

History at Clyst St Mary Primary School: Helping Every Child Discover the Past

In our history lessons, we use adaptive teaching to make sure every child can explore the past with confidence. This means we keep our expectations high for everyone, but we change how we teach to make sure no child is left behind.

By removing barriers and providing the right support at the right time, we ensure our history curriculum helps every student belong, thrive, and achieve.

EYFS: Understanding the World – How we support your child's learning

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), we help children begin to understand time, change, and the world around them by linking learning to their own lives and experiences.

Using real objects

We use familiar objects such as old and new toys or family photographs to help children understand ideas like past and present. Seeing and handling real items helps make these ideas easier to understand.

We use Tapestry to share about past events, such as weekend news, birthdays and special family events. Children find it easier to talk about the photos from their own experiences.

Learning through stories and play

Stories are a big part of how children learn. We read a range of high-quality books and look at picture books together. Children then have opportunities to retell stories through puppets, small world play, and role play, helping them explore characters, events, and what happened first or next.

Making simple timelines

We create simple visual timelines using pictures and symbols. These might show daily routines, events in a story, or special moments in a child's life, helping children begin to understand the order that things happen.

Building time language

Throughout the day we introduce and model words related to time such as "yesterday", "before", "later", and "a long time ago." Hearing and using these words in everyday activities helps children develop their understanding naturally.

This approach helps children build early historical understanding in a way that is meaningful, engaging, and connected to their own experiences.

Belong: Creating an Inclusive History for Everyone

We want every child to feel they belong in our history lessons. We do this by:

- **Connecting with the familiar:** In Key Stage 1, we start with personal history and family stories, helping children see themselves in the timeline of the past.

- **Removing barriers:** We use visual cues, artefacts, and sensory objects (like old toys or clothing) so that history isn't just about reading—it's about touching, seeing, and feeling.
- **Empowering every voice:** We use "Thinking Time" and "Think-Pair-Share" to give children the space they need to rehearse their ideas, ensuring everyone feels confident enough to contribute.

Thrive: Growing as Young Historians

History is more than just dates; it's about curiosity and enquiry. To help our pupils thrive, we adapt our support as they grow:

- **Manageable steps:** We break big historical events into smaller, bite-sized tasks so children feel successful at every stage.
- **Creative expression:** Students can show what they know in ways that suit them best—whether that's through drama, audio recordings, storyboards, or labelled maps.
- **Flexible groups:** We group children dynamically, allowing them to work with different peers depending on the specific skill we are practicing, such as investigating a mystery source.

Achieve: Reaching High Standards Together

We are ambitious for our pupils. To help them achieve their very best, especially in **Key Stage 2**, we provide expert tools:

- **Scaffolded Enquiry:** We "drip-feed" evidence to students, teaching them how to adjust their thinking as new clues about the past emerge.
- **Expert Vocabulary:** We use knowledge organisers and pre-teach key terms like chronological or artefact so that every child has the "history language" they need to succeed.
- **Writing Frames & Sentence Stems:** We provide sentence starters to help children structure complex historical arguments, ensuring their written work reflects their true potential.
- **Close Procedures:** Provide texts with key vocabulary missing for pupils who struggle with extensive writing, ensuring they still engage with the core historical content.

- **Visual Supports including Widgit:** Use pictures, symbols, and artifacts to illustrate abstract concepts like "power" or "belief". We use Widgit to help children understand through pictures what the text is saying.
- **Auditory Sources:** Use recordings of speeches (e.g., Churchill) or oral histories to engage pupils who find heavy text-based work difficult.
- **Drama & Role Play:** Use techniques like "hot seating" or "freeze frames" to explore historical characters' motivations and perspectives.
- **Graphic Organisers:** Use timelines, Venn diagrams (for comparisons), and mind maps to help pupils visualise historical events and connections.
- **Flexible Grouping:** Set up temporary, fluid groups during a lesson to provide a quick re-explanation to those who are struggling or to offer a "stretch" task for those who have mastered the core concept.