

**Whole School Plan for**

# **History**

**For**

**Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál  
Creagh,  
Ballinasloe**

# History

## ■ Title : Whole School Plan for SESE History – a work in progress

### ■ Introductory Statement and Rationale

#### (a) Introductory Statement

*Having attended In-service training in the SESE History curriculum and school development planning day of 21.05.2007 and having reviewed current practice in history in our school in the light of the key messages imparted on the In-service day, we are now embarking on the implementation of the curriculum and have reached consensus as to how history will be taught in our school and the programme that will be followed going forward as part of the wider SESE programme.*

#### (b) Rationale

*We recognise History as an integral element of Social, Environmental and Scientific education. In our school SESE provides opportunities for the child to explore, investigate and develop an understanding of the natural, human, social and cultural dimensions of local and wider environments, to learn and practise a wide range of skills, and to acquire open, critical and responsible attitudes. SESE enables the child to live as an informed and caring member of local and wider communities. We recognise the distinct role **History** has to play in enabling the child to explore and understand the natural, human, social and cultural environments in which he/she lives. We hope that historical education in our school will enable the child to investigate and examine critically significant events in their own immediate past, the past of their families and local communities and the histories of people in Ireland and other parts of the world. We believe that History develops an understanding of the actions, beliefs and motivations of people in the past and is fundamental to an informed appreciation of contemporary society and environments. We view history as having a distinct but complementary role together with geography and science within SESE and as a contributor to the wider child centred curriculum.*

*This plan has been drawn up in response to the 1999 Primary School Curriculum, to conform to the principles outlined in this curriculum and to review our practices in the light of these principles. As a whole school plan it guides and organises the teaching and learning for SESE History in our school.*

## ■ Vision and Aims

### (a) Vision :

*The mission statement of our school states that we will promote the full and harmonious development of the individual – intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual and that we will present a varied curriculum so as to allow all to achieve some level of success. We are cognisant of the distinct role history can play in the harmonious development of the child. As a school community we aspire to enable each and every child to reach his/ her full potential. We are aware of the contribution SESE makes to the harmonious development of the child. We hope that by creating opportunities for children to experience a rounded historical education that is not exclusively focused on the transmission of a body of knowledge but that allows children to work as historians children will help children to understand more fully the world in which they live, how events and personalities have shaped the home, locality and wider environments in which they exist.*

### (b) Aims

*We endorse the aims of Social, Environmental and Scientific Education as outlined on Page 5 of the SESE History Curriculum Statement.*

*We endorse the aims of the SESE History Curriculum:*

- 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)

## ■ Curriculum Planning

### 1. Strands and Strand Units

*Classes in our school are divided in the following manner – majority are single year units/ 3 mixed years units.*

*We are familiar with the strands, strand units and content objectives for our own class levels and indeed for each other's class levels. We feel this is important in order to ensure a coherent programme throughout the school. As children move from one classroom to the next we liaise with each other so that there is continuity in progression.*

*From Junior Infants to Second Class history may be delivered through integrated themes in the context of the other SESE subjects as well as through integration with the SPHE curriculum, the Alive O programme and other curricular areas, therefore making the learning experience more holistic and meaningful for the child.*

**Infants:** Page 19, 20 C.S.

- We are aware that the content in history for the infant classes is confined to two strands
  - Myself and my Family
  - Story

*Each of these strands will be covered.*

**1st/2<sup>nd</sup> :** Page 27-31 C.S.

*-We understand that the three strands that comprise the content of the History Curriculum at this level must be covered:*

- Myself and my Family
- Change and Continuity
- Story

*- We will ensure that the stories and other activities selected from Infants to Second class will encompass a range of perspectives and will:*

- Introduce children to the lives of women, men and children from a range of social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds.
- Include studies from a wide range of human experience.
- Come from local, national and international contexts.

*-We endorse the emphasis this curriculum places on the exploration of **personal and family history** at these levels and are conscious of the sensitivities some aspects of these topics may involve.*

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**3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>:** Page 42-50 C.S.

*-- We are familiar with the Strands that comprise the curriculum for Third/Fourth classes.*

- Local studies
- Story
- Early People and ancient studies.
- Life, society, work and culture in the past.
- Continuity and change over time.

## 2. Skills and Concepts Development

As outlined in our vision for history in our school we are not solely concerned with the transmission of a body of knowledge about the past, but also with ensuring children experience something of the way in which the historian goes about his/ her work. 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 at each class level.

