

History – Position Statement

Background & Context

The History Department is well established within the school and has for many years been a popular subject with all our pupils. The Department is made up of a Head of Dept, 1 full-time specialist and 1 part-time specialist on a fixed term variable 0.73 contract. This is the first year in post for the Head of Department, who was appointed in September 2023. The full-time member of staff has additional responsibilities as a Training Manager. The other members of the Department have no additional responsibilities.

Curriculum

Pupils at KS3 have 4 hours of curriculum time across a two-week timetable. Pupils at KS4 have 5 hours of curriculum time across a two-week timetable. In current Year 11 there are 4 teaching groups with a total number of 106 students. In current Year 10 there are 3 groups with a total number of 59 students. All teaching groups are composed of mixed ability pupils.

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.

At KS3, pupils carry out 5 enquiries per academic year. All enquiries are thematic in nature and follow a cyclical approach, whereby themes are revisited each academic year allowing skills and knowledge to be revisited, built upon, and consolidated. Students are assessed throughout the academic year using Star and Target methodology. Formative assessment is conducted during the learning process to modify teaching and learning activities to improve student outcomes and holistic understanding of the subject. Summative assessment takes place at the end of an instructional unit and is compared against specific standards or benchmarks. Individual reports are written for each student each academic year giving feedback and offering areas for improvement. Take up for History has been historically very strong but has for the first time in many years been impacted by the increased emphasis on the EBacc qualification, leading to lower numbers going into 2023-24 academic year.

The KS4 course follows the specification requirements of the AQA GCSE History course and is designed to provide students with every opportunity to achieve or outperform their FFT target grades. Assessment across both Key Stages takes place continually with key assessments taking place at appropriate points with feedback being provided on a regular basis. Students who are underachieving are provided with in-class intervention and some in Year 11 are invited to History Revision with the Head of Department. These

interventions are recorded, monitored, and adjusted to meet individual needs as required based on progress.

Enrichment

The department provides a range of enrichment opportunities including a Key Stage 3 History Club, catering to students in Years 7-9. 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. As part of an on-going curriculum review, the department seeks to introduce greater learning outside of the classroom opportunities which will tie into enquiries being studied.

Approaches to Pedagogy [Teaching and Learning]

The History Department is dedicated to creating a positive learning environment, prioritising behaviour and respect while maintaining structured lessons and clear routines. With three subject specialists and a focus on high-quality resources, including both traditional and electronic formats, the department ensures a comfortable and familiar atmosphere for students. The emphasis on literacy, key terminology, powerful knowledge, and exam-relevant language further enhances the overall educational experience. Moreover, teachers benefit from pedagogical autonomy, allowing for diverse instructional approaches, and the department actively encourages evidence-informed teaching practices. This commitment to continuous improvement is reinforced by an ongoing curriculum review, ensuring that teaching methods remain dynamic and responsive to the evolving educational landscape. In summary, the department's dedication to excellence and adaptability contributes to a well-rounded educational experience for our pupils.