St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

History Policy

2025 – 2026

Learn to Love: Love to Learn

Our Mission

Learn to Love: Love to Learn

At St. Bernadette's Catholic School, you will find us caring, hardworking and co-operative. We follow the ways of Jesus using our talents and gifts to make our school special. We show respect to all and welcome you.

Intent, Implementation & Impact

Intent

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School is a beacon of hope and a place that offers children an education rich in wonder and memorable experiences. Through our diverse and inspiring curriculum, our children learn to love and love to learn. We believe that high-quality History lessons inspire children to want to know more about the past and to think and act as historians. Through discovery of the past, we are enabling our children to open the doors to the future.

It is our intention to equip all children with the knowledge, skills and cultural capital needed to succeed in later life. The History curriculum has been devised in a way that enables children to reach clearly defined end points. In order to do so, we have planned and sequenced topics using a reverse chronological approach. This allows children to connect new and existing knowledge, thus building a more secure historical framework that will be embedded in long-term memory.

Further to equipping the children with historical knowledge, defined by the national curriculum, we have also devised a record of skills in order to ensure that progression is both logical and systematic.

We provide children with the following essential characteristics to help them become historians:

- An excellent knowledge and understanding of people, events and contexts from a range of historical periods, including significant events in Britain's past;
- Learning about the concept of chronology, which underpins children's developing sense of period, as well as key concepts such as change and causation.
- 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;
- A respect for historical evidence and the ability to make critical use of it to support their learning;
- The ability to think, reflect, debate, discuss and evaluate the past by formulating and refining questions and lines of enquiry;
- 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.

Implementation

We believe that the delivery of the history curriculum is as important as its design. Therefore, subject leaders have implemented the following:

- A knowledge organiser that outlines knowledge and skills, which all children can access.
- A progression of skills document which ensures that skills are developed in a logical sequence.
- A cycle of lessons which carefully plans for progression and depth;
- A series of CPD in order to ensure that staff have effective subject knowledge and are confident with delivering high quality history lessons.

Teachers have implemented/ ensured the following:

- High expectations for all pupils.

- Quality teaching which enables all pupils to understand key concepts and skills and embed them in long- term memory.
- The fluent application of historical skills, with independence.
- Facilitation of appropriate discussion, in which all children are encouraged to engage.
- Assessing understanding and addressing misconceptions.
- The delivery of planning is based on assessment of the children's knowledge and driven by the emerging ideas/needs of the class.
- Organisation of trips and visiting experts who will enhance the learning experience.

Impact

Our History Curriculum is broad, rich and accessible to all. It has been carefully planned to enable the progression of both knowledge and skills.

Children will acquire vital knowledge, skills and gain the cultural capital that they need for the next stage of their educational journey. We also believe that we are equipping them with the essential knowledge to enable them to become educated and responsible citizens. Through learning about past events and how they have shaped our world children develop respect, tolerance and empathy for others, which will then enable them to contribute respectfully towards the shaping of our future.

The Nature of History

The national curriculum for history aims to ensure that all pupils:

- know and understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the earliest times to the present day: how people's lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world
- know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world: the nature of ancient civilisations; the expansion and dissolution of empires; characteristic features of past non-European societies; achievements and follies of mankind

- gain and deploy a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as 'empire', 'civilisation', 'parliament' and 'peasantry'
- understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically-valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses
- understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed
- gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history; and between short- and long-term timescales.

Catholic faith

History at St Bernadette's is taught in a way that encourages children to respect the dignity of every person, to be tolerant of different perspectives, and to understand the importance of justice, peace, and community. Through learning about the lives, cultures, beliefs, and experiences of people across time, pupils are encouraged to approach the past with empathy, curiosity, and compassion, reflecting the Catholic ethos of our school.

The National Curriculum for History guides our planning, ensuring that pupils gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain's past and that of the wider world. Through a range of carefully selected topics, children explore themes such as change and continuity, cause and consequence, and significance, while developing key disciplinary skills like historical enquiry, critical thinking, and use of evidence and interpretation.

