**SUMMERCOURT ACADEMY: QUALITY MARK REPORT**

**TEACHING AND LEARNING**

The school uses a range of approaches with an increasing emphasis on enquiry and independent work. Discussions with pupils and examination of planning revealed the use of sources, visits, drama, the use of artefacts and the techniques of history such as archaeology. The planning follows the structure required by the Academy Chain (Aspire) with long term, medium and short term planning. It demonstrates a high status for history (although there is an inevitable priority for literacy and numeracy). Some attention is given to skills and conceptual understanding (for example, the Historical Association’s matrix has been utilised) but this is not yet fully embedded and a bit more consideration could usefully be given to the planning of skills and concepts. Observation of a Y3/4 mixed ability class demonstrated that there was considerable pupil enthusiasm for history, a high level of motivation, some good group work and opportunities for pupils to consider possible alternatives to questions such as how and where a historical individual died . The lesson on an ancient chieftain and his grave goods posed some good, open-ended questions but could have benefitted from a closer relationship with historical reality. For example, the pupils’ views could have been compared with an actual grave and reasons for differences analysed. Pupils made good use of a timeline and the teacher managed the lesson well introducing some new vocabulary and posing a variety of questions. Resourcing remains a challenge especially with some areas of the new curriculum but the school has invested in the county library service loans and topic boxes.

**CURRICULUM**

The school is putting increased emphasis on cross-curricular work but it is apparent that history receives a good share of attention in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The new National Curriculum has been embraced with coverage planned or delivered on Egypt, Greece, Romans, Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages. The coverage of local history is particularly impressive often accompanied by visits. For a school of this size there is a very extensive series of history visits. The travel is supported by the Friends of the School illustrating the acceptance of history as an important curriculum area. For example, there have been visits to Castle an Dinas, a local ancient hillfort, Truro Museum, Pendennis and St Mawes Castles and Plymouth Museum. Museum visits have sometimes been accompanied by workshops. The exact sequence and structure of the history curriculum remains to be finalised in both key stages. There is considerable enthusiasm for the subject in all years. Key Stage 1 has a considerable emphasis on prominent individuals (such as Guy Fawkes, Florence Nightingale and Louis Braille), anniversaries and remembrance including the Cornish St Piran as well as themes such as seaside holidays. Key Stage 2 focuses on the new National Curriculum headings with some additional, often whole school themes, such as Magna Carta. The planning and rationale associated with the history curriculum is being developed but is not yet finalised, particularly with regard to the security of historical understanding and progression within key skills and other cross-curricular work. There is some evidence of good work in this area such as some work on Darwin but such examples could usefully be extended. History is celebrated in the school as evidenced of good displays in classrooms and corridors and the pride taken in local history.

**ACHIEVEMENT**

Observations of pupils in lessons, discussions with them and examination of work in topic books showed evidence of some good work and thinking, eg. with regard to timelines and change. The portfolio also showed some evidence of progression with some older pupils producing some extended work. The lesson observed showed the work was appropriately matched to pupils with support from a learning support assistant. A brief analysis suggested that the standard of history work compared fairly well with other subject areas. The school uses a range of approaches to monitor the work in history such as scrutiny of plans, pupil discussions and checking of work by the co-ordinator. There is also evidence of pupil self-evaluation and peer assessment. Talking to pupils showed that they had a good grasp of the topic being covered. Marking is done with some care although the comments about ways to improve tend to be generic rather than history-focused. Although progress is being made with regard to assessing history, this is still at a relatively early stage with more work to do on assessing pupil understanding and how this progresses as they move through the school.

**LEADERSHIP**

This is strong in that the subject leader/co-ordinator is an enthusiastic, committed, skilful and hard-working member of staff. She has carried out a useful subject audit and devotes considerable attention to looking at teacher plans and offering advice, eg. about resources. The role is made easier by considerable enthusiasm for history throughout the school and by senior managers and governors. For example, the vice chair of governors is actively involved in local history and archaeology. The school has supported history financially, eg. visits, membership of the HA and CPD in the subject (including attendance at the HA Conference). There is the potential for collaborative work across 4 schools within the Academy chain including shared history meetings although this is at an early stage. It could also usefully be extended to links with the secondary school in Newquay to which most pupils transfer at 11. Planning has built in a reasonably generous amount of time for history-related activities. Although the co-ordinator is a part-time member of staff, she enjoys a high status and respect within the school. An improvement plan is being prepared but was not available at the time of the assessment visit.

**ENRICHMENT**

This is another strength. History permeates much of the curriculum. It is being increasingly well-integrated within the school’s whole curriculum and its contribution to it made explicit including key skills. Good links are being forged with other subject areas especially literacy but also art, music, science, geography etc. The importance of the wider world is instantly recognisable with pupil visits and visitors to the school. Pupils have a good grasp of the wider historical world with visits to historical sites and museums. They understand how archaeologists and curators work. Whole school activities take place with a history focus. Pupils are immersed in history from a young age as evidenced by a visit to historic sites in Falmouth with Key Stage 1 pupils.

**FINAL COMMENTS**

The portfolio and visit confirmed that there were many good things going on in history. There is already much that is fairly impressive with some exciting future plans to share history across a hub within the Academy chain. Planning and assessment procedures are developing well even if not finalised. It is the view of the assessors that the school should be awarded the Historical Association’s Silver Award Quality Mark and should seriously consider enhancing this to the gold standard when some of these issues referred to above have been developed and embedded.

The assessors would also want to express our gratitude to the school and especially the history co-ordinator for her hard work and commitment in facilitating the assessment process. Other members of staff were also extremely helpful and supportive. The pupils were a delight with all of them keen to talk about the subject and their work. There is much to be proud of in Summercourt Academy.

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| **QM Historical Association Quality Mark Final Report** |
| Visit to: SUMMERCOURT ACADEMY, CORNWALL | Date: 12 December 2014 |
| 1. Teaching and Learning
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| 1. Curriculum
 |
| 1. Achievement
 |
| 1. Leadership
 |
| 1. Enrichment
 |
| 1. Other
 |
| Final Comments:  |
| Award made? Yes/NoLevel: Silver/Gold | Date of Award: | Renewal Date |