



BSRAC History Policy – 2022/2023

Introduction

This policy was updated during the school year 2022/23. The policy was updated by Paula O’Sullivan, Assistant Principal with responsibility for History in our school.

Much collaboration took place between the Assistant Principals with responsibility for Geography and Science in order to reinforce integration between the three SESE subjects of History, Geography and Science.

Vision

In Bunscoil Rinn an Chabhlaigh, we seek to assist the children in the learning of their History, to learn from the past and to look to the future. We aim to implement the most effective methodologies that provide our pupils with an insightful, engaging, stimulating, rewarding and integrated experience with regard to teaching and learning of History in our school.

Rationale

1. To benefit effective teaching and learning of History in our school
2. To conform to principles outlined in the primary curriculum
3. To review and update the existing plan for History in light of the 1999 Primary School Curriculum
4. To create a core History curriculum for each class level which is achievable, stimulating and engaging for each and every pupil.

Background – Time for Change – An Action Plan

During the school year 2020/2021, it was decided that our History policy and related plans required an overhaul in Bunscoil Rinn an Chabhlaigh. We decided to carry out a comprehensive review of how History is taught in our school. We created an Action Plan to help guide us through this process (attached at end of policy).

This provided us with a fantastic opportunity to focus on teachers’ thoughts and opinions regarding their teaching of the subject as well as the relevance of History as a useful and stimulating aspect of our social-sciences at each class level.

Our aim was to update History with a view to opening up more opportunities in the areas of digital technology and environment-based learning, as well as reducing the risk of the same topics being covered at

different levels – thus eliminating ‘overlapping’. This of course would allow for more variety in the themes being explored in History across all class levels in the school.

The process began in April 2021 with a survey questionnaire being distributed to all class teachers; the results and information provided by the teachers proved invaluable and allowed us to move forward with our overhaul.

It was clear that a new History programme would benefit teachers and pupils since our old ‘History Quest’ programme was seen to be outdated and tired. Also, the survey showed that there were gaps and overlaps in different areas of the curriculum and at different class levels – Therefore a thorough overhaul of our short and long term plans in History at all levels would be required.

Investing in the future

Following collaboration between management, the leadership team and between the three APs responsible for the SESE subjects in May 2021, it was decided that the school should invest in a new programme for SESE that would assist us in bringing a refreshed and updated approach to our teaching of History, Geography and Science.

A comprehensive review of 4 of the most up-to-date SESE programmes available to schools in Ireland was co-ordinated by the 3 Assistant Principals at the time, P. Murphy (History); C. O’Sullivan (Geography) and M. Moynihan (Science).

A key aspect of this review was the involvement of all the teachers in the school. Samples of all four SESE programmes were distributed to every class level and teachers were afforded time to examine and analyse the merits of each in terms of their suitability to the teaching of History, Geography and Science in Bunscoil Rinn an Chabhlaigh.

Following feedback from all teachers at the final stage of the consultation process, it was decided in June 2021 that the ‘Explorers’ programme by Folens was the most appropriate to assist us with our teaching of History, Geography and Science going forward.

The school has invested in this programme as part of our book rental scheme and we have also invested in the digital resources for teachers. In particular, ‘Explorers’, which is a fully integrated SESE programme, has afforded us more opportunity for integration between subjects and also allows us to integrate the themes in our long and short term plans (with the added use of digital resources).

Implementation

An integrated approach to how we implement the SESE curriculum and its various strands is vital in order for our pupils to benefit most effectively across all three subject areas.

From September 2021, the ‘Explorers’ programme was adopted in our school as the primary tool to assist teachers in implementing the targets of the History curriculum.

We embrace all the benefits provided by digital technologies in our teaching across the curriculum in BSRAC – This aspect of teaching within History is no exception. Teachers use a variety of digital tools provided by both Explorers and by external agencies and websites.

Good planning is vital with regard to achieving our aims and objectives in our teaching – During the school year 2021/2022 the teachers undertook a comprehensive overhaul of both the short and long term plans in History. We aim to have this fully complete by June 2022.

This review of our plans in History has provided us with an opportunity to reflect upon our goals, as well as allowing us to add new, relevant content to different strands and strand units at various levels.

Another key aspect of how we teach History is our use of our local area and its environs. In BSRAC, we embrace environment-based learning as an invaluable resource for our pupils. At all levels of the History curriculum, exploration and evaluation of local facilities and historical monuments feature strongly in our teaching.

We believe that our pupils are stimulated and engaged in their learning most effectively when they experience visits to museums, galleries, monuments and historical exhibitions. We aim to facilitate historical walking tours for our pupils to allow them to engage with our local environment and all that it has to offer with regard to links to our past.

