



Primary School  
Curriculum

Curaclam na  
Bunscoile

# History

Social, Environmental  
and Scientific Education

DUBLIN  
PUBLISHED BY THE STATIONERY OFFICE

To be purchased directly from the  
GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS SALE OFFICE  
SUN ALLIANCE HOUSE  
MOLESWORTH STREET  
DUBLIN 2

or by mail order from  
GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS  
POSTAL TRADE SECTION  
4-5 HARCOURT ROAD  
DUBLIN 2  
(Tel: 01-6476834-5; Fax: 01-4752760)  
or through any bookseller

Design Consultancy:	Bradley McGurk Partnership
Designed by:	The Identity Business
Typesetting:	Spectrum Print Management
Printed by:	Mozzon Giuntina - Florence and Officine Grafiche De Agostini - Novara



# History

**Social, Environmental and  
Scientific Education**

**Curriculum**

# Contents



## Introduction

<b>Social, environmental and scientific education</b>	2
The SESE curriculum	2
Aims	5
<b>History: a sense of time</b>	6
The history curriculum	6
Aims	12
Broad objectives	13

## Infant classes

Overview	15
Planning	16
Skills and concepts development	18
Content	19

## First and second classes

Overview	23
Planning	24
Skills and concepts development	26
Content	27



## Third and fourth classes

Overview	34
Planning	36
Skills and concepts development	40
Content	42

## Fifth and sixth classes

Overview	54
Planning	56
Skills and concepts development	60
Content	62

## Assessment

Assessment in SESE	74
Assessment in history	76

## Appendix

Membership of the Curriculum Committee for SESE	88
Membership of the Primary Co-ordinating Committee	89

# Introduction



# Social, environmental and scientific education

Social, environmental and scientific education (SESE) provides opportunities for the child to explore, investigate and develop an understanding of the natural, human, social and cultural dimensions of local and wider environments, to learn and practise a wide range of skills, and to acquire open, critical and responsible attitudes. SESE enables the child to live as an informed and caring member of local and wider communities.

SESE takes place within, and contributes to, many areas of the curriculum. It thus contributes significantly to many aspects of the child's development. Within this curriculum, SESE is presented under three subject headings: history, geography and science. Each of these areas has a distinctive role to play in enabling the child to explore and understand the natural, human, social and cultural environments in which he/she lives.

## The SESE curriculum

### Understanding the term 'environment'

An understanding of the term 'environment' is fundamental to an appreciation of the nature of social, environmental and scientific education. The word 'environment' is used in this curriculum to denote the surroundings or external conditions with which an individual (human or other living organism) or community interacts.

Environments may be categorised in two broad groups. *Natural environments* are formed largely through the interaction of the earth's physical features and processes, its flora and fauna. A tropical rainforest, a peatland or a rocky seashore may be examples of natural environments.

In Ireland, human activity over thousands of years has shaped and changed the landscape considerably. Environments which have been modified in this way are termed *human environments*. Areas which have been altered by the presence of people, farming activities, the extraction of resources, the provision of roads and other communication links and the construction of buildings are all examples of human environments.

Some human environments, such as urban areas, are predominantly the constructions of people and are termed *built environments*. Other human environments result from social and cultural activities and are entirely human creations. As people live and work together, social patterns, relationships, systems and institutions are evolved, while human experience, knowledge, values and beliefs are expressed, developed and



perpetuated through a range of cultural activities. Patterns of human behaviour, the social institutions developed by people and the political and economic systems which they utilise are aspects of *social environments*; artistic, religious, ethnic, scientific, technological and recreational activities are aspects of *cultural environments*.

## Exploration and investigation

A key characteristic of learning within SESE is the involvement of the child in the active exploration and investigation of all of these environments.

Historical education enables children to investigate and examine critically significant events in their own immediate past, the past of their families and local communities and the histories of people in Ireland and other parts of the world. History develops an understanding of the actions, beliefs and motivations of people in the past and is fundamental to an informed appreciation of contemporary society and environments.

In geographical education, children explore and learn about features in human and natural environments, especially those in the immediate locality. They investigate the processes which create, sustain or change physical features and the interactions of people with each other and their environments in the locality and wider contexts.

Science education enhances children's knowledge and understanding of themselves and the world in which they live. It involves children in the active construction of their own understanding. This understanding changes in response to the children's broadening experiences. A scientific approach to investigations fosters the development of important skills, concepts and knowledge through which children can observe, question, investigate, understand and think logically about living things and their environments, materials, forces, everyday events and problems. The knowledge and skills acquired may be applied in designing and making activities in which children perceive a need to create or modify elements of their environments.

## Values, attitudes and responsibilities

SESE is also concerned with the cultivation of important values and attitudes. It fosters an appreciation of the inter-relationships of all living things and their environments and encourages children to become active agents in the conservation of environments for future generations. Through their investigations, children develop informed, critical and scientific perspectives which acknowledge the importance of founding judgements upon a respect for facts, accuracy and reason. SESE seeks to generate an appreciation of cultural and historical inheritance and cultivates an atmosphere of equality and opportunity where gender, cultural diversity, minorities and special needs are respected and valued. Prejudice and discrimination are challenged while respect and mutual understanding are promoted.

## Integration

Throughout the primary school years, the environments of the child, particularly those of a local nature, provide ideal contexts and a compelling impetus for the integration of learning. The subject headings history, geography and science are used to aid the presentation of the curriculum, and an awareness of them is an important part of the child's cultural and intellectual inheritance. Each subject offers a distinctive perspective on the world and equips children with a particular range of skills. However, the use of these subject divisions must not negate the effective implementation of an integrated curriculum. The use of well-planned integrated approaches, both within SESE and between SESE and other curricular areas, will have an important part to play in the delivery of the primary curriculum at all levels. Systematically planned integrated topics can provide contexts in which knowledge and skills may be developed in a range of areas. Many elements from the history, science and geography curricula may be explored concurrently, and much of the work involved will contribute to the development of oral language, literacy, numeracy, aesthetic awareness, creative expression and communication skills.

A number of features have been incorporated in the curriculum in order to facilitate effective integration. SESE is best approached in a holistic manner with younger children, as this respects the wholeness of their view of the world. Accordingly, a considerable degree of overlap and similarity has been embodied within the content suggested in the strands and

strand units of the three curricular statements for infants and first and second classes. Further suggestions for integrated studies are included in the accompanying guidelines for teachers.

As children grow older they begin to recognise that there are different ways or modes of looking at the world and of organising human knowledge, so teaching strategies may vary to include a holistic approach, some cross-curricular integration and a subject-centred focus. Possible cross-curricular links and integrated studies are noted within the content of the curricular statements for third to sixth classes. These should be regarded as suggestions only: people and their activities, other living things, features, materials, events and processes to be found in local and wider environments provide many other opportunities for a unified approach to learning. Such an approach utilises teaching and learning time efficiently and acknowledges that the social, emotional, attitudinal and moral development of the child is interwoven with the acquisition of knowledge and skills.

## Aims

The aims of social, environmental and scientific education are

- to enable the child to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes so as to develop an informed and critical understanding of social, environmental and scientific issues
- to reinforce and stimulate curiosity and imagination about local and wider environments
- to enable the child to play a responsible role as an individual, as a family member and as a member of local, regional, national, European and global communities
- to foster an understanding of, and concern for, the interdependence of all humans, all living things and the earth on which they live
- to foster in the child a sense of responsibility for the long-term care of the environment and a commitment to promote the sustainable use of the earth's resources through his/her personal life-style and participation in collective environmental decision-making
- to cultivate humane and responsible attitudes and an appreciation of the world in accordance with beliefs and values.

# History: a sense of time

History is the interpretation of what are considered to be significant human activities in the past and the process by which these activities are selected, investigated and analysed. History is not the story of the past but rather our attempt to reconstruct and interpret elements of the past which are of interest to us.

History gives children a knowledge of past human experiences at family, local, national and international levels. Pupils also develop an understanding, appropriate to their age, of time and chronology, change and continuity, cause and effect. They acquire skills appropriate to their developmental stages so that they may interpret evidence in a critical way.

Historical themes and topics develop empathy with other people and a deeper understanding of past and current social, political and economic interactions.

## The history curriculum

### The nature of history in a child-centred curriculum

A broad and balanced understanding of history is essential if a child is to become a confident, informed, critical and responsible adult member of society. A rounded historical education reflects the nature of history itself: firstly, it is concerned with knowledge and interpretations of the lives of people in the past, and secondly, it enables children to experience something of the way in which historians go about their work.

Through exploring the past in this way, children can acquire knowledge and concepts while simultaneously developing important skills and attitudes appropriate to their individual stages of development. History in the primary school can then make a unique and vital contribution to the harmonious development of the child in a truly child-centred education.

### *The lives of people in the past*

History is concerned with our interpretations of the actions of people in the past and the ways in which men, women and children responded to, and lived through, these events. Exploring the lives of people in the past, and especially the causes and effects of their actions, contributes to the child's awareness of human character, motivation, belief and emotion. More immediately, it can help the child to understand more fully the world in which he/she lives—how events and personalities have shaped the home, locality and wider environments in which he/she exists.

The particular people and events which are thought to be historically significant will vary from historian to historian, from society to society and from time to time. However, primary school children will understand the actions of people in the immediate past more readily than those of people in distant ages, and historical enquiry will acquire a greater relevance for children if it fulfils their need to explore and understand their immediate environment. For these reasons, the history curriculum places a very strong emphasis on the study of personal and local history in all classes in the primary school.

At the same time the curriculum provides for the exploration of various aspects of history through which the child will become aware of the individuals, groups, events, cultures, beliefs and values which have affected the lives of people in the past and shaped contemporary society in Ireland, Europe and the wider world.

### *Local studies*

A major concern in this curriculum is the involvement of children in the study of personal and local history. Children can gain their first impressions of the concept of time through simple discussions of personal and family history. By exploring the changes which have occurred and elements which have remained unchanged in their own lives, in the lives of their families and friends, and in their homes and immediate environments, children begin to appreciate the existence of times different from their own. Their historical understanding is enriched as they visit and investigate the buildings and common features of the locality and the lives of people who have lived there. In this way, the study of the past and the development of a sense of time come to have an immediate relevance as children explore and understand the world in which they live. The curriculum provides for the exploration of personal, family and local history at all levels and suggests practical, simple activities in which these elements of local studies may be completed.