At St Bernadette's, we believe that history should not only inform pupils about the past but also help them reflect on moral choices, human dignity, and the consequences of actions for both individuals and societies. Where appropriate, we draw clear links to Catholic Social Teaching, particularly:

The Common Good – Children examine how communities throughout history have worked together or suffered when justice, equality, and solidarity were lacking. They are encouraged to learn from the past to help build a better, fairer world.

Human Dignity – By studying events such as World War II, classism, or the impact of conflict, pupils gain insight into the importance of protecting the dignity and rights of every human being.

Solidarity and Promoting Peace – Pupils reflect on how unity and peace have been built—or broken—through decisions and actions in history. They are encouraged to consider how their own choices can promote harmony in today's world.

Stewardship – Where appropriate, historical topics explore how people have used and managed the earth's resources over time, linking to our responsibility to care for God's creation.

This faith-informed approach to teaching History helps pupils to see the relevance of the past in shaping a just and compassionate future. It supports them in developing not only historical knowledge and skills, but also a strong sense of moral responsibility, respect for others, and an appreciation of the diversity and interconnectedness of human experience.

Planning and coverage

At St Bernadette's, we have designed a bespoke History curriculum based on the National Curriculum 2014. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, planning has been devised by the Topic Co-ordinators, ensuring a consistent and coherent approach across the school. This ensures that pupils within the same year group and across the school are given access to the same high-quality historical learning opportunities, fostering both progression and equity.

Whole School Overviews provide a clear picture of the historical topics taught in each year group, aligned with national expectations.

Medium Term Planning has been structured using a consistent format. Each planning grid includes:

- Statutory National Curriculum objectives
- Identification of common misconceptions
- Key vocabulary
- Key questions and creative exploration prompts
- Key concepts and skills
- Golden threads
- Key questions and prompts for historical enquiry
- Information on significant figures, civilisations, periods, or events relevant to the unit

A strong emphasis is placed on historical enquiry—encouraging pupils to ask perceptive questions, think critically, consider evidence, and develop informed perspectives. Children are explicitly taught how to use a range of sources of evidence, including artefacts, photographs, documents, oral histories, and digital media. They learn to compare interpretations, assess reliability, and construct their own narratives about the past.

Chronological understanding is embedded throughout the curriculum. Pupils develop a secure sense of time by sequencing events, understanding cause and consequence, and identifying change and continuity over time.

Whole school planning in history is monitored by the Topic Co-ordinators to ensure consistently high standards. Monitoring focuses on the development and use of historical vocabulary, retention of key knowledge, and the progression of historical thinking across the key stages. Regular review of planning, teaching, and outcomes ensures that our history curriculum remains rigorous, reflective of current best practice, and relevant to the diverse world our pupils live in.

Organisation

In Key Stages 1 and 2, the History curriculum at St Bernadette's is built upon a topic-based system that encompasses the key strands of chronological understanding, knowledge of significant individuals and events, understanding of continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity and difference, and historical enquiry using evidence and sources. The curriculum is composed of prescribed topics ranging from Year 1 to Year 6 and is structured as a spiral curriculum—one that allows pupils to revisit historical concepts and skills at progressively deeper levels. This approach prevents unnecessary repetition while ensuring that key knowledge and enquiry skills are regularly practised, deepened, and retained. Our goal is to provide a progressive, balanced, and broad history curriculum that enables pupils to understand how the past has shaped the world around them.

Our bespoke history planning has been carefully designed to build on pupils' prior knowledge and to support the retention of historical knowledge and disciplinary skills. Each unit includes prior learning checks and targeted flashbacks to help pupils connect previous historical understanding with new content. Every lesson begins with flashback activities focused on:

- Vocabulary
- Prior historical learning
- Historians, significant figures, civilisations, or historical contexts previously studied

These activities serve several key purposes:

- Support the transfer of historical knowledge into pupils' long-term memory
- Act as a pre-teach mechanism for important historical concepts and subject-specific terminology
- Address misconceptions before they develop

- Enable more meaningful links between past and present learning, enhancing historical understanding as topics progress

At St Bernadette's, we believe that vocabulary plays a vital role in enabling pupils to access and engage deeply with historical ideas and content. As such, vocabulary development is placed at the forefront of our history teaching. Each history lesson includes:

