

Teaching Emotive and Controversial History to 7-11 Year Olds: A Report for The Historical Association

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Abstract *The English government's Department for Education and Skills funded the Historical Association to produce a synoptic report called "Teaching emotive and controversial History 3 – 19" (TEACH 3-19). Below is the commissioned research paper on TEACH to 7-11 year olds, on pages 00-00 the report on TEACH 3-7 year olds.*

The National Curriculum for History and GCSE and A-level History qualifications often include areas of study that touch on social, cultural, religious and ethnic fault lines within and beyond Britain. Such areas of study include the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the Holocaust and aspects of Islamic history. These areas are sometimes avoided by teachers to steer away from controversy in the classroom.

The way such past events are perceived and understood in the present can stir emotions and controversy within and across communities. The Historical Association's report contains exemplars of effective teaching that deals with emotive and controversial history in schools across all key stages from the ages of 3 to 19. This produced a comprehensive view of current best practice in teaching these and similar issues. It recommended proven and successful approaches that enable teachers to tackle these issues in ordinary lessons through rigorous and engaging

Context – the History Curriculum at Key Stage 2, i.e. 7-11 year olds

Key Stage 2 encompasses the final 4 years of primary education, years 3, 4, 5 and 6. Typically children in this year group are aged between 7 and 11. In some cases children in this age group are taught in Middle or Junior Schools, and in some cases in primary schools. The curriculum is subject to substantial upheaval at time of writing, as the rigid structure of the literacy and numeracy strategies which have been in place in primary schools for over 10 years give way to the more flexible approach of the primary strategy. However, especially in year 6, children's learning experience in Key Stage Two is dominated by the end of Key Stage Standard Attainment Tests [SATs] in English, Mathematics and Science, which are used in compiling league tables of primary phase schools. Schools naturally want to do well in these tests, and the educational experience of many children in the later stages of the Key Stage is of preparation to take these tests. It is in this context that this report considers the History Curriculum at Key Stage 2, and the opportunities for teaching emotive and controversial history.

The National curriculum

A visit to a Key Stage 2 classroom will usually show that History is a popular subject. There are often interesting displays on the wall and good collections of books. However, OFSTED's recent findings are worrying. The most recent report into history in primary schools (OFSTED 2005b) notes that although pupils' achievement in history has improved since 1998, the rate of improvement has now slowed and achievement is now lower than in most other subjects. The report goes on to note:

- Provision between schools is inconsistent with fragmented understanding of key concepts and resulting weaknesses in pupil's historical skills.

- The balance of the KS2 curriculum, which is heavily biased in favour of literacy and numeracy, means that time for other curriculum subjects such as History is limited
- Teachers' professional development opportunities in history are limited
- The curriculum is delivered in a 'piecemeal' way

Despite these concerning findings, inspectors still found some enthusiasm for History in primary schools. It is in this rather mixed context for History in primary schools that this report into teaching emotive and controversial History at Key Stage 2 is set.

The National Curriculum at Key Stage 2 builds on the Key Stage 1 in two main ways (DfEE and QCA 1999). Firstly the knowledge, skills and understanding element of the curriculum is extended and deepened. In addition the suggested breadth of study is substantially increased, not only with far more 'content' but also with increased prescription of topics. The rationale for this seems likely to be that Key Stage 2 is twice the length (4 school years). In addition however, as pupils develop through the primary phase of education, their ability to develop and understanding of complex and sometimes abstract concepts generally increases.

The Key Stage 2 programme of study has several aspects which are pertinent in the context of the TEACH project. Aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding which would be particularly relevant include:

Pupils should be taught:

2 c) to identify and describe reasons for, and results of, historical events, situations, and changes in the periods studied

3) Pupils should be taught to recognise that the past is represented and interpreted in different ways, and to give reasons for this. (DfEE and QCA 1999)

These elements are significant because they ask pupils to begin to develop skills in weighing and considering evidence, raising the issues of interpretation of history. In learning about topics in the history curriculum that are emotive and controversial, understanding how history can be interpreted in different ways is crucial. This developing sense that individuals have differences that are expressed in many ways is important. In addition the programme of study makes direct reference to diversity:

Pupils should be taught:

2 b) about the social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of the societies studied, in Britain and the wider world (DfEE and QCA 1999)

This element of the programme of study makes explicit the need to study history content that reflects diversity, not only in the units on British history but beyond.