The impact of listening to the stories of those who have experienced History in their lives on our young pupils cannot be under-estimated. We promote (when safe and appropriate) welcoming visitors and grandparents to our classrooms to engage with our pupils as part of History lessons - the stories they tell can provide a fascinating window into aspects of the past, and for children, can prove to be far more effective than reading from a textbook.

In essence, the formulation of this History policy has involved contributions from all members of our teaching team – We in Bunscoil Rinn an Chabhlaigh strive to make History an insightful, stimulating, fun, engaging and fascinating subject area for all our pupils.

We promote collaboration between teachers with regard to our aims and targets and we assess our teaching and learning in History through a variety of tools, from digital technologies to project work to pupils' oral presentation.

Central to our teaching of History is the application and integration of a variety of methodologies, including in-class discussion, debate, digital resources, project-work and environment-based trips and visits.

Aims

In Bunscoil Rinn an Chabhlaigh, we endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for History:

1. To develop an interest in and curiosity about the past
2. To make the child aware of the lives of women, men and children in the past and how people and events have had an impact upon each other
3. To develop an understanding of the concepts of change and continuity
4. To provide for the acquisition of concepts and skills associated with sequence, time and chronology, appropriate to the development stages of the child
5. To allow the child to encounter and use a range of historical evidence systematically and critically
6. To provide opportunities for the child to communicate historical findings and interpretations in a variety of ways
7. To foster sensitivity to the impact of conservation and change within local and wider environments
8. To help the child recognise and examine the influences of the past on the attitudes and behaviour of people today
9. To foster a willingness to explore personal attitudes and values and to promote an openness to the possibility of changing one's own point of view
10. To encourage the child to recognise how past and present actions, events and materials may become historically significant
11. To enable the child to acquire a balanced appreciation of cultural and historical inheritances from local, national and global contexts.

This History policy will be addressed under the following headings:

A. Curriculum Planning:

1. Strands and strand units
2. Skills and concepts development
3. Approaches and methodologies
4. Linkage and integration
5. Assessment and record keeping
6. Children with different needs

B. Organisational Planning:

1. Timetable
2. Resources
3. Digital Technology
4. Health and Safety
5. Teachers' Planning and Reporting
6. Staff Development
7. Parental Involvement & Community links
8. Places of historical interest with curriculum links

A.1. Strands and strand units

1. Teachers are familiar with the strands/strand units/content objectives for the relevant classes. The core curriculum has been selected from these and is laid out for each class level in our school's long and short term plans.
2. The History curriculum is a spiral curriculum, based on some similar themes and avoiding undue repetition. There is a balance between personal, local, national and international history. History is selected from the local environment around our school and from further afield e.g. churches, St Colman's Cathedral, local museum, Cobh Heritage Centre, Spike Island, Titanic Memorial, University College Cork, Nano Nagle Place, English Market, Cork City, local post boxes, local monuments etc.
3. The local history reflects the maritime and ecclesiastical heritage of Cobh.

A.2. Skills and concepts development

1. Teachers use a variety of strategies to develop the child's skills to work as a young historian. These are recorded in yearly content grids, fortnightly schemes, and in this plan as follows:
 - a. Junior and Senior Infants
 - i. Time and chronology
 - ii. Using evidence
 - iii. Communication
 - b. First to Sixth classes
 - i. Time and chronology
 - ii. Change and continuity
 - iii. Cause and effect
 - iv. Using evidence
 - v. Synthesis and communication
 - vi. Empathy
2. Teachers ensure that there is a balance between skills development and the acquisition of knowledge in implementing the curriculum

A.3. Approaches and Methodologies

The following approaches and methodologies are implemented in our school:

1. Story
2. Drama and role play
3. Oral evidence
4. Documentary evidence
5. Using digital technology
6. Personal and family history
7. Using artefacts
8. Pictures and photographs
9. Use of the environment

A.4. Linkage and integration

Teachers are aware of invaluable opportunities to link with History and integrate with other subjects, particularly Geography and Science, but also English, Drama, Irish, SPHE, etc. Integration between

the three SESE subjects of History, Geography and Science is embedded in the Explorers programme and in our planning for the teaching and learning in these subjects.

A.5. Assessment and record keeping

1. Teachers assess
 - a. Progress in children's knowledge of the past
 - b. Ability to use historical skills
 - c. Development of attitudes through
 - i. Teacher observation
 - ii. Teacher-designed tasks and tests
 - iii. Work samples, portfolios and projects (Using digital technology, pictures, paintings, models etc.)
2. Information gained from the assessments is used to guide future learning and reinforcement where necessary. This information can also be used as a home-school link.

