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| **QM Historical Association Quality Mark Final Report** | | | |
| Visit to: Sketchley Hill Primary School | | Date: 28 November 2014 | |
| Context:  Sketchley Hill is a large two form entry school situated on the southern edge of the village of Burbage in Leicestershire. The majority of the children are from white British backgrounds with a very small number of children from Asian or British Asian heritage. The school population is stable with most children joining in reception and staying through the school to year 6. The proportion of children in receipt of pupil premium and who have special educational needs are both below the national average.  History is organised throughout the school according to a long term plan with the required areas of study allocated to individual years. This allows the two teachers in each year group to develop an expertise on a limited area of the programme of study. The school is currently responding to the demands of the new national curriculum orders in ensuring continuity and progression through this plan. There have been whole school staff meetings to explore the new history requirements and a very honest and accurate subject self-assessment underpins the future development plan. | | | |
| 1. Teaching and Learning   The pleasure and enthusiasm that the children exhibited throughout the day presented the strongest case for the school receiving the award. Without exception the children were hugely positive about history. Comments ranged from history being “brilliant”, “educational”, “fun” and “enjoyable” to more considered statements relating to “finding out about people in World War 1 who gave their lives for us” and “learning about our ancestors”. Staff are clear about the need for developing an enquiry based approach to the curriculum and how this engages the learners, but are also aware that this requires further development across the school. The teaching and learning of history is an active and engaging process. Children were able to recall a wide variety of history work they had done, including the dressing up that had clearly made a big impression such as the stone age day, the visits to a range of sites, and information about the local area and people. There is an emerging understanding of progression in history and this was articulated by staff. More support to explore key concepts and processes such as change and causation will enable the school to develop progression further.  Children are comfortable in using sources to develop their understanding of the past and respond well when given the opportunity to pose their own questions to research. Older children were seen posing questions about a range of individuals from World War 1 and then using a range of printed sources and the Internet to find answers to these questions. Other children were keen to show work they had done at home in their own time. This had not been set as homework but was purely voluntary on the children’s part.  Next steps marking was evident across all year groups. Children were very clear that teachers help them get better in history by explaining work to them, by reviewing their work with them and by working with them to make the work understandable. The pupil tracker currently in use for all subjects including history is a good means of enabling staff to monitor progression across the school. To move on to gold standard the understanding of progression amongst the staff needs to be brought to bear in developing more specific history focused next steps marking on key pieces of work.  The enthusiasm of all staff for history was very clear throughout the day. Everyone including the headteacher, the co-ordinator, class teachers and teaching assistants were keen to share their displays, talk about what they had done this term and the impact this had had on the children. The whole school impact was captured by one teaching assistant who reported that she had not enjoyed history at school but since working at Sketchley she had come to love history. This very much reflected the wider experience of the children. | | | |
| 1. Curriculum   The current curriculum is planned across the school and the required areas of study are allocated to individual year groups. An enquiry based approach is adopted by staff but further work is required to develop this progressively across the school and to help develop the assessment process. Staff are rapidly becoming confident with the new content and are developing cross-curricular opportunities to enhance learning. Staff and children talked enthusiastically about exploring Roman numerals in history, archaeology digs to find evidence of the past, dressing up in costumes from different historical periods, collective worship sharing the story of a child’s ancestor who received the Victoria Cross in World War 1, visits, visitors, and the Stone Age rap which was performed on the day by the two year 3 classes. The history curriculum brings a richness to the wider curriculum and everyone in the school spoke with enthusiasm about the wider opportunities it offered the children. As part of the assessment process a representative from the local heritage group explained how they are working with the school to develop the children’s understanding of their local environment and heritage. | | | |
| 1. Achievement   The school has in place a progress tracking system that is used for history. Assessment information has been generated for all year groups and this shows good progress across the school. This is underpinned by a school wide approach to next steps marking in history which the children feel helps them improve. As staff develop their deeper understanding of progress within history this will enhance the history specific information to feed in to the next steps marking already in place. Some good examples were seen of history specific feedback. A development point will be for this good practice to be spread to all staff.  The celebration of all things historical is highly evident across the school both in classrooms and in wider shared spaces. | | | |
| 1. Leadership   History enjoys a high status across the school. Staff and pupils were enthusiastic about all aspects of the subject and it was very evident that its development was well supported by both a very active and committed co-ordinator and the headteacher. The school has made big strides in tackling the implementation and organisation of the changes to history in this first term of the new curriculum. In a school of approximately 400 children that is no small task. There is a clear long term plan covering all key stages, staff are fully engaged with the subject and there is a very honest and accurate self-assessment of the strengths and further areas of development for history. The school has been very strategic in using the process of the application for the Quality Mark as a means of subject development.  There have been whole school staff meetings to support the development of history and staff were positive in their praise for the support and leadership provided by the subject co-ordinator on questioning, enquiry, child led learning and the resourcing of the new curriculum. The organisation of the school where there are two classes in each year group has allowed for there to be a year group focus on a limited aspect of the curriculum. Staff reported that this enabled them to feel more confident, more quickly with the subject demands of the history they were required to reach. | | | |
| 1. Enrichment   History clearly enriches the wider curriculum at Sketchley Hill and the teaching and learning of the subject enthuses and excites teachers and learners alike. Classrooms are alive with history displays which form part of the learning process. Cross-curricular links are already established and staff were clear that as they developed their own expertise they would find further opportunities to link history to other areas. Links to literacy were described as “easy” and there was evidence seen of links to music, numeracy, and collective worship.  Good use has been made of visits and visitors including theatre companies focusing on the Ancient Greeks and the First World War, and very positive links to the local heritage group. A particularly impressive event was where the school organised for grandparents to visit the infant classes to talk about life in the past. All of the organisation with grandparents was done in secret and on the day over 20 grandparents appeared in school to talk to the children.  The strength of the school is that it is not resting on its laurels but is looking at more ways of enhancing the provision of history across the school. | | | |
| 1. Other   The assessors felt that the school had embarked on a journey that had already met with a great deal of success and that they had the capacity to push ahead to realise further improvements. The school’s claim to celebrate the education of the ‘whole child’ is well supported by the work seen in history. At this point the school richly deserves to achieve the silver award and the gold award was well within their reach in the foreseeable future. | | | |
| Final Comments:  The day was very well organised by the school and the assessors were struck by the shared commitment of everyone at the school from the headteacher through all staff and including the children. The sheer enjoyment and pleasure of a school engaging so fully with the study of history was good to see. The role of the subject leadership in building a shared commitment to history in such a large school is a real testimony to his dedication and hard work.  The school richly deserves the award in becoming the first primary school to receive the history Quality Mark. | | | |
| Award made: Yes  Level: Silver | Date of Award:  28th November 2014 | | Renewal Date  November 2017 |