

Planning for the curriculum and children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage uses the elements of the EYFS statutory framework rather than the subject disciplines of the National Curriculum. This planning is supported by the use of the non-statutory Development Matters guidance.

The EYFS curriculum starts with the child's experience in their family and in their immediate environment. The content of the curriculum is often guided by teachers in response to children's interests and planning needs to take account of the balance between deliberate teaching and spontaneous learning driven by curiosity and purpose. These are the ideal starting point for history - exploring what they already see around them and seeing that other families do things differently.

Children's experiences and learning which, once they are in KS1, can be thought of as typical of work in History may in Early Years draw upon all the areas of learning - Communication and Language, Personal Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design. There will be a strong connection between what children achieve in what is called Understanding the World and what they will develop in KS1 in History, but developmental learning for children in EYFS is not linear, it proceeds in a web of multiple strands. For example, the development of the language and skills associated with numerical patterns will be a strong feature of chronological understanding and they do not feature in the end of EYFS assessment statements for Understanding the World, but reflect aspects of Mathematics. Knowledge of seasonal change and life cycles help prepare the way for historical chronology.

In our schools, the experiences children gain across the EYFS curriculum are rich in opportunities to investigate and explore their environment, to speculate and make choices to support their ideas, and to articulate their thinking within their play and within structured activities. The way in which the curriculum is designed and experienced by the children supports the development of the characteristics of effective learning in EYFS: playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically. These are foundational to what lies at the centre of the subject discipline of History: close observation of the world around them, curiosity in their play and in their handling of objects and materials, asking questions, watching how things happen and change and wondering why this is so, and describing what they see, hear and feel. All these help create the successful historian of later years.

Examples of a range of activities, planned with reference to Development Matters, enable children typically, across a range of contexts,

- To explore the natural world around them, describing what they see, hear and feel whilst outside;
- To observe the effect of changing seasons on the natural world around them;
- To plant seeds and care for growing plants, recognising the key features of the life cycle of a plant;
- To recognise key features of the life cycle of animals;

All of these experiences and knowledge gained provide a secure foundation for what they will encounter in History in KS1 and beyond.