Considering these elements of the knowledge skills and understanding, we can see that the curriculum is intended to promote an 'open-minded' approach to history where different interpretations are considered and tokenistic views of history are avoided.

In addition the extensive Key Stage 2 history content, exemplified in the 'Breath of study' section contains several elements that could be regarded as emotive and controversial. In addition it could be argued that most of the topics in the Key Stage 2 programme of study could be taught in a way that emphasises its emotional and

controversial aspect. However for the purposes of this project, we have identified a number of topics which are regarded as emotive and controversial:

- Community history;
- Islamic;
- Transatlantic slavery;
- Holocaust;
- Britishness;

To this end, the following table analyses the Key Stage 2 Breadth of study in terms of links to these issues.

Programme of Study reference	Links to QCA scheme Units	Description	This topic could be emotional and controversial when...
7. Local history study	12 and 18	A study investigating how an aspect in the local area has changed over a long period of time, or how the locality was affected by a significant national or local event or development or by the work of a significant individual.	... the local study includes the issues of immigration and developing cultural diversity.
8. British history	6 a,b,c	In their study of British history, pupils should be taught about: a) the Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings; Britain and the wider world in Tudor times; and either Victorian Britain or Britain since 1930 b) aspects of the histories of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, where appropriate, and about the history of Britain in its European and wider world context, in these periods.	... the issues of the movement of populations are discussed. Vocabulary such as native, immigrant, invasion, settlement and colonization should be used carefully. ... there is a danger of anachronistic views of the composition of the UK.
9. Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings in Britain	6 a,b,c	An overview study of how British society was shaped by the movement and settlement of different peoples in the period before the Norman Conquest and an in-depth study of how British society was affected by Roman or Anglo-Saxon or Viking settlement. Issues of immigration are dealt with.
10. Britain and the wider world	7 and 8	A study of some significant events and individuals, including Tudor monarchs, who shaped this period Issues relating to the imposition of Imperial rule are

in Tudor times		and of the everyday lives of men, women and children from different sections of society.	raised.
11. Victorian Britain or Britain since 1930	9, 11,12 and 13	<p>Teachers can choose between a study of Victorian Britain or Britain since 1930.</p> <p>Victorian Britain a) A study of the impact of significant individuals, events and changes in work and transport on the lives of men, women and children from different sections of society.</p> <p>Britain since 1930 b) A study of the impact of the Second World War or social and technological changes that have taken place since 1930, on the lives of men, women and children from different sections of society.</p>	... views of 'Britishness' are discussed. There are dangers in teaching of histories that focus on white, male, middle/upper class, Christian people without reference to the diversity of society throughout this period.
12. A European history study	14 and 15	A study of the way of life, beliefs and achievements of the people living in Ancient Greece and the influence of their civilisation on the world today.	... generalisations are made about ancient societies are made. These can promote tokenistic and simplistic views.
13. A world history study	10 and 16	A study of the key features, including the everyday lives of men, women and children, of a past society selected from: Ancient Egypt, Ancient Sumer, the Assyrian Empire, the Indus Valley, the Maya, Benin, or the Aztecs.	... generalisations are made about ancient societies are made. These can promote tokenistic and simplistic views.

Table 1 The Key Stage 2 programme of study mapped against opportunities to teach about emotive and controversial topics

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority [QCA] Scheme of Work

The QCA scheme of work was designed to support the new National Curriculum (QCA 1998). The units were always seen by those who produced them as a starting point for planning rather than a totally 'ready made' solution. Their quality is borne out by the significant take up of the units in schools, where they are often used as medium term planning documents. The units that are suggested for Key Stage 2 are diverse and cover the wide range of the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum breadth of study. The table above exemplifies the links, and the full titles of the units are listed below:

Original Key Stage 2 units:

- Unit 6A. Why have people invaded and settled in Britain in the past? A Roman case study
- Unit 6B. Why have people invaded and settled in Britain in the past? An Anglo-Saxon case study
- Unit 6C. Why have people invaded and settled in Britain in the past? A Viking case study
- Unit 7. Why did Henry VIII marry six times?
- Unit 8. What were the differences between the lives of rich and poor people in Tudor times?
- Unit 9. What was it like for children in the Second World War?
- Unit 10. What can we find out about ancient Egypt from what has survived?
- Unit 11. What was it like for children living in Victorian Britain?
- Unit 12. How did life change in our locality in Victorian times?
- Unit 13. How has life in Britain changed since 1948?
- Unit 14. Who were the ancient Greeks?
- Unit 15. How do we use ancient Greek ideas today?
- Unit 16. How can we find out about the Indus Valley civilisation?

