



# Celebrating Success:

London Fields Primary School  
achieves Gold Award Quality Mark

Mel Jones

London Fields is a larger than average primary school situated in Hackney, east London. The school was rated Outstanding by Ofsted in 2011 and again in 2015. The school has a challenging context with free school meals, minority ethnic groups and English as an Additional Language all far in excess of the national average.

Having been to HA Primary History conferences, the history co-ordinator at the school, Sarah Winser, had learnt a lot of new teaching ideas and developed her own subject knowledge which she was eager to share with the other teachers. The school had done a huge amount of work to develop an engaging, investigative and progressive programme of study for history in line with the new curriculum expectations and felt that the process of auditing and collating their evidence would help to further improve the learning experience they were providing and highlight any gaps that they could work on.

Awards like this cannot be gained by one person alone and the history co-ordinator was lucky to have a supportive, forward-thinking leadership team to turn to and an enthusiastic staff who were eager to extend their own knowledge and teaching as well as the learning in their classroom. They began by looking at each individual criterion and listing ways in which they could evidence each one. This highlighted any gaps and areas for improvement which they could then spend the following months addressing.

There was a huge amount of dialogue between the teachers and history co-ordinator concerning any gaps they felt they had in their own practice, which was then followed up with CPD opportunities and subsequently regular support with adapting the medium-term plans to ensure that the children were gaining the necessary skills they needed to develop as historians. Collaborating with other schools, community events and opportunities for external learning further ensured that the children acquired a passion for the subject.

One of the key strengths that the assessor pointed to in the school's evaluation was the consistently high standard of expectation and questioning, carefully built around well-thought-out enquiries that were clearly matched to what it means to make progress in history. Pupils were consistently encouraged to see the value in learning the subject and talked very enthusiastically about their learning.

Another was the strong leadership for the subject within the school as well as the mutual support from staff and leadership. The status that history enjoyed in the school was the result of strong dialogue and discussion between staff as well as effective leadership of the subject to put plans into place. Careful monitoring of the subject, through observations, discussion and feedback all helped to feed into a



development plan. The history co-ordinator supported staff to ensure that key identified priorities were met through CPD and the school regularly supported history teaching in other schools.

The curriculum reform of 2014 has been seen by the school as an opportunity to innovate the history curriculum in a way that really suits the context of the school and meets pupils' needs. The Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes (SOLO) describes increasing levels of complexity in pupils' understanding and ability in subjects. It has received criticism, as has the similar Bloom's taxonomy, but rather than adopting it as a straitjacket, the school uses the SOLO and growth mindset initiatives effectively to deepen pupils' understanding.

While assessment procedures at the school had not yet been finalised, and the marking of work with history feedback was still in development, it was clear that all staff teaching history had a clear grasp of progression in many areas of the subject including knowledge, chronological understanding and use of evidence and interpretations and progress was clearly being monitored.

The range of history enrichment activities at the school was impressive and part of an on-going programme. As an example of this, the school developed a democracy week that enabled a history element to include work on Magna Carta and the growth of parliament. The school also regularly worked alongside other schools and heritage providers on various enrichment projects, and as a result of one such project, pupils from the school had work displayed in the Museum of London.

London Fields provided a clear example of a primary school who are committed to delivering a purposeful and engaging history curriculum that encourages children to be lifelong learners in the subject. For the full case study, visit [www.history.org.uk/resources/primary\\_resource\\_8714\\_284.html](http://www.history.org.uk/resources/primary_resource_8714_284.html)

**Mel Jones** is the HA's Education Officer