

MVFS Past and Present Curriculum

Intent

At MVFS we understand that having a coherent knowledge of the past enables children to better understand the present, and can also contribute positively to shaping their future. As part of Understanding the World, our Past and Present Curriculum seeks to stimulate the children's interest in history. We aim for our children to better understand the actions of people from the past; as well as starting to develop a sense of personal identity based on their historical heritage.

We teach our children to understand how events in the past relate to our lives today; and we equip them with skills of enquiry, analysis, interpretation and problem solving as we teach them to investigate and question historical events.

Our Key Aims: At MVFS, we strive to...

- promote an interest in the past and ignite curiosity about the history of Britain and the wider world.
- encourage children to understand and empathise with people from the past – their beliefs, thoughts, values and experiences.
- begin to develop an understanding of society and their place within it, so that they begin to acquire a sense of their own historical heritage.
- appreciate past achievements as well as some behaviours that would no longer be deemed to be acceptable; and encourage thinking and discussion about how the past influences the present.
- help children to develop a chronological framework of events, periods and people.
- develop an ability to recognise and interpret different and contrasting versions of past events.
- develop a range of historical enquiry skills and abilities – particularly those related to finding out about the past, explaining what happened, and considering what people then and people now think about these events.
- develop the ability to communicate historical knowledge and understanding clearly in a variety of ways, using appropriate terminology and historical vocabulary.



Implementation

At MVFS we have devised a bespoke curriculum which is carefully sequenced and enables our children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the past as they move through our school. Our Past and Present Curriculum is organised in a two year cycle, with topics of study being reviewed collaboratively by our teaching team at the end of each cycle.

As with all areas of our curriculum, it is important to remember that all of our children have significant gaps in their learning due to the experiences that have brought them to MVFS – indeed, all of our children have not been able to access the full curriculum for at least a year before joining us. As explained in our Curriculum Policy, this means that many of our children are working at a level below their chronological age whilst we support them to re-engage with education and enjoy high levels of interest and success, which help them to rebuild their self-esteem and start to value their own social and academic achievements. In order for our children to know more and remember more, prior learning is always considered; and opportunities for the revision of knowledge, skills and vocabulary are built into lessons.

Stage One:

- In Stage One our children start to explore how we can find out about events and people from the past, and are introduced to simple skills of historical enquiry and interpretation. With support, they are encouraged to make conjectures and inferences from a wide range of evidence sources, and are taught to understand that people living at the same time often had very different experiences (e.g. rich and poor). By introducing them to exciting topics, such as Kings, Queens and Castles and the Great Fire of London, we encourage a real interest and excitement for the subject; and help them to see how events which took place hundreds of years ago have influenced aspects of our lives today.

Stage Two:

- In Stage Two the children begin to explore further back in time and, after exploring what is meant by ‘ancient’, they learn about Ancient Egypt. They also explore Roman, Saxon and Viking settlers and begin to develop a sense of different periods of British history – where they sit on a chronological timeline, and how our nation has been shaped by invaders, settlers and lawmakers. At this stage the children are also taught that ‘evidence’ about the past is not always quite what it seems to be; and they begin to think and work more critically, and consider possible bias in sources.

Stage Three:

- Stage Three builds securely on the previous stages and enables the children to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the past; and they further develop their skills of investigation and analysis by exploring evidence relating to Ancient Greece. The children then explore the Industrial Revolution, World War II and the theme of Crime and Punishment to develop their understanding of Britain’s more recent past; and how these periods and events have shaped our national identity.

Past & Present – Cycle A

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Block 1	Skill Seekers: Birthday Parties		Sources of Evidence: Ancient Greece
Block 2		Romans in Britain	
Block 3	Kings, Queens & Castles		The Industrial Revolution
Block 4		Chronology: Ancient Civilisations	

Past & Present – Cycle B

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Block 1	Skill Seekers: Emergency Services		
Block 2		Saxons, Scots & Vikings	World War II
Block 3	The Great Fire of London		
Block 4		Ancient Egypt	Crime & Punishment

The lives of additional significant individuals from the past (such as Guy Fawkes, Martin Luther King Jnr. and famous scientists, etc.) are also taught in all keys stages when we mark and explore key dates and events in the school calendar. Regular assemblies also introduce children to the life, work and impact of historical figures, using the “Little People, Big Dreams” biographies as a starting point for discussions.

Impact

Through our bespoke approach and quality first teaching, we will see the impact of this subject in different ways. Our children will be engaged in lessons about the past and will want to find out more. They will be able to talk about and demonstrate the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that they have acquired; and will show increasing levels of critical analysis when exploring, discussing and giving opinions about the past.

Evidence collected will show that a range of topics are being covered, and that our carefully sequenced approach to learning is enabling our children to develop a meaningful sense of the periods, people and events studied. Ultimately, our children will learn lessons from the past which will help them to understand the present and shape their future in a positive way.