



Neston Primary School

History



Rationale

'A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.'

Marcus Garvey

'The more you know about the past, the better prepared you are for the future.'

Theodore Roosevelt

At Neston we want all of our children to love History! Our History Curriculum has been carefully created so that our children's curiosity is piqued by the range of historical opportunities and adventures offered to them. We want our children to gain a wealth of historical knowledge and have the curiosity to inquire, investigate and explore. Bringing History alive is important to us all at Neston.

At Neston we want our children to remember their history lessons and to go on to make historical connections outside of the classroom, with their families and in the wider world. **Recently children in Year 5 delved into their family histories to find out about family members that were involved in the World Wars. The children loved connecting with their grandparents (often over Zoom!) to talk about the past. We discovered that one child's great-grandparents had given up their horses for the war effort, which instantly connected us to the story of 'War Horse' that we were studying. Another child shared with us the experiences that her French great-grandfather had in the Alps during WWII. Her Mum told us how much she has enjoyed re-connecting with her French grandparents who she has not seen for over a year because of the pandemic.**

We believe that our History Curriculum creates memories that our children cherish and historical opportunities that they embrace. At Neston, *'we explore, we discover, we unlock hidden treasures, we shine and reach the stars.'* As our children set out on the adventure of a lifetime it is up to us to make sure they have the skills, the character and the confidence to follow their dreams.

Intent

At Neston, we believe that high-quality history lessons inspire children to want to know more about the past and to think and act as historians. By linking learning to a range of topics, children have opportunities to investigate and interpret the past, understand chronology, build an overview of Britain's past as well as that of the wider world, and to be able to communicate historically.

We want our children to truly benefit from the rich history of our local area. **For example, our children's curiosity is piqued by a wide-range of historical trips throughout their time at Neston, many of which we are lucky enough to have on our doorstep - the Roman Baths of Aquae Sulis, the awe-inspiring Stonehenge, experiencing up-close the engineering feats of**

Brunel, in both Bristol and Swindon, learning about our amazing military past at Lyneham and truly going back in time at St Fagans. We firmly believe that it is not just about what happens in the classroom, it is about the added value we offer to really inspire our children.

We recognise that the majority of our children at Neston have limited cultural diversity, largely come from similar socio-economic backgrounds and that this is not replicated throughout Great Britain and across the world. This is something that we seek to address through our History curriculum so that our children have awareness and acceptance of different cultures and backgrounds that they may not encounter on a regular basis. We aim to raise their sights above their current experiences.

We want our children to learn from other cultures, respect diversity, co-operate with one another and appreciate what they have. We achieve this by creating an environment where, *'We look after each other, we stick together'*. **For example, in the autumn term the whole-school celebrated 'Remembrance' and, as part of this theme, our pupils remembered and honoured those who sacrificed themselves to secure and protect our freedom. The children explored why remembrance is part of modern British life, culture and heritage. They observed a two-minute silence and explored how the poppy is a symbol of remembrance. Every child made a beautiful glazed and fired clay poppy – these were used to create a striking outdoor display that families could admire and contemplate. We are extremely proud of our pupils, who ensured that no-one is forgotten and united to honour all who suffered or died in war.**

Our history curriculum promotes inquisitiveness and a love and thirst for learning. It is ambitious and empowers our children to become independent, resilient and question the world they live in.

Implementation

Our History curriculum aims to excite the children and allow them to develop their own skills as historians. We encourage regular references to timelines, think carefully about how topics fit together as well as having a hands-on approach involving artefacts and visits to bring history alive. We use cross-curricular links to ensure that the children have many occasions to apply their knowledge and understanding.

We develop children with the following essential characteristics to help them become historians **and** to have the cultural capital to become educated citizens of the world:

- **An excellent knowledge and understanding of people, events and contexts from a range of historical periods, including significant events in Britain's past;**
- **The ability to think critically about history and communicate ideas confidently to a range of audiences;**
- **The ability to support, evaluate and challenge their own and others' views using historical evidence from a range of sources;**
- **The ability to think, reflect, debate, discuss and evaluate the past by formulating and refining questions and lines of enquiry;**
- **A respect for historical evidence and the ability to make critical use of it to support their learning;**
- **A desire to embrace challenging activities, including opportunities to undertake high-quality research across a range of history topics;**

- **A developing sense of curiosity about the past and how and why people interpret the past in different ways.**
- **A sense of their own identity within a social, political, cultural and economic background. Because of this, we feel it is important for the subject to be taught discretely as well as incorporated within other curriculum subjects such as English and Art.**

Authentic understanding in history comes from developing a grasp of the key concepts and underlying key historical events, themes, and issues. The core strands we address when teaching History and which connect our History curriculum together are:

- Historical Investigations
- Historical Interpretations
- Chronological Understanding
- Knowledge and Understanding of Events, People and Change in the Past
- Presenting, Organising and Communicating

We make these strands explicit in our long-term planning to show progression throughout the school.

Key concepts help develop understanding

Teaching and planning with key concepts in mind prevents learning being about gathering information. It helps to develop understanding by offering opportunities to link, review and put knowledge into context. In this way, awareness of key concepts can help deepen learners' knowledge and understanding. Of course, learners should also be able to apply the skills of handling evidence and of identifying the significance of historical events.