Additional units added since 1998:

- Unit 17. What are we remembering on Remembrance Day?
- Unit 18. What was it like to live here in the past?
- Unit 19. What were the effects of Tudor exploration?
- Unit 20. What can we learn about recent history from studying the life of a famous person?

There is significant potential for approaching History in a lively way in through these units and they do address some emotional and controversial topics. One example of the potential of a unit to provide a basis for teaching emotional and controversial history could be Unit 11, What was it like for children living in Victorian Britain? The Expectations for the unit are as follows:

EXPECTATIONS at the end of this unit:

most children will: place the changes in the period within a chronological framework; make appropriate use of dates and terms; demonstrate knowledge and understanding about the everyday lives of children in the Victorian period; show how some aspects of the period have been interpreted in different ways; select and combine information from a range of visual, textbook and documentary sources; communicate their knowledge and understanding of changes to children's lives in Victorian times in organised and structured ways

some children will not have made so much progress and will: recognise some similarities and differences between the lives of children from different areas of Victorian society; ask and answer questions about the period by using at least one source of information

some children will have progressed further and will: describe reasons for and results of particular events; use their knowledge and understanding of the Victorian period to make links with other societies and periods; select and combine information from a range of sources to reach substantiated conclusions (QCA 1998)

These expectations exemplify several issues that relate to learning experiences that are potentially emotive and controversial. The subject matter itself raises a number of potentially emotive issues such as social inequality and family breakdown. In addition there is the potential of negative labeling about 'the poor', and generalizations could be made about families at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder. Equally care must be taken by teachers not to make tokenistic judgments and assumptions about

the lives of children from well off families. In short, a simplistic approach to this topic that leads children to believe that poor children had unhappy lives and rich children happy lives must be guarded against. It is both historically inaccurate and potentially offensive to make these assumptions. In addition to the subject matter, the unit focuses on using a range of historical sources and emphasizes the need for pupils to interpret these sources (such as school logbooks, contemporary accounts and Victorian fiction). Pupils should engage with this sort of sources in history, but must be aware that contemporary sources reflect the prejudices and assumptions of the time.

The National Curriculum and supporting QCA Scheme of Work has the potential to provide many opportunities to tackle emotive and controversial history. However as with all such opportunities, there is also the potential to deal with issues simplistically or in a tokenistic way and teachers and curriculum planners must be aware of this potential and plan carefully. Some of the constraints and barriers that might lead to simplification and tokenism are discussed in the next section of this report.

Key Stage 2 – the pedagogical context

Key Stage 2 is the final part of most children's primary school experience. It is different in nature from Key Stage 1 for a range of reasons, including the much greater emphasis on curriculum content in many subjects, including history. There is often a distinct pedagogical difference too, as children are asked to read and write much more in their learning across the curriculum. Many children are able to work independently of the teacher for some time at this stage, however, some are not, and this can sometimes cause problems for children who have not reached the same developmental stage as their peers. In many schools, particularly in Year 6, this Key Stage is dominated by the imperative to do well in English, Mathematics and Science statutory tests, the results of which are used to compile the published league tables of primary schools. Understandably many schools focus heavily on the tested subjects and the skills needed to pass the tests. This has a significant effect on the way the rest of the curriculum, including History, is taught.