### *National and international history*

Children develop an enhanced understanding of their own country and the wider world through encountering elements of national and international history. At times history has concentrated on political developments and the lives of 'famous people', often 'famous' men. Some elements of political history have a place in the historical education of older primary pupils, but this curriculum places an emphasis on the study of the 'everyday lives' of what may be termed 'ordinary people'.

Children should study the domestic and social history of women, men and children as well as their technological, scientific, cultural, artistic and leisure activities in the past.

These studies can never be exhaustive, and this curriculum seeks to provide flexibility for schools and teachers in the selection of content while ensuring that children become familiar with a broad and balanced range of topics. In particular it will be important that children have opportunities to become aware of the lives of people from different social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds in Ireland, Europe and the wider world.

### *Working as an historian*

Engaging in the process of historical enquiry is a second and essential element of history. Thus, the curriculum provides for the development of a growing range of historical skills and concepts as children study the lives of people in the past. These skills and concepts, which are outlined in the sections entitled *Working as an historian*, are related to the nature of historical enquiry.

History uses skills and concepts which are associated with *time, sequence and chronology*. Although young children have a very imperfect understanding of the concepts of time which adults use to mark periods in the past, they can become aware of differences between life in the present and the past, and so begin to develop a sense of time. This curriculum suggests activities for infants and junior classes in which the development of children's sense of time may begin through the exploration of elements of their immediate past and the past of their families and locality.

Children's sense of the past will become somewhat more sophisticated as they grow older, so that they will begin to understand and use concepts of time and chronology, recognise instances of change and continuity, and develop gradually a sense of perspective in time.

All history rests on *evidence*. History in the primary school should engage the child in finding, selecting and analysing a wide range of sources which can tell us about the past. Older children should also come to appreciate the importance of such evidence, its limitations and the need to treat it fairly. By realising that the evidence of the past may be interpreted in a number of ways, children will come to appreciate that historical judgements are always provisional and may have to change in the light of new evidence.

Historians do not simply study the past: they use the evidence they have found to reconstruct the past, and they convey their accounts and interpretations to others. *Synthesising* an account from a number of pieces of evidence in order to create an *imaginative reconstruction* of the past and its *communication* to others are fundamental aspects of history. They may be engaged in readily by the primary child, and they make important contributions to the development of the child's wider personal, social and intellectual skills.

A study of the past relies on, and helps to develop, *a sense of empathy*: the ability to view situations from another person's perspective. This involves learning to appreciate and understand the attitudes, values and motivations of others as well as the historical contexts in which they lived. A sense of empathy is essential if the child is to become critically aware of his/her own attitudes and those of others, and it makes a valuable contribution to the development of mutual respect and tolerance.

History is also concerned with *the influence of the past on the present*. History should allow the child to explore how the actions and experiences of people in the past have influenced subsequent generations. The exploration of the immediate environment will reveal many instances in which people in the past have shaped elements of our present surroundings through settlement, farming, building and other activities. But the influence of the past is not confined to the physical and material world. History can also reveal how our sense of identity—on a personal level and as a member of family, national and other communities—has been shaped by the cultural and social experiences of many different peoples in the past. Perhaps most important of all, history can help the child to begin to explore how people's interpretations of the past can exert a powerful influence on their attitudes, beliefs and actions today.

## History and the integrated curriculum

### *History and other areas within SESE*

While history makes an important and distinctive contribution to the development of the child, historical education complements the growth of the child's geographical and scientific learning. All three contribute to the wider social and environmental education of the child and their complementary roles will be reflected in the organisation of learning. Throughout the primary school, and in the early years especially, much learning in history, geography and science will take place through the

integrated themes or topics which teachers use to organise their work. Many of these topics will arise out of the child's need to explore and understand his/her immediate environment and local community. The curriculum and its accompanying guidelines suggest how the development of valuable historical skills, concepts and attitudes will be achieved as these topics are explored.

### *Language and history*

Language develops primarily through its purposeful use and effective learning often involves and occurs through talk and writing. Because of this, history can make a critical contribution to the child's language development: the growth of the child's historical understanding and the acquisition of language skills are interdependent and mutually enriching. Possible instances of integration between history and other subjects are suggested within the curriculum statement and guidelines but, in view of the pervasive influence of language throughout the teaching and learning process, examples of integration involving language and history are not delineated.

The opportunities for the parallel development of language and historical understanding are extensive. Much of the evidence of the past which children will encounter will be mediated through language; oral accounts and stories will be an important source at all levels in the history curriculum and as children grow older they will examine an ever-widening range of written sources. Moreover, children will use oral and written language to describe, discuss and interpret the activities of people in the past. As they become more accustomed to examining oral and written evidence in a critical and sensitive manner children will also come to appreciate with increasing discernment the nuances of language and the meaning these convey.

An essential element in the work of the historian is the communication of his/her interpretation of the past to others and this has led to the inclusion of 'communication' as an historical skill in the curriculum. While the curriculum encourages the use of a range of communicative methods by children, many of these, such as oral retellings, drama, written accounts, worldwide web pages and other computer applications will encourage the development of skills in oral language, reading and writing. History will therefore provide rich opportunities for the enrichment and extension of children's language.



History also has a language of its own. Children will be introduced to terms associated with chronology (words such as 'long ago', 'era', 'period') and they will encounter instances in which commonly used words (such as 'ruler', 'house', 'school') acquire very different meanings when used in an historical context. The extent, therefore, to which language is an integral part of the teaching and learning process should be a consistent concern in the planning and implementation of the history curriculum.

### Information and communication technologies

History provides many opportunities for the development and application of skills in the area of information and communication technologies and the curriculum encourages the use of ICTs in the development of children's historical understanding and skills. Many multimedia computer programs re-create the appearance of buildings, places and events in the past and allow children to experience aspects of the lives of people at various periods. Electronic media such as CD-ROMs and the internet can give children access to a vast range of pictorial, film and other sources which can greatly enrich children's historical understanding. Indeed, as the use of ICTs becomes more widespread, electronically stored information will become an increasingly important primary source of historical evidence in its own right and it will be used to help children and adults draw conclusions about the past.

Information and communication technologies also facilitate children's presentation of their own historical findings: information can be exchanged with others while written, aural and visual accounts may be readily created and edited. Moreover, the accounts of the past which children have created may be easily communicated both to others in the school and to a wider audience throughout Ireland and other parts of the world.

### Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning in history, as in other areas of the curriculum. The section on assessment outlines how a range of informal and more formal assessment techniques can assist in enriching the learning experience of the child and provide useful information for pupils, teachers, parents and others.

## Aims

The aims of the history curriculum are

- to develop an interest in and curiosity about the past
- to make the child aware of the lives of women, men and children in the past and how people and events have had an impact upon each other
- to develop an understanding of the concepts of change and continuity
- to provide for the acquisition of concepts and skills associated with sequence, time and chronology, appropriate to the developmental stages of the child
- to allow the child to encounter and use a range of historical evidence systematically and critically
- to provide opportunities for the child to communicate historical findings and interpretations in a variety of ways
- to foster sensitivity to the impact of conservation and change within local and wider environments
- to help the child recognise and examine the influences of the past on the attitudes and behaviour of people today
- to foster a willingness to explore personal attitudes and values and to promote an openness to the possibility of changing one's own point of view
- to encourage the child to recognise how past and present actions, events and materials may become historically significant
- to enable the child to acquire a balanced appreciation of cultural and historical inheritances from local, national and global contexts.

## Broad objectives

When due account is taken of intrinsic abilities and varying circumstances, the history curriculum should enable the child to

- study a range of people and events in the past in order to develop a balanced understanding of family, local, national and world history
- learn about the people, events, issues and cultural experiences which have helped to shape the local community and the environment
- develop an understanding of chronology, in order to place people, events and topics studied in a broad historical sequence
- acquire some understanding of change and continuity, including an awareness of factors which may have caused or prevented change, and come to appreciate that events may have a number of causes and outcomes
- examine and use a range of historical evidence systematically and critically, and appreciate the fact that evidence can be interpreted in different ways
- use imagination and evidence to reconstruct elements of the past
- communicate historical understanding in a variety of ways, using appropriate language and other techniques or media
- develop an appreciation of the perspectives and motives of people in the past and accept that individuals and events should be understood in their historical context
- be aware that the attitudes and behaviour of people may be influenced by their understanding of the past and by their past experiences
- respect and value a range of opinions and acquire open, questioning attitudes to the beliefs, values and motivations of others
- develop tolerance towards minorities in society and appreciate the contribution of various ethnic, cultural, religious and social groups to the evolution of modern Ireland
- develop a sense of personal, local, national, European and wider identities through studying the history and cultural inheritance of local and other communities
- develop a sense of responsibility for, and a willingness to participate in, the preservation of heritage.

# Infant classes

# Overview

infant classes

## *Skills and concepts development*

### Working as an historian

- Time and chronology
  - Using evidence
  - Communication
- 

## *Strands*

## *Strand units*

### Myself and my family

- Myself
  - My family
- 

### Story

- Stories
-

# Planning

## Structure

The content of the history curriculum for infant classes is presented in two sections:

- a skills section entitled *Working as an historian* which describes the historical skills which children should develop as they encounter historical topics
- a number of *strands* which outline the historical periods and topics which may be included in the history programme. The topics within each strand are referred to as *strand units*. Examples and suggestions are shown in italic type throughout the content sections.

The presentation of content in these two sections is intended to help teachers in planning for the development of important skills and attitudes as knowledge and understanding of historical topics are acquired.

## Strands for infant classes

Content in history for the infant classes is confined to two strands:

- *Myself and my family*, through which the child will begin to explore aspects of his/her own immediate past and that of his/her family
- *Story*, in which the child will encounter elements from the lives of a range of people in the past.