**Infants:** Page 18 SESE History Curriculum Statement-

We are aware of the skills and concepts children will develop as they have the opportunity to **work as historians**:

- Time and Chronology
- Using Evidence
- Communication

At Infant level strategies we may use to develop the child's skills to work as a young historian will include:

- Sequencing activities- Ordering objects/pictures; Sequencing of artefacts from own personal past; sequencing of elements in a story etc.
- Use of timelines
- Using simple evidence: artefacts from own personal past: clothes, toys, birthday cards etc; photographs from own personal past.,
- Allowing children opportunities to communicate an awareness of stories about the past in a variety of ways: listening to and retelling stories, drama, art work, ICT.

**Ist/ 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Page 26 C.S.

- We are aware of the skills and concepts children will develop as they are provided with opportunities to engage with the History Curriculum and to **work as historians**:

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

-Strategies we may use to develop the child's ability to work as a young historian will include:

- Sequencing activities: placing objects or pictures in historical sequence
  - Exploring instances of change and continuity in personal life, family and immediate local environment: looking at features which have changed or remained unchanged
  - Through examining the actions of a character in a story discuss the reasons for change and the effects of change.
  - Use of simple historical evidence: photographs, objects, memories of older people, buildings, stories and songs.
  - Allowing children opportunities to communicate an awareness of stories, people and events from the past in a variety of ways: writing, drama, ICT etc.
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**Third/Fourth Classes:** Page 40 C.S.

-We are aware of the skills and concepts that children will continue to develop through engagement with the History Curriculum and by having the opportunity to **Work as Historians**:

- Time and chronology

### 3. Approaches and Methodologies

*-Our History Curriculum asserts that one of the keys to successful history teaching is the use of a broad range of classroom approaches and methodologies.*

*Children's learning experiences in history should:*

- *Arouse enthusiasm and curiosity about the past*
- *Encourage discussion and a questioning, critical attitude to accounts of the past.*
- *Develop historical skills and wider skills of co-operation, communication and problem solving*
- *Engage children in lively, purposeful activity*

*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)*

### 4. Linkage and Integration

- ***Linkage:***

*In order to make learning more meaningful for the child and to ensure the simultaneous development of historical skills and to provide for the application of these skills 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 assertion made in the Curriculum Statement page 9 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 all possibilities to integrate the SESE subjects. Using integrated themes or topics will be one way we would hope to achieve this. We are conscious not only to seek out opportunities to integrate content, but also to be mindful of opportunities for transferral and application of skills. We will also exploit all meaningful possibilities where history could be integrated with other curricular areas.*

## **5. In Depth Study**

Topics identified in History Classroom Planning – Appendix 1 by \*

Two Strand Units selected for each year. One Strand Unit from Local Studies/One Strand Unit from all the rest. These topics to be investigated, explored and developed in greater detail. A wide variety of approaches and methodologies will be used and pupils' skills as *Working as an Historian* will be further enhanced.

## 6. 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. The curriculum is constructed on the premise that history can make a valuable contribution to the education of the child if it involves the **simultaneous acquisition knowledge about aspects of the past, the development of historical skills and the cultivation of important attitudes.** We believe that the assessment of children's progress in history must reflect this approach to the subject. Assessment techniques which we will use in history will seek to assess:*

- *Progress in children's knowledge about the past*
- *Children's ability to use historical skills*
- *Development of children's attitudes*

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 (pages 79,80 C.S.)*
  - children's enjoyment
  - responses pupils make to teachers questions and suggestions
  - the ways in which pupils react to and use historical evidence
  - participation of pupils in class and group discussion
  
- *Teacher designed tasks and tests such as:*
  - telling and re-telling of events and stories
  - oral, written and pictorial accounts and descriptions of sites visited or people interviewed
  - construction of timelines varying from simple episodes in a story, lines to more complex lines of historical periods
  - work cards or activity sheets
  - trail booklets which help the child to examine the evidence of the past in the environment or in an exhibition
  - maps of historical sites
  - role play or dramatising a conversation or event
  - speculating on the feelings and emotions of others so as to create a spoken or written account (integration with English)
  - model making
  - drawings
  - compilation of a book on a particular historical topic or the presentation of project work using information and communication technologies.
  - Projects completed on historical themes
  - Interactive, multimedia computer programs which enable children to explore historical topics
  - Results of the child's independent historical research
  - Teacher-designed revision test on a unit of work

Using a range of these learning activities means that assessment is intimately linked to the teaching and learning process and that the child's progress is assessed in the context of the historical material with which he/ she is familiar

