

History- First and Second Order Concepts

In EYFS and Key stage 1 it is important that children encounter important concepts and ideas in an age-appropriate way. The history curriculum at our school is carefully designed to make sure that the concepts they are introduced to set them up for success in Key Stage 2 and beyond.

Substantive (first order) concepts introduced:

The substantive concepts which run through our history curriculum and help children to understand recurring abstract themes within a historical context are:

Travel

The concept of travel is focused upon heavily in the Year 2 topic 'How did transport change the world?' However, the children come to this topic with prior knowledge because they have previously learnt about the first moon landing and astronauts in Reception and Seaside holidays in the past in Year 1.

KS2 links: The Romans (Y3), Vikings vs Anglo-Saxons (Year 5) Leisure and entertainment (Y6)

Society

The second concept which children will begin to develop an understanding of is society. This is a more complex concept than travel but it is introduced gently for example by looking at the impact the arrival of the Windrush generation had on society (Y1, A2) looking at the differences between the experiences of rich and poor people during events such as the Great Fire of London (Y2, Spr2) and comparing the lives of landowners and servants living in Bramall Hall (Y1, Spr2). These topics begin to build up an idea of what was like in the past and also begin to question how much has changed.

KS2 links: The Romans (Y3), Early Civilisation (Y4), Ancient Greece (Y5) and Crime and Punishment (Y6).

Empire

The third substantive concept that the children are introduced to in Key Stage 1 is 'empire'. This links to the children's developing geographical understanding in Year 1 and 2 where they find out about the U.K. and then the continents. This really needs to be in place for the children to have an idea about how far an empire can reach. Within our curriculum, the idea of empire is primarily based around the British Empire. This is central to the learning on the arrival of the Windrush (Y1, A2) and also the impact of George Stephenson's Rocket (Y2, S1). It also features in a lot of our key anniversaries such as Remembrance day and special events like the Queen's platinum jubilee.

KS2 links: The Romans (Y3), Ancient Greece (Y5), Shang Dynasty (Y5).

Second order concepts

These are the common threads across historical teaching which are central to everything we teach ('they can be said to cover what history is about, without the content' - Tim Jenner, HA Primary Journal 82). The children repeatedly meet these concepts in their learning and they help the children to make links between different aspects of historical learning so that their historical knowledge and thinking connects rather than being a series of stand alone topics.

Similarities and differences

One of the best ways for us to assess whether children are thinking like historians is to encourage the children to make links within topics. This could be as simple as children in Nursery thinking back to what they were like as babies (Nur A2), Reception making comparisons between the way they wash their clothes at home and investigating a 'domestic life' loan box with equipment such as mangles, washing tongs and a dolly tub (Rec, Spr1). Or it could be looking at the toys our grandparents played with in our Year 1 topic comparing childhood in the 1960s and 70s with life today (Y1, A2).

Children are also prompted to find similarities and differences between topics. One of our key tools for this is our history mystery box which is used at the beginning of every lesson in KS1. These lead to activities such as Venn diagrams, 'Who am I?' and 'Odd one out' which are also ways of the children demonstrating what they know and making connections (see pupil voice notes).

KS2: Prehistoric Britain (Y3), Anglo Saxons, Picts and Scots (Y4), Vikings Vs Anglo Saxons (Y5).

Significance

Many of the units in our scheme of work revolve around the concept of significance of either people (eg Neil Armstrong and Mae Jemison in Reception Spr2), places (Bramall Hall Year 1 Spring 2) or events (eg the Rainhill Trials, Year 2 S1). The children come to understand the meaning of the term significance as a historical concept as something which is important from the past and is remembered after it has happened.

KS2 links: Early Civilisations (Y4), Ancient Greece (Y5), The Local Area (Y6)

Chronology

Over the course of EYFS and Key Stage 1 we begin the process of helping children to develop their own mental timeline. This begins with a display in Nursery which documents the children's journey through the academic year, moves onto memory boxes in Reception and then develops into more traditional timelines over the course of Year 1 and 2. The timelines are added to throughout the enquiry topic and aim to give the children an idea about duration, sequence and time. For us, the idea of chronology is organised into three core areas- now, within living memory and beyond living memory and this underpins all the historical learning we do across Year 1 and 2.

Key Stage 2 links: throughout.

Continuity and Change

This secondary concept helps children to focus on things that have changed and things that stay the same. This is often best started when considering local and personal history such as comparing their own childhoods with their

grandparents' (Y1 A2), the varying uses of Bramall Hall over the years (Y1, Spr2) and why Cheadle Hulme was used as a place to evacuate children to during World War 2 (Y2, A2). This paves the way for more abstract work on continuity and change later in their historical learning.

Key Stage 2 links: Prehistoric Britain (Y3), Anglo Saxons, Picts and Scots (Y4), Vikings Vs Anglo Saxons (Y5) and Local Area Study (Y6).

Cause and Consequence

As the children progress through Key Stage 1, they become more aware of the concepts of cause and consequence. For example, in Year 1 the children look at the reasons people from the Caribbean were asked to come to the U.K. after World War 2 and also how this changed and enriched communities (Y1, A2). In Year 2, the enquiry work based around The Great Fire of London (Spr2) and Transport (S1) visit these secondary concepts again, building on what was started in Year 1.

Key Stage 2 links: Early Civilisation (Y4), Vikings Vs Anglo Saxons (Y5), Crime and Punishment (Y6)

In these ways we make sure that the children at our school are introduced to key first and second order concepts which develops their understanding of historical terms and helps them to start thinking like a historian and apply these in a range of different historical contexts.