In recent years (DfES 2003) the government introduced a major overhaul of primary school approaches to teaching and learning in the form of the Primary National Strategy (PNS). In this report, the link between children's enthusiasm for learning and their attainment is cited as a reason for pedagogical and curriculum development in the primary phase, along with some aspirations for primary schools:

- OFSTED reports show that the best primary schools combine high standards with a broad and rich curriculum. We want all schools to have this aspiration and to:*
- *Develop the distinctive character of their schools by, for example, developing strengths in sport or music or special needs or working very closely with the local community.*
 - *Take ownership of the curriculum, shaping it and making it their own.*
 - *Teachers have much more freedom than they often realise to design the timetable and decide what and how they teach.*
 - *Be creative and innovative in how they teach and run the school.*
 - *Use tests, targets and tables to help every child develop to his or her potential, help the school to improve and help parents and the public to understand the progress of the pupils and the performance of the school. (DfES 2003)*

These aspirations provide some opportunities for curriculum and pedagogical development in History. However the strategy does not draw distinctions between the foundation subjects, missing the opportunity to emphasise that while some subjects

have things in common, many, including History, have distinct teaching and learning approaches. An example of this is the opportunities that History provides to address emotive and controversial issues in a context in which they can be explored and discussed by pupils. The PNS emphasizes the benefits of cross-curricular work but does not draw out such distinctive curriculum issues in foundation subjects. It is to be hoped that future curriculum development will explore these more.

In the evaluation of the PNS by OFSTED (OFSTED 2005a) carried out two years after the strategy was first introduced to schools, it was found that schools had taken a cautious approach to curriculum redesign and that the dominance of literacy and numeracy continued to be prevalent in most schools. Specific opportunities that the foundation subjects provide to enrich the curriculum are being missed, and although foundation subjects may now be more present in classrooms, the focus of teaching objectives remains on the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills. An example of this is quoted in the report:

A meticulous mapping of literacy objectives against the foundation subjects ensures that pupils have the opportunity to consolidate their learning in relevant contexts in other subjects. For example, pupils' historical understanding develops through planned speaking and listening opportunities. They reinforce their knowledge in writing well-structured biographies, letters or instructions. Working in this way adds to pupils' enjoyment and relevance of both literacy and history. (OFSTED 2005a)

In this example of good practice cited in the evaluation of the PNS, skills in speaking and listening are learned in a History context. While speaking and listening skills are of course crucial in children's work in History, good speaking and listening does not make good history learning in itself. This is an example of a common phenomenon in Key Stage 2 schools, the 'History flavour literacy lesson', where the focus is on literacy skills, which are covered through the medium of history. The problem in this is that specific History lessons that focus on history issues (including emotive and controversial ones) are lost in favour of a continued focus on literacy. This is not to suggest that all cross-curricular work is detrimental to History, far from it, links which are made between curriculum subjects are important. However when planning History lessons, curriculum planners and teachers must ensure that there is sufficient rigour in each subject so as to give proper opportunities to engage with subjects and issues such as emotive and controversial History.

Constraints, barriers and poor practice

History has always been valued as a subject of study, since ancient times, stories about the past have been kept alive, and they continue to be, even up to today. From ancient history we still have stories of Gods, wars and human endeavour, from Greece, Egypt, Britain and all over the world. In a wide variety of cultures and countries, the past is passed on. As 21st century teachers we must examine this noble tradition and ask where it fits within the current educational culture. Grant Bage (Bage 2000) examines this issue in terms of both the official and unofficial role of History in education. This is an interesting perspective, and as Bage discusses, History is both as aspect of the formal taught school curriculum and prevalent and popular in television series such as Time Team and Coast. There are even entire television channels based around History. In many ways history has never been so popular. Yet against this backdrop, OFSTED has found that in recent years pupils' achievement in History is now lower than in most other subjects (OFSTED 2005b). The reasons for this are complex, and in this section of the report, some of these reasons are examined and discussed.

Children's readiness to tackle emotive and controversial issues – child development

In a study conducted in the US and Northern Ireland, Barton, McCully and Marks (Barton 2001) examined beginning primary phase teachers' attitudes to their pupils' readiness to study history. They found that while the beginning teachers presumed that children's cognitive ability and lack of background knowledge would prevent them from engaging with issues in History, that actually the children were able to effectively learn about History and Social Studies. The study that was the subject of the paper had positive effects both on quality of teaching and crucially on teachers' perceptions of the ability of their pupils to learn history from a young age.

