

History Policy

2025-26

'Rise above the ordinary'



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ACADEMIES
TRUST

History Policy

School Vision and Values

Our Vision

At St Mary's C of E Academy, Walkley, we believe history helps children understand who they are, where they come from, and how they belong in the world. Rooted in our Church of England values, our history curriculum encourages pupils to explore the past with curiosity, compassion and courage, enabling them to achieve, develop a strong sense of belonging, and thrive as thoughtful citizens.

Our enquiry-led curriculum is carefully designed to be inclusive, ambitious and locally meaningful. By personalising history to our community in Walkley and Sheffield, children see their own place in the story of the past while developing a secure understanding of national and global history. We ensure that diverse voices are heard and valued, exploring themes such as civil rights and the Windrush generation, and learning about inspirational men and women including Mary Anning and Helen Sharman, so that every child can see themselves reflected in the curriculum.

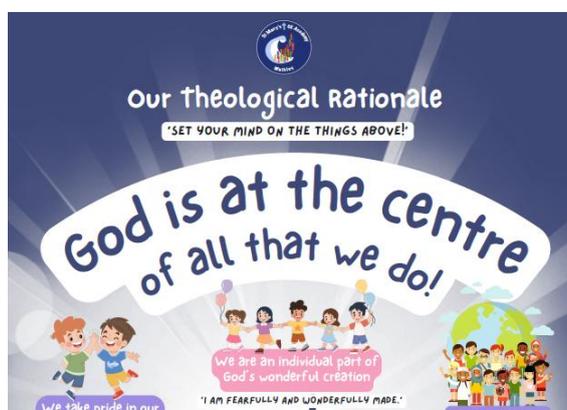
History at St Mary's is brought to life through rich experiences. We invest in high-quality artefacts and immersive learning opportunities, allowing children to work *in role* as historians and archaeologists through engaging "History Mysteries". Practical and oral outcomes are prioritised so that all pupils can access learning and demonstrate understanding, with writing never acting as a barrier to success.

Guided by our school motto RISE — Respect, Inspire, Support and Exceed — we aim to inspire a love of history that empowers children to ask perceptive questions, think critically, and exceed expectations. Through history, pupils at St Mary's grow in confidence, empathy and understanding, ready to take their place in the world with knowledge, integrity and hope.

Our Mission "Rise above the Ordinary"

At St. Mary's we provide a welcoming, safe and happy school where everyone is respected and listened to; a school where we take pride in ourselves and our achievements, enabling children to become confident and successful learners.

We aim to rise above the ordinary and promote excellence by providing a positive, inclusive environment for learning and growth. Inspired by our faith in God, and together, we aim for each child to become the best version of themselves in mind, body and spirit. Our Theological Rationale further encapsulates what we believe in.



Aims

Through the teaching of history, we aim to ensure that all pupils:

- Develop a curiosity and enthusiasm for history, building confidence, enjoyment and resilience so that they approach the past with interest, questioning and open-mindedness.
- Achieve a secure knowledge and understanding of the past, including key events, people, periods and concepts, enabling them to make sense of historical change and continuity.
- Think and communicate like historians, using appropriate historical vocabulary to describe, explain and justify interpretations of the past.
- Ask perceptive historical questions and carry out enquiries, analysing evidence from a range of sources and reaching informed conclusions.
- Make meaningful connections within history and beyond, linking local, national and global history and understanding how the past shapes the present.
- Progress from their individual starting points, with high expectations for all pupils, including those with additional needs and those working at greater depth.
- Work collaboratively and respectfully, valuing different viewpoints, listening carefully to others and developing strong discussion and oracy skills.

Teaching is underpinned by an **enquiry-led approach**, carefully structured to build historical knowledge alongside disciplinary skills. Assessment is used effectively to identify misconceptions, inform planning and provide timely support or challenge so that all pupils can succeed and exceed expectations.

Through history, we seek to inspire pupils to use their **God-given talents wisely**, developing understanding, empathy and moral awareness so they can live out our Christian values and grow as thoughtful, informed individuals.

Why is History Important?

History is important because it helps children understand the world, their place within it, and the experiences of others. At St Mary's, history is valued as a subject that supports identity, belonging and understanding.

History is important because it:

- **Develops critical thinking and enquiry skills**
History teaches pupils to ask questions, weigh evidence, evaluate sources and understand different interpretations of the past.
- **Builds empathy and understanding**
By learning about people's lives, struggles and achievements, pupils develop compassion, respect and a deeper understanding of diversity.
- **Supports success across the curriculum**
History strengthens oracy, vocabulary, reading comprehension and reasoning, supporting learning in English, geography, RE and beyond.

