculum by ensuring that the content is taught using a range of methodologies.

3.2 Strands and strand units

Teachers are familiar with the strands, strand units and content objectives for the relevant class level, and refer to them in their long and short-term planning.

Junior Infants to Second Class

ref *Curriculum*

- Infant classes, pp 15-20
- First and Second classes, pp 23-31

Third Class - Sixth Class

ref *Curriculum*

- Third and Fourth classes., pp 34-35
- Fifth and Sixth classes, pp 54-55.

Children are exposed to a variety of strand units. Teachers of middle and senior classes have collaborated in drawing up a table of content for each class from Third - Sixth Class. Certain topics, selected from the menu curriculum, are studied in depth by middle classes and others by senior classes. Other topics are revisited in more depth as the children progress through the school (ref Appendix 1). Having an agreed content in this way should ensure that there is continuity and progression in the history curriculum from class to class and avoid gaps and undue repetition between classes. In selecting content there is balance between local, national and international contexts.

3.3 Approaches and methodologies

Teachers are familiar with, and are implementing, the following approaches and methodologies:

- Story (ref *Teacher Guidelines*, pp 65-71)
- Drama and role play (ref *Teacher Guidelines*, pp 109-113)
- Oral evidence (ref *Teacher Guidelines*, pp 77-80)
- Documentary evidence (ref *Teacher Guidelines*, pp 104-108)
- Using ICT (ref *Teacher Guidelines*, p 114)

- Personal and family history (ref *Teacher Guidelines*, pp 72-75)
- Using artefacts (ref *Teacher Guidelines*, pp 81-86)
- Pictures and photographs (ref *Teacher Guidelines*, pp 87-98)
- Use of the environment (ref *Teacher Guidelines*, pp 99-103)

Aspects of the History programme, whether content or methodology, are highlighted from time to time for particular emphasis, details of which may be found in *On-going planning for History* (ref Appendix 4).

The display of timelines in each classroom is encouraged (ref *Teacher Guidelines*, p 8).

3.4 Linkage and integration

3.4.1 Linkage

(ref *Teacher Guidelines* pp 46-55)

There are opportunities to link one strand with another strand in the history curriculum, and this may be done, in a natural way through a thematic approach or through line-of-development methodologies.

3.4.2 Integration

(ref *Curriculum* pp 4-5, p17, p25, p38, p58; *Teacher Guidelines* pp 56-61)

Teachers are aware of the possibility of integration in an un-contrived way with other subject areas in their planning. Theme-based activities and project work in particular, lend themselves for integration with other SESE subjects, as well as other subjects like Maths, Visual arts and PE.

3.5 Assessment and record keeping

(ref *Assessment policy, Record keeping policy; Curriculum* pp 76-8; *Teacher Guidelines* pp 30-32, 115-119)

Teachers assess

- progress in children's knowledge of the past
- ability to use historical skills
- development of attitudes.

using a variety of methods for assessment including

- teacher observation;

- teacher-designed tasks and tests at the end of a unit of work and/ or at set times in the year e.g. Christmas test/ end-of-year tests;
- work samples, portfolios and projects (use of ICT, pictures, paintings, models, story board).

Assessment informs teachers' planning and class teaching. Teachers share information with each other at the start-of-year meetings, and on an on-going basis as needs arise. Information is shared with parents throughout the year at start-of-year class-based meetings and mid-year parent/teacher consultations, and through end-of-year reports, as well as being available to meet parents on request.

3.6 Children with different needs

(ref *Teacher Guidelines* p 43)

Through lesson planning for differentiation, consideration is made for special needs within each class, and plans are made and modified as required to cater for the range of learning abilities in our history teaching, e.g., children with general and specific learning disabilities, children receiving learning-support, children whose first language is not English, or children who are exceptionally able.

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) assist the class teacher during practical activities, e.g. by helping with supervision of group activities during field work, model building, etc.

The nature of project work lends itself to co-operative learning, as children are put working in pairs and/or groups or work together on a whole-class project. Children are encouraged to communicate information in a variety of ways e.g. written report, pictures, models, using ICT, or through photographs and media presentations.

Teachers are sensitive to differing family situations when dealing with personal history.

3.7 Equality of participation and access

(ref *Equality of access and participation policy and Curriculum*, p 4)

Gender issues are considered in relation to the teaching of history, as appropriate, e.g. addressing the role of women in local, national and international contexts, while the history class can provide opportunities for studying the ordinary lives of men, women and children.

As with other SESE subjects, opportunities within the history programme are used to broaden the pupils' understanding of other cultures and environments. The strand units dealing with feasts and festivals provide opportunities to explore other cultures in an interesting and sensitive way.

All children have equal access to services, facilities, and amenities in the school environment.

4. Content of History plan - organisation

4.1 Timetable

(ref *Primary School Curriculum Introduction*, p 70)

The curriculum allocates a minimum of 3 hours per week (2 hours 15 minutes for infant classes) for SESE. History is timetabled separately within all class timetables, though there may be opportunities for an integrated approach, especially with other SESE subjects, e.g. Infants (Aistear). Discretionary curriculum time is used occasionally for SESE, and history is regularly the focus of excursions, e.g. visits to local historical sites, National Museum, etc.

4.2 Homework

(ref *Homework policy*)

History assignments are given for homework, when considered appropriate by the class teacher, i.e. activities that are particularly suited such as research, investigation and recording that can be done at home.

4.3 Resources and ICT

Teachers currently source materials for their own use, which they are

encouraged to add to the school resource library if appropriate. This work is supplemented by use of textbook, workbooks, worksheets etc.

