

HISTORY: CURRICULUM STATEMENT

INTENT

For the St Mary's RC High School History Department, our curriculum intent is twofold. Firstly, we aspire to empower students with a profound understanding of their place in the world by unravelling the tapestry of the past and its influence on the present and future. Secondly, we are committed to imparting Catholic virtues, weaving a thread of moral and ethical understanding throughout our teachings. Within this framework, we integrate the British values of democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law, tolerance and mutual respect.

Our curriculum is not static; it is a dynamic framework that is constantly refined to reflect the challenges of the modern day, utilising ever-evolving language and perspectives. This adaptability ensures that students engage with history in a relevant context, fostering a deep connection between the lessons of the past and the complexities of contemporary society. By embracing this evolving approach, we empower students to see themselves as change-makers, equipped with the knowledge, values, and critical thinking skills needed to navigate and positively influence the world around them.

Through our holistic curriculum, we aim to nurture well-rounded individuals who are not only informed about the past but also inspired and prepared to shape a future guided by the principles of democracy, justice, and compassion underpinned by Catholic virtues.

IMPLEMENTATION

Curriculum and Programmes of Study

The Key Stage 3 History curriculum at St Mary's is currently undergoing a thorough review to closely align with its intended objectives. A new Head of Department was appointed in September 2023. This has led to a peak divergence in approaches; however, the overarching aim is collaborative development. The department seeks to author shared lesson intentions that enhance cohesion across the team while maintaining pedagogical autonomy for class teachers.

Students at St Mary's engage with history through guided enquiry questions, and the department is working towards making this approach more cohesive across the team. The introduction of new practices is part of the ongoing effort to enhance the curriculum, and the team is keen on collaboration to achieve a more unified and effective Key Stage 3 History curriculum.

As of January 2024, considerable work is ongoing to review Key Stage 3 History provision. Subject teachers have written lessons and created resources collaboratively, with resources being held on the Central Resource Library they can be accessed by any member of the department. In time the CRL will be updated with more 'Central

Resources' to provide greater consistency in the student experience with much of the Key Stage 3 curriculum being updated.

The department views learning as organic and therefore does not stipulate that the five enquiries that feature in each year group will fall exactly within half- and termly timeframes. However, class teachers are expected to ensure that their classes make good and reasonable progress in line with the rest of the year group. It is also important that all classes complete all five enquiries to ensure the curriculum intent is met. This is reviewed at department meetings and class teachers are held accountable for class progress through the curriculum.

Marking & Feedback

Assessment for Learning is habitually carried out by subject teachers who regularly monitor pupil progress within lessons through knowledge checks and targeted questioning. This ongoing practice aims to establish a conducive learning environment grounded in high expectations, fostering a climate that encourages all learners to achieve and surpass age-related expectations. It is essential to note that this marks a point of development for the team as they continually refine their approaches to best support student growth and success.

Starting from September 2023, the department has introduced a customised marking and feedback policy focused on evaluating homework tasks and key assessments. The principal focus of marking is to generate feedback which students can then act upon. The Educational Endowment Foundation defines feedback as 'information given to the learner about the learner's performance relative to learning goals or outcomes. It should aim to (and be capable of producing) improvement in students' learning.' This is therefore the approach of the History Department. Notably, the department has undertaken trials involving whole-class feedback approaches, resulting in the creation of Directed Improvement and Reflection Time (DIRT) tasks. These tasks allow learners to revisit skills, reinforce core knowledge, and refine responses based on received feedback.

Feedback for key homework tasks can be identified in pupil work with 'Feedback Tickets' attached which feature the use of the 'Star and Target' methodology outlined in the school's Marking and Feedback Policy. Feedback on key assessments takes the form of coloured Class Feedback Sheets which also include the use of 'Star and Target' methodology with general teacher comments on the strengths and areas for development for that assessment, these are bespoke to the class. As of January 2024, there also remains some legacy feedback approaches in the department whilst the effectiveness of the trialled whole-class feedback approach is reviewed.