## A range of perspectives

The stories and other activities selected by the school and teacher should

- introduce children to the lives of women, men and children from a range of social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds
- include studies from a wide range of human experience (e.g. economic, technological, scientific, artistic, social, cultural, religious, political, etc.)
- come from local, national and international contexts.

## Personal and local history

An important emphasis is placed on the exploration of personal and family history at this level. This type of activity enables the child to explore thoroughly elements of his/her own past and that of his/her family, community and locality. In this way the exploration of the past becomes of immediate relevance for the child and important opportunities are provided for the examination of a wide range of evidence.

The exploration of personal and family history provides excellent opportunities for the development of historical understanding but some aspects of these topics will require sensitive handling. In some cases schools may wish to replace the units on family history with a study of the family of a person known to the children.

## Linkage and integration

Much of the work suggested in the curriculum might be delivered through the integrated themes or topics which are commonly used to organise learning in infant classes. For example, objectives in the strand units 'Myself' and 'My family' might be achieved as children examine these themes in SPHE or religious education. Similarly, many of the stories used in language lessons or at story time will provide opportunities for the development of simple historical skills such as the discussion of sequences and the retelling of stories through oral language, drama or art work. Information and communication technologies may also be used in the telling and recording of stories and in the exploration of the lives of people in the past.

Within the content sections, notes below strand units suggest some of the instances where linkage (i.e. integration within the history curriculum) and integration (i.e. cross-curricular connections) might be established.

# Skills and concepts development for infant classes

## Working as an historian

---

*Through completing the strand units of the history curriculum the child should be enabled to*

### Time and chronology

- become aware of and discuss the sequence of events in simple stories about the past
- record sequences of events in personal or family history and in stories using simple timelines

*place a number of personal photographs or items in chronological order*

### Using evidence

- encounter some simple historical evidence

*family photographs, own clothes worn when younger, buildings*

### Communication

- communicate an awareness of stories from the past in a variety of ways

*listening to and retelling stories, drama, art work  
information and communication technologies.*



# Strand: Myself and my family

## Strand unit Myself

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- explore and record significant personal events and dates
  - my age*
  - when I was born*
  - when I took my first steps*
  - as I grew up*
  - first day at school*
  - places where I have lived*
- collect and examine simple evidence
  - photographs of oneself when younger, first toys*
- compare photographs, clothes worn or toys used at different ages, noting development and things which have stayed the same.

### *Integration*

Science: Living things—Myself

SPHE: Myself—Growing and changing

## Strand unit My family or The family of a person known to me

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- become aware of and identify the members of the family
- compare relative ages: old/older, young/younger
- collect simple evidence
  - photographs of family members*
- explore and discuss how family members care for each other
- discuss developments in the life of the family and things which have stayed the same
  - living in the same home*
  - getting a new car*
  - trees growing in the garden.*

### *Integration*

SPHE: Myself and others—Myself and my family

# Strand: Story

## Strand unit Stories

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- listen to, discuss, retell and record through pictures and other simple writing activities some stories from the lives of people who have made a contribution to local and/or national life and to the lives of people in other countries in a variety of ways
- become aware of the lives of women, men and children from different social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, including the lives of 'ordinary' as well as 'more famous' people
- listen to local people telling stories about their past
- discuss the chronology of events (beginning, middle, end) in a story
- express or record stories through art work, drama, music, mime and movement and using information and communication technologies
- display storyline pictures showing episodes in sequence.

### *Integration*

Music: Listening and responding; Performing

Visual arts: Many stories may inspire artistic work.

Drama: Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding



First  
and second  
classes

# Overview

first and second classes

## *Skills and concepts development*

### Working as an historian

- Time and chronology
  - Change and continuity
  - Cause and effect
  - Using evidence
  - Synthesis and communication
  - Empathy
- 

## *Strands*

### Myself and my family

## *Strand units*

- Myself
  - My family
  - When my grandparents were young
  - Games in the past
  - Feasts and festivals in the past
- 

### Change and continuity

- Continuity and change in the local environment
- 

### Story

- Stories
-

# Planning

## Structure

The content of the history curriculum for first and second classes is presented in two sections:

- a skills section entitled *Working as an historian* which describes the historical skills which children should develop as they encounter historical topics
- a number of *strands* which outline the historical periods and topics which may be included in the history programme. The topics within each strand are referred to as *strand units*. Examples and suggestions are shown in italic type throughout the content sections.

The presentation of content in these two sections is intended to help teachers in planning for the development of important skills and attitudes as knowledge and understanding of historical topics are acquired.

## Strands for first and second classes

Content in history for first and second classes is confined to three strands:

- *Myself and my family*, which encourages the exploration of the past experiences of the child and that of his/her wider family circle
- *Change and continuity*, which involves the child in exploring items from the past in the immediate environment
- *Story*, in which the child will encounter elements from the lives of a range of people.

## A range of perspectives

The stories and other activities selected by the school and teacher should

- introduce children to the lives of women, men and children from a range of social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds
- include studies from a wide range of human experience (e.g. economic, technological, scientific, artistic, social, cultural, religious, political, etc.)
- come from local, national and international contexts.

## Personal and local history

An important emphasis is placed on the exploration of personal and family history at this level. This type of activity enables the child to explore thoroughly elements of his/her own past and that of his/her family, community and locality. In this way the exploration of the past becomes of immediate relevance for the child and important opportunities are provided for the examination of a wide range of evidence.

The exploration of personal and family history provides excellent opportunities for the development of historical understanding but some aspects of these topics will require sensitive handling. In some cases schools may wish to replace the units on family history with a study of the family of a person known to the children.

## Linkage and integration

Much of the work suggested in the curriculum might be delivered through the integrated themes or topics which are commonly used to organise learning in first and second classes. For example, objectives in the strand units 'Myself' and 'My family' might be achieved as children examine these themes in SPHE or religious education. Similarly, many of the stories used in language lessons or at story time will provide opportunities for the development of simple historical skills, such as the discussion of sequences and the retelling of stories through oral language, drama or art work. Information and communication technologies may also be used in the telling and recording of stories and in the exploration of the lives of people in the past.

Within the content sections, notes below strand units suggest some of the instances where linkage (i.e. integration within the history curriculum) and integration (i.e. cross-curricular connections) might be established.

# Skills and concepts development for first and second classes

## Working as an historian

---

*Through completing the strand units of the history curriculum the child should be enabled to*

### Time and chronology

- begin to distinguish between the past, present and future
- begin to develop an understanding of chronology through exploring and recording simple sequences and by placing objects or pictures in historical sequence

### Change and continuity

- explore instances of change and continuity, especially in personal life, in family and local history

*features which have changed or remained unchanged in home, family and immediate local environment*

### Cause and effect

- discuss the reasons why some events happened and some of their consequences

*the actions of a character in a story*

### Using evidence

- examine a range of simple historical evidence  
*photographs, objects, memories of older people, buildings, stories and songs*
- begin to distinguish between fictional accounts in stories, myths and legends and real people and events in the past

### Synthesis and communication

- communicate an awareness of stories, people and events from the past in a variety of ways

*writing, drama, other media, information and communication technologies*

### Empathy

- imagine and discuss the feelings of characters in stories from the past.



## Strand: Myself and my family

### Strand unit Myself

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- explore and record significant personal dates and events

*birthdays*

*how I changed as I grew up*

*first visits on holidays*

*when my brother or sister was born*

*when I moved home*

*when we got a new caravan or trailer*

*first day at school or in this class*

- collect, discuss and compare simple items of evidence from own past

*photographs of myself or my home*

*items of clothing, toys*

*first reading book or copybooks*

- construct simple personal timeline or storyline.

#### *Integration*

Science: Living things—Myself

SPHE: Myself—Growing and changing

### Strand unit My family or The family of a person known to me

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- explore and record significant features, events and dates in the past of the child's family and extended family
- compare ages of family members: old/older, young/younger
- discuss and record significant family events  
*births, moving home, holidays*

- collect, explore and discuss a range of simple evidence, noting changes and developments and items which have stayed the same

*photographs of family members and events*

*simple mementoes or memorabilia*

*items used by parent(s) or guardian(s) when they were young*

- compile simple family tree, scrapbook or timeline.

#### *Integration*

SPHE: Myself and others—Myself and my family

## Strand unit When my grandparents were young

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- explore and record aspects of the lives of people when his/her grandparents were young
  - where grandparents lived, their homes*
  - work they did, their clothes and food*
  - how they travelled*
  - their games, hobbies, toys, dances and songs*
- listen to adults talking about their own past
- collect and/or examine simple evidence in school or in a local museum
  - household tools and equipment*
  - some farm tools*
  - packages or boxes, toys or games*
  - newspapers or magazines, letters or postcards*
- compare lives of people in the past with the lives of people today, noting differences and similarities
- learn songs and dances, or play games from the past
- record material on appropriate timeline.

## Strand unit Games in the past

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- explore and record traditional non-formal games, especially those common in the locality and those known to parents or grandparents
  - street games, local games, house games*
  - Halloween games, May Day games,*
  - Christmas games*
- collect information on rules, traditions, songs or rhymes associated with the games
- handle, collect or reconstruct articles used in such games, where possible.

### *Integration*

Physical education: Games

SPHE: Myself and the wider world—Developing citizenship

## Strand unit Feasts and festivals in the past

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- explore and discuss the origins and traditions of some common festivals

*Christmas, Halloween*

*local feasts and festivals celebrated by various members of the school community*

- listen to, discuss, explore and record associated stories, legends, games and songs.

### *Integration*

Physical education: Dance

Music: Listening and responding; Performing

## Strand: Change and continuity

### Strand unit    Continuity and change in the local environment

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- visit, explore and become aware of elements in the local environment which show continuity and change
  - my home—when built, when and why it was changed*
  - street scene now and then*
  - a local building (e.g. house, church, barn or farmyard, railway station, school, castle, old wall, estate garden, mill)*
  - a factory—product in the past, product now*
- listen to and record memories of older people about such places
- compare photographs, drawings and simple accounts of the site in the past with the site now
- use simple work directives, work cards or trail leaflets
- record findings through drawing and other art work, modelling, photographs, information and communication technologies
- use appropriate timelines.

