



## Historical Association Quality Mark Final Report

**St Bede's Catholic Junior School, Widnes**

**Date: 23.5.24**

St. Bede's Catholic Junior School is a 2.5 form entry school with 309 children in 11 classes. One class is a mixed Year 3/4 class. Across the school, 20.5% of pupils are on the SEND register and 29.4% are eligible for Pupil Premium. Gender is fairly balanced with 145 boys and 163 girls, and the pupils are predominantly white British. However, there is significant socio-economic diversity amongst pupils, with 20.5% of pupils living within the top decile (most deprived) wards in Halton. Therefore, their aim is to provide cultural and character capital for all children through an enriching and engaging curriculum. The school is a flagship school for Inclusion and holds Quality Marks in several subjects.

Evidence for the assessment was obtained through a scrutiny of the portfolio, a tour of the school with the Subject Leader, lesson observations in two classes, discussions with several teachers, discussions with three parents and Subject Leader, discussions with pupils and examining planning, Subject Leaders file, and children's books.

This is the first full renewal of the Quality Mark. At the original assessment in 2017 assessment was not fully developed but there was clear capacity for improvement.

### **1.) Learning, Teaching and Achievement**

**The evidence suggests that overall teaching, learning and achievement is at a Gold standard, with 1.5 at Silver.**

I met with a group of Year 3/4 children and another group of Year 5/6 children separately. Both groups were enthusiastic and lively discussing their history lessons. The older children could confidently talk about historical figures and why they were important and significant. They explained how they used Knowledge Organisers to help them remember facts and to support their spelling and writing in history lessons, and also to help them organise their thoughts. They identified teaching, working as an archaeologist or in a museum as potential jobs if you enjoyed history. The younger children also identified a range of people or places who were significant and why. They thought the Knowledge Organisers helped them to learn and remember new words. They were less sure about how to get better at history, talking about learning in general; do little bits at a time, keep trying hard, don't give up.

The children's books, the pupil voice conversations and the lesson observations demonstrated that a range of activities are used in history lessons. These include sorting, matching, timelines, TV programmes/video clips and computers, labelling diagrams and images.

The two lessons I observed were at least very good. The Year 3 class was exploring the Enquiry Question "Why Emperor Claudius might have wanted to add Britain to the Roman Empire?" They considered reasons why Emperor Claudius decided to invade Britain. The teacher was introducing the reasons carefully to lead into a piece of persuasive writing written in role as Claudius persuading his council of the benefits of this invasion. She was calm and generally knowledgeable. The benefits had been broken down into four main reasons and the teacher used a variety of resources to help the children understand this.

The Year 5 class were considering the Enquiry question "How serious was the risk of invasion by Nazi Germany?" The pupils were engaged and enthusiastic about the activities and the questioning at the start of the lesson encouraged the children to recall previous lessons to set the scene. They evaluated a range of sources – for example, an audio clip of Winston Churchill, a Pathe news reel of the Dunkirk evacuation, and copies of original documents from both the German and British perspective. They were asked to rate the threat on a five-point scale of low to critical. The teachers were confident to adapt the scheme where they felt this was necessary, for example the Year 5 teachers had created the evaluation scale.

The school uses the assessments included as part of the Collins Connected scheme they have adopted. Between 79-83% of pupils across the year groups achieve expected standards. However, this is related to the Collins scheme so further evaluation and comparisons with other local schools would be advisable. I am not suggesting the figures are not accurate, but this would be good practice.

Most units are well resourced, with a range of artefacts and documents, posters etc with slightly less for the newer Units adopted as part of the Collins Connected scheme. The library contains a good range of fiction and non-fiction books related to history, and further texts are in the classrooms. There is a large timeline displayed in the corridor and Knowledge Organisers, which include information vocabulary, timelines, key concepts, key learning, important people and places, important artefacts are stuck into the children's books.

Marking is generally verbal feedback given during lessons in line with the school policy. The children join the school at the start of Year 3, but the Infant school does not pass on any information about their curriculum or how well the children do in history. The Subject Leader has made attempts to address this but has been successful. Therefore, the school does assessments during the Autumn term in Year 3. The children's history books move through the school with them so they can see how they are developing.

The teachers have a good grasp of how to support the pupils to improve but this is not always clearly understood by the children. No information about achievements in history are shared with the Secondary schools the children move to. The children achieve well relative to their starting points and good achievement is demonstrated across all year groups. Effective tracking is starting to be used through the school to identify those children who are struggling in history.

#### **Targets:**

- 1.4 Consider how to develop appropriate links with the Infant school.
- 1.5 Support the pupils to have a better understanding of how to get better at history.
- 1.5 Consider how to send information to the relevant Secondary schools about the children's achievements in history.