- *Work samples, portfolios and projects (pages 82,83 C.S.)*

*In line with our school's policy on assessment, the primary purpose underlying assessment in history is to enhance the learning experiences of the child.*

## 7. Children with Different Needs

*As previously stated we are cognisant of the distinct role history can play in the harmonious development of each and every child. As such we will do our best to ensure that all children have the opportunity to experience a rounded historical education.*

*In the same way as we endeavour to provide for individual difference in every curricular area, we will also 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 and focused group work*
- *Planning topics so that opportunities are provided for further investigation work for the more able or less able*
- *Choosing more accessible or more demanding evidence*
- *Using a range of questions and providing a range of tasks.*
- *Planning for the use of a wide range of communication skills.*
- *Provide opportunities for co-operative learning*

*-We are familiar with the NCCA Draft Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities' and will consult these guidelines as appropriate.*

*-We endorse the emphasis this curriculum places on the exploration of **personal and family history** at all levels and are 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.*

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

-Boys and girls will have equal access to a rounded historical education.

-By incorporating a range of approaches and methodologies we hope to make history accessible to as many children as possible.

-In planning our history curriculum, we will endeavour to ensure that children encounter a broad and balanced curriculum that:

- *Includes studies from local, national and international contexts*
- *Explores the past from a range of perspectives*
- *Explores the contribution of different ethnic and cultural groups, social classes and religious traditions*
- *Includes a range of historical periods*
- *Allows for the use of a wide range of evidence*
- *Includes a balance between the broad sweep of history and more intensive study of limited periods*
- *Fosters the child's sense of local, national and European identity*

## **■ 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.*

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

*-using a thematic approach*

*-working on a project*

*-exploring the local environment*

*Teachers will consider the use of discretionary curriculum time for SESE when appropriate.*

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

*-We are in the process of compiling an Audit of local history.*

*-We have gathered together our resources for history.*

*-We use textbooks as a resource in our teaching of history.*

*-We have discussed using our digital camera to gather photographs of our local area and aim to source photographs of our local area from the past.*

## **11. Health and Safety**

*We have a Health and Safety policy in place in our school and we will consult this in relation to undertaking fieldwork in history or when necessary.*

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

-Individual teachers take the programmes of work for their individual classes and will go into more detail re content, skills, resources needed, methodologies, recording of work and assessment in their own short term planning.

-Cúntais Míósúil assist in evaluating progress in History and inform future teaching.

-Parents are informed of children's progress at History at parent teacher meetings and end of year reports.

## **13. Staff Development**

We will attend In -service training as appropriate and will consider any workshops/courses that become available. We will consider accessing the RCSS.

## **14. Parental Involvement**

As personal and family history is such an integral element of the history curriculum parents and grandparents have an important role to play in developing the child's sense of his/her own personal past and in nurturing a sense of the value of this past. Parents and grandparents will be asked to source photographs/artefacts from the children's and their own personal past.

The unique story of the local area is another aspect of the history curriculum where parents and grandparents can make an important contribution.

We recognise the wonderful resource that parents and grandparents provide in the area of Oral evidence and are at all times conscious of the need to involve parents and grandparents in the history curriculum.

## **15. Community Links**

We have discussed people in the local community who may be willing to visit the school and talk to the children about the past; to bring artefacts to show the children; to share some of their knowledge about the local environment both with the teachers and the children.

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

We intend to explore our local area with the children and to consider visiting other places of historic interest in the context of our annual school tour/school outings.

**Field Trips** for various classes have been decided upon as follows:

3<sup>rd</sup> Class - Creagh Graveyard : 4<sup>th</sup> Class – Clonmacnoise:  
5<sup>th</sup> Class – Aughrim : 6<sup>th</sup> Class - Garbally

## **■ Success Criteria**

When reviewing our Whole School Plan for History in the future we will consider the following:

- That history is defined as an attempt to reconstruct and interpret the past rather than the past itself
- That there is a balance between the process (how the child learns) and content (what the child learns)
- That the child must acquire skills and concepts to work effectively as a young historian
- That the curriculum is spiral and developmental in its structure
- That the child engages in studies ranging from personal to local, national and international history
- That history is integrated across the curriculum from Infants to Sixth Class.

## **■ Implementation**

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

All members of the school community have a role to play in the successful implementation of this plan.

### **■ Review:**

#### **Timeframe:**

We will review this plan in 2011 and make any necessary amendments.

## **■ Ratification and Communication**

This plan was communicated to the Board of Management and was ratified on 25.09.2007.