# Strand: Story

## Strand unit Stories

---

### *The child should be enabled to*

- listen to, discuss, retell and record some simply told stories from the lives of people who have made a contribution to local and/or national life and to the lives of people in other countries through technological, scientific, cultural and artistic activities as well as those who have contributed to social and political developments
- become aware of the lives of women, men and children from different social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, including the lives of 'ordinary' as well as 'more famous' people
- listen to local people telling stories about their past
- listen to, discuss, retell and record a range of myths and legends from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds in Ireland and other countries
- distinguish between fictional accounts in stories, myths and legends and real people and events in the past
- discuss chronology of events (beginning, middle, end) in a story
- discuss the actions and feelings of characters
- express or record stories through simple writing, art work, drama, music, mime and movement and using information and communication technologies
- display storyline pictures showing episodes in sequence
- use appropriate timelines.

### *Integration*

Music: Listening and responding; Performing

Visual arts: Many stories may inspire artistic work.

Drama: Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding

Third  
and fourth  
classes



# Overview

third and fourth classes

## *Skills and concepts development*

### Working as an historian

- Time and chronology
  - Change and continuity
  - Cause and effect
  - Using evidence
  - Synthesis and communication
  - Empathy
- 

## *Strands*

## *Strand units*

---

### Local studies

- My family
- Homes
- My school
- Games and pastimes in the past
- Feasts and festivals in the past
- Buildings, sites or ruins in my locality
- My locality through the ages

*Two strand units should be selected from this strand during each year.*

---

### Story

- Stories from the lives of people in the past
- Myths and legends

*A selection of stories should be explored in each year.*

---



## Strands

## Strand units

---

### Early people and ancient societies

Study a selection from:

- Stone Age peoples
- Bronze Age peoples
- Early societies of the Tigris and Euphrates valleys
- Egyptians
- Greeks
- Romans
- Celts
- Early Christian Ireland
- Vikings

and a selection from:

- Central and South American peoples  
*e.g. Aztecs*
- Asian peoples  
*e.g. peoples of the Indus valley, Ch'in and Han empires of China*
- African peoples  
*e.g. Benin peoples*
- North American peoples  
*e.g. Native American peoples*
- Australasian peoples  
*e.g. Maori*

*Two strand units should be selected from this strand during each year.*

---

### Life, society, work and culture in the past

- Life in Norman Ireland
- Life in mediaeval towns and countryside in Ireland and Europe

- Life in the 18th century
- Life in the 19th century
- Life during World War II
- Life in Ireland since the 1950s

*Two strand units should be selected from this strand during each year.*

---

### Continuity and change over time

Possible units may include:

- Food and farming
- Clothes
- Homes and houses
- Transport
- Communications
- Shops and fairs
- Schools and education
- Caring for the sick

*Two strand units should be selected from this strand during each year.*

# Planning

## Structure

The content of the history curriculum for third and fourth classes is presented in two sections:

- a skills section entitled *Working as an historian* which describes the historical skills which children should develop as they encounter historical topics
- a number of *strands* which outline the historical periods and topics which may be included in the history programme. The topics within each strand are referred to as *strand units*. Examples and suggestions are shown in italic type throughout the content sections.

The presentation of content in these two sections is intended to help teachers in planning for the development of important skills and attitudes as knowledge and understanding of historical topics are acquired.

## Strands for third and fourth classes

The range of strands is expanded significantly at this level and includes:

- *Local studies*
- *Story*
- *Early people and ancient societies*
- *Life, society, work and culture in the past*
- *Continuity and change over time.*

The range of units within these strands provides considerable flexibility for schools and teachers in the selection of content.

## A spiral approach

The curriculum is based on a spiral approach in which some aspects of the past may be explored in increasing detail at a number of levels. In five of the strands, *Local studies*, *Story*, *Early people and ancient societies*, *Life, society, work and culture in the past* and *Continuity and change over time*, the titles of the strand units are almost identical for third and fourth (middle) classes and fifth and sixth (senior) classes. However, this does not imply that these strand units will be taught at both levels; rather it is to provide flexibility for school and class planning.

Some units will be treated during middle classes only, some will be taught in the senior years only, while others could be profitably taught at both levels, with the more complex details, concepts, and methods of investigation and treatment reserved for fifth and sixth classes. The suggestions are not intended to be prescriptive or exclusive.

### A range of perspectives

The units selected by the school and teacher should

- introduce children to the lives of women, men and children from a range of social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds
- include studies from a wide range of human experience (e.g. economic, technological, scientific, artistic, social, cultural, religious, political, etc.)
- come from local, national and international contexts. An important aim of the programme is that children will acquire a balanced understanding of family, local, national and international history.

### Personal and local history

An important emphasis is placed on the exploration of personal history and/or local studies at this level. This type of activity enables the child to explore thoroughly elements of his/her own past and that of his/her family, community and locality. In this way the exploration of the past becomes of immediate relevance for the child and important opportunities are provided for the examination of a wide range of evidence.

The exploration of personal and family history provides excellent opportunities for the development of historical understanding but some aspects of these topics will require sensitive handling. In some cases schools may wish to replace the units on family history with a study of the family of a person known to the children.

## Depth of treatment

A balance should be sought between the need to allow children to learn about the broad sweep of national and world history and the need to provide opportunities for children to engage in an intensive study of shorter periods or more restricted topics in local, national or world history. Therefore, it is suggested that in each year one strand unit in local history and one strand unit in national or world history would be studied in more depth over a longer period.

## Chronology

A strict adherence to a chronological treatment of strand units should be avoided because of the constraints this would impose on curricular planning: for example, schools in the vicinity of particularly rich Stone Age sites might decide to engage in detailed studies of the sites with senior classes, an arrangement which would be precluded if a strictly chronological approach was adopted. The development of children's chronological understanding (which is discussed more fully in the accompanying guidelines for teachers) can be fostered through the use of timelines and other methods.

## Planning

Efficient planning for history in the school will ensure that children experience a broad and balanced curriculum in which undue repetition or significant gaps are avoided. Advice on developing and implementing the school plan for history may be found in the guidelines.

## Linkage and integration

Opportunities for the use of an integrated approach exist at all levels in the history curriculum. Within the content sections, notes below strand units suggest some of the instances where linkage (i.e. integration within the history curriculum) and integration (i.e. cross-curricular connections) might be established.



# Skills and concepts development for third and fourth classes

## Working as an historian

---

*Through completing the strand units of the history curriculum the child should be enabled to*

### Time and chronology

- distinguish between the past, present and future
- develop an understanding of time and chronology through comparing the relative ages of people, objects and events
- record information about people and events in the past using simple timelines
- understand and use date conventions when studying the past, including day, month and year

*year of own birth*

*birth of parents and family members*

*year of commencing school*

*other personal dates in immediate and more distant past*

- use common words and phrases associated with time

*old/new, older/newer, before/after, later/earlier, a long time ago, a very long time ago*

### Change and continuity

- develop an understanding of change and continuity by exploring similarities and differences between the past and the present

### Cause and effect

- discuss the reasons for, and the effect of, some events and changes in the past

### Using evidence

- examine and use a wider range of historical evidence, especially that which may be found in the locality or which is connected with local history

*photographs, pictures, objects, memories of older people, buildings, stories and songs, written sources, films, other media, information and communication technologies*

- ask questions about a piece of evidence
- summarise information in, and make simple deductions from, a single source of evidence

## Synthesis and communication

- use evidence and imagination to reconstruct elements of the past
  - a game played by grandparents when they were young*
  - conversation between two historical characters*
  - appearance of an ancient rath*
- communicate this understanding of the past in a variety of ways
  - oral language, writing, drama, art work, modelling, other media, information and communication technologies*

## Empathy

- imagine and discuss the feelings and motives of people in the past.

## Strand: Local studies

### Strand unit My family

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- explore aspects of personal family history or the family history of a person known to him/her

*birth dates of brothers and sisters*

*birth dates of parents and grandparents*

*life-spans of great-grandparents if possible*

*the occasions of births, deaths and other family events in the past*

*when my home was built or when my family came to live here*

*significant dates in the life of the family (e.g. when father, mother or other relative started work, changed job, when a member of the family emigrated or migrated)*

- examine changes and examples of continuity in the lives of parents and grandparents

*in clothes, foods*

*in books, games and leisure activities*

*in communication, roads, transport*

*in built and natural environment*

- collect and use a range of simple historical evidence

*oral history*

*photographs*

*family memorabilia*

*old newspapers*

*reference books*

- present findings using a variety of media and appropriate timelines.

#### *Integration*

SPHE: Myself and others—Myself and my family



## Strand unit Homes

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- explore changes which have taken place in the home and other homes in the area  
*varying designs and materials in homes of different ages and types, including houses, caravans, flats, cottages, trailers*  
*changes to the structure*  
*changes in services (e.g. when electricity came to the home)*  
*changes in furniture and appliances used*
- discuss with older people items which have changed and those which have remained the same
- collect and/or examine old artefacts
- present findings using a variety of media and appropriate timelines.

*Integration*

Geography: Human environments—People living and working in the local area

## Strand unit My school

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- investigate the development of present buildings and the history of earlier school buildings
- become familiar with the story of the school's founder(s)
- attempt to reconstruct a school day in the past using a range of simple evidence  
*memories of former pupils*  
*old textbooks, handwriting copies and pens*  
*photographs of schoolchildren*  
*folk memories, oral history*
- compare school furniture and equipment of the past and the appearance of the classroom with those of today
- examine old roll books or other records; if possible old handwriting copybooks
- refer to or use appropriate timelines.

*Integration*

SPHE: Myself and the wider world—Developing citizenship

## Strand unit Games and pastimes in the past

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- become familiar with some games and pastimes enjoyed in the locality
- explore and discuss games and pastimes enjoyed by parents and grandparents in the past
- have some knowledge of games and pastimes enjoyed by children in ancient societies and in other lands.

*Integration*

Physical education: Games

SPHE: Myself and the wider world—Developing citizenship

## Strand unit Feasts and festivals in the past

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- become familiar with the origins and traditions associated with some common festivals in Ireland and other countries
- explore, discuss and record some of the ceremonies, stories, legends, poetry, music, dances and games associated with these feasts and festivals.

