



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

History Policy

Policy Date: September 2026

Policy Lead: K Madden

Mission Statement

We are proud of our school as a place of learning, prayer and happiness.
Hand in hand with God, Our Lady and St. Joseph, we promise to work hard and be kind to one another so that we can grow stronger together in our faith.
Hand in hand with God we learn.

Aims of the Curriculum

At St Joseph's we value every child as a gift from God.

Our curriculum is created with a deep understanding of how our faith influences our thoughts, decisions and actions.
Resilience and pride shape the learning culture within this school for both children and adults. Having the highest aspirations for and of all, we learn together, opening minds and creating an environment of intellectual curiosity.

Working towards a rich and meaningful curriculum that reflects the diverse population of our school family. Teaching children about where they live, making experiences personal and memorable.
Giving children worldwide experiences that help them to understand who they are.

History – Curriculum Intent

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we believe that every child is uniquely created in the image and likeness of God. Through our History curriculum, pupils develop curiosity about the past, understand how people and events have shaped the world we live in today, and learn to

appreciate the dignity, courage and achievements of individuals and societies across different times, places and cultures.

Our History curriculum encourages pupils to become thoughtful historians who ask meaningful questions, examine historical evidence and recognise how understanding the past enables us to interpret the present and shape the future with hope and purpose.

History is taught each term through a carefully sequenced curriculum that develops both substantive knowledge and disciplinary skills. Our curriculum is underpinned by the following principles:

Enquiry-Based Learning

Each History unit is driven by a carefully planned Big Question, which inspires curiosity and provides a meaningful purpose for learning. Pupils investigate social, cultural and ethical themes through historical enquiry, developing critical thinking, problem-solving and investigative skills as they explore significant events, people and civilisations.

Subject Enhancement and Cultural Capital

We believe that bringing History to life is essential in creating memorable learning experiences. Educational visits, visitors, historical artefacts and high-quality resources enrich the curriculum and enable pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the periods they study while broadening their cultural capital.

Developing Young Historians

Throughout each unit, pupils are encouraged to think and work as historians. They learn to ask questions, analyse evidence, compare historical periods and consider different interpretations of the past. This enquiry-led approach nurtures curiosity, resilience and a lifelong appreciation of history.

Building Knowledge Over Time

Our curriculum is designed around principles from cognitive science. Key knowledge and vocabulary are revisited regularly through spaced repetition, interleaving and retrieval practice to strengthen long-term memory. Carefully planned progression documents identify the essential knowledge, vocabulary and disciplinary skills for each year group, enabling teachers, subject leaders and senior leaders to monitor progression effectively across the school.

Catholic Ethos and Spiritual Development

Our faith is at the heart of everything we do. Carefully planned spiritual links encourage pupils to reflect on the impact of historical people and events through the lens of Catholic values. Wherever appropriate, History themes are connected to the Seven Principles of Catholic Social

Teaching, helping pupils develop an understanding of justice, dignity, stewardship, solidarity and the common good as they grow in faith and love.

History – Curriculum Implementation

At St Joseph's, History is taught through carefully sequenced units centred around a Big Question that encourages pupils to develop a depth of understanding through enquiry and investigation. Each Big Question focuses on a significant historical theme, enabling pupils to build secure substantive knowledge while developing the disciplinary skills required to think critically as historians.

History is taught each term and follows a progressive curriculum that builds knowledge systematically from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6. Where appropriate, topics are taught chronologically to strengthen pupils' understanding of chronology, change, continuity, cause and consequence.

Curriculum Structure

Our curriculum provides pupils with opportunities each year to study:

- the history of a local place or significant local figure;
- events and people that are relevant to their own lives in Key Stage 1;
- Ancient Civilisations in Key Stage 2;
- significant aspects of British History as outlined in the National Curriculum.

This carefully sequenced approach enables pupils to make meaningful comparisons between different historical periods, societies and cultures while developing a secure understanding of Britain's place within world history.

Key Historical Concepts

Throughout the curriculum, pupils revisit three key concepts that help deepen their historical understanding:

What are they known for?

- Significant people
- Important events
- Remarkable achievements
- Architecture and innovation

Who was in charge?

- Leadership
- Government

- Social structures
- Power and authority

What is their lasting legacy?

- How societies are remembered
- Long-term impact
- Influence on the modern world

These recurring concepts help pupils connect new learning with prior knowledge and develop increasingly sophisticated historical understanding.

Talk for Writing Across the Curriculum

As with all subjects at St Joseph's, our planning is informed by the Talk for Writing approach. Teachers use the familiar cycle of Imitation, Innovation and Independent Application to support pupils in developing both historical knowledge and disciplinary thinking.

Teachers model historical thinking, co-construct age-appropriate toolkits and explicitly teach the skills needed to analyse evidence, explain historical significance and communicate understanding confidently. This familiar structure supports all learners, particularly those who benefit from consistent approaches across the curriculum.

Knowledge Organisers

Knowledge organisers are used to support both classroom learning and home learning and co-constructed through the term. They include:

- essential knowledge;
- key vocabulary;
- significant people;
- important dates where appropriate;
- 4–5 priority facts identified by the History Subject Leader.

These carefully selected facts are revisited throughout pupils' time at St Joseph's to strengthen long-term retention.

Skills Progression and Toolkits

Progressive History Toolkits clearly outline the disciplinary skills expected in each year group. Teachers use these toolkits alongside progression documents to support planning and co-construct success criteria with pupils, enabling children to articulate how their historical skills develop over time.

Vocabulary and Reading

As a school that celebrates linguistic and cultural diversity, explicit vocabulary instruction is a key feature of History teaching.

