



## Historical Association Quality Mark Final Report

**Sydenham Primary School**

**Date: 13/12/2022**

Sydenham Primary School is an average sized primary school of over 400 pupils serving an area of the town of Leamington Spa. The school operates in partnership with Lighthorne Heath Primary School. Sydenham Primary School has an above average cohort of EAL students (approximately 50%), and around 30% of pupils are on the SEN register.

Evidence for the assessment was gathered through a selection of pupil interviews from all year groups, learning walks across all key stages, a tour, book looks, and a meeting with a senior leader. Further evidence was also provided by the subject leader in the form of a comprehensive portfolio and other requested paperwork on the day.

### **1.) Learning, Teaching and Achievement**

Many of the pupils I spoke to during the visit could articulate the purpose and value of History as a key subject area in the school. A year 5 pupil spoke of learning about history topics like a 'spider' that grows more legs when you start to question the evidence and explore them further. Most of the pupils I spoke to during the pupil voice sessions, and during the learning walk, were well motivated and could make some connections between the topics they had studied previously in the school. Evidence in the portfolio from previous governor visits also confirmed a high degree of motivation for History amongst the pupils.

History teaching observed during the visit, and through evidence of monitoring and medium-term plans in the portfolio, shows that teachers use relevant objectives in lessons that clearly develops pupils learning in History. History objectives were displayed in classes during the visit, and pupils could describe what they meant and link it to their current learning.

The school has a good range of resources for teachers including links in schemes of work such as documents for the Yr6 Titanic topic, and stamps and coins that pupils evaluate in Yr2. There are resources for each topic in History provided by Maestro, and there are a range of resources in the Humanities cupboard which help enrich History learning through the evaluation of sources.

Marking in History involves a combination of live marking exercises, self-assessment exercises and history linked success criteria for topics stuck in pupils' books. Other differentiated assessment approaches are used across the school in the form of 'chilli' exercises whereby pupils select a task closely linked to their ability, which are also designed to stretch pupils with 3 chilli exercises being the most difficult, and the teacher checks and advises pupils in terms of what level to choose. One of these tasks in Yr5 was an exercise about contradicting sources in the unit on Roman Britain which certain pupils could talk to the advisor confidently about looking at the 'trustworthiness' of the sources they were evaluating.

The school has detailed progression grids covering all key stages for History. These grids are used by teachers for assessment, and by the subject leader during moderation meetings and subject monitoring.

## **2.) Leadership**

History enjoys a good status across the school and averages an hour of week of discrete teaching in the curriculum. History is also included as part of the assembly rota themes, through special events such as Armistice and Disability History Month and is an integral part of the whole school curriculum map. Pupils (through regular recorded pupil voice sessions), and staff, feel supported and History enjoys a good reputation across the school. The subject leader has clear structures in place, and History is well organised and managed at Sydenham Primary School.

Each History unit is backed up with a detailed medium term planning document that specifies the key vocabulary that needs to be taught and makes direct links to previous learning and the detailed progression grids that cover substantive and disciplinary knowledge across the key stages.

There are valid criteria used to evaluate the performance of History in the school. Monitoring activities, including governor visits, book scrutinies, lesson observations and staff meetings ensure actions are quickly identified by the subject leader and then followed up with additional monitoring activities. Strong self-evaluation evidence in the portfolio highlights the coherent systems in place to evaluate the performance of History from SLT down to the classroom teacher.

The school are members of the Historical Association, and the subject leader has accessed a range of resources (including webinars) to attend and then feedback to other staff.

The Cornerstones Maestro Curriculum provides staff with a range of useful resources which support teachers' subject knowledge. Knowledge organisers and home learning activities are shared with staff, pupils and parents for all units which includes word mats and key word glossaries.

## **3.) Curriculum**

Overall, the History curriculum at Sydenham Primary School is clearly planned, broad, balanced and there is explicit consideration to progression. The curriculum covers the statutory requirements in the national curriculum and there are strong links to local History, as in Year 2 with the nearby local Leamington Spa gardens and links to the 'royal prefix' ascribed to the town by Queen Victoria.

The Cornerstones Maestro curriculum provides the backbone to the planning of the whole school History curriculum. Topic overviews are selected, with resources and links to the national curriculum clearly mapped. While topics are not taught in chronological order, medium term plans enable pupils to make links to previous periods studied, and timelines of topics are used as a visual in books to enable them to make sense of links to other topics, and the scale of periods of study.

The subject leader has also adjusted this curriculum to make it more diverse and relevant to the school cohort. One example of this comes from the KS1 topic on Significant People in which individuals provided by the system tended to be white male focused, so the subject leader, teachers and SLT amended some of these individuals to include more women and ethnically diverse individuals. This change is also in line with the schools UNICEF Rights School award which has helped the teaching of primary and secondary sources as pupils are asked to discuss the implication and impact of Article 17 on children's rights in terms of access to information from the media. The topic of Dinosaurs in Year 1 is currently labelled a History

Unit, yet discussions with the subject leader on the day confirmed this was under review as the unit lends itself to science rather than History.

The EYFS curriculum prepares pupils effectively for primary History. One example of this can be seen in the History progression document whereby the concept of chronology is introduced to children through the study of their own family history, and their life story. Discussions with pupils during the visit, and through governor visitor paperwork in the portfolio, showed a good proportion could make links and connections across the periods they had studied. At the beginning of each new History topic pupils are given the opportunity to find the period on their own timelines in their topic books, and this resource is also used to find other periods of study to make comparisons too. Moreover, teaching activities, including Venn diagrams and 'write down everything you know' activities, are used regularly at the beginning and end of units to enable pupils to make comparisons on topics such as Celtic and Roman life.

#### **4.) Enrichment**

History links to a wide range of other areas of the school curriculum through cross-topic projects and units. Evidence in the portfolio, and through book looks during the assessors visit, show how cross-curricular work is a regular aspect of the pupils learning. Examples of this can be seen through the Great Fire of London topic and English, Anglo-Saxon history and map work in Geography, and the study of the Egyptians alongside the science of mummification. The school has a strong link with the Royal Shakespeare Company and has regular visits from them to enrich the study of Shakespeare, Tudors, and drama across the school. The History subject coordinator, along with her peers from other subjects, regularly monitor pupil books to ensure all relevant content is covered for their subject area.

History makes an explicit and planned contribution to enrichment outside of the classroom. As part of the schools drive to develop pupils' cultural capital, there are regular History themed trips to enrich the curriculum including a Yr2 visit to Kenilworth Castle, and Yr3 visit to the Roman fort at Lunt. All these visits are explicitly mapped as 'memorable experiences' on the whole school curriculum map and linked to the History Action Plan. Photographs in the portfolio, and assessor observations on the day, also shows that History is well advertised in classrooms and corridors through displays of pupil work, and artefacts for the current unit of study.

History contributes to the school website through the publishing of History curriculum documents, overviews, knowledge organiser guidance for parents and regular contributions to the weekly digital whole school newsletter. History has been included in 31 of the last 48 newsletters (65%) published by the school.

**Final Comments:**

History at Sydenham Primary School is well developed and supported by the staff, parents, and pupils. The experience of the assessor's visit was overwhelmingly positive, and the subject leader supported the process with a detailed portfolio highlighting the strengths of History provision across the school. Well done to all the community at Sydenham Primary School for receiving the Silver Quality Mark for their school.

Award made: Yes  
Level: Silver

Date of Award:  
13.12.22

Renewal Date:  
13.12.25