*local feasts and festivals*

*feasts and festivals celebrated by various members of the school and local community, including Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and other celebrations where appropriate*

*festivals associated with agricultural practices*

*festivals celebrated in ancient times*

*Integration*

Physical education: Dance

SPHE: Myself and the wider world—Developing citizenship

Music: Listening and responding; Performing

## Strand unit Buildings, sites or ruins in my locality

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- actively explore some features of the local environment
  - local church*
  - old house or houses*
  - estate farmyard*
  - street (or section of a street)*
  - bridge or old road*
  - mill*
  - hospital*
  - shop front or other building façades*
  - castle or towerhouse*
- investigate various aspects of these sites
  - origins and location*
  - their appearance now and formerly*
  - purpose of construction*
  - elements which have changed*
  - elements which have remained unchanged*
  - what it was like for people to live, work, worship or die in this place*
  - stories of people who lived, worked, worshipped or died in this place*
- present findings using a variety of media and appropriate timelines.

### *Integration*

Geography: Human environments—People living and working in the local area

## Strand unit My locality through the ages

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- study a period or periods in the history of the local village, town, city area, townland, parish or county
- become familiar with important events in the history of the locality, referring to the wider national context where relevant; possible events might include:
  - ancient settlements in rath or d n*
  - ancient burials*
  - foundation of village, town or city*
  - erection of particular buildings, bridges*
  - events in locality associated with the Great Famine*
  - changing farming practices*
  - opening and/or closing of local hospital or factories*
- collect related local ballads, stories and traditions.

### *Linkage*

Note that this unit might be used instead of one of the units suggested in the strand *Continuity and change over time*.

### *Integration*

Geography: Human environments—People living and working in the local area

# Strand: Story

## Strand unit Stories from the lives of people in the past

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- listen to, discuss, retell and record a range of stories from the lives of people who have made a contribution to local and/or national life and to the lives of people in other countries through technological, scientific, cultural and artistic activities as well as those who have contributed to social and political developments
- become aware of the lives of women, men and children from different social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, including the lives of 'ordinary' as well as 'more famous' people
- listen to local people telling stories about their past
- discuss chronology of events (beginning, middle, end) in a story
- examine and begin to make deductions from some simple relevant evidence
- discuss the actions and feelings of characters
- discuss the attitudes and motivations of characters
- express or record stories through oral and written forms, art work, music, drama, mime, movement and information and communication technologies
- use appropriate timelines.

## Strand unit Myths and legends

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- listen to, discuss, retell and record a range of myths and legends from various cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds in Ireland and other countries
- discuss the chronology of events in the stories
- discuss the actions and feelings of characters
- distinguish between fictional accounts in stories, myths and legends and real people and events in the past
- express or record stories through oral and written forms, art work, drama, mime, movement and information and communication technologies.

### *Integration*

Music: Listening and responding; Performing

Visual arts: Many stories may inspire artistic work.

Drama: Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding

## Strand: Early peoples and ancient societies

Strand units *A selection from:*

---

Stone Age peoples

Bronze Age peoples

Early societies of the Tigris and Euphrates valleys

Egyptians

Greeks

Romans

Celts

Early Christian Ireland

Vikings

*and a selection from:*

Central and South American peoples  
*e.g. Aztecs*

Asian peoples  
*e.g. peoples of the Indus valley, Ch'in and Han empires of China*

African peoples  
*e.g. Benin peoples*

North American peoples  
*e.g. Native American peoples*

Australasian peoples *e.g. Maori*

*The child should be enabled to*

- become familiar with aspects of the lives of these peoples

*origins*

*homelands*

*homes of people*

*food and cooking*

*clothes*

*work and technologies, weapons*

*cultural or artistic achievements*

*myths and stories*

*faith and beliefs*

*leisure and pastimes*

*burial practices*

*links these people had with Ireland or Europe (as appropriate)*

*arrival, settlement and life of these people in Ireland (as appropriate)*

- examine and become familiar with evidence we have which tells us about these people, especially evidence of these people which may be found locally

- record the place of these peoples on appropriate timelines.

## Strand: Life, society, work and culture in the past

Strand units *A selection from:*

---

Life in Norman Ireland

Life in mediaeval towns and countryside in Ireland and Europe

Life in the 18th century

Life in the 19th century

Life during World War II

Life in Ireland since the 1950s

*The child should be enabled to*

- become familiar with aspects of the lives of these people

*homes of people*

*clothes*

*farming, foods and cooking*

*technologies which people developed and used*

*people at work*

*tools and weapons*

*language(s), culture, art and music*

*leisure and pastimes*

*stories of individuals from this era*

- examine and become familiar with evidence from the periods studied, especially evidence which may be found locally
- record the place of peoples on timelines.

## Strand: Continuity and change over time

Strand units *Possible units may include:*

---

Food and farming

Clothes

Homes and houses

Transport

Communications

Shops and fairs

Schools and education

Caring for the sick

*The child should be enabled to*

- study aspects of social, artistic, technological and scientific developments over long periods
- identify items of change and continuity in the 'line of development'
- identify some of the factors which have caused or prevented change
- refer to or use appropriate timelines.





Fifth  
and sixth  
classes







# Planning

## Structure

The content of the history curriculum for fifth and sixth classes is presented in two sections:

- a skills section entitled *Working as an historian* which describes the historical skills which children should develop as they encounter historical topics
- a number of *strands* which outline the historical periods and topics which may be included in the history programme. The topics within each strand are referred to as *strand units*. Examples and suggestions are shown in italic type throughout the content sections.

The presentation of content in these two sections is intended to help teachers in planning for the development of important skills and attitudes as knowledge and understanding of historical topics are acquired.

## Strands for fifth and sixth classes

The range of strands is expanded further at this level and includes:

- *Local studies*
- *Story*
- *Early people and ancient societies*
- *Life, society, work and culture in the past*
- *Eras of change and conflict*
- *Politics, conflict and society*
- *Continuity and change over time.*

The range of units within these strands provides considerable flexibility for schools and teachers in the selection of content.

### A spiral approach

The curriculum is based on a spiral approach in which some aspects of the past may be explored in increasing detail at a number of levels. In five of the strands, *Local studies*, *Story*, *Early people and ancient societies*, *Life, society, work and culture in the past* and *Continuity and change over time*, the titles of the strand units are almost identical for third and fourth (middle) classes and fifth and sixth (senior) classes. However, this does not imply that these strand units will be taught at both levels; rather it is to provide flexibility for school and class planning.

Some units will be treated during middle classes only, some will be taught in the senior years only, while others could be profitably taught at both levels, with the more complex details, concepts and methods of investigation and treatment reserved for fifth and sixth classes. The suggestions are not intended to be prescriptive or exclusive and the units may be supplemented by additional enrichment units at the discretion of the teacher.

### A range of perspectives

The units selected by the school and teacher should

- introduce children to the lives of women, men and children from a range of social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds
- include studies from a wide range of human experience (e.g. economic, technological, scientific, artistic, social, cultural, religious, political, etc.)
- come from local, national and international contexts. An important aim of the programme is that children will acquire a balanced understanding of family, local, national and international history.

### Depth of treatment

A balance should be sought between the need to allow children to learn about the broad sweep of national and world history and the need to provide opportunities for children to engage in an intensive study of shorter periods or more restricted topics in local, national or world history. Therefore it is suggested that in each year one strand unit in local history and one strand unit in national or world history would be studied in more depth over a longer period.

### Chronology

A strict adherence to a chronological treatment of strand units should be avoided because of the constraints this would impose on curricular planning: for example, schools in the vicinity of particularly rich Stone Age sites might decide to engage in detailed studies of the sites with senior classes, an arrangement which would be precluded if a strictly chronological approach was adopted. The development of children's chronological understanding (which is discussed more fully in the accompanying guidelines for teachers) can be fostered through the use of timelines and other methods.

### Planning

Efficient planning for history in the school will ensure that children experience a broad and balanced curriculum in which undue repetition or significant gaps are avoided. Advice on developing and implementing the school plan for history may be found in the guidelines.

### Linkage and integration

Opportunities for the use of an integrated approach exist at all levels in the history curriculum. Within the content sections, notes below strand units suggest some of the instances where linkage (i.e. integration within the history curriculum) and integration (i.e. cross-curricular connections) might be established.





# Skills and concepts development for fifth and sixth classes

## Working as an historian

---

*Through completing the strand units of the history curriculum the child should be enabled to*

### Time and chronology

- develop an understanding of time and chronology so as to place people, objects and events within a broad historical sequence
- record people and events in the past using a variety of simple timelines
- use words, phrases and conventions associated with the recording of dates and time, such as BC, AD, age, period

*Stone Age, 600 BC, Early Christian Ireland, Renaissance, Georgian period*

### Change and continuity

- develop an understanding of change and continuity by exploring similarities and differences between the past and the present and between different periods in the past

### Cause and effect

- recognise some factors which may have caused, prevented or delayed changes in the past
- appreciate that events usually have a number of causes and outcomes

### Using evidence

- examine and use critically a wide range of historical evidence  
*photographs, pictures, objects, memories of older people, buildings, stories and songs, written sources, films, other media, information and communication technologies*
- develop some skills in the location and selection of evidence
- distinguish between primary and secondary sources
- ask questions about a piece of evidence
- compare accounts of a person or event from two or more sources
- make simple deductions from evidence
- recognise that evidence may be incomplete or biased
- appreciate that evidence can be interpreted in a number of ways

## Synthesis and communication

- select and organise historical information
- use imagination and evidence to reconstruct elements of the past  
*events of a 19th-century school day, emigration scene during famine times, appearance of a crannóg settlement, a letter or diary written by an historical character*
- communicate this understanding of the past in a variety of ways  
*oral language, writing, drama, art work, modelling, other media, information and communication technologies*

## Empathy

- imagine and discuss the feelings and motives of people in the past
- discuss how an event in the past may have been perceived by those who participated in it.