Hilary Cooper's influential book on teaching history summarizes the relationship between learning history and child development very effectively. She makes a case that children in the primary age range are able to engage with e historical learning effectively if they are supported with appropriate learning experiences and effective teaching:

Psychologists' work on reasoning, then, suggests that young children may be helped to develop arguments about historical evidence if we teach them how. It suggests that we need to provide interesting, memorable learning experiences, ask simple open-ended questions, and teach appropriate vocabulary. (Cooper 2000)

Cooper goes on to discuss ideas about children's ability to understand other people's point of view.

Research into young children's thinking in history suggests that, in a limited way, they can make suppositions about how people in the past may have felt or thought (Cooper 2000)

Cooper's examination of learning theories in the context of history indicates that it is possible and desirable to involve Primary age children in authentic History learning. It is not necessary to avoid emotive and controversial topics with children, but that with careful teaching children can begin to engage with these ideas. The issue of child development and teacher's perceptions of child development is complex and it is difficult to effectively summarize all the issues in this report. However we must recognise that young children can and do engage emotionally in History and that we should steer clear of making assumptions about what children will be able to understand.

Curriculum and teaching time

In May 2003 the Primary National Strategy was launched with the publication of Excellence and Enjoyment, a primary strategy for schools (DfES 2003) this initiative was intended to help schools maintain high standards in the teaching of the core subjects while encouraging more cross curricular and creative approaches to teaching. The evaluation of the strategy (OFSTED 2005a) suggests that these links are particularly strong between literacy and history. This means that in many schools where this cross curricular approach has been taken, that History often appears to get significant time dedicated to it, which, one would hope, would lead to higher standards. However, this contrasts with findings of the most recent OFSTED report into the teaching of history, standards in history, compared to other subjects, have slipped. One reason for this might be that, whilst the History subject knowledge is

covered in the cross-curricular approach, the rigorous teaching of historical skills is neglected. This is borne out in OFSTEDs findings in the history subject report. This impacts on tackling emotive and controversial history because without the appropriate approaches to history, where pupils question, weigh evidence and engage with the sources, History teaching is reduced to a 'factual' knowledge transfer model.

Resources

The range scope and nature of resources that could be used to teach History at Key Stage 2 is vast. Some of these are discussed in section 4 of this report. In considering these resources in the context of teaching emotive and controversial history at KS2, the affect that the resources have on shaping the nature of teaching must be emphasised. Teachers in Key Stage 2 classrooms tend not to be history specialists, and with CPD limited in this area of the curriculum, may teachers rely on the schemes and resources, as well as the QCA guidelines to shape their lessons.

While egregious examples of bias and prejudice in school textbooks can be spotted readily enough, it has been argued that text book material by definition contains in addition to more obvious problems, hidden agendas (Marsden 2001)

Studies into the nature of information and textbooks designed for Key Stage 2 (Marsden 2001; Scanlon and Buckingham 2002; Blake, Newton et al. 2003) have found that they can lack in rigour and accuracy, as well as be biased. It could be argued that the same should be said of any Historical text. However it is a particularly difficult situation given that primary school teachers often base their lessons around a small number of sources. In addition, may teachers rely on 'ready-made' lessons from books that give lesson ideas and photocopiable resources in one book. Although, again, its easy to be overly judgemental about these resources, its important for teachers to remember that these should count as only one historical source. One good example, however, of a ready-made resource is 100 History Lessons (HOODLESS REF). This book cites sources from books and the Internet that teachers could use, as well as providing photocopiable resources. Examples form this text are given in section 4, below. The conclusion to be drawn is that these sort of resources may have unavoidable limitations as far as teaching emotive and controversial topics go, where sources of information are often limited. However some well designed textbooks, like the example given can tackle emotive and controversial issues well.

As well as textbooks and information books, there are many books that might be loosely termed as fiction or biography for children available to teachers. A selection of these are reviewed in section 4. The range and quality of children's historical fiction is impressive. Notable in this genre are Michael Foreman, Philip Pullman and Geraldine McCaughrean. These authors tackle arrange of emotive and controversial topics such as war, death, identity and difference. In their book on children's historical fiction, Collins and Graham (Collins and Graham 2001) highlight the qualities of good historical fiction:

...an absorbing story; unclotted language; accurate research; and a concern with how ordinary people were affected by the political and social climate of the time (Collins and Graham 2001)

Given that there is so much useful and well written historical fiction for children on emotive and controversial topics, it is hoped that teachers would make use of these in history lessons as much as traditional textbooks.