- **Promotes equality and representation**
A diverse history curriculum ensures pupils see a wide range of voices, including men and women from different backgrounds, helping all children feel represented and valued.
- **Encourages curiosity and imagination**
History sparks wonder about the past and invites pupils to explore how people lived, thought and shaped the world.
- **Helps pupils understand identity and belonging**
Learning about local, national and global history helps pupils understand their community, heritage and shared humanity.
- **Supports moral and spiritual development**
Within a Christian vision, history encourages reflection on justice, responsibility, courage and compassion.

At St Mary's, history is taught as an ambitious, inclusive and engaging subject that enables all pupils to **achieve**, feel a sense of **belonging**, and **thrive**.

How History is Taught at St Mary's

History at St Mary's is taught through a carefully sequenced and coherent curriculum that builds progressively from EYFS to Year 6, in line with the National Curriculum.

The curriculum is **enquiry-led** and personalised to our local area of Walkley and Sheffield, alongside national and global history. Learning is organised around key questions and "**History Mysteries**" that encourage pupils to investigate the past through evidence, discussion and reflection.

Knowledge and skills are revisited and built upon over time to support long-term retention. Clear links are made between periods of history and, where appropriate, across the wider curriculum.

A range of **practical, oral and creative outcomes** ensures that all pupils can demonstrate understanding, with writing never acting as a barrier to success.

Planning

Teachers plan history lessons using a structured enquiry approach:

1. **Engage** – introducing the historical context and enquiry question, often through artefacts, images or drama.
2. **Investigate** – pupils explore sources, evidence and viewpoints, working in role as historians or archaeologists.
3. **Conclude** – pupils apply their learning to answer the enquiry question and reflect on their understanding.

Planning is informed by ongoing assessment and prior learning, with clear learning objectives, vocabulary development and appropriate challenge built in.

Teaching and Learning

History teaching at St Mary's promotes high levels of engagement, discussion and enquiry. Teachers model historical thinking, use precise vocabulary and ask purposeful questions to deepen understanding.

Learning is inclusive and ambitious. All pupils access the same core learning, with adaptations such as:

- Artefacts and visual sources
- Structured questioning and talk opportunities
- Drama, role play and oral outcomes
- Pre-teaching and timely intervention
- Additional challenge for pupils working at greater depth

Pupils with SEND are supported through reasonable adjustments, ensuring equal access to learning and experiences.

Resources

A wide range of high-quality resources supports history teaching and learning, including:

- A growing collection of **historical artefacts**
- Primary and secondary sources
- Visual timelines and vocabulary displays
- ICT and digital resources to support research and engagement

Resources are used consistently across the school to support progression, curiosity and independence.

How We Check Progress in History at St Mary's

Assessment Methods

Assessment in history is ongoing and purposeful and includes:

- Formative assessment through questioning, discussion and observation
- Analysis of pupils' work and outcomes
- Pupil voice, enabling pupils to articulate understanding and recall
- Low-stakes quizzes and retrieval activities
- Summative assessment to support teacher judgement

Assessment informs planning and ensures pupils make strong progress from their starting points.

Monitoring

The quality of history teaching and learning is monitored through:

- Book scrutiny and review of outcomes

- Lesson visits and learning walks
- Pupil discussions
- Analysis of assessment information

Monitoring is carried out by the **History Subject Leader** and senior leaders and informs action planning and professional development.

Reporting

Progress in history is communicated through:

- Ongoing verbal feedback
- Termly and annual reports to parents
- Parent consultations

Reporting celebrates achievement while maintaining high expectations.

How We Review History at St Mary's

The impact of the history curriculum is measured by the extent to which pupils:

- Retain key historical knowledge and vocabulary
- Think, question and communicate like historians
- Show curiosity, confidence and enjoyment in history
- Make strong progress from their starting points
- Are well prepared for the next stage of education

Evaluation is informed by assessment, monitoring and pupil voice.

Roles and Responsibilities

History Subject Leader

- Providing strategic leadership for history
- Ensuring curriculum coverage, progression and consistency
- Monitoring teaching, learning and assessment
- Supporting staff development

Class Teachers

- Planning and delivering high-quality history lessons
- Assessing progress and adapting teaching
- Maintaining high expectations

Senior Leaders

- Monitoring standards and outcomes
- Ensuring statutory requirements are met
- Supporting subject leadership