## Strand: Local studies

### Strand unit Homes

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- compare and classify a range of homes in the area (ideally homes from a variety of periods)
  - size and layout, construction materials*
  - decoration, furniture and fittings*
  - heat, light, sewerage, water supplies*
  - environs (e.g. street, flat complex, estate, garden, fields, trees, woods, play spaces)*
- investigate local and/or regional variations or similarities in building styles and materials
- investigate links between the age of houses and their location
- collect, study and classify domestic artefacts.

#### *Integration*

Geography: Human environments—People living and working in the local area

### Strand unit Schools

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- study the development of the school over a period
- relate the history of the school to the history of education in the parish or local area
  - bardic schools*
  - schools in the penal era of the early 18th century*
  - payschools (hedge schools) of 18th and 19th centuries*
  - modern schools*
- explore the history of the school in the wider context of educational development in Ireland
  - national school system*
  - work of religious orders*
  - curriculum content and school equipment*
- use documentary and other sources
  - records in school (e.g. rollbooks, punishment books, inspectors' reports)*
  - oral history from former pupils and staff*
  - school photographs*
  - letters, bills, receipts, diaries*
  - parish records (these can have valuable references to schools)*
  - local newspaper reports (of school opening or extensions)*
  - official printed reports (especially 19th-century government reports on education in Ireland).*

#### *Integration*

SPHE: Myself and the wider world—Developing citizenship

## Strand unit Games and pastimes in the past

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- become familiar with aspects of the history of games in the locality  
*games and sports in ancient times*  
*development of hurling, camogie, Gaelic football*  
*introduction of international sports such as tennis, hockey, soccer, rugby, golf*
- explore aspects of the leisure interests and games of local people in the past  
*board games, card games, street games*  
*house visiting and story-telling*  
*music and dancing*  
*cinema, radio and television.*

### *Integration*

Physical education: Games

SPHE: Myself and the wider world—Developing citizenship

## Strand unit Feasts and festivals in the past

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- become familiar with the origins and traditions associated with a range of festivals in Ireland and other countries  
*local feasts and festivals*  
*feasts and festivals celebrated by various members of the school and local community, including Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu and other celebrations where appropriate*  
*feasts and festivals of major world religions*  
*feasts and festivals in ancient times*
- explore, discuss and record some of the ceremonies, stories, legends, poetry, music, dances and games associated with these feasts and festivals.

### *Integration*

Physical education: Dance

SPHE: Myself and the wider world—Developing citizenship

Music: Listening and responding; Performing

## Strand unit Buildings, sites or ruins in my locality

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- actively explore some features of the local environment; suitable items or places might include:
  - streetscape (including building styles and features, street furniture)*
  - area of a town or village*
  - industrial site (e.g. factories, mills)*
  - local canal, bridges, road patterns, railways*
  - ruined building (e.g. towerhouse)*
  - site of an old monastery, graveyard, Mass path, Mass rock, holy well*
  - prehistoric site (e.g. rath, portal tomb)*
  - farmyard, field and farm patterns*
  - landlord's house, houses of tenants*
  - ice house, sweat house*
  - battle sites*
  - local rights of way*
- investigate various aspects of these sites
  - origins and location*
  - maps of site then and now*
  - appearance of site now and formerly*
  - purpose of construction*
  - elements which have changed and the reasons for change*
  - elements which have remained unchanged*
  - lives of people in this place over time*
- identify opportunities to become involved in enhancing and protecting the environmental features
- present findings using a variety of media and appropriate timelines.

### *Integration*

Geography: Human environments—People living and working in the local area

SPHE: Myself and the wider world—Developing citizenship

## Strand unit My locality through the ages

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- study a period or periods in the history of the local village, town, city area, townland, parish or county; in fifth and sixth classes children should study periods not already covered in third and fourth classes
- become familiar with important events in the history of the locality, setting local figures or events in the national and international context where relevant. In addition to the developments suggested for this unit in third and fourth classes, suitable subjects might include:
- use evidence which is more diverse and more complex than heretofore
- collect local ballads, stories and traditions relating to these events.

*origins of place-names*

*local battle*

*changes in land settlement or use*

*changing farming practices*

*significant events in the economic life of the area, such as the founding of factories, mills, or co-operatives*

*impact of changes in services and sanitation*

*patterns of relationships between towns and their surrounding areas*

### *Integration*

Geography: Human environments—People living and working in the local area

SPHE: Myself and the wider world—Developing citizenship

## Strand: Story

### Strand unit Stories from the lives of people in the past

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- listen to, discuss, retell and record a wide range of stories from the lives of people who have made a contribution to local and/or national life and to the lives of people in other countries through technological, scientific, cultural and artistic activities as well as those who have contributed to social and political developments
- become aware of the lives of women, men and children from different social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, including the lives of 'ordinary' as well as 'more famous' people
- listen to local people telling stories about their past
- discuss the chronology of events in a story
- examine and begin to make deductions from some simple relevant evidence
- discuss the actions and feelings of characters
- discuss the attitudes and motivations of characters in their historical context
- express or record stories through oral and written forms, art work, music, drama, mime, movement, information and communication technologies
- use appropriate timelines.

### Strand unit Myths and legends

---

*The child should be enabled to*

- listen to, discuss, retell and record a wider range of more complex myths and legends from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds in Ireland and other countries
- discuss the chronology of events in the stories
- discuss the actions and feelings of characters
- relate the myths and legends to the beliefs, values and traditions of the peoples from which they came
- discuss the forms of expression and conventions used in myths and their retelling  
*exaggeration, repetition, fantasy, caricature*
- explore and discuss common themes and features which are to be found in the myths and legends of different peoples
- express or record stories through oral and written forms, art work, drama, mime, movement, information and communication technologies.

#### *Integration*

Music: Listening and responding; Performing

Visual arts: Many stories may inspire artistic work.

Drama: Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding



## Strand: Early peoples and ancient societies

Strand units *A selection from:*

Stone Age peoples

Bronze Age peoples

Early societies of the Tigris and Euphrates valleys

Egyptians

*and a selection from:*

Central and South American peoples  
*e.g. Aztecs*

Asian peoples  
*e.g. peoples of the Indus valley, Ch'in and Han empires of China*

*The child should be enabled to*

- become familiar with some aspects of the lives of these peoples
  - origins*
  - homelands and migrations*
  - homes, settlements and urban developments*
  - food and farming*
  - clothes*
  - work and technologies*
  - tools and weapons*
  - cultural or artistic achievements*
  - language(s), myths and stories*
  - leisure and pastimes*
  - faith, beliefs and religious practices*
  - burial practices*
  - links these people had with Ireland or Europe (as appropriate)*
  - arrival, settlement and life of these people in Ireland (as appropriate)*
  - relationship of these people with other civilisations*
  - long-term contribution of these people*

Greeks

Romans

Celts

Early Christian Ireland

Vikings

African peoples  
*e.g. Benin peoples*

North American peoples  
*e.g. Native American peoples*

Australasian peoples  
*e.g. Maori*

- examine critically, and become familiar with, evidence we have which tells us about these people, especially evidence of these people which may be found locally and in Ireland, where appropriate
- record the place of these peoples on appropriate timelines.

## Strand: Life, society, work and culture in the past

### Strand units *A selection from:*

---

Life in Norman Ireland

Life in mediaeval towns and countryside in Ireland and Europe

Life in the 18th century

Life in the 19th century

Language and culture in late 19th and early 20th-century Ireland

Life during World War II

Life in Ireland since the 1950s

*The child should be enabled to*

- become familiar with aspects of the lives of these people

*homes of people*

*settlement patterns and urban developments*

*clothes*

*foods and farming*

*technologies which people developed and their influence on the lives of people*

*people at work*

*culture, art and music*

*language(s) and literature*

*leisure and pastimes*

*faith, beliefs and religious practices*

*migration and emigration*

*relationships of different groups of people to one another (e.g. landlord and tenant in the 19th century)*

*simple treatment of some of the social, economic, political or religious issues of the time (e.g. fear of plague in mediaeval towns, penal laws, decline in use of Irish in the 19th century, life of workers in 19th-century industrial towns)*

*long-term contribution of people and events at this time to the development of modern Ireland*

- examine and become familiar with evidence which informs us about the lives of people in the periods studied, their thoughts and concerns, especially evidence which may be found locally

- record the place of peoples and events on appropriate timelines.

## Strand: Eras of change and conflict

Strand units *A selection from:*

---

The Renaissance

The Reformation

Traders, explorers and colonisers from Europe

The Great Famine

The Industrial Revolution

Changing land ownership in 19th-century Ireland

Changing roles of women in 19th and 20th centuries

World War I

Modern Ireland

*The child should be enabled to*

- become familiar with aspects of these periods
  - ways in which the everyday lives of people changed*
  - changes and conflicts in people's thoughts and beliefs*
  - reasons for these changes and conflicts*
  - people, organisations and events involved in bringing about change or adapting to change*
  - local evidence of changes and conflicts*
  - the reactions of people to changes and issues which they experienced*
  - the long-term effect of changes and conflicts*

- examine and become familiar with evidence which informs us about the lives of people in the periods studied, their thoughts and concerns, especially evidence which may be found locally
- record the place of peoples and events on appropriate timelines.

## Strand: Politics, conflict and society

Strand units *A selection from:*

---

16th and 17th-century Ireland

Revolution and change in America,  
France and Ireland

O'Connell and Catholic Emancipation

1916 and the foundation of the state

Northern Ireland

Ireland, Europe and the world, 1960  
to the present

*The child should be enabled to*

- engage in simple studies of some of the more important aspects of periods in which political changes or movements have had an important influence on the lives of people in Ireland
- acquire some knowledge of the major personalities, events or developments in these periods
- explore, discuss, compare and develop some simple understanding of the attitudes, beliefs, motivations and actions of differing individuals and groups of people in the past
- begin to develop some appreciation of the 'mind-set' of former generations  
*appreciate that the notion of tolerance developed over time, that the notion of equality of treatment of people had to evolve over time*
- acquire insights into the attitudes and actions of people in contemporary Ireland
- develop a growing sense of personal, national, European and wider identities.

