



Historical Association Quality Mark Final Report

St Thomas CE Primary School

Date: 16.11.23

Merseyside

Context

St Thomas' Primary School is an oversubscribed one-form-entry academy primary school in Lydiate, a village about 30 minutes from Liverpool. Pupils begin the school broadly in-line with the national expectations. There are a small number of pupils who have SEND and a small number who are Pupil Premium. There is one child with EAL. A school nursery was added to the school last September and the Lighthouse Curriculum is taught from EYFS to Year 6. The Key Stage 2 data is excellent so the staff know that the pupils have the potential to achieve highly, therefore are committed to providing an academic, knowledge-rich curriculum for all of the pupils. They use and adapt the Core Knowledge Curriculum, founded by ED Hirsch.

This award is based on evidence from the portfolio, a visit to the school which included observation of three history lessons in Year 1, Year 4, and Year 5 a tour of the school, discussions with a member of the Senior Leadership Team and Subject Leader, two members of teaching staff, a group of six Year 1 and Year 2 pupils and a group of seven Year 4/5/6 pupils. Further evidence of floor books, pupils' books, planning and Subject Leader documentation were also provided on the visit.

1.) Learning, Teaching and Achievement

The younger children could talk confidently about their learning and recalled several monarchs and Prime ministers from their previous units of work, including Elizabeth I, Charles III, Oliver Cromwell and Robert Walpole. The Key Stage 2 children were very articulate and confidently discussed what they have learnt in history lessons, including Baghdad, Victorians, Tudors and the Gunpowder Plot. They could explain several careers you might choose if you liked history including an archaeologist, palaeontologist, a history teacher and working in a museum. When I asked how they get better at history they talked about helping each other, revising and researching and knowing more. It may help them to understand this better if the historical concepts in their books are made more explicit.

The EYFS floor books, children's books and the three lessons I observed demonstrate that the children experience a wide range of carefully organised activities which progress in difficulty as they move through the school. The Year 1 children were learning about King John and the Magna Carta with crowns, an orb and sceptre made by one of the children as part of their home learning project (see later) being used by the teacher. The Year 4 children were studying the Gunpowder Plot and watched a video as part of this, during which they were encouraged to take notes. This was paused to discuss some points further and following this they analysed Guy Fawkes two signatures to consider what might have happened to him when he was caught. The Year 5 class was exploring the British Empire and trade. This lesson included a section of reading from the textbook which is part of the Hirsch approach. The teacher read the first page then a child took over. They went on to mark the Empire countries on a map as their independent task. SEND pupils were given adapted tasks or further support from the teacher or a TA. All the lessons demonstrated the consistent approach the school expects in terms of revisit and review, adaptations for SEND/EAL pupils, clear focus on vocabulary, developing independent skills and conceptual development. Lessons were carefully planned to build up children's knowledge, understanding and skills.

A good range of resources are used but this could be developed further, for example one or two of the lessons I observed could have included artefacts. The school does not access loan boxes from museums as they found this difficult logistically being further away from the bigger museums. A range of suitable fiction and non-fiction texts are available in the library and in the classrooms. Timelines have been developed throughout the school with a clear focus and developing progression. There is a large timeline display in the corridor but it does need to make durations clearer at the Stone Age end of this. Current units of work could be marked with speech bubbles to bring the children's attention to it more. Timelines were evident in every classroom and the children's books.

Most feedback is given verbally at the time in conversations with the children, referred to as 'over the shoulder' but any comments and questions in books were history related. Teachers complete assessments based on their assessment tasks which is a written task for most units but every year group includes one unit where the outcome is oracy based, for example a news report, debate, structured discussion or hot seating. The statistics are collected by the Subject Leader who monitors these results. Where there are anomalies, the Subject Leader has a discussion with the teacher(s) to explore why this is and how it can be addressed. There is good progress relative to the children's starting points. The data shows that with all children 58% achieve Expected standards and 34% Greater Depth. For SEN children 32% achieve Expected and 16% Greater Depth, with Pupil Premium children it is 56% meeting Expected levels and 30% Greater Depth.

The evidence suggests that learning, teaching and achievement is at a Gold standard.

Targets:

- 1.1 To develop the children's understanding of how to get better at history
- 1.4 To encourage the use of artefacts in lessons more.

2.) Leadership

History has an excellent status at St Thomas as evidenced in a number of areas, for example the timetable allocation is an hour every week throughout the year. As so much reading and writing is included in history lessons the school decided to use the literacy time each Friday for their history lessons. The Head Teacher was knowledgeable and complimentary about history and how it has developed across the school. The current curriculum was introduced a couple of years ago and several staff visited a school in London where it was working successfully. The Subject Leader has an excellent understanding of where the school is now and what the priorities for further development should be for example developing the use of artefacts more. Management time allocation for the subject is an afternoon termly for subject improvement and monitoring.

History is extremely well organised and managed by the Subject Leader. Very good systems are applied consistently and efficiently. The Subject Leader attends the academy trust's CPD and she cascades this information in staff meetings. The criteria used throughout the school to evaluate performance demonstrate a good understanding of how this may be monitored, this includes: lesson observations, learning walks, pupil voice, book and planning scrutiny, which take place regularly to carefully monitor the impact of any changes made. Sometimes Governors are included in these activities. The outcomes are fed back to staff in staff meetings. The Subject Leader follows clearly defined structures with a clear role supporting the staff. This has included in-house CPD, support with planning, and suggestions for visits and visitors amongst others. Manageable and useful records are kept, for example monitoring documentation, assessment analysis and the action plan. The Subject Leader could now help to support other local schools, sharing her expertise.

