



**Primary Curriculum
Support Programme**
foghlaim agus forbairt



**School Development
Planning Support**

A Whole School Plan for History



**AN ROINN
OIDEACHAIS
AGUS EOLAÍOCHTA
EDUCATION
AND SCIENCE**

Title: St. Eunan's National School's History Policy

Introductory Statement and Rationale

(a) Introductory Statement

This document was devised in St. Eunan's National School to outline the aims, objectives and strategies for implementing the history programme in our school. It was formulated with the help and support of the PPDS, the school staff and informed by the Curriculum Statement and Curriculum Guidelines.

(b) Rationale

This policy was devised to:

Develop a structured, whole school approach to the teaching of history in our school which is in line with the New Revised Curriculum. The implementation of this policy will benefit both the teaching and learning in our school by creating the opportunity and introducing the children to a wide range of historical topics, thus increasing their appreciation, interest and understanding of History.

Vision and Aims

(a) Vision

The history curriculum provides opportunities for the child to explore, investigate and develop an understanding of life in the past and their interpretation of it. The children's interpretation of life in the past is a central theme of our history curriculum. Our history curriculum provides opportunities for the child to acquire a broad and balanced understanding of local, national and international history through the study of a range of peoples, events and periods.

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. We view history as having a distinct but complementary role with geography and science within SESE and as a contributor to the wider child centred curriculum.

(b) Aims

We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for history

- 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 have had an impact upon 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 development 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 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
- To encourage the child to recognise how past and present actions, events and materials may become historically significant
- To enable the child to acquire a balanced appreciation of cultural and historical inheritances from local, national and global contexts

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
- We intend to collect artefacts for use in the classroom and have a school artefacts day. We will keep them for a month and then return them to parents and grandparents. We will photograph them before they are sent home.

- We will compile some **Documentary Evidence** for our school. Each class will send home a hard covered notebook with each child for a week and they must write/draw/paste in under the following headings – personal/local/national/international. Each child writes in pieces of news/information or cuts out newspaper headings/photographs.
- We will compile some SESE trails focussing on our environment and streetscapes of Laghey Village and Donegal Town.

Curriculum Planning

1. Strands and strand units

- Teachers are familiar with the strands/strand units/content objectives for the relevant class levels.
- All strand units are recorded in the teachers planning and in the school plan.
- Certain topics may be revisited throughout the school and covered in depth as the children progress.
- Equal emphasis is given to each strand and strand unit.
- With reference to the local environment and the history of the local area, we hope to invite a guest speaker into the school, who has in-depth knowledge of the history of the local area, to talk to the children and take them on a historical tour of the area.
- A four year plan, for all classes, has been drawn up for history. Where possible, the same topics will be taught in both classes within the same year. As a whole school, we are aiming to collect resources for the different topics in history in order to build on our history resources. (See appendix 1 for the four year plan)
- Within the four year plan the following points are adhered to:
 - ✓ 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 to choose from. Two topics must be chosen from each section each year.
 - ✓ Two in depth studies must be carried out each year from third class to sixth class, one local and one national/international.

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. Each teacher is aware of the aspects of “Working as a Historian” that apply to each class level. (See appendix 2 for details of skills and concepts)

The following are the strategies which are used by each class to develop the child’s skills to work as a young historian.

Infants

Time and Chronology
Using Evidence
Communication

First – sixth classes

Time and Chronology
Change and Continuity
Cause and Effect
Using Evidence
Empathy

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

- Sequencing activities
- Use of timelines
- Examining historical evidence

Communicate findings through a range of media.

Communication and synthesis

3. Approaches and methodologies

Using a broad range of teaching techniques and classroom approaches is crucial for success in history. Identifying and building on opportunities to use a number of approaches during long term planning will greatly facilitate the implementation of these methods during the year.

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: (see appendix 3 for more details or pages 64-114 in the Teacher Guidelines)

- Story
- Personal and family history
- Using Artefacts
- Drama and role play
- Using pictures and photographs
- Use of the environment
- Oral evidence
- Documentary evidence
- Use of ICT

4. Linkage and integration

- **Linkage:**

We acknowledge that linkage and integration are recommended within the SESE curriculum.

Teachers will explore possibilities for linkage across the History curriculum and will consider and note such opportunities in their classroom planning.

- **Integration:**

We agree with the statement made on page 9 of the history curriculum (refer to appendix 4) that

while history makes an important and distinctive contribution to the development of the child, historical education complements the growth of the child's geographical and scientific learning. With

this in mind, we will ensure to explore possibilities to integrate the SESE subjects.