A.6. Children with different needs

1. Teachers support and ensure the participation of children with special needs through differentiation of materials, grouping and paired activities, using assistance of SNAs
2. Teachers are always sensitive to the needs of children who have sensitive family situations. They are as careful as possible to allow for the following situations which arise in every class .e.g. the death of a parent or sibling, lone parents, separated parents, adopted children, fostered children, cultural backgrounds.
3. The teacher will use his/her discretion when teaching a particular topic from the History curriculum that may cause any undue distress to a child affected by situations outlined in the previous point.

B.1. Timetable

1. Time is allocated at each class level for History as per the curriculum guidelines i.e. 1 hour per week from 1st-6th and 45 minutes per week in the infant classrooms
2. Teachers do time block on occasions for history e.g. using a thematic approach, working on a project, gathering artefacts for a class museum, visits to local historical sites
3. Discretionary curriculum time can be used occasionally for SESE if needed and at the discretion of each individual teacher

B.2. Resources

1. There is an inventory of general resources in the school including those available for History
2. Appropriate artefacts, projects, paintings, photographs, models and items are displayed in classrooms during lessons

B.3. Digital Technology

1. A key aspect of how we implement the History curriculum involves use of digital technologies
2. Digital in-class resources are a significant feature of the 'Explorers' programme which we use to implement the History curriculum at each class level
3. The Explorers programme provides teachers with a number of links to various websites that are related to the topics being taught in History.
4. A key aspect of our school's self-evaluation incorporates our Digital Learning Plan – We use a variety of digital resources to assess the learning in History in our school – Examples used in-class at different levels include:

IPads; laptops (used by pupils with SEN); Interactive white-boards; Green Screen; Kahoot; Mentimeter; Book Creator; variety of activities and tasks on Seesaw (our school digital forum).

Sources of Local History:

National Archives www.nationalarchives.ie

National Museum www.museum.ie

National Library of Ireland www.nli.ie

Heritage Council www.heritagecouncil.ie

An Chomhairle Leabharlanna www.askaboutireland.ie

Other Websites:

Primary Curriculum Support Programme www.pcsp.ie

School Development Planning Support www.sdps.ie

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment www.ncca.ie

ENFO www.enfo.ie

TeachNet Ireland www.teachnet.ie

Scoilnet www.scoilnet.ie

Irish National Teachers Organisation www.into.ie

B.4. Health and Safety

As per our school's Health & Safety Policy, on any school trip teachers take the utmost care to ensure the safety of all children visiting areas of historical significance e.g. handling artefacts, going on trails, visits to museums, ruins, archaeological sites, on walking tours, on public transport etc. Teachers wear our school -identifiable hi-vis vests on all external walks and tours.

B.5. Individual teachers' planning and reporting

1. Each teacher contributes to and has access to a copy of the school plan, including the core curriculum which informs their long and short-term planning
2. Teachers can plan using the strands and strand units or use a thematic approach depending on which is most appropriate to the lesson content and time frame needed.
3. Teachers record their content of work and assessment in the area of History in the Cúntas Míósúil each month, including any aspect of digital assessment that they have used.

B.6. Staff development

1. Teachers have access to reference books, resource materials, Explorers-based teacher resource books and websites dealing with History. Paula O'Sullivan is the Assistant Principal responsible for History and for co-ordinating the planning and resources for the subject. Each Class Teacher is responsible for his/her own class preparation using these plans and resources.
2. Teachers are made aware of any appropriate History courses available as in-service and are encouraged to attend these during the school year and during summer holidays. As in all subject areas, teachers share their expertise with the rest of the staff at in-service, staff meetings and informal discussions.
3. Paula O'Sullivan is responsible for informing all teachers about upcoming CPD courses available in areas of History as well as pupil and whole-class History competitions, local events and history-themed occasions.

B.7. Parental involvement and community links (guided by public health advice post-Covid)

1. Parents and grandparents are invited to become involved in supporting the History curriculum through participating in interviews with children and sharing stories/pictures/artefacts from their past.
2. Some parents and grandparents are invited in to speak to classes on specific topics where their experiences and knowledge provide a perfect stimulus for a lesson.
3. Local historians and former teachers are invited to speak to classes/staff on local historical topics.

B.8. Places of historical interest linked to the Curriculum

- The school continues to embark on many tours/trails to places of historical interest.
- These include both local and national places of interest and are invaluable resources that complement our teaching of various strands and strand units within the History curriculum.
- As previously stated, environment-based learning provides our pupils with an engaging and direct approach to looking at aspects of History.
- Some of the external destinations that our pupils visit include:
 - Looking at homes/buildings/post boxes around Cobh
 - Local churches
 - St Colman's Cathedral
 - 5 foot walk way
 - Whitepoint
 - Local cemeteries
 - Cobh Museum
 - Cobh Heritage Centre
 - Nano Nagle Place, Cork City
 - University College Cork
 - Spike Island
 - English Market, Cork City
 - Historical walking tour around Cobh
 - Historical walking tour around Cork City
 - Lusitania memorial, Cobh
 - Titanic trail, Cobh

Conclusion

Means of assessing the outcomes of this policy include:

1. Teacher/parent feedback
2. Children's feedback
3. Inspectors' suggestions/reports
4. If the plan has promoted the key considerations when implementing the history curriculum:
 - a. That history is defined as an attempt to reconstruct and interpret the past rather than the past itself;
 - b. That there is a balance between the process (how the child learns) and content (what the child learns);
 - c. That the child must acquire skills and concepts to work effectively as a young historian;
 - d. That the curriculum is spiral, developmental and integrated in its structure.

It has been agreed by all members of the teaching team that this policy will guide the teaching and learning of History in Bunscoil Rinn an Chabhlaigh going forward from the date of this policy.

This policy is an ever-evolving document as we continuously strive to promote the most effective learning outcomes for our pupils. It will be necessary to review this policy on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the History curriculum. Those involved in the review process, as co-ordinated by the Assistant Principal with responsibility for History, will be:

- a. Teachers
- b. Pupils
- c. Parents
- d. Leadership Team
- e. BoM/DES/Others.

This policy is made available to staff through our internal school LAN and is available to view in: **An Plean Scoile – Planning and Records – Curricular Areas – Stair – BSRAC History Policy 2022.**

This policy was reviewed by P. O’Sullivan, A.P. with responsibility for History, in September 2022.

	Action Plan 2022/23 NAME: Paula O'Sullivan	Content: Vocabulary to be taught to support PLC/ OL if applicable	Time frame/ who is responsible
<p>Key areas to work on this year:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Skill- working as an historian. 2. Environment based learning. 3. Ensuring all plans are updated and all strands and stand units are being fulfilled. 	<p>Term 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the skill 'Working as an historian'. Link oral language development with the development of this skill (4th class- Grandparent's Day & 3rd class- Cathedral visit). • Focus on environment based learning. Ensure appropriate links with the curriculum and the new Explorers programme as well as oral language development (3rd class- Cathedral visit). 	<p>3rd and 4th class teachers will compile a list of target language and teach this language. <u>Language may include:</u> old/new, older/newer, before/after, later/earlier, a long time ago, a very long time ago, day/ month/ year. Teachers will focus on relevant vocabulary to develop the language required to talk about school in the past. Grandparents day will then allow the children to use the target language learned while working as an historian.</p> <p>Teachers will focus on vocabulary to develop the language required to talk about the cathedral. The trip to the cathedral will then allow the children to use the target language learned while working as an historian to find out information about the cathedral (when was it built etc).</p>	<p>3rd and 4th class teachers will be responsible. I will support teachers. Grandparents Day (4th class) <u>in term 1.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grandparents come to the school to talk about schools in the past. • Strand: Local studies; Strand unit: My School <p>Local trip to the Cathedral (3rd class) <u>in term 1.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strand: Local studies; Stand unit: Buildings, sites or ruins in my locality.

	<p>Term 1- 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on the skill ‘Working as an historian’ at a whole school level. Each class will complete a level appropriate history project/ activity based on topics being learned in the class. (Project on a particular topic/ comparing pictures/ sequencing activity etc). 	<p><u>Class teachers</u> will compile a list of target language and teach this language prior to classes completing their projects.</p> <p><u>Language may include:</u> Junior & Senior Infants: younger/ older. 1st & 2nd: before/ after, younger/ older. 3rd & 4th: old/new, older/newer, before/after, later/earlier, a long time ago, a very long time ago. 5th & 6th: BC, AD, age, period.</p>	<p><u>Class teachers</u> will be responsible for selecting a suitable topic for the class project/ activity. I will support teachers.</p> <p>Projects/ activities will be completed: <u>Terms 1- 3.</u></p>
	<p>Term 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on the skill ‘Working as an historian’. Link oral language development with the development of this skill (second class- visit the titanic museum) Focus on environment based learning. Ensure appropriate links with the curriculum and the new Explorers programme as well as oral language development (second class- visit the titanic museum). 	<p><u>2nd class teachers</u> will compile a list of target language and teach this language. Teachers will focus on relevant vocabulary to develop the language required to talk about the titanic and its relationship with the local area; Cobh. The trip to the museum will then allow the children to use the target language learned while working as an historian.</p>	<p><u>2nd class teachers</u> will be responsible. I will support teachers.</p> <p>Local trip to the titanic museum (2nd class) in <u>term 3.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strand: Change and continuity; Stand unit: Continuity and change in the local environment