The staff I met were complimentary about the development of history across the school and the support they receive for teaching history. They were very enthusiastic about teaching history. The staff felt the textbook provided for each year group was very supportive of their

subject knowledge. The Subject Leader is very approachable and disseminates anything which might be useful.

The evidence suggests that leadership is at a Gold standard.

Target:

2.4 To develop links with other schools, including the local secondary schools, and Subject Leaders for support and to share expertise.

3.) Curriculum

The school history curriculum follows the Core Knowledge Curriculum which gives explicit consideration of progression, breadth and a balance of British and world history. The EYFS curriculum has been brought in line with the school curriculum to ensure a good foundation for history further up the school. The curriculum is suitably challenging and engaging for the children in this school but I would have liked to see more local History taught, both as independent units and as part of the Units already taught, for example, trade and industry in Liverpool. The pupils could not identify much in the way of local history in my Pupil Voice discussions. Key Stage 1 classes study three units each year; Kings and Queens, Prime Ministers, Prehistoric Britain, Ancient Egyptians, The Romans and Anglo Saxons and Vikings. Key Stage 2 children explore five units in each academic year; Ancient Greeks, Law and Power, Wars of the Roses, Henry VIII, Tudor Monarchs, Life in Rome, Gunpowder Plot, Charles I and the civil war, Charles II – Plague and the Great Fire of London, Glorious Revolution, Baghdad, British Empire, Abolition of Slavery, Industrial Revolution, Victorian Age, World War I, Suffragettes, Rise of Hitler and World War II, World War II and the Holocaust, and the Cold War. Vocabulary is clearly identified and is addressed in every lesson. Each unit has been carefully planned to ensure the children develop suitable knowledge, understanding and skills and these are built up carefully. The concepts of monarchy, parliament, democracy, conflict, civilisation and continuity and change are identified and thread through the curriculum.

The curriculum needs to be evaluated further in terms of the range of diversity included. There are some interesting aspects, for example the Abolition of Slavery and Baghdad in Year 5 but overall, more examples should be included in the units, in particular of BAME, people with disabilities and examples from the LGBT community would be welcomed. There is a good range of books about a variety of people in the library.

Pupils make links and connections across periods and locations from the various units they are taught. The identified concepts across the curriculum are used as part of the recap and retrieval exercises at the start of each lesson.

The evidence suggests that curriculum is at a Silver standard.

Targets:

3.1 To include local history as separate units and also include references to the local area where appropriate in the units already taught.

3.1 To evaluate the diversity that is included across the units of history and make suitable adjustments and additions.

NB These targets should be discussed and addressed with some urgency.

4.) Enrichment

Teachers carefully consider potential links, but the school approach is generally more focused on each individual subject. Literacy links in particular are extremely strong with reading included as a non-negotiable in every lesson and writing and oracy used as assessment outcomes. Links are made to other subjects where appropriate, for example Art and architecture as part of the Baghdad unit and making poppies for remembrance, French as part

of the World War II unit and cross school events such as Remembrance, the Jubilee and the Coronation.

The school has a Pupil Leadership Team which is used effectively, for example for pupil voice feedback for example. We discussed how these could potentially be developed further and used to support younger children with vocabulary development, for example.

Parents are generally extremely supportive and Home Learning support is sent home as part of each unit to include suggestions for Creative responses, Places to go, Research, and Time to Teach (teaching a relative or friend what they know). The crown, orb and sceptre used in the Year 1 lesson observed was a creative response to the Kings and Queens unit. The response to these newsletters is excellent with many children completing many of the activities, not just one.

A History after school club has been established for Years 1-3 with children's names drawn out of a hat. The children explore aspects not covered in the school curriculum.

A range of visits and visitors take place through the year but these could be developed further, in particular to include workshops or online activities. It would be useful for the Subject Leader to have a plan and highlight where these support the history in her file and encourage each year group to include at least one of these each year related to the history. Currently these include visits to Imperial War Museum North, the Slavery Museum in Liverpool and the Tower of London as part of a day trip to London. Further online opportunities could be explored to minimise costs but still provide interesting and engaging experiences for the children.

Parents and guardians are kept up to date through the school X social media account. The web site includes an excellent range of information, this includes a history policy, knowledge overview, an Example of a Knowledge Organiser and a Curriculum map for history. The school approach to teaching history is carefully explained here too.

The evidence suggests that enrichment overall is at a Gold standard but 4.2 is currently silver.

Targets:

4.2 To develop the programme of visits and visitors to ensure a 'Wow' activity for each year group.

4.3 To develop further links with parents through social media and with the local History community to support the development of Local History in the school.

Final Comments:

Many thanks to the Subject Leader for her hard work. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit. The Historical Association is extremely grateful to all involved in making the assessment process an enjoyable, manageable, and rewarding one.

Sue Temple

Award made: Yes
Level: Gold

Date of Award:
16.11.23

Renewal Date:
16.11.26