For example:

Subject	History	Geography	Science
Strand	Local Studies	Human environments	Materials
Strand Unit	Homes	Settlements: homes & other buildings	Properties & characteristics

5. Multi-grade teaching

As we are currently a two teacher school, history will be taught over a four year period (refer to plan – appendix 1). This will allow the children to experience a wide variety of topics within the history curriculum. Where possible, the same topics will be covered throughout the year so that (1) resources are readily available and (2) the whole school is involved in collecting and building on the resources.

6. Assessment and record keeping

The following assessment tools will be used:

- Teacher Observation
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Work samples and projects
- Feedback from pupils and parents

7. Children with different needs

- It is the policy in our school that all children will participate in the History Curriculum in the main stream class situation.
- A variety of teaching methods will be used in order to facilitate the children with learning difficulties, for example, whole class teaching, focused group work or paired work and grouping children across the classes. Lesson content will also be modified to meet the needs of all children.
- More challenging opportunities will be afforded to children who display particular talent in the area of history e.g. they will be encouraged to undertake additional research and record their findings in a variety of ways.
- 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 Myself or a family of a person known to me.

8. Equality of participation and access

- Equal opportunity will be given to boys and girls to experience all strands and strand units of the history curriculum and participation in all class activities.
- At all class levels we include the lives of men, women and children from different social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds.

- Our studies will range from local, national and international.

Organisational Planning:

9. Timetable

In keeping with the recommendations of the Primary School Curriculum Introduction, time allocated to History is one hour per week. On occasions history time may be blocked, for example, when children are working on a project, gathering artefacts for a school museum etc.

10. Resources and ICT

- Use will be made of I.T. for word processing and presentation of project work
- Internet and encyclopaedias will be used for researching topics (refer to use of internet policy)
- Videos etc will be used when relevant and available.
- Children will bring in available historical objects as relevant to subjects
- Use will be made of local items/people in the community
- The environment (Refer to audit – appendix 5)

Each teacher is responsible for their own resources. Teachers have a range of resources and reference materials to supplement the teaching of history in the classroom. (Refer to appendix 6 for list of resources).

11. Health and safety

Please refer to our School's Health and Safety statement and Geography Fieldwork Guidelines (Appendix 7). 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

- Each teacher has the responsibility to write their own class plans which will be written in accordance with the whole school plan. This plan will use a strand unit approach but will include some thematic units as necessary.
- Lessons will be planned on a long term and a short term basis.
- A cúntas míosúil will be written and kept on file at the end of each month.

13. Staff development

- Teachers will have access to reference books and materials to further their knowledge and expertise.
- All staff members are aware of and encouraged to attend history related courses in our local Education Centre. Opportunities are given for the sharing of information and expertise from these courses with the rest of the staff.
- We will liaise with various external agencies e.g. Heritage in School, Museum of Country Life etc.

14. Parental involvement

- Parents/grandparents can support their child by showing an interest in the child's acquisition of skills, encouraging the child to talk about the past.
- We will encourage parents to talk to 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/grandparents may be invited to come in to the school to talk about their own past and help on trips.
- Parents/grandparents will be encouraged to helping their child complete questionnaires based on different topics associated with the past e.g. schools long ago etc.

15. Community links

- The school will endeavour to try to use the skills of local historians to support the history work in school.
- If the opportunity arises/ is appropriate we will try to participate in local historical events.
- Children can visit an old building or a sight of historical interest e.g. Where St. Colmcille was born.
- Visits from local/ national agencies e.g. heritage council etc.

16. Places of historic interest

Our local area is of immense historical value, linking in with our history curriculum. Places of historic interest in our locality include (Refer also to appendix 5)

- Donegal Castle
- The Old Abbey

Success criteria

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

- Teacher's preparation is based on this plan.
- Procedures outlines in this plan consistently followed throughout the school
- Children's feedback
- Teacher feedback
- Inspectors' suggestions/feedback
- PPDS personnel feedback
- Review our short term aims – in this regard it will be necessary for us to revisit the short term aims that we identified and update accordingly.

Implementation

(a) Roles and Responsibilities

All class teachers are responsible for the implementation of the history curriculum in their own classrooms. They will employ a variety of methodologies in doing so and history will receive its full time recommendation as is allocated.

(b) Timeframe

This policy will be in place by September 2010.

Ratification and Monitoring

This policy will be monitored and reviewed on an on-going and/or when the need arises. This may occur during staff meetings/during other planning sessions. All staff will be involved in the process of review.

Reference Section

- Primary School Curriculum: History (1999)
- Primary School Curriculum. Your Child's Learning: Guidelines for Parents (*available on the NCCA website www.ncca.ie*)
- The What, Why and How of children's learning in primary school, NCCA DVD (2006)

Useful Websites

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.pfsp.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