## Strand: Continuity and change over time

Strand units *Possible units may include:*

---

Homes, housing and urban developments

Nomadism

Food and farming

Clothes

Transport

Communications

*The child should be enabled to*

- study aspects of social, artistic, technological and scientific developments over long periods
- identify examples of change and continuity in the 'line of development'

Energy and power

Workshops and factories

Schools and education

Literature, art, crafts and culture

Caring for the sick

Barter, trade and money

- identify the factors which may have caused or prevented change
- refer to or use appropriate timelines.

# Assessment



# Assessment in SESE

## Assessment: an integral part of teaching and learning

The assessment of children's learning is an essential and on-going part of the teaching and learning process in SESE: in some form it will be a part of every lesson in history, geography and science. Teachers are constantly making judgements about their pupils' learning as they plan how to introduce and develop topics, concepts and skills, consolidate earlier lessons, assess the progress of individual pupils, identify difficulties, and praise and encourage learners.

Assessment enhances the teacher's awareness of each individual's learning, provides accurate information about the child's understanding and skills, and creates a picture of the child's holistic development throughout the broad range of curricular areas. It provides the basis for decisions about the pupil's further learning needs, assists in planning better educational experiences and is a natural element of a progressive child-centred curriculum.

## Roles of assessment: why assess in SESE?

Assessment enhances teaching and learning in a number of ways. Primarily, assessment in SESE, as in other areas of the curriculum, should assist in planning and supporting future learning for the child. Assessment should indicate the positive achievements of each pupil as he/she is engaged in the study of historical, geographical and scientific topics and should indicate possible areas of development in the child's learning. Used in this way, assessment plays a constructive, *formative* role in the child's education. Information gained about the child's learning will be used primarily by the teacher but it will also involve the pupil in self-evaluation and in the setting of personal learning targets.

Assessment will also indicate areas of learning difficulty encountered by the child. The learning difficulties identified in SESE may include weaknesses in the child's understanding, gaps in his/her knowledge or a lack of certain skills. As assessment fulfils this *diagnostic* role, it should help the teacher to identify approaches or learning experiences which would help to improve the child's learning. At times learning difficulties may be identified in one aspect of the child's historical, geographical or scientific development, but on other occasions a weakness encountered



in one area of SESE will reveal information about the child's learning in the other SESE curricula. Many teaching and learning experiences in history, geography and science draw on and use a wide range of skills and concepts, so SESE may also provide valuable opportunities to gain evidence of a child's progress in areas such as mathematics, language and social development.

Assessment should provide an indication of the child's overall achievement in a systematic way at regular intervals. Assessment may be used to fulfil this *summative* role when teachers seek to establish the outcomes of learning following the completion of a unit of work or when they report to audiences beyond the child, for example when they communicate with parents or other teachers about the child's progress.

Assessment can also help the teacher to evaluate the suitability of the SESE programme selected by the teacher and school for a particular age group and can assist the teacher in assessing the effectiveness of the educational resources, methodologies and approaches deployed. Used in this *evaluative* role, assessment can help to identify how the learning experience could be improved for the child.

# Assessment in history

## Assessment and the nature of history: what should be assessed?

If assessment is to fulfil these roles successfully it must be valid, i.e. it must seek to measure and report the child's progress and achievements in all aspects of the history curriculum. The history curriculum is constructed on the premise that history can make a unique and valuable contribution to the education of the child if it involves the simultaneous acquisition of knowledge about aspects of the past, the development of historical skills and the cultivation of important attitudes. The assessment of children's progress in history must reflect this approach to the subject in order to ensure the validity of the assessment and to avoid distortion of the curriculum by assessment techniques. Therefore, assessment techniques used in history must seek to assess progress in children's knowledge of the past, their ability to use historical skills and their development of attitudes.

## Strands and strand units

The strands and strand units of the history curriculum outline the knowledge areas of the curriculum and suggest ways in which historical skills may be developed as these units of work are completed. The objectives and italicised exemplars indicate the range of knowledge which may be expected at each level, and the section *Planning a unit of work* in the accompanying teacher guidelines illustrates how these may form the basis of teaching and learning activities. The knowledge base of these units should form one aspect of assessment.

The arrangement of the strands and strand units gives considerable flexibility to schools and teachers in the selection of appropriate topics for the history programme while at the same time giving guidance on the balance to be achieved in the curriculum. The curriculum makes it clear that in infant classes and in first and second classes much of the work suggested might be delivered through integrated themes and topics, and assessment should be sufficiently flexible to accommodate this pedagogical approach.

Assessment techniques will also have to take cognisance of the wide range of units from which the content of the programme may be selected in the middle and senior classes and the criteria which should inform the planning of a broad and balanced history curriculum (outlined on pp. 36–38 and 56–58 of the curriculum).

The flexibility offered by the curriculum and the requirements that children study elements from local, national and international contexts and from the early, middle and modern periods of history make comprehensive planning, effective summative assessment and record-keeping essential within the school.

### Working as an historian

An equally important aspect of assessment in history will be concerned with the development and application of historical skills achieved by pupils. At each level in the curriculum the section *Working as an historian* outlines the historical skills and concepts which should be developed as children study the topics described in the strand units of content. The objectives and the exemplars listed under each heading in these sections are intended to indicate the degree of skill which should be expected at each level, and, as in the case of knowledge objectives, the section *Planning a unit of work* in the teacher guidelines illustrates how the development of these skills may form an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

The assessment of skills is a complex activity for a number of reasons. Firstly, skills, by their very nature, are concerned with process, activity and application and are therefore less readily assessed by techniques which rely on a final written or other product. The level at which a primary school child applies historical skills is demonstrated best in the context of activity and discussion of people, events and objects from the past. The child will use historical skills when working individually, but frequently they are observed more readily in group work or class discussions. Thus, if assessment is to be a valid indicator of the child's historical understanding, it must seek to record and acknowledge the ability which the child demonstrates through a range of activities in varied learning situations.

Secondly, the development of historical skills is not linear or hierarchical. The curriculum presents historical skills in a series of four graduated statements in order to assist teachers in providing for the development of skills in a systematic way, but the acquisition of these skills is rarely achieved in a neat, progressive manner. Children's historical understanding does not progress smoothly from level to level in a consistent way, and it is affected by a range of factors.

In particular, children's ability to apply historical skills is developed in the context of the people, events and evidence from the past which they encounter: while children may be able to use certain skills when discussing an event with which they are familiar, they may be unable to apply these skills to the same extent in a less familiar context. Moreover, many children will apply the different historical skills at varying levels: a child may demonstrate a subtle understanding of cause and effect when discussing the motives of a character in the past yet be unable to place the events in question in their chronological context.

The assessment of children's historical skills is concerned therefore with describing a complex and organic process which cannot be monitored in a precise way because of the nature of the child's historical thinking and because the substance of history—its events, personalities, sources, questions, inferences and interpretations—are variable, complex and interconnected. Assessment must involve the use of tools which can accommodate the subtleties of this learning process and assess children's learning in the context of the elements of the past with which they are familiar.

### Values, attitudes and responsibilities

Assessment in history will also be concerned with values and attitudes which are developed in the child as he/she is engaged in the study of historical topics. The curriculum stresses the role which history may play in cultivating open, questioning attitudes to the beliefs, values and motivations of others, a tolerance towards various ethnic, cultural, religious and social groups, a sense of responsibility for the preservation of heritage, and a sense of local, national, European and global identity.

These attitudes are fostered by a balanced curriculum of historical topics from local, national and international contexts in which the child is encouraged to apply the skills of the historian in an open, critical way. As in the case of skills, a child's development of these attitudes can only be gauged in the context of authentic discussions and learning situations. Assessment of the child's attitudes in history must therefore rely strongly on the teacher's observations and his/her judgement of the child's approach to historical topics and activities.

## Assessment tools: how to assess

In the light of the various roles which assessment in history must fulfil and the need to assess children's knowledge of the past and their development of skills and attitudes, a range of assessment tools and approaches will be necessary. These will range from the less structured and more informal means of assessment to more structured and formal approaches. Generally, the assessment techniques used should arise naturally out of teaching and learning, and their effectiveness will be dependent on crucial teacher skills of observation, listening, interacting with pupils and scrutinising the outcomes of learning tasks used in history.

The following are among the assessment tools which schools will find most useful in history:

*teacher observation*

*teacher-designed tasks and tests*

*work samples, portfolios and projects*

*curriculum profiles.*

It should be understood that it may not be practicable or desirable to use all these tools in every learning situation or within a particular time span.

### *Teacher observation*

Observations and professional judgements made by the teacher in the classroom provide some of the most immediate and accurate information about pupils' learning, and they will be used constantly by the teacher in history lessons. Much can be gleaned from observing and noting children's responses in a variety of situations, including:

- the responses pupils make to the teacher's questions and suggestions
- the participation of pupils in whole-class discussions of historical characters, of their motives and actions, and of events in the past
- the interaction of pupils with each other in discussions and in group work
- the reaction of pupils to learning materials and learning tasks designed by the teacher
- the ways in which pupils react to and use historical evidence.

Teacher observation provides a continuing assessment of children's achievements in knowledge, skill and attitudinal aspects of history and can therefore play important formative and diagnostic roles and facilitate feedback to the learner. The child's success in developing and applying historical skills—such as the recognition of cause and effect, the handling of evidence, and the empathy he/she displays for others— is best observed in action, and so informal teacher observation may often be the only way in which an accurate estimation of the child's progress may be made.

Many observations will occur spontaneously as children engage in learning activities, express an interest in an historical topic or piece of evidence. However some observations may be planned or structured: for example, a teacher may decide to observe the work of particular pupils with learning difficulties or the discussion within a particular group in the classroom.

Some of the learning behaviours of children may be noted informally by teachers so as to help in organising the future educational experiences suitable for individual learners. At times teachers may find that making a simple written note of their observations can make the planning of further work for an individual, group or whole class more focused and systematic.

### *Teacher-designed tasks and tests*

Throughout the units of the history curriculum, teachers will identify opportunities for pupils to engage in a range of tasks. These will have a number of purposes: some will be designed to reinforce aspects of lessons, some will be designed to engage the child in asking questions and thinking about historical events or people, others will promote a range of historical skills. As well as contributing to the learning process, the reaction of pupils to these tasks will indicate their progress in history.

