

# Standards

## Knowledge and understanding

In a few primary schools surveyed, pupils have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the history of their local area and Wales. In these schools, pupils understand the contribution that local and Welsh events and individuals have made to history. In a very few primary schools, pupils develop a knowledge of the history of their locality and begin to make connections between their local area and the history of Wales and the wider world. In these schools, many pupils can explain how individuals and events have helped shape the community they live in today. In a majority of primary schools, pupils have little knowledge of the historical events that have shaped their local area and can name few significant Welsh people from history.

Pupils at Mount Stuart Primary School investigate the development of the coal industry and the docks area in Cardiff. Pupils discuss and explore how the growth and development of coal mining and the industrial revolution led to the export of raw materials to countries across the world. Pupils develop a sound understanding of how these events shaped immigration and their local community over time. Pupils appreciate and respect a range of perspectives when discussing the experiences of people in their community and Wales.

In most primary schools, pupils have very limited knowledge and understanding of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history within Wales and the United Kingdom. Many can talk knowledgeably about individuals from international history such as Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks, but in general pupils have a limited understanding of their significance and contribution to history. In a very few schools, pupils have extensive knowledge and understanding of the contribution of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals and communities to the history of Wales and the United Kingdom. For example, they understand the importance of the campaign to reform race relations legislation following the murder of Stephen Lawrence. In these cases, pupils make links between events such as the murder of George Floyd, the Black Lives Matter movement and its effect on events in Wales and the United Kingdom.

Generally, primary school pupils' recall of historical events and life in Wales is strongest when they have visited a museum or historical site such as Caerleon Roman museum, Big Pit National Coal Museum in Pontypool or Plas Mawr Elizabethan mansion house in Conwy. In many primary schools, pupils do not make effective use of source material, including first hand evidence to develop their knowledge and understanding of the past, the local area and Wales. Pupils do not consider different perspectives and

interpretations in history well enough because teachers provide them with limited opportunities to do so.

In many secondary schools, key stage 3 pupils can recount a few stories from Welsh history, for example the events of the Rebecca Riots. However, in the majority of cases, pupils do not develop a secure and cohesive knowledge and understanding of the history of their local area or Wales as a whole. They do not make connections between individuals and events in Welsh history to British and global history. This is because local and Welsh history is included as a 'bolt-on' element of the history curriculum. In a very few schools, pupils develop a strong understanding of local and Welsh history where links and connections are made to explain the significance of historic events, changes and individuals. These pupils think analytically to make connections and comparisons with events in other countries and different perspectives.

In most secondary schools, pupils do not develop their knowledge and understanding of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history well enough. In a very few schools where teachers provide carefully selected opportunities for pupils to consider Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history, they show understanding of issues such as slavery, colonisation and the end of empire and can make links with events such as the genocide in Rwanda and racism today. Most pupils do not have an understanding of how Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals and communities have contributed to the history of Wales.

All pupils who take GCSE history study Welsh history as a part of the thematic study. How much Welsh history is studied by pupils in the rest of the course is dependent on the units chosen by schools. The variance in the content of units and GCSE questions makes it difficult to judge how well pupils understand Welsh history. The same can be said for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history. Evidence from the examiners' report in summer 2019 suggests that a common feature across all thematic papers was that pupils did not refer to the Welsh context well enough in their answers.

At AS and A level, schools opt to study topics from a range offered within the examination specification. The variance in the opportunities to study Welsh history within topics and examination questions makes it difficult to judge how well pupils perform in units that include elements of Welsh history. Opportunities for pupils to study Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history within the A level specifications are limited and focus primarily on international history.

## **Attitudes to learning**

Most foundation phase pupils enjoy learning about things that happened in the past including learning about themselves and their families. Pupils particularly enjoy

opportunities to learn beyond the classroom. This includes making visits to historical places of interest to take part in practical activities, for example taking part in Marged's Washday at St Fagans National Museum of History. Most foundation phase pupils enjoy listening to stories about Wales in the past, particularly when these are brought to life through the use of puppetry or by visiting theatre groups.

In key stage 2, pupils in most schools are keen to talk about the activities they enjoy when learning about history, including learning about the local area, Wales and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history. The activities they enjoy include:

- taking part in stimulating practical activities
- handling real historical artefacts and evidence including photographs, and newspaper reports
- reading novels that are based on historical events, for example a book where pupils visit the National Museum of Wales and are transported back in time through a painting of Cardiff Docks
- listening to someone who talks to them about life in the past, for example a member of the local community
- preparing and presenting an argument based on a historical event
- visiting places of historical interest such as Llancaiach Fawr, Castell Henllys Iron Age Fort, Flint Castle, Strata Florida, The Slate Museum in Llanberis or Ruthin Gaol
- taking part in re-enactments or events to mark historical occasions, for example the Chartist March on Newport
- listening to stories about Wales when presented as dramas, for example a play about Owain Glyndŵr or Dic Penderyn
- using digital resources, including film clips and websites to explore local history
- listening to stories about individuals such as Joseph Parry, Betty Campbell, Paul Robeson and Walter Tulle and events such as the Senghennydd disaster and the Penrhyn strike

In key stage 3, when given the opportunity, many pupils enjoy learning about local and Welsh history and culture. Pupils appreciate opportunities to learn about the significance of the local area including its political, economic, social, cultural and religious development and how this links to national and international history. For example, pupils enjoy learning about events such as Tryweryn, Cilmeri and the Rebecca Riots. Where pupils are given opportunities to study Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history, many enjoy studying individuals such as John Ystumlllyn, Martin Luther King, Harriet Tubman and Nelson Mandela.

In the schools contacted, most pupils who choose to study history at GCSE and A level have positive attitudes towards learning about history including Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history.