- Dual coding of key historical terms (visuals and definitions)
- Partner talk opportunities to use and apply vocabulary in historical contexts

This consistent, research-informed approach helps pupils build a strong foundation of historical knowledge, language, and thinking skills. It enables them to:

- Ask thoughtful enquiry questions
- Examine and interpret a range of primary and secondary sources
- Understand that the past can be represented and interpreted in different ways
- Think critically, communicate confidently, and construct their own informed views about the past and its relevance today

Assessment

At the end of each history unit, children complete a short pop quiz designed to assess their understanding and retention of key knowledge. These quizzes help to consolidate learning and identify areas that may need further reinforcement. The results of each quiz are recorded on an Excel spreadsheet, allowing staff to track individual and class progression over time. This data provides valuable insights into how well pupils are retaining historical knowledge and understanding key concepts.

Subject coordinators regularly monitor this information to ensure consistent progression across year groups and to identify any trends or gaps in learning.

This process supports effective planning, targeted support, and continuous improvement in the teaching and learning of history throughout the school.

At the end of the year three books from each class (AA, A and BA) are to be kept as a record of the children's work and progress.

Reporting to parents

At St Bernadette's, we make use of BlueSky to celebrate and share the historical learning experiences of our pupils with parents and the wider school community. In History, teachers are encouraged to regularly share updates on units, learning journeys, and pupil work. These updates can be found using #stbernshistory.
This platform allows us to showcase:

- The historical periods, events, and figures pupils have been studying
- Primary and secondary sources pupils have explored
- Enquiry questions and key lines of historical investigation
- Pupils' responses, timelines, reflections, and creative historical work

It also provides parents with a valuable opportunity to see what their children have been learning, encouraging continued conversations, celebration, and engagement with history at home.

History reports are included in the pupil's end-of-year topic reports, providing an overview of their progress, understanding, engagement, and development of historical thinking across the year.

Resources

The school provides a wide variety of history resources, including books, source materials, artefacts, and digital learning tools. All of these play a vital role in delivering a rich and engaging history curriculum. Each year group has access to a tailored set of sources and artefacts appropriate to their units of study, supporting a deeper understanding of historical periods, people, and events.

A comprehensive record of available historical sources and artefacts is accessible to all staff, ensuring resources are used effectively across year bands. These materials are carefully selected to align with the National Curriculum and are regularly reviewed and updated to maintain quality and relevance.

Each year band has its own dedicated history resource box, containing sources and artefacts specific to the topics they are studying. These boxes are clearly labelled and stored in the central history cupboard, allowing for easy access and organisation. This system supports staff in delivering well-resourced and consistent history lessons across the school.

At St Bernadette's, we believe reading is a cornerstone of every curriculum area, including History. Therefore, opportunities to share picture books, historical fiction, and non-fiction texts have been planned into each unit. Every classroom includes a selection of books linked to current historical topics, enabling pupils to extend their learning beyond formal lesson time and to develop a love for historical enquiry through reading.

All children and staff are encouraged to care for and respect these resources to ensure they remain in good condition for future learners.

Equal opportunities

All history experiences are planned with the school's commitment to equal opportunities in mind. History is approached in such a way that equality is afforded to all, regardless of gender, faith, or ability. This is directly in line with St Bernadette's Equal Opportunity Policy.

All pupils will be given equal access to the entire history curriculum, including educational visits, role-play, source analysis, and other practical learning opportunities. Where required, pupils with SEND will be provided with additional support to enable full engagement with the history curriculum. If it is inappropriate for a pupil to participate in a specific lesson due to reasons related to any protected characteristics, the lesson will be adapted to meet the pupil's needs, and alternative arrangements involving extra support will be made where necessary.

The school also aims to provide more academically able pupils with opportunities to deepen their historical understanding through enrichment activities such as independent research, critical thinking tasks, and debate. Teachers will ensure that the provision is adapted for children who have English as an Additional

Language to ensure the History Curriculum is accessible and inclusive for all learners.

Revised by Topic Co-ordinators Z Boron & R Wayne

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