ICT

(ref school's *ICT policy*; *Teacher Guidelines* pp 114; and *Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Teachers*).

ICT is an important resource and tool for learning in History in the school. Children's investigations and explorations are enhanced by using ICT in investigating, researching, and recording information.

The school has an *ICT Acceptable User Policy (AUP)* to ensure safe internet usage.

4.4 Health and safety

(ref *Safety statement, Tours and excursions policy* and *Geography Teacher Guidelines* (preparing for fieldwork) pp74-78)

The school's *Safety statement* and *Tours and excursions policy* deal with activities connected with the history curriculum e.g. going on trails, visits to museums, ruins and working outside of the classroom/school. Teachers outline the need for safe procedures and routines with the children.

4.5 Individual teachers' planning and reporting

All teachers have access to the school policy for History. Alongside the curriculum documents, this is used for reference when preparing long-term and short-term plans, providing information and guidance to individual teachers. Teachers use the strands and strand units and/or a thematic approach.

An outline of suggested topics covered at each level is provided in Appendix 2. If teachers vary from this, they note the changes/additions made.

Teachers' monthly reports are very helpful when reviewing and/or developing

all curricular areas, including History.

4.6 Staff development

Teachers have access to a comprehensive range of reference books, resource materials, and websites dealing with history and history-related topics.

Teachers are encouraged to attend courses relating to the teaching of History, and to share the expertise acquired at these courses through our staff meetings and in-school SDP.

Time is allocated at staff meetings to discuss aspects of the history curriculum as the need arises.

4.7 Parental involvement

(ref Teacher Guidelines, exemplar 10, p78; NCCA, Your child's learning, guidelines for parents; NCCA, The What, Why and How of children's learning in primary school)

Parents are aware of the nature and purpose of the history curriculum. The school arranges for information to be given to parents individually (if requested), in class groups (annually), in whole school meetings (occasionally).

Parental support in the implementation of the history curriculum is greatly appreciated, through support with individual activities (e.g. lessons, trips, displays, and homework), and opportunities such as the tours and excursions, or visits by those with special knowledge and/or experience. Parents, grandparents and older relatives have a role in helping pupils to research personal and family history, and in providing artefacts and anecdotes relating to life in the recent past.

Parents are invited to view their children's work in all curricular areas, as part of our home/school communication policy.

4.8 Community links

Members of the community are involved in supporting the History programme, through occasional visits, as appropriate opportunities arise.

4.9 Places of historical interest

Field trips and trails may be organised to support the teaching of local and National history. As a supplement to curricular course content, places of historic interest may be incorporated into school tours as decided by individual teachers, and with the approval of the principal.

5. Success criteria

We will know that the plan has been implemented if the

- teachers' preparation is based on this plan
- procedures outlined in this plan are consistently followed.

The plan will have achieved its aims if we are aware of:

- an increased interest in and curiosity about the past amongst the children;
- use of an evidenced based research methodology;
- sensitivity amongst the children to the impact of conservation and change within local and wider environments

Means of assessing the outcomes of the plan include

- teacher/parent feedback
- children's feedback
- Inspectors' suggestions/reports
- second level feedback.

6. Implementation

6.1 Roles and responsibilities

The plan is supported, developed and implemented by the staff, Board of Management and parents.

6.2 Timeframe

On completion of this review, the policy was implemented immediately following its ratification by the Board of Management.

Appendix 1

Table of History Content for Third and Fourth Class

	Third Class	Fourth Class
Strand	Strand unit	Strand unit
Local Studies	My family – family history Feasts and Festivals	Local history Education in Ireland Games and pastimes
Story	Myths and legends Stories from the past Ireland – stories of artists	Myths and legends - Jewish folklore Stories from around the world The Travelling Community
Early People & Ancient Societies	The Stone Age and the Bronze Age Early people and ancient societies – Ancient Greece Vikings	The Romans The Celts The Maori
Life, Society, work and culture in the past	Norman Ireland 18 th Century Ireland	Life in medieval towns and countryside in Ireland and Europe Life in the 19 th century
Continuity & Change Over Time	Transport	Homes; Homes and houses Technology

Table of History Content for Fifth and Sixth Class

	Fifth Class	Sixth Class
Local Studies	<p>My locality through the ages</p> <p>Feasts and festivals</p> <p>Homes, housing and urban developments</p> <p>Schools and education</p>	<p>Feasts and festivals Halloween, Chinese New Year, Diwali</p> <p>Workplaces in my locality</p>
Story	<p>Myths and legends</p> <p>Young History makers</p> <p>Stories from World Changing women</p>	<p>Tales from Africa</p> <p>Female inventors</p> <p>Pioneers of new technology Irish Myths and Legends</p>
Early People & Ancient Societies	<p>Asian peoples</p> <p>Central and South American peoples</p>	<p>Early Christian Ireland</p> <p>Native Americans</p>
Life, Society, work and culture in the past	<p>The Famine</p> <p>Life in Ireland since the 1950's</p>	<p>World War 2</p>
Eras of Change & conflict	<p>First World War</p>	<p>The Reformation</p> <p>Modern Ireland</p>
Politics, conflict & society	<p>Northern Ireland</p>	<p>Daniel O'Connell</p> <p>1916 and the foundation of the state</p>
Continuity and change over time	<p>Homes, housing and urban developments</p> <p>Education and schools</p>	<p>Food, farming and clothes</p>

Other topics found in the curriculum and not listed above may be used as material for project

work.