High-quality fiction, non-fiction and historical texts are carefully selected to immerse pupils in each period studied. Teachers make deliberate reading links throughout History units, while knowledge organisers provide clear definitions of ambitious subject-specific vocabulary that pupils are expected to understand and use confidently.

History – Curriculum Impact

The impact of our History curriculum is measured by how successfully pupils develop secure historical knowledge, disciplinary skills and an enduring curiosity about the past.

By the time pupils leave St Joseph's, they will have developed a secure understanding of the historical periods and concepts identified within the National Curriculum, providing a strong foundation for further study at secondary school.

Pupils will be able to:

- think and speak confidently as historians;
- use appropriate historical vocabulary accurately;
- place historical events within a secure chronological framework;
- analyse and interpret historical evidence;
- explain cause and consequence, change and continuity;
- compare different societies and civilisations;
- understand the significance and legacy of historical events and individuals.

Our pupils leave St Joseph's with a genuine sense of awe and wonder about the past and an understanding of their role within both their local community and the wider world. They develop the confidence to question, debate and reflect thoughtfully on historical issues while growing in faith, knowledge and love through our Catholic values.

Inclusion and Adaptive Teaching

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we believe that every pupil should experience success in History. Lessons are carefully adapted to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and higher-attaining pupils, can access an ambitious curriculum and make excellent progress.

Adaptive teaching strategies may include:

- visual timelines and chronological scaffolds;
- teacher modelling and worked examples;

- pre-teaching and revisiting historical vocabulary;
- historical artefacts, photographs and visual prompts;
- sentence stems and writing frames;
- co-constructed toolkits;
- flexible grouping;
- targeted adult support where appropriate;
- additional challenge through deeper historical enquiry.

Where pupils have an EHCP or SEND Support Plan, learning is adapted in line with individual targets and recommendations from external professionals while maintaining high expectations for all learners.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment in History is ongoing and is used to inform future teaching, identify misconceptions and celebrate pupils' progress. Teachers assess learning through a range of formative assessment strategies, including questioning, discussion, observation, historical enquiry, written outcomes, source analysis and retrieval practice. Assessment focuses on pupils' ability to recall and apply substantive knowledge, use appropriate historical vocabulary, establish chronological understanding, analyse historical evidence and communicate historical understanding confidently.

Teachers use Progression Documents to assess pupils' acquisition of essential knowledge and disciplinary skills throughout each year group. These documents enable teachers to identify next steps in learning and ensure that knowledge builds progressively across the curriculum.

Knowledge Organisers support both classroom learning and home learning by identifying the key knowledge and vocabulary that pupils are expected to retain over time. Regular retrieval activities provide opportunities for pupils to revisit previously taught content, strengthening long-term memory and supporting sustained progress.

The school's progressive History Toolkits are used to monitor the development of disciplinary skills, enabling pupils to articulate their understanding as historians and demonstrate increasing independence in historical enquiry.

Assessment information contributes to whole-school monitoring processes and is used by the History Subject Leader and Senior Leadership Team to evaluate curriculum effectiveness through planning scrutiny, work scrutiny, pupil voice, lesson visits and staff discussions. Findings inform curriculum development, professional development priorities and future planning to ensure that History remains ambitious, inclusive and progressive for all learners.

Subject Leader Responsibilities

The History Subject Leader is responsible for:

- Providing strategic leadership and direction for History across the school.
- Ensuring that the curriculum is ambitious, progressive and aligned with the National Curriculum.
- Developing and maintaining a clear progression of knowledge, skills and vocabulary from Foundation Stage to Year 6.
- Supporting teachers to plan and deliver high-quality History lessons.
- Ensuring that knowledge builds systematically building on pupils' previous learning.
- Monitoring teaching and learning through lesson visits, book scrutiny, pupil discussions and curriculum reviews.
- Identifying strengths and areas for development within the subject.
- Supporting staff with subject knowledge development and access to appropriate resources.
- Ensuring that assessment approaches accurately reflect pupils' progress in History.
- Promoting opportunities for pupils to apply creativity, problem-solving and practical skills.
- Ensuring that health and safety procedures are followed when using tools, materials and equipment.
- Ensuring equality of opportunity and accessibility for all pupils.
- Keeping up to date with developments in History education and relevant national guidance.
- Reporting regularly to senior leaders and governors regarding curriculum development and impact.

Headteacher Responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that History is given appropriate importance within the curriculum.
- Ensuring that the subject meets statutory requirements and reflects the aims of the National Curriculum.
- Providing appropriate support, time and resources for effective subject leadership.
- Ensuring staff have access to relevant professional development.
- Supporting the Subject Leader in monitoring and evaluating curriculum quality.
- Ensuring that pupils' entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum is maintained.
- Ensuring that safeguarding and health and safety requirements are met.

Governors' Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Supporting and challenging leaders to ensure that History contributes effectively to pupils' wider education.
- Ensuring that statutory curriculum requirements are met.
- Monitoring the impact of History provision as part of the school's curriculum monitoring processes.
- Supporting the school's commitment to providing a rich, ambitious and inclusive curriculum.
- Ensuring that appropriate resources are available to support high-quality teaching and learning.
- Understanding how History contributes to pupils' personal development, creativity and preparation for life beyond primary school.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required due to:

- Changes in statutory guidance.
- Updates to the National Curriculum.
- Changes in school priorities.
- Recommendations from monitoring activities.

The History Subject Leader will be responsible for reviewing and updating this policy in consultation with senior leaders.

The reviewed policy will be presented to governors for approval.