A wide variety of tasks should be used, including:

- telling and retelling of events and stories
- oral, written and pictorial accounts and descriptions of sites visited or people interviewed
- construction of timelines, varying from simple 'episodes in a story' lines to more complex lines of historical periods

- work cards or activity sheets which guide and stimulate children in the examination of evidence or in researching a topic
- trail booklets which help the child to examine the evidence of the past in the environment or in an exhibition
- maps of historical sites
- role-playing or dramatising a conversation or event
- speculating on the feelings, emotions and motives of a character so as to create a spoken or written account (e.g. what Strongbow told his friend about Diarmaid Mac Murchú following their first meeting, the letter a nineteenth-century emigrant wrote to her mother in Ireland)
- drawing or completion of drawings
- model-making
- compilation of a book on a particular historical topic or the presentation of project work using information and communication technologies
- projects completed on historical themes
- interactive, multimedia computer programs which enable children to explore historical topics and complete a range of tasks, puzzles or problems. These programs adjust to the child's level of knowledge or skill, give the child immediate feedback on his/her progress and, in some cases, may record information for the teacher about the progress of a number of pupils. Although useful, these programs may be of limited use in assessing historical skills
- results of the child's independent historical research
- teacher-designed revision test on a unit or units of work.

Using a range of these learning activities means that assessment is intimately linked to the teaching and learning process and that the child's progress is assessed in the context of the historical material with which he/she is familiar. Tasks may help to assess both the children's knowledge of historical topics and their ability to apply historical skills, and the information they supply can be used for formative, diagnostic and summative purposes.

The use of a range of tasks encourages all children to demonstrate the fullest extent of their historical understanding. The inclusion of tasks in media other than writing will enable the teacher to assess more accurately the level of historical understanding of pupils with less well-developed literacy skills. For example, some pupils may have absorbed considerable knowledge of the social conditions and technology of a period which is best demonstrated in the detail of model-making; others may have developed a keen sense of empathy which might only be expressed in role play.

#### *Work samples, portfolios and projects*

The compilation of a range of samples of a child's work to form a history portfolio provides a systematic means whereby his/her progress can be documented and assessed over a term, a year or a longer period. Depending on the school's assessment policy and the need to make the handling, scrutiny and storage of the portfolios manageable, they may contain examples of work in progress or 'best samples' of finished pieces together with teachers' comments.

Just as teacher tasks need to be varied so as to allow all children to express their development in a range of media, the portfolios should be sufficiently flexible to record achievement in a range of areas. Written accounts or drawn items are readily included, but completed work cards and booklets, teacher-prepared tests, computer disks (or other methods of electronic storage), photographs of models and perhaps audio tapes of retellings or dramatisations might also be enclosed. Older children can be responsible for the maintenance of their own portfolios, so gaining a pride in their own achievements, and this can be enhanced further by encouraging pupils to select their own 'best samples' for inclusion.

Reviewing the contents of the portfolio with the pupil can encourage the child in self-assessment of his/her own work and in the setting of personal learning targets. It also provides an excellent basis for the reporting of pupils' achievements to teachers, parents and others, and it allows remaining weaknesses to be identified. In addition, the systematic analysis of history portfolios can allow the teacher to evaluate the content, methodologies and approaches which he/she has used over a term or year.



The use of portfolio assessment is especially suited to the assessment of history (and other areas in SESE) for a number of reasons: these include the diverse nature of the history curriculum, the need for the child to explore thoroughly the history of the locality and the need to form a balanced assessment of children's progress in the development of skills and attitudes as well as knowledge. Therefore, portfolio assessment will be a major component in the range of assessment tools used in history.

### *Curriculum profiles*

Curriculum profiles provide a means of recording systematically children's progress and achievements as they are observed by the teacher. The profile consists of indicators of achievement, i.e. short phrases which describe the range of knowledge, skills and attitudes which might be expected of the child at different stages in his/her development. At times groups or sets of these indicators may be formed to provide a more general description of the child's progress at a number of particular levels or stages. Teachers seek to match their observations of pupils to the indicators in the profiles as work is undertaken or completed on a unit and at other regular intervals. By marking or highlighting indicators as they are achieved by the child, the profile can also serve recording and reporting functions.

The section *Working as an historian* in the history curriculum would provide an important basis for the development of at least some of the indicators to be included in a history profile; other indicators would refer to the knowledge base of the units to be chosen by the school. The development of suitable history profiles would facilitate greatly the reliable and valid assessment of the history curriculum.

Curriculum profiles provide a means of organising, systematising and recording teachers' observations which provide some of the most reliable data about pupils' progress in all aspects of history. The profile can also create an efficient system of record-keeping and reporting within the school. If updated at regular intervals throughout the year it will provide an excellent summative record for reporting to parents and others.

## A balanced approach to assessment in SESE

The primary aim of all assessment is to enhance the learning experiences of the child, and it will be important that the assessment techniques utilised in history and other areas of SESE should not detract unduly from teaching time. The school's policy for history should guide teachers in using assessment tools in a manageable and reliable way which is closely integrated with teaching and learning. The development and use of common approaches to recording teacher observations and the outcomes of learning experiences, and the compilation of portfolios and curriculum profiles, will facilitate a balanced and practical approach to assessment in the school.

## Recording and communicating

Teacher observations, teacher-designed tasks and tests and work samples, portfolio and projects, together with curriculum profiles and pupil profile cards, constitute a comprehensive system of assessing and recording each child's progress and achievements in the history programme. The pooling and discussion of this information among the teaching staff can enable teachers to share expertise and develop a common understanding of pupils' progress and assessment in SESE (a process referred to as *moderation*). Such co-operation can help to ensure continuity and reliability in the use of the assessment tools.

The range of assessment tools in SESE should provide essential information about the child's learning for pupils, teachers, schools, parents and other professionals and so facilitate future decisions about the child's learning. Teacher-parent discussions will provide opportunities for parental feedback and will enhance the overall assessment of the child.

### *Pupil profile card*

The recording and communication of this information about the child's progress will be facilitated by the use of a pupil profile card. The pupil profile card, which may be developed for use in all primary schools, should contain a summative assessment of the child's progress in all curricular areas and of other aspects of his/her development.

The teacher's professional judgement of the child's development in history, based on the outcomes of teaching, learning and assessment throughout the year, will form one aspect of the profile card. The section of the profile card for SESE should be sufficiently flexible to allow for the highly integrated nature of the area in the infant, first and second classes. As it should provide a basis for the planning of the child's future learning in another class or school, it should include, or be accompanied by, information regarding the selection of historical topics which the child has explored.

The possibilities and advantages offered by information technology in facilitating the recording, storage and transfer of pupil profile records should be explored and if possible used in the compilation of any widely used pupil profiling system.

# Appendix



# Membership of the Curriculum Committee for Social, Environmental and Scientific Education

This curriculum has been prepared by the Curriculum Committee for Social, Environmental and Scientific Education established by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

## Chairpersons

Michael Dee	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Angela Griffin ( <i>from 1995</i> )	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Helen Kennedy-Martin ( <i>to 1995</i> )	Irish National Teachers' Organisation

## Committee members

Br Thomas Costello	Teaching Brothers' Association / Association of Primary Teaching Sisters
Peadar Cremin	Management of Colleges of Education
Margie Cullen	National Parents Council— Primary
Marie Danaswamy ( <i>to 1995</i> )	National Parents Council—Primary
Henry Goff	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Teresa Farry ( <i>from 1996</i> )	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
David Fitzgerald	Catholic Primary School Managers' Association
Angela Griffin	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Kathleen Horgan ( <i>to 1996</i> )	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Jim Hourihane	Irish Federation of University Teachers
Siobhán Hurley	Irish Federation of University Teachers
Helen Kennedy-Martin	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Frankie McGrath ( <i>to 1995</i> )	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
James Malseed	Church of Ireland General Synod Board of Education
Sheelagh Morrow	Church of Ireland General Synod Board of Education
Patrick Murchan	Catholic Primary School Managers' Association
Éamonn Ó Breacáin	Department of Education and Science
Tomás Ó Briain	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Colm Ó Ceallacháin	Department of Education and Science
Micheál Ó Cinnéide ( <i>from 1995</i> )	National Parents' Council—Primary
Micheál Ó Mathúna	Department of Education and Science
Sr Mairéad Rabbitte	Association of Primary Teaching Sisters / Teaching Brothers' Association
Brian Tubbert	Irish National Teachers' Organisation

## Education officers

Harold Hislop
Carmel O'Doherty

# Membership of the Primary Co-ordinating Committee

To co-ordinate the work of the Curriculum Committees, the Primary Co-ordinating Committee was established by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

<b>Chairperson</b>	Tom Gilmore	
<b>Committee members</b>	Sydney Blain <i>(from 1995)</i>	Church of Ireland General Synod Board of Education
	Liam Ó hÉigeartha <i>(from 1996)</i>	Department of Education and Science
	Dympna Glendenning <i>(to 1995)</i>	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
	Fionnuala Kilfeather <i>(from 1995)</i>	National Parents Council—Primary
	Éamonn MacAonghusa <i>(to 1996)</i>	Department of Education and Science
	Fr Gerard McNamara <i>(from 1995)</i>	Catholic Primary School Managers' Association
	Peter Mullan	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
	Sheila Nunan <i>(from 1995)</i>	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
	Eugene Wall	Irish Federation of University Teachers
<b>Co-ordinator</b>	Caoimhe Máirtín <i>(to 1995)</i>	
<b>Assistant Chief Executive Primary</b>	Lucy Fallon-Byrne <i>(from 1995)</i>	
<b>Chief Executive</b>	Albert Ó Ceallaigh	

NCCA Chairpersons: Dr Tom Murphy *(to 1996)*, Dr Caroline Hussey *(from 1996)*

ISBN 0-7076-6325-3



9 780707 663258



AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS EOLAÍOCHTA | DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment | An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta  
**NCCA**