

SSMJ History Policy 2026-27



Following the example of Jesus, together we learn, love and respect one another to be the best we can be.

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Role: History Subject Leader

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History Policy

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1. Purpose of Study

At St Michael & St John's RC Primary School, History enables pupils to explore, appreciate and understand God's world through the stories, people and events that have shaped our local community, Britain and the wider world. Through a carefully sequenced, enquiry-led curriculum, pupils learn how the past influences the present and develop the knowledge and disciplinary skills needed to think critically about historical evidence.

Our curriculum reflects our Catholic values of **aspiration, love, respect, courage and unity**, encouraging children to act as thoughtful, empathetic and responsible members of society.

We follow the National Curriculum Programme of Study for History, enriched by the unique context of our locality and the interests and lived experiences of our children.

"The history curriculum at SSMJ is carefully planned and structured to ensure that current learning is linked to previous learning and that the school's approaches are informed by current pedagogy."

2. Aims

In line with the National Curriculum, we aim for all pupils to:

- Know and understand the history of Britain as a coherent, chronological narrative.
- Know and understand significant aspects of world history, including ancient civilisations and non-European societies.
- Gain and use a wide range of historical vocabulary and concepts (continuity, change, cause, consequence, similarity, difference, significance).
- Understand historical enquiry and how evidence is used to make claims about the past.
- Develop historical perspective by making connections across time, place, culture and society.
- Build curiosity, critical thinking and a lifelong interest in the past.

3. Curriculum Intent

History is highly valued at SSMJ. Our curriculum:

- Celebrates the rich history of our locality, including Clitheroe Castle, the Pendle area, Learie Constantine and the heritage of our school.
- Promotes stewardship, empathy and respect through studying diverse cultures, communities and historical perspectives.
- Is enquiry-driven: each unit centres on a big historical question that pupils investigate through evidence, discussion and analysis.
- Prioritises vocabulary development and oracy, enabling pupils to articulate historical ideas clearly and confidently.
- Is trauma-informed, ensuring emotional safety, predictable routines, relational practice and inclusive access for all learners.
- Builds progression from EYFS to Year 6 through carefully mapped substantive knowledge, disciplinary skills and historical concepts.

4. Implementation

Curriculum Structure

History is taught in blocks across the year to allow depth of study. Each unit includes:

- A big enquiry question
- Key vocabulary
- A knowledge organiser
- Opportunities to handle sources and artefacts
- Oracy structures (discussion, debate, drama, presentations)
- A final outcome answering the enquiry question

Teachers use the History Progression Document to ensure continuity and progression.

Teaching Approaches

Teaching is practical, engaging and child-centred. Lessons include:

- Handling artefacts and exploring primary and secondary sources
- Visits to historical sites (e.g., Clitheroe Castle, museums)
- Drama, role-play and storytelling
- Chronology work using timelines and visual models
- Cross-curricular links with English, Geography, Art, PSHE, R.E. and Computing
- High-quality texts to support historical learning
- Purposeful use of technology to enhance understanding

"Our teaching of history is driven by an enquiry approach that seeks to capitalise on children's curiosity and prior learning."

Faith and Stewardship

Children explore how people of the past have shaped communities, acted with courage, shown unity and influenced the world we live in today. Local heritage studies strengthen pride in our community and deepen understanding of our Catholic identity.

5. EYFS

In EYFS, History is taught through *Understanding the World*. Children:

- Explore past and present through stories, role-play and real-life experiences.
- Learn about people in their community and their roles in society.
- Identify similarities and differences between life now and in the past.
- Develop early chronological understanding.
- Engage in continuous provision that embeds historical thinking.

"They will know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class."

6. Key Stage 1

Children begin to:

- Develop awareness of the past using common vocabulary related to time.
- Place people and events studied within a simple chronological framework.
- Identify similarities and differences between ways of life in different periods.
- Ask and answer simple historical questions.
- Use stories, artefacts and simple sources to understand key features of events.
- Explore local history, including their own family history and the history of SSMJ School.
- Study significant individuals such as Learie Constantine.

7. Key Stage 2

Children deepen their understanding of:

- Chronology across British, local and world history.
- Historical concepts: continuity, change, cause, consequence, similarity, difference, significance.
- How evidence is used to construct historical claims.
- How to devise historically valid questions.
- How to communicate findings clearly through writing, diagrams, timelines and presentations.

Key content includes:

- Stone Age to Iron Age
- Roman Britain
- Anglo-Saxons, Scots and Vikings
- Crime and Punishment through time
- Local history: Clitheroe Castle and the Normans
- Ancient Egypt
- Ancient Greece
- Early Islamic civilisation (Baghdad AD 900)

"By the end of year 6, children will have a chronological understanding of British history from the Stone Age to the present day."

8. Fieldwork, Visits & Enrichment

Historical fieldwork and enrichment are integral to our curriculum. Pupils take part in:

- Visits to museums and heritage sites
- Local walks exploring historical landmarks
- Handling artefacts
- Re-enactments and drama workshops
- Interviews with community members
- Participation in Remembrance events

These experiences build curiosity, empathy and real-world understanding.

9. Inclusion & Equal Opportunities

SSMJ is committed to an inclusive, trauma-informed History curriculum. We:

- Follow the EEF 5-a-day principles (explicit instruction, scaffolding, cognitive strategies, flexible grouping, technology).
- Adapt teaching to meet individual needs (SEND, EAL, PPG, HA).
- Use KWL grids, spider diagrams and pupil voice to ensure relevance.
- Provide enrichment opportunities for all learners.
- Deploy additional adults effectively to support progress.
- Ensure every child can access sources, artefacts and visits.

"All pupils are entitled to access the history curriculum at a level appropriate to their needs."

10. Assessment

Assessment is continuous and purposeful. Teachers use:

- KWL grids
- Enquiry outcomes
- Vocabulary checks
- Source analysis
- Book monitoring
- Lancashire Key Learning and End of Year Expectations
- Observations, questioning and feedback

Children reflect on their learning and compare their end-of-unit understanding with their starting points.

11. Planning & Resources

- History resources are centrally stored and organised by topic.
- Classrooms include accessible timelines, artefacts and texts.
- Knowledge organisers support vocabulary, key concepts and retrieval.
- Planning documents include clear progression, cross-curricular links and local context.
- Teachers use high-quality sources including the Historical Association, Key Stage History and museum education resources.

12. Role of the Subject Leader

The History Lead will:

- Champion the subject across school.
- Support and motivate staff.
- Provide CPD and updates.
- Monitor planning, books and teaching.
- Ensure progression of knowledge and skills.
- Maintain high-quality resources.
- Promote pride in the local area.
- Ensure the curriculum benefits all pupils, including disadvantaged learners.
- Keep up to date with current pedagogy and best practice.
- Lead ongoing improvement and development.

13. Online Safety

History teaching follows the school's Online Safety and Safeguarding Policies. Pupils are taught to use digital tools safely, with explicit reference to **Content, Contact, Conduct and Commerce**.

14. Parents & Community

We value strong partnerships with families and the wider community. Parents support History learning through:

- Homework tasks with clear purpose
- Contributions to History Day
- Sharing expertise about local and global history
- Supporting visits and community projects

15. Review Cycle

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or more frequently if required.