These are the key concepts:

- Leadership
- Legacy
- Culture
- Conflict
- Empire
- Religion
- Social Injustice

It is these key historical concepts that the teachers can turn into problems that our children can solve. As AJ Collingwood says, 'Good questions are the engine of historical enquiry'. All of these concepts are revisited across topics so that children gain sufficient skills and knowledge to prepare them for future learning and equip them for life beyond Neston.

We empower our staff to organise their own year group curriculums under the guidance of our subject leader. Teachers are best placed to make these judgements. Staff develop year group specific long-term curriculum maps which identify when the different subjects and topics will be taught across the academic year. The vast majority of subjects are taught discretely but staff make meaningful links across subjects. They link prior knowledge to new learning to deepen children's learning. **For example, in Year 4 when the children explore 'Ancient Greece – a study of Greek life and achievements and their influence on the western world' they also tackle the concept of democracy in their PSHE lessons, explore Greek pottery in Art and Design and use the text 'Who let the Gods out?' by May Evans in English.** Our children are taught the right, connected knowledge.

Our short-term plans are produced on a weekly and lesson-based basis. We use these to set out the learning objectives for each lesson, identifying engaging activities and resources which will be used to achieve them. Specific key historical concepts, such as 'Similarities and Differences', are highlighted on short-term plans, showing links to prior learning or setting children up for future historical investigations. On these plans, schema questions are used to develop enquiry skills and create golden threads that run through our whole history curriculum. **For example, in Year 2: 'Why did Mary Seacole nurse British soldiers?' could lead to discussions of identity, empire, slavery, race (amongst many other themes) – all of which will be discussed further and in future topics, in future years!** We also identify 'abstract' terms that we seek to explore through historical enquiry, such as 'civilisation' or 'peasantry', dependent on the topic.

We encourage staff to teach a weekly history lesson. This helps to ensure sufficient time is allocated to history and that historical subject matter can be revisited frequently. We believe that by crafting our curriculum this way, we improve the potential for our children to retain what they have been taught, to alter their long-term memory and thus improve the rates of progress they make.

Assessment is done at the end of each lesson (and written on plan) by identifying any gaps in knowledge from that lesson. **For example, after the first lesson on the Maya the Year 5 teacher identified that children could only name three of the five countries that make up Mesoamerica. Therefore, the teacher noted on plans to quickly re-cap at start of next lesson to see if they could recall the countries.**

Reception

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) follows the 'Development Matters in the EYFS' guidance which aims for all children in reception to have an 'Understanding of the World; people and communities, the world and technology' by the end of the academic year.

Key stage 1

In years 1 and 2, history will form a major part of integrated topics such as Toys and Games (Y1) and Transport (Y2). Addressing the knowledge, skills and understanding (KSU) and giving children a chance to develop a sense of period, we can deliver children's entitlement to history. The Department for Education allows for a range of topic choices, moving from the local to the British and world stages. We have the freedom to use our historically-rich local area and the interest and expertise of teachers (and others) to develop a broad and exciting KS1 history curriculum.

Key Stage 2

History is taught in blocks throughout the year, so that children achieve depth in their learning. We have identified the key knowledge and skills of each topic and consideration has been given to ensure progression and chronology across topics throughout each year group across the school. By the end of year 6, children will have a chronological understanding of British history from the Stone Age to the present day. They are able to draw comparisons and make connections between different time periods and their own lives. Interlinked with this are studies of world history, such as the ancient civilisations of Greece and the Maya of Mesoamerica.

Process for teaching history throughout our school includes:

- Beginning with timeline that should include add-ons from previous years' teaching/ start with learning the basic timeline so that it is known by the time the history topic begins. By doing this, we are using timelines as a teaching strategy that can help students construct an understanding of historical events over time. Books/ICT can be used to show, model, and help students develop concepts about time, continuity, and change in social studies as a basis for developing timelines. Also, by asking the children what events to include for the period of time studied, they are making their own mark on history as the timeline moves through school.
- Using artefacts as a WOW at the start of a topic as well as throughout the topic. This will encourage the children to become history detectives by getting them to think about what the artefact is for, where it is from and how old it is. Artefacts help pupils to question and understand the past.
- Using schema to create golden threads that run through our whole history curriculum at Neston. We establish webs of meanings and ideas associated with particularly important historical terms by referring to them across the Key Stages and by building on children's prior knowledge. As the National Curriculum states: 'children should have a grounded understanding of abstract terms such as 'empire', 'civilisation', 'parliament' and 'peasantry'.

It is these 'abstract' terms that we seek to explore through historical enquiry and turn historical content into mysteries to be investigated. For example, in Year 2: 'Why did Mary Seacole nurse British soldiers?' would lead to discussions of identity, empire, slavery, race and many more – all of which will be discussed in future topics, in future years!

- Outreach intervention: inviting people into school to talk about, demonstrate or re-enact aspects or periods in history has the effect of bringing history alive to the children and provides them with a more visual view of the topic they are covering.
- Using ICT to support learning and make the curriculum accessible for everyone.
- Ending the topic with the adapted timeline so that the children know where their topic fits in history and in relation to other episodes in history.
- Making sure as many women as men are studied. Making sure that people of all races are represented.

Impact

We use both formative, including the use of questioning and knowledge organisers, and summative assessment in our history lessons. Staff use this information to inform their short-term planning and short-term interventions. This helps us provide the best possible support for all of our pupils, including providing greater challenge when necessary. The assessment endpoints for each phase have been carefully mapped out and further broken down for each year group. This means that skills in history are progressive and build year on year. Children in Foundation Stage are assessed within the EYFS framework.