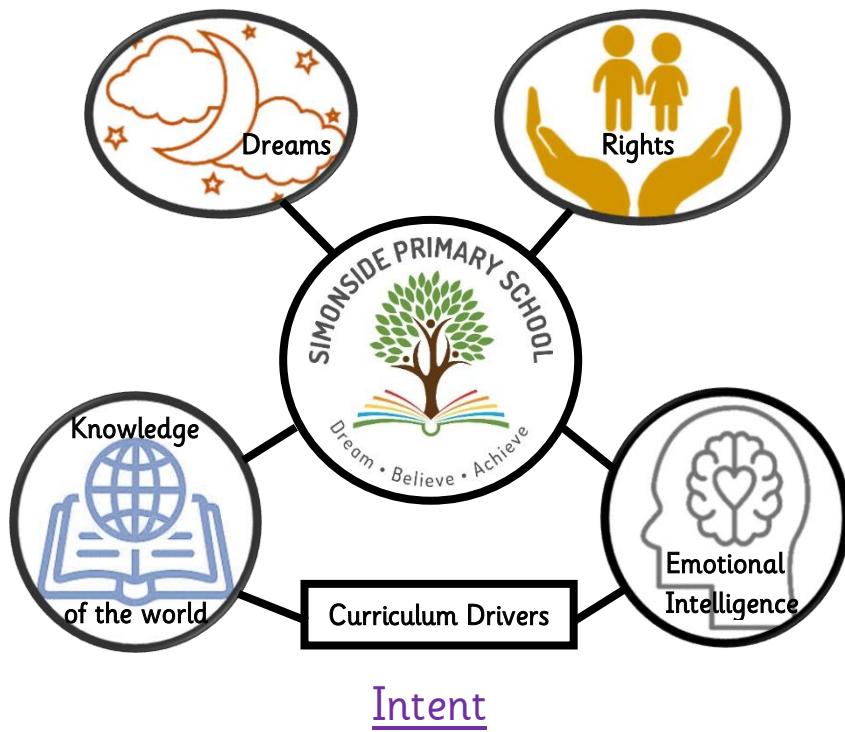


Simonside History Policy Updated October 2025



Aims

Our History curriculum is underpinned by our **Curriculum Drivers** and our **BIG IDEAS**.

Knowledge of the World – We want our children to develop an understanding of the concepts of time and chronology. We also want them to understand that events usually have a multiplicity of causes and that historical explanation is provisional, always retractable and sometimes controversial.

Rights of the Child – We want our children to know they have rights and appreciate that historically, children have not always had these same rights and in some countries, they still do not. Furthermore, our children will develop their understanding of the major issues and events in their own country and the world, as well as how these events may have influenced the world in which they now live.

Dreams – We want our children to develop an interest in the past and an appreciation of human achievements and inspirations. We hope they can be inspired by significant individuals or movements.

Emotional Intelligence – We want our children to learn that the world has changed over time. We want them to know the past was different to the present and the people of other times and places may have had different values and attitudes from our own.

Civilisation – We want our children to be exposed to a wide variety of civilisations. We believe this is key to expanding their understanding of the world. This enables children to make effective comparisons between the civilisations they study because as they move through school, they gain a greater understanding of how different people have lived during history. The children are able to evaluate what makes a civilisation successful by drawing on their knowledge of the civilisations they have studied. Furthermore, they can link this to their own civilisation, in order to assess how they can make their world a better place.

Innovation – We want our children to be able to identify how the innovations of the time affected and changed society. History has been driven by innovation and we believe it is important that our children recognise this. It is our hope that the children are inspired and dream to be innovators themselves.

Invasion – We want our children to understand that the world as we know it today has been shaped by invasion. The world has changed significantly throughout time and it is important to recognise the reasons as to why countries/leaders invaded other countries and what impact this had on the world. This idea also helps children frame rights throughout history as they can reflect on if they were met during conflict.

Implementation

Curriculum and Skills

Early Years Foundation Stage

In Nursery and Reception, all children are taught history as an integral part of the learning covered during the academic year. All historical objectives within the EYFS are underpinned by the objectives of the early learning goals (ELGs). The history curriculum in the EYFS enables children to:

- Begin to make sense of their own life-story and family's history.
- Comment on images of familiar situations in the past.
- Compare and contrast characters from stories, including figures from the past.
- Talk about the lives of people around them and their roles in society.
- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.

- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

In planning and guiding children's activities, our teachers constantly reflect on the different ways that children learn and this is seen in their practice. It allows the teaching staff to provide all children with rich historical opportunities through playing, exploring and active learning. Children are continually encouraged to make meaningful connections in their learning.

Key Stage 1

The new 2014 National Curriculum at Key Stage 1 focuses on developing children's awareness of the past, using common words and phrases relating to the passing of time. They should know where the people and events they study fit within a chronological framework and identify similarities and differences between ways of life in different periods. Children should use a wide vocabulary of everyday historical terms. They should ask and answer questions, choosing and using parts of stories and other sources to show that they know and understand key features of events. They should understand some of the ways in which we find out about the past and identify different ways in which it is represented. In planning to ensure the progression described above, through teaching about the people, events and changes outlined below, teachers may introduce pupils to historical periods that they will study more fully at Key Stage 2.

Pupils should be taught about:

- Changes within living memory
- Events beyond living memory that are significant nationally or globally
- The lives of significant individuals in the past who have contributed to national and international achievements.
- Significant historical events, people and places in their own locality.

Key Stage 2

The new 2014 National Curriculum at Key Stage 2 should continue to allow children to develop a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history, establishing clear narratives within and across the periods they study. They should note connections, contrasts and trends over time and develop the appropriate use of historical terms. They should regularly address and sometimes devise historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity and difference, and significance. Children should construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection and organisation of relevant historical information. They should understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.

In planning to ensure the progression, teachers should combine overview and depth studies to help pupils understand both the long arc of development and the complexity of specific aspects of the content.

Pupils should be taught about:

- Changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age
- The Roman Empire and its impact on Britain
- Britain's settlement by Anglo-Saxons and Scots
- The Viking and Anglo-Saxon struggle for the Kingdom of England to the time of Edward the Confessor
- A local history study
- A study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066
- The achievements of the earliest civilizations – an overview of where and when the first civilizations appeared and a depth study of one of the following: Ancient Sumer; The Indus Valley; Ancient Egypt; The Shang Dynasty of Ancient China • Ancient Greece – a study of Greek life and achievements and their influence on the western world • A non-European society that provides contrasts with British history – one study chosen from: early Islamic civilization, including a study of Baghdad c. AD 900; Mayan civilization c. AD 900; Benin (West Africa) c. AD 900-1300

In September 2019, a *Coverage and Skills Document* was developed by the subject lead and Deputy Head Teacher. This was created to ensure all teachers could use one document to underpin their planning, focusing on the historical skills and knowledge required for the particular year group. Furthermore, this document outlines the historical content each year group will study to ensure children are not repeating topics across our mixed year group classes. This document will be reviewed by the subject lead annually to ensure that children have complete coverage of the National Curriculum.

Teaching and Learning

At Simonside Primary School, each History topic is launched with a timeline activity. The children are exposed to all topics they will cover from Year 1-6. This helps children with the concept of chronology as they are reminded of prior learning and signposted to future learning they will receive.

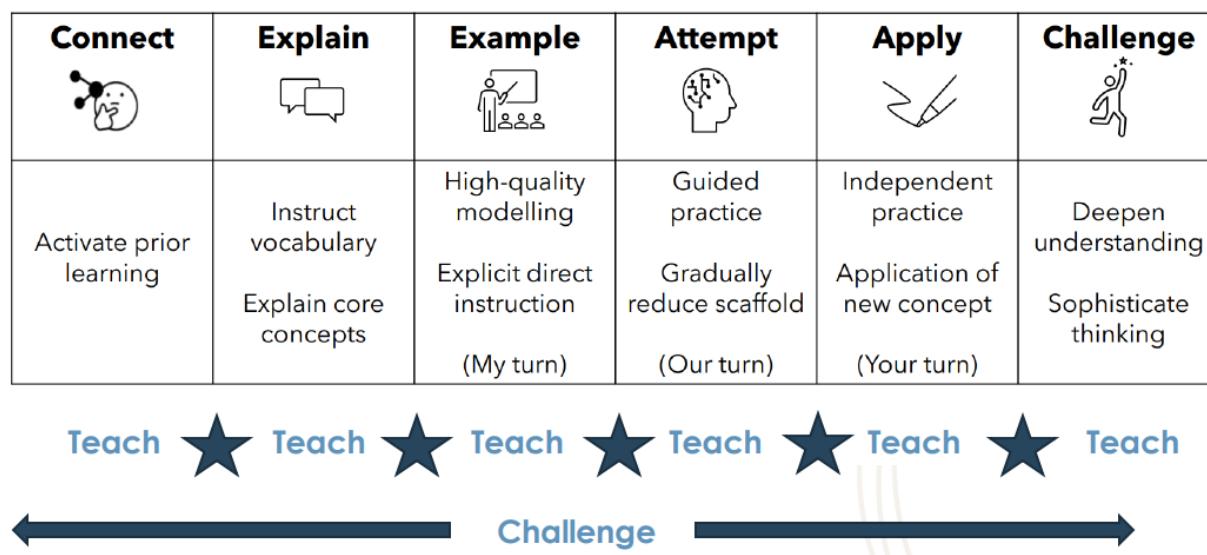
Additionally, we use knowledge organisers at the forefront of each topic. These help children to build substantive knowledge, engage with the BIG IDEAS and ensures vocabulary is 'taught not caught'.