## **2.) Leadership**

**The evidence suggests that leadership is at a Gold standard, with 2.1 on the cusp of Gold/silver.**

History enjoys a good status across the school with very good levels of resourcing and a good reputation among teachers and pupils. There is a reasonable time allocation with teachers given flexibility to expand the time where they felt it was needed. Year 3 and 5 have 2 terms of History with Year 4 and 6 using the Spring term for history. This does leave a long gap between units of history so perhaps the Subject leader and staff could consider how these gaps could be addressed, for example, through a programme of assemblies. The teachers I spoke to were all enthusiastic and enjoying teaching the curriculum as it is now running.

The Subject Leader operates to clearly defined structures and has a clear role, which is followed and understood by others in the school. Very good systems are followed consistently and efficiently. The staff I spoke to were very complimentary about how supportive and knowledgeable the Subject Leader is, with support always available.

The criteria used throughout the school demonstrate a good understanding of how performance can be monitored, and the results of monitoring are used to set and achieve practical goals. These are recorded on the Action Plan.

Varied and targeted support is available to support those teaching history in the school, and involvement is encouraged. The Subject Leader hosts the local network meetings for primary history teachers and Subject Leaders. A local secondary school history teacher was involved in this and is subsequently coming to teach the Year 6 children as part of a transition project. This year, there has

been a whole school focus on CPD, which the Subject Leader has undertaken with a consultant and through the Heritage School's Programme. These have then been shared with staff in meetings. Texts are available in the staff room to support the teaching of history. and Heritage England is booked to deliver Heritage CPD to the whole school next term to develop the Local History offer further.

**Targets:**

- 2.1 To develop the status of history further through displays, assemblies and social media.
- 2.4 To provide staff with some CPD to build on their understanding of good history.

### **3.) Curriculum**

**The evidence suggests that Curriculum at a Silver standard.**

The Collins Connected scheme is embedding well and is supporting the development of excellent teaching and learning across the school. The teachers are more confident using this scheme than the previous one and were enthusiastic about how it is supporting their own development. Local History is not included in the scheme, so this was addressed last year by a whole school approach which the staff and pupils were able to talk about confidently. Diversity needs to be considered a little more. The new Shang Dynasty and Maya units address this to some extent, but the school could consider where further examples could be included, for example through Black History Month. It would be useful to identify opportunities to include women, disabled people and LGBT+ people too. An overview of the Early Civilisations is not currently included so this needs to be addressed.

To support the teachers and pupils in making links and connections threads have been identified through the curriculum. These are trade, invasion, power and industrialisation and I observed a teacher building these links in their lesson. I would suggest these are mapped out to show the development of knowledge through the school to support teachers further. The pupils could make some links and connections but these need to be developed further.

**Targets:**

- 3.1 Continue to review the long-term plan for history and make any appropriate changes as needed and consider a wider range of diverse people to include in history lessons and assemblies.
- 3.1 Include an Early Civilisations overview either at the start or end of your Shang Dynasty Unit.
- 3.2 Map the threads through your curriculum to support staff and children in making links and connections between eras and Units studied.

### **4.) Enrichment**

**The evidence suggests that enrichment is at a Gold standard, with 4.3 assessed as currently silver.**

History is explicitly taught in a coherent way across a number of subject areas and cross curricular opportunities. In particular strong links have made with Art, for example, clay Viking masks, Maya masks in the style of Vadium Puyandoev. Lowry style paintings linked to the local history and development of the chemical industry locally were also produced as part of the Halton Primary Arts Network which were put on display in Runcorn Shopping centre. Viking battle songs were developed, music notation using hieroglyphs, ICT for research and a strong link using maps regularly. The school Reading Spine, for guided reading includes historical fiction and some teachers have texts linked to their units. It would be useful to identify potential texts for all units.

A good range of visits and visitors has been developed for the pupils across the school. These include a Roman soldier visiting the school, visits to Merseyside Maritime Museum and the Black Country Museum. The transition project with the local secondary school and work planned to develop Local History with Heritage England are planned for during the summer term. There are numerous clubs across the school with every teacher and TA running a cub and a History Club is offered too. It would be useful to devise an overall plan to ensure parity across year groups to include visits, visitors and

workshops. Humanities awards are made at the end of each year and the children wear these badges throughout the following year.

The school web site includes the History Policy and a curriculum plan for this year. Social media (Facebook) is sometimes used to inform parents and carers about history activities in school and on visits, though this could be developed further.

**Target:**

4.1 To consider identifying fiction texts linked to each Unit of history.

4.2 Create an overall plan of visits, visitors and workshops across the long-term plan for history to ensure parity.

4.3 Use social media and/or the school web site to promote history in the school more.

**Final Comments:**

Many thanks to the Subject Leader for their hard work in compiling the portfolio of evidence. This Gold award is well deserved, and everyone has worked hard since the original award of silver in 2017.

The Historical Association is extremely grateful to all involved in making the assessment process an enjoyable, manageable, and rewarding one. Many thanks.

*Sue Temple*

Award made: Yes  
Level: Gold

Date of Award:  
23.5.24

Renewal Date:  
23.5.27