

## Whole School Plan for History

### ■ **Introductory Statement and Rationale**

#### **(a) Introductory Statement**

This plan was written by the principal and staff of Knock N.S following a review of the current History plan and consultation amongst the staff.

#### **(b) Rationale**

In keeping with the guidelines laid down by the DES (1999), we focussed on this area of planning to ensure that the revised curriculum for History was introduced in our school in a well-planned and organised manner. This plan will benefit teaching and learning within our school, this plan will be made available to all new and existing members of staff.

### ■ **Vision and Aims**

#### **(a) Vision**

Our school is located in the village of Knock, Co Mayo. The village is steeped in history. Our school is located within close proximity of Knock Shrine, the site of the 1879 Apparition. The children have a great awareness of the history of the locality and carry out studies in relation to the church, shrine, Carmelite settlement and local people who have led extraordinary lives e.g. Monsignor James Horan. We endeavour to ensure that through the study of history in our school we hope that children will have an understanding, interest and knowledge of the history of their local area, in addition to 'ordinary people' that form a part of the history of our area.

It is our vision that history in our school will enable children to understand the present by exploring the past before they look towards the future.

#### **(b) Aims**

We endorse the aims of Social, Environmental and Scientific Education as outlined on Page 4 of the SESE History Curriculum Statement.

- To develop an interest in and curiosity about the past
- To make the child aware of the lives of women, men and children in the past and how people and events had an impact on each other
- To develop an understanding of the concepts of change and continuity
- To provide for the acquisition of concepts and skills associated with sequence, time and chronology, appropriate to the developmental stages of the child
- To allow the child to encounter and use a range of historical evidence systematically and critically
- To provide opportunities for the child to communicate historical findings and

interpretations in a variety of ways

- To foster sensitivity to the impact of conservation and change within local and wider environments
- To help the child recognise and examine the influences of the past on the attitudes and behaviour of people today
- To encourage children to recognise how past and present actions, events and materials may become historically significant

(SESE History Curriculum Statement Page 12)

#### **Short-term Aims:**

We have made the following decisions to promote and develop the teaching and learning of history in our school:

- We will ensure there are timelines in each class and encourage the use of artefacts in each room
- We hope to develop and undertake a history trail around the school grounds and immediate locality.

### **1. Curriculum Planning**

#### **1. Strands and Strand Units**

Refer to appended grid outlining choices from third to sixth class

Each teacher is familiar with the strands, strand units and content objectives for their relevant class level. We are aware that the infant classes to second class have to cover all strands and strand units and content objectives, from third to sixth class there is a menu curriculum the chosen topics for this year are in the attached appendix Teachers plan together on a yearly basis and identify gaps and avoid undue repetition. We are aware that we have to carry out two in depth studies each year from third class to sixth class level, one local and one national/international. Certain topics are revisited throughout the school and covered in depth as the children progress; these topics are recorded in the teachers planning. Equal emphasis is given to each strand and strand unit. When selecting content teachers ensure there is a balance between local, national and international topics. In relation to the study of local topics, strand units are selected to reflect topics within our immediate locality. All teachers are familiar with the history of the local environment, in the event of new members of staff joining the school the environmental audit and Knock history folder, booklets, literature and trails. All new and existing members of staff are encouraged to undertake a fieldtrip to the local museum at times during the school year in order to re-familiarise themselves with the history of surrounds. There are several aspects of the local environment which may be used to illustrate national and/or international history e.g.

- Story of the 1879 Apparition at Knock Church – witness accounts, tribunal of inquiry etc.
- Monsignor James Horan – story of his life and accomplishments
- History of Knock Shrine
- History of Knock Airport

- Carmelite settlement
- Study of the 1939 Bealoideas Folklore Commission – available for all classes
- Study of museum – forge, school in the past etc.

## **2. Skills and Concepts Development**

Each teacher is aware that the curriculum provides for the development of a growing range of historical skills and concepts. The skills of the history curriculum are taught in conjunction with curricular content. Each teacher is aware of the aspects of **Working as a Historian** that apply at each class level.

### **Infants (Refer p.18 Curriculum)**

- Time and Chronology
- Using Evidence
- Communication

### **First – Sixth Classes (Refer pg's 26, 40, 60 Curriculum)**

- Time and Chronology
- Change and Continuity
- Cause and Effect
- Using Evidence
- Empathy
- Communication and Synthesis

Depending on the class level the following strategies may be used for developing the skills of Working as an Historian

- Sequencing of stories
- Use of timelines
- Communicating findings through different mediums e.g. photos, ICT
- Using documentary evidence e.g. Bealoideas collection, old maps, roll books, use of materials from the museum – transcript of interviews
- Listening to oral evidence on video of local people
- Invite grandparents for Grandparents day
- Use of artefacts and class museums
- Listening to local people recounting life in the past.
- Developing empathy through the use of the novel in the senior classes
- Visits to local ruins/settlements and look at change and continuity in the local area.