History teaching focuses on enabling children to think as **historians**.

Lessons are made up of four main elements:

1. Set the scene, place learning in a wider context, link to prior learning, review previous learning, provide the 'big picture', share objectives and learning outcomes.
2. Pupils are taught new information (instruction/exposition).
3. Pupils make sense of information (processing/understanding).
4. Review information and plan next steps.

In order to incorporate all four elements we plan '6 phases of a lesson':



The phases are not always sequential.

History lends itself to, and benefits from, a wide range of teaching and learning styles i.e. whole class teaching, when new or complex materials are introduced, as well as paired, group or individual work. We recognise the fact that in all classes there are children of widely different abilities in history and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this by:

- setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty. Not all children complete all tasks;
- grouping children by ability in the room and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- providing resources of different complexity depending on the ability of the child;
- using classroom assistants to support children individually or in groups.

We also recognise that History lessons should be engaging, and skills based as opposed to having a literacy focus. We do this by using a range of stimulus and tools.

We place an emphasis on examining historical artefacts and primary sources. History teaching should provide children with experiences of working with different source materials, documents, photographs, maps, artefacts, oral testimony, videos, secondary interpretations as well as visits. In each key stage we give children the opportunity to visit sites of historical

significance. We encourage visitors to come into the school and talk about their experiences of events in the past.

We recognise and value the importance of stories in history teaching and we regard this as an important way of stimulating interest in the past. We focus on helping children understand that historical events can be interpreted in different ways and that they should always ask searching questions, such as, 'How do we know?', about information they are given.

Although history will not always be taught and learned in a chronological sequence, pupils will have access to some form of timeline so that past events can be placed in a chronological sequence and their relative distance from the present identified.

Although history is strongly rooted in written and spoken language, information technology is a very useful tool for the historian. It can be used to store, retrieve and analyse information and for word processing. All classes have access to computers, interactive whiteboards with access to the Internet and opportunities to use laptops and iPads.

Impact

Assessment

At Simonside Primary we use the **Depth of Learning tracker** which allows teachers to assess the key concepts being taught. Within the concepts are the milestones which are split into BAD (Basic, Advancing, Deep). These grids aid planning as well as assessment. The detail of the milestones ensure full coverage of the key skills and allow teachers to see that the curriculum is being taught in the breadth and depth required.

Within lessons, teachers are constantly assessing and checking to ensure learning 'sticks'. The tracker helps teachers with their questioning as they know which key historical concepts they are assessing as well as the level in the milestone.

Since 2021, the school has adopted the 'Writing to Learn' approach from Chris Quigley. This allows for children to use 'golden sentences' with a range of conjunctions to vary their responses to their learning. Through this medium, children showcase their learning in a critical manner and it also allows teachers to assess the pupils' understanding of the content taught.

Monitoring

Monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in history is the responsibility of the history subject leader. The work of the history subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of history, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.

History books will be monitored to ensure that the key skills are being effectively taught and match the needs and abilities of the pupils. **Pupil Book study** is a key tool for the subject lead to see if children are learning and remembering more. These sessions are often recorded. Other samples of curriculum work may include photos of activities/displays/visits/assemblies etc.