Self-assessment and peer marking is employed to encourage growth mindset, self-reflection and to help pupils develop their understanding of critical assessment. Pupils

¹ Education Endowment Foundation. (2021). Teaching and Learning Toolkit: Feedback. Retrieved from <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/feedback>

use alternative colour (not blue or black) pens to indicate self- and peer-assessment, unless this is written on a Class Feedback Sheet.

Extra-Curricular

The Key Stage 3 History Club, catering to students in Years 7-9, offers a conducive and enjoyable environment for the exploration of historical narratives. Through structured discussions, engaging activities, and purposeful projects, participants delve into diverse historical subjects, fostering an appreciation for the narratives and insights of past epochs. The primary objective of the club is to render history both accessible and enjoyable, thereby instilling a curiosity that transcends the confines of the traditional classroom setting.

The annual St Mary's Battlefields Tour holds pivotal educational value for GCSE students, specifically aligning with the 'Conflict and Tension: The First World War (1894-1918)' curriculum unit. Meticulously planned in collaboration with Trench Tours Ltd., the tour offers a tailored, immersive learning experience, reinforcing classroom teachings about key historical events. Beyond education, it cultivates cultural awareness and personal growth by engaging students with diverse historical perspectives and the lasting impact of war. The Battlefields Tour significantly contributes to the History Department's curriculum intent by providing a holistic educational experience that combines historical education, cultural exposure, and personal development, leaving a lasting impact on students' nuanced understanding of the world.

Assessment

Assessment for Learning is considered a crucial component of effective history teaching. Subject teachers are expected to carry out formative assessment in its many forms along with live marking strategies, which enables pupils to make progress, and for teachers to offer specific feedback which can be acted on immediately.

Alongside the Key Stage 3 History curriculum review, the department is also undertaking a review of summative assessment. The primary objective is to integrate essential skills for success at the GCSE level while fostering the development of critical thinking and communication skills among pupils. The emphasis of this review is not merely on adopting GCSE-style assessments but on cultivating a robust practice of history that goes beyond examination-oriented approaches. The review reflects a commitment to a holistic and skill-based approach to history education at St Mary's.

As part of this review the findings and guidance from recent Ofsted research are being considered which states that assessment in history should 'focus on whether pupils are secure in their knowledge of the most important content and concepts, which can support future learning'² Alongside this guidance, the updated Whole-School Assessment Policy (coming in 2024) will be considered, and this is an area of on-going

² Ofsted. (2023). Rich encounters with the past: history subject report. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-report-series-history/rich-encounters-with-the-past-history-subject-report>

refinement at Key Stage 3. Common assessments will be agreed for each enquiry question and other means of assessment on content and skills will form a crucial component of the 2024-25 history curriculum map.

At GCSE level subject teachers employ a greater degree of autonomy with their class assessments which may include assessment homework tasks, timed exam-style questions, and end of topic quizzes. For cohort-wide assessment points such as mock exams the department set the same assessment (based on AQA past papers or question stems) to standardise the experience and allow for cohort-wide interventions if necessary. Marking of these assessments is standardised using department moderation.

IMPACT

Academic Outcomes

SISRA data is reviewed by the Head of Department and features as an agenda point in department meetings which allows for appropriate interventions to be made. All KS4 results are included in the *History Department DDP*. Although historically enjoying strong results, the academic outcomes in 2023 did not reflect the true potential of pupils in history at St Mary's. In June 2023 department results were 48% achieving grades 5+ with 20% achieving grades 7+.

With a new Head of Department in place from September 2023, interventions have been planned and put in place to maximise outcomes and review the effectiveness of the implementation of the history curriculum.

REFERENCES

Education Endowment Foundation. (2021). Teaching and Learning Toolkit: Feedback. Retrieved from <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/feedback>

Ofsted. (2023). Rich encounters with the past: history subject report. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-report-series-history/rich-encounters-with-the-past-history-subject-report>