### 3. Approaches and Methodologies

We note that there are common approaches and methodologies underpinning all curricular subjects these include:

- Active learning
- Collaborative/co-operative learning
- Talk and discussion
- Problem solving
- Use of the environment
- Skills through content

We are aware of the variety of approaches and methodologies outlined as particularly suited to history and will endeavour to employ as many as we can as appropriate to our individual circumstance.

The range will include:

- Story (pgs 65-71, TG)
- Personal and family history (pgs 72-75, TG)
- Using Artefacts (pgs 81-86, TG)
- Drama and role play (pgs 109-113, TG)
- Using pictures and photographs (pgs 87-98, TG)
- Use of the environment (pgs 99-103, TG)
- Oral evidence (pgs 77-80, TG)
- Documentary evidence (pgs 104-108, TG)
- Use of ICT (pg 114, TG)

We have prioritised oral evidence as a methodology throughout the school as this links with our School Self Evaluation of Oral Language

### 4. Linkage and Integration

- **Linkage:**

We acknowledge that linkage and integration are recommended within the SESE curriculum. There are opportunities to link strands and strand units across the history curriculum e.g.

- When my Grandparents were young – Story
- Local Studies: Schools – Change and Continuity: Schools and Education
- Local Studies: Buildings, sites and ruins (old church Knock, story of Apparition, Carmelite settlement, Ballyhowley Castle, graveyard – visionary graves, local monuments)
- Where strands are linked using a thematic approach this will be reflected in individual teacher planning.

- **Integration:**

History integrates with the other SESE subjects examples include:

- History: Myself integrates with Science/SPHE: Myself
- History: Ancient Civilisations integrate with study of countries in geography

- History: Ancient Civilisations integrate with Science through materials, study of inventors/scientists, study of women in science, forces.
- History integrates with Art
- History integrates with English through the study of the Novel i.e. Under the Hawthorn Tree, War Horse, the Twelfth of July

### **5. Multi-Grade Teaching**

Knock National School is a seven teacher school with five mainstream class teachers. As a result there are certain factors that must be taken into consideration in relation to multi class. Within the classes we will differentiate the work for the different ages by expecting the older children to cover more ground in depth and content and presentation. Children partake in group work, grouped across the classes regardless of age, ability. We will take account of children with different needs and the Learning Support Resource teacher and Special Needs Assistant may support the class if the need arises.

In the event of using textbooks, they are selected after consultation within the staff. At present we draw on a variety of resources to supplement the teaching of history in the classroom, we have compiled a folder based on the history of our local area which we use to supplement teaching of local history. Textbooks are used judiciously in all classrooms.

### **6. Assessment and Record Keeping**

*Refer to School Policy on Assessment and Record Keeping*

Assessment in history must seek to measure and report the child's progress and achievements in all aspects of the curriculum. We seek to assess the following:

- Progress in children's knowledge about the past
- Children's ability to use and the development of historical skills
- Development of children's attitudes, interests, critical thinking skills

As a staff we have discussed the purposes of assessment in history and reached a shared understanding of the assessment tools we will use. These will include:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Work samples, portfolios and projects
- Feedback from pupils and parents

These records will inform the teacher as to the progress of the child. This information will form part of teacher's classroom and school planning. Teachers share this information with parents at parent teacher meetings and when the opportunity provides itself.

### **7. Children with Different Needs**

*Refer to Learning Support/Resource policy*

All teachers are familiar with the NCCA guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities and the guidelines for Exceptionally Able Students. These documents inform our Learning Support/Resource Policy.

We endeavour to provide for individual difference we strive to make the history curriculum accessible to as many children as possible. In order to do this we will consider:

- Using a mixture of whole class teaching, focused group work or paired work, grouping children across the classes
- Choosing more accessible/more demanding pieces of evidence for different children
- Using a range of questions spanning from simple recall to the more complex and analytical
- Planning for the use of a wide range of communication skills
- The exceptional child will be encouraged to undertake additional research and record their findings in a variety of ways
- Content, methods of recording and desired learning outcomes will be differentiated for children with general learning difficulties
- Any other that refer to the school's specific needs e.g. The SNA and support teachers may work with children within the class should the need arise

We endorse the emphasis this curriculum places on the exploration of **personal and family history** at all levels and are very conscious of the sensitivities some aspects of these topics may require. In instances where it would be insensitive to explore a child's own personal and family history we will consider the substitution of the personal and family history of another person, the curriculum allows for this within the strand unit My family or a family of a person known to me.