Teacher subject knowledge and Continuing Professional Development

In the most recent OFSTED report into History in primary schools highlights the need to raise the expertise of teachers in History:

Some of the problems highlighted in this report can be associated with the very limited opportunities for continuing professional development in history. The old local authority advisory structures have largely disappeared and there only limited alternatives in place. (OFSTED 2005b)

In addition there are also limited opportunities for History in initial teacher training:

On an average PGCE primary course, the time devoted to history could be six hours training or even lower and if history is not being taught when they are working in schools, trainees may never get the chance to teach it before they are awarded qualified teacher status (OFSTED 2005b)

In order to tackle emotive and controversial topic in history effectively, teachers need to have a broad secure knowledge of the curriculum and up to date resources that are available to teach it. Teachers also need to have the appropriate pedagogical skills in order to effectively challenge and stimulate pupils to participate actively in lessons. Promoting pupils engagement is crucial in the effective teaching of emotive and controversial topics. In addition teachers need the support of their peers and experts to tackle some of the difficult issues that are raised by emotive and controversial history. While initial teacher education and continuing professional development in History for primary teachers is at such low levels, it seems unlikely that emotive and controversial topics will be taught with in any effective way in schools.

Evidence of good practice across Key Stage 2

Despite the constraints discussed in the section above there are some good examples of pupils in Key Stage 2 engaging with emotive and controversial history in effective ways. These examples deal with the issue of specific curriculum planning and linking History with issues of citizenship. Where teachers and curriculum planners in school can take heed of these issues, the teaching of emotive and controversial history is likely to be enhanced.

Planning for diversity in the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum

Table 1 in section 1 of this report (p4) maps the Key Stage 2 curriculum content against possibilities for teaching emotive and controversial history topics. Many of these topics relate to the representation of social and ethnic diversity in the history curriculum. Hilary Claire has written widely on this subject and in a series of articles for primary history (Claire 2001a; Claire 2001b; Claire 2001c) she explored the opportunities to plan for diversity in the Key Stage 2 curriculum. Claire explores the decisions that are made in by teachers and curriculum planners, suggesting ways in which the History curriculum can promote pupils' understanding social and ethnic diversity.

Issues of the significance of events, people and actions are discussed. Claire's point is drawn out when we reflect on our own time:

Lets imagine that a future KS2 Programme of Study requires a unit on Britain at the turn of the C20th. What might children in the late C21st learn about us? Well it depends on what happens next, because hindsight gives a different view on significance (Claire 2001a)

In the series, she explores how to raise issues of diversity in 3 areas of the Curriculum, Britain since 1930, The Victorians and the Tudors. She emphasises the need to consider histories carefully, eschewing white, middle class male dominated traditional accounts and using sources to uncover the significance of all groups in society.

In the first article of the series (Claire 2001a) Claire examines the issues in teaching Britain since the 1930, setting out generic principles for deciding upon significance.

These are:

- There are always several significant themes which are needed to make sense of change and continuity in a period
- Society is too complex to reduce the experience to a single version of history
- Identity and diversity are linked.

This article is followed by one in which teaching about the Victorians (Claire 2001b) was used to give context to a discussion about the tokenism and diversity in teaching the curriculum. It substantially builds upon point 2, above. In the article, Claire identifies several common stereotypes that are sometimes perpetuated in teaching about Victorian Britain. These include:

- That all children in Victorian Schools encountered the same experience. In addition children from ethnic minorities are rarely represented in contemporary accounts although we know they were present.
- That all children who worked in industry in Victorian times had the same experience, and that negative experiences of work were confined to urban areas.

In the final article in the series (Claire 2001c) explores the themes of diversity and significance in the context of Britain and the wider world in Tudor times. The central idea in this article is that in teaching about this topic, there are hidden messages about power, agency and identity. The article encourages teachers to examine the way in which they approach the curriculum in order to structure it to ensure a balanced consideration of:

- The role of women and children in society at the time
- The religious issues of the time
- The role of the wider world in the development of British prosperity

Overall the series of articles sets out both the principles of a Key Stage 2 curriculum that celebrates diversity and considers historical significance carefully. In the context of this report, the practical examples that Claire suggests would be good opportunities to raise emotive and controversial topics, including national identity, gender and slavery within the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum.

