

Raedwald Trust KS4 History Curriculum Policy.

Introduction

'Those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it.' (Winston Churchill)

'History is bunk' (Henry Ford)

The purposes of teaching and learning History as a discrete subject at Key Stage 4 are as follows:

1. To give a context to modern Britain and the world by understanding more about the events, people and movements that have contributed to creating our society.
2. To develop, through the study of history a range of adaptable skills which will prove useful for further learning in all areas and success in later life.
3. To have the opportunity to study for and achieve a GCSE qualification in History.
4. To utilise the wealth of opportunities and examples associated with historical study to expand literacy and appreciate the diverse and evolving nature of our language.
5. To model a love of history as a lifelong area of interest.

The role of Student and Teacher

Our policy is to encourage all students who have chosen to study History at Key Stage 4 to take a significant measure of responsibility for their learning and development as historians. This requires a questioning, critical attitude towards the subject where young people will need to use their curiosity to actively interrogate the content of the curriculum. This approach derives from our belief that the ability to learn independently and reflect constructively are two of the most important skills for life. It is also born partly out of necessity in that the content of the GCSE History curriculum is substantial and will require study beyond the classroom. Success in History will require a commitment beyond taught sessions to self-directed study. Many of our students will have experienced gaps in learning, poor fit educational environments and mental, learning or physical difficulties. We therefore assess and respond to the needs of each student and adapt our support and resources accordingly. We retain the expectation throughout that all students will achieve the best they can.

Accessing History in the Raedwald Setting.

It is important to recognise the context in which History will be taught across the Trust. Raedwald Trust makes a full-time offer to all students. There are occasions when circumstance requires a bespoke offer which might include a reduced or integration timetable. Our goal remains always to enable all students to access a complete, full-time curriculum.

Students may join us at any point in their Key Stage 4 career. With this in mind, we aim to offer two learning pathways:

1. For later entrants or those who have stronger interests elsewhere, we will provide the opportunity to undertake Discrete History Units (DHU). The focus here will be to use the study of events, people and ideas to develop adaptable skills, promote an interest in history and increase understanding of why the modern world is as it is.
2. For students who join in Year 10 and have the desire and commitment, we are able to offer a GCSE in History. This will be taught either on specific sites or at a convenient central location. The emphasis on the development and use of adaptable skills will remain a key focus.

Adaptable Skills.

We have identified the acquisition and practice of the following adaptable skills as particularly suited to historical study. (NB, we use the term 'adaptable' as opposed to transferable skills. This is because any skill, when used in a new context will be adapted to suit that different situation).

- Chronological understanding and sequencing
- Identifying cause and effect
- Drawing conclusions from limited or conflicting information
- Writing and speaking coherently and logically
- Researching effectively
- Developing views and opinions and supporting them effectively
- Increasing ability to judge own performance accurately and set realistic next steps

This list is not exhaustive and will be subject to regular review.

Content and Sequencing

The Programme of Study is derived in the first instance from the Department for Education (2014) History GCSE Subject Content. Our Programme demonstrates how the national guidance is translated into a working version for Key Stage 4 at Raedwald Trust. It shows the content and sequence of both GCSE and stand-alone History modules.

Assessment and Outcomes

The fundamental qualification in Key Stage 4 History is the AQA GCSE History (8145). It is assessed by means of two terminal examinations at the end of Year 11.

The examinations assess students' knowledge and understanding of 4 identified Units of Work which have been studied through Key Stage 4.

As part of the course, summative assessments take place at the end of each Unit of Work. In addition, a process of formative assessment provides students with an ongoing understanding of their progress, success and areas for development. This may take the form of verbal and written feedback, ongoing mini-tests and self and peer assessment. The latter is particularly significant as part of our teaching programme is to support greater independence in managing the quality of work.

For students undertaking DHU's the assessment process will be the same as for GCSE except there will be no terminal examination. Instead, students will receive written feedback in the form of a citation which will outline the skills and knowledge attained.

History and the Wider Curriculum

Our language is in the process of continuous change. A student transported back to the 16th century would struggle to understand the 'English' spoken. An appreciation of how our language has evolved provides useful insights into the nature of modern, multicultural Britain and the wider world. In addition to the adaptable skills outlined above, students will have the opportunity to develop a broader, richer vocabulary which will be of benefit in all areas of the curriculum and beyond. The high reading, writing and structured speaking content of the course supports students to improve and develop their literacy abilities.

There is obvious Cultural Capital in the study of local and national History. The town of Ipswich and the County of Suffolk offer significant opportunities from the archaeology of Sutton Hoo and Grimes Graves to the Technological developments of Martlesham Heath and the Port of Felixstowe. We believe that fieldwork is an essential element in making history relevant and therefore useful. Our curriculum includes opportunities to make use of local opportunities such as museums, record offices and historic sites.

Another element of modern historical study is the increased use of technology for teaching and learning. The internet provides almost unlimited access to historical information and opinion. Students are able to communicate instantly with teachers and historians. The sheer volume of information now available requires the development of effective critical skills which are obviously adaptable elsewhere.

A qualification in History provides an excellent foundation for numerous career and educational routes. Students have developed and can demonstrate a wide range of adaptable skills such as problem solving, independent working and self-management which are highly valued by employers.