## **8. Equality of Participation and Access**

*Refer to Equality Policy*

- Equal opportunity will be given to boys and girls to experience all strands and strand units of the history curriculum and participate in all class activities
- Our studies will range from local, national and international
- History in our school will place equal emphasis on the lives of ordinary people of the past
- At all class levels we include the lives of men, women and children from different social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds

## **■ Organisational Planning**

### **9. Timetable**

In keeping with the recommendations in the Primary School Curriculum Introduction (page 70) a minimum of three hours will be allocated to SESE per week, from first class to sixth, and two and a quarter hours with the infant classes. History integrates effectively with literacy through the development of oral language, use of story, use of differing writing genres etc.

On occasion, time will be blocked as appropriate. This might occur when:

- working on a project
- exploring the local environment
- devising and undertaking a local trail

#### **10. Resources and ICT**

Each teacher will be responsible for their own resources. Teachers have a range of resources and reference materials to supplement the teaching of history in the classroom. One of these resources will be the environment and outlining areas of possible local study, this may include areas of local historic interest. We have appended a list of resources that we will use to enhance the teaching of history these include a range of schemes, programmes, educational software, videos and reference books that are consistently in use as an aid to curricular implementation. While using the internet to supplement the teaching of history in our school teachers will adhere to the schools acceptable user policy for ICT.

#### **11. Health and Safety**

Please refer to our School's Health and Safety statement and appended Geography Fieldwork Guidelines. Before use in the classroom artefacts will be examined by the teacher and checked for potential danger i.e. sharp edges. Artefacts with small parts will not be used with infants.

#### **12. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting**

- Teachers will report on work completed on the Cúntas Míósúil. These will help inform teachers future classroom planning
- Teachers will use the history curriculum strands, strand units and whole school plan when planning.
- Teachers keep yearly and fortnightly plans for history

#### **13. Staff Development**

Teachers have access to reference books, resource materials, and websites dealing with history. Teachers are responsible for keeping these resources up to date. Resources are purchased after consultation within the staff. School personnel can research new methodologies and approaches and are encouraged to use these in the classroom and share with colleagues. Teachers are made aware of history courses available in our local Education Centre, and activities that take place in the local museum and encouraged to attend and share their knowledge with other members of staff. We have close links with Knock museum and endeavour to ensure that at least one class visits the museum on a yearly basis. Teachers who have a particular expertise in an area are encouraged to share this with other members of staff, likewise teachers may avail of outside expertise e.g. PPDS support, Heritage in Schools scheme, Museum of Country Life etc.

#### **14. Parental Involvement**

The DES handbook Primary School Curriculum; Your child's learning, Guidelines for Parents (NCCA); The What, Why and How of children's learning in primary school, NCCA DVD (2006) have been distributed to parents within the school community, and new parents enrolling children are made aware of the DES website 'Help My Kid Learn'.

We will encourage parents to talk with their children about their personal and family history, this will also involve sourcing family photographs, lending artefacts for display and encouraging children to have an

interest in local historic places. Parents and grandparents will be invited to the school to share their historical experiences with the children. Parents may be asked to accompany the children on school trips. Parents from distant lands will be encouraged to share their heritage with the rest of the school. Grandparents are invited into the school on an annual basis for grandparent's day; they are also invited to work with classes. Parents are invited to the school on a regular basis to attend assembly.

### **15. Community Links**

We have identified a number of individuals, groups and agencies in our local community that may be able to support our history programme. The local library will be a source of historical knowledge for the children i.e. documentary evidence, maps etc. Ways in which the local community can support the history curriculum are

- Interview a local older resident/ historian
- Visit the local active aging organisation in Knock – children from the senior classes make St Bridget's Crosses with members of active aging group, children perform and entertain older residents of the locality at events in the Rest and Care
- Interview and record a local storyteller e.g. grandparents, past and present members of staff

### **16. Places of historic interest**

Our local area is of immense historical value, linking in with our history curriculum.

*Refer to SESE Environmental Audit.*

### **2. Success Criteria**

We will use the following criteria to assess the success of this plan

- Teacher's preparation is based on this plan
- Procedures outlined in this plan consistently followed throughout the school
- Children's feedback
- Teacher feedback
- Inspectors' suggestions/feedback
- School Self Evaluation framework
- Review our short term aims after a two year cycle in the plan

We will consider if the plan has promoted the key considerations of the history curriculum

- That history is defined as an attempt to reconstruct and interpret the past rather than the past itself
- That there is a balance between skills and content
- The child has the opportunity to work effectively as a young historian
- The curriculum is spiral and developmental in structure
- The child engages in studies from local, national and international history

- History is integrated across the curriculum from infants to sixth class

## ■ Implementation

### (a) Roles and Responsibilities

All class teachers are responsible for the implementation of the history curriculum in their own classrooms.

### (b) Timeframe

History has been implemented throughout our school, and will be reviewed after three years. It may be reviewed within the SSE framework.

## ■ Review

This plan will be reviewed after three years. This will occur during staff meetings/other planning sessions. All staff will be involved in the process of review.

## ■ Ratification and Communication

This plan was presented to the school Board of Management and ratified on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

This plan will be published on the school website.