History teaching and the development of Citizenship in Key Stage 2

Another powerful example of good practice at Key Stage 2 is the way in which History is beginning to be linked with what could loosely be described as the Citizenship curriculum. Although not a compulsory 'subject' at Key Stage 2, issues around citizenship are often covered in primary schools, in links with the local community, in circle time and other PHSE activities and as part cross curricular work. There are a number of good reasons for fostering links between History teaching and the issues of citizenship:

- **History can help develop pupils' identities within their communities and society as a whole.** Claire discourages teachers from regarding their pupils as 'homogeneous' (Claire 2002) where ethnicity, sex or social class is at issue. Some of these problems are related to the curriculum and teaching materials making generalizations about the experiences of people in society. Some problems are caused by tokenistic approaches to pupils' own lives and experiences. This raises the emotive and controversial issue of national identity.
- **Historical knowledge is important in understanding concepts in citizenship such as politics.** Concepts such as democracy are difficult to understand. History can give us several perspectives on this issue (Claire 2005) Comparisons of new and ancient versions of concepts such as this, from the autocratic versions of democracy in ancient Greece through to the fight for universal suffrage in Britain in the Victorian and Edwardian times can help children explore what it means to live in a democracy. In addition
- **History can help pupils develop skills they need to engage with ideas raised in citizenship.** Citizenship as a concept is enshrined within the Aims, Values and Purposes of the National Curriculum (DfEE and QCA 1999) in which pupils are asked to do things like distinguish between right and wrong and understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens. In order to do this it is vital that pupils develop a sense of empathy for others. History can provide a range of contexts in which this can evolve. A good example is cited by Vass (Vaas 2005) in which he suggests that children can engage with pictures of people from historical periods and imagine from these, biographies for these people.

Citizenship and History are closely linked in these and many other ways. Where these links are promoted there are advantages for pupils to develop a range of skills. If pupils are to effectively discuss and assimilate the issues in emotive and controversial history, the kind of teaching approaches described in this section should be promoted.

Resources for teaching and learning at Key Stage 2

There are many History text and reference books designed to meet the needs of Key Stage 2 teachers. These fit into 2 broad categories.

Textbooks and teacher guides

Firstly there are books that are designed as textbooks or teachers' guide sections of which support teachers' planning and other sections can be used by pupils, for example as sources of evidence as templates for work or worksheets. It is very easy to critique these as simplistic and uncreative, but in reality with most Key Stage 2 teachers non history specialists these resources are often used. One of the better examples of the genre is cited in this report in section 2 on page 9 and reproduced here.

Sources on evacuees

Objectives

- To find out about the events, people and changes studied from an appropriate range of sources of information.
- To recognise that the past is represented and interpreted in different ways, and to give reasons for this.

Vocabulary

experiences, accounts, versions

Resources

Writing frame and the photocopiable sheet 'My life as an evacuee' on page 60, one per child (other first-hand accounts can be found on websites such as <http://www.besses.org/evacuees/index.html>); fictional stories, such as *Goodnight Mister Tom* by Michelle Magorian (Fifth)

Links

KS2 Y2 Text 17 to understand the distinction between fact and fiction; Y3 T2 Text 17 to make class notes; Y4 T2 Text 17 to scan texts in print or on screen to locate key words or phrases and use these as a tool for summarising text.

Background

The immediacy and authenticity of first-hand accounts, retelling the experiences of evacuees, are perhaps in many ways the best sources for young children to use. Despite problems with the level and style of language, which is, of course, not necessarily written for children, the vivid quality and detail in these real accounts will give children an experience that is as close to the event itself as is possible. There is also an excellent opportunity to make real links with the teaching of literacy, through introducing children to different styles of writing, aimed at different audiences.

Introduction

- Explain to the class that they are going to read and hear an account written by a person who was actually evacuated from her home as a child.
- Tell them that they are going to find out what sources tell us about the experiences of evacuees.

Main teaching activity

- Read to the class some stories written about the experiences of evacuees, including fiction and first-hand accounts.

● Discuss the different accounts of evacuation with young children, comparing first-hand accounts that are more factual with the fiction which represents a child's imagination of childhood and feelings.

● Read out copies of the photocopiable sheet 'My life as an evacuee' on page 60 and read through the account with the class. Make sure the children understand any unfamiliar words and expressions.

● Highlight phrases as they come to complete with the meanings. Highlight several examples of remembered experiences.

● Work with the children to compile the first few key points from the stories they have heard.

● Organise the children to work in pairs to re-read the account on the photocopiable sheet and to note down the key points from the account in their books.

Planning

● During the planning ask the children to explain what they think the version was told differently.

● Ask the children to consider whether they preferred reading the story or the first-hand account and what they have learned about evacuees from each version.

Differentiation

Repeat the reading frame to match the needs of the different children in your class.

My life as an evacuee

Joan's story



My mother took my brother and myself to a big station called Paddington in London. She did not tell us that she would not be coming with us on the train, only that I must hold my brother's hand all through the journey. The whole of my school were there plus the teachers who took care of us. When the train left the platform and my mother still stood standing there, I felt very frightened.

We carried a gas mask over one shoulder and another [bag] containing enough food for the journey over the other. A label pinned on our lapel had our name and school in London. The journey was very long, ten hours in near darkness. On arrival at Penzance Station, we were told to climb onto a lorry and taken to the village hall which was very bright after our dark train journey.

The hall was filled with local people and us children. Ten children were told to stand on the stage whilst the local people chose the children they wanted. My brother and I were the last up onto the stage so at this point only one couple was left. They agreed to take my brother but not me, but I refused to let go of his hand. They reluctantly took us both.

My brother and I were the last to be chosen. Can you imagine what it was like for us? standing there while complete strangers decided if they liked the look of us enough to offer us a home? I think I know how slaves must have felt on the auction block – and we were just six and four years old and a long way from our mother. The last couple didn't want me – just my brother – but I wouldn't let go of his hand, so they had to take us both.

They were Mr and Mrs Opie and they lived on a farm outside Penzance and had five children, two boys and three girls. The elder two boys shortly afterwards were drafted into the army. They were a very kind, warmhearted couple and did their best to comfort us by showing us the cows, sheep, chickens and various farm animals. They also showed me how they made butter and cheese. It was a strange world to move into. I had never seen so much green space before and found it somewhat overpowering.

(extract taken from <http://time-witnesses.org/evacuees/-joan.html>)

These pages are reproduced from Hoodless, P (2006) 100 History Lessons, published by Scholastic

These resources are effective because they are accessible to pupils and teachers but retain historical integrity.

There are also a many reference books designed with Key Stage 2 pupils in mind. The quality of these reference books is very mixed. Many of these are highly descriptive (Blake, Newton et al. 2003) without encouraging children to engage in questioning, explaining or evaluating the history that is presented in them. However these remain popular in schools, and are often enjoyed by children. If teachers are to get the most out these resources they must use them selectively, and encourage

children to question the presentation of historical 'facts'. Emotive and controversial history topics should always be taught using a range of sources.

The Internet

In addition many schools now use a range of Internet based resources for pupils. This raises 2 major issues, firstly, the quality of the resources used, and secondly, the way in which they are used. At worst, pupils will search for information using a search engine such as Google. Results from such a search are likely to be both numerous and of varying quality. Much of the content on the Internet is both un-moderated for accuracy and appropriate. In addition it is also often text based which is unsuitable for most Key Stage 2 pupils. A Google search for 'The Tudors' or 'World War II' or 'Romans' turns up over a million hits for each, and that's just from websites based in the UK. A better way to approach searching is to collect suitable pages together for pupils to use, either by using the favourites tool or through a virtual learning environment. The quality of resources is variable, and pupils should be taught that the Internet is both unregulated and often inaccurate. When dealing with potential emotive and controversial topics in history, teachers will want to select and use sources carefully.

Some useful, reliable and good quality sites related to emotive and controversial topics in Key Stage 2 History include:

For World War II <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwtwo/>

This is the World War II section of the BBC History website. It contains comprehensive information in a variety of ways, including text, images and video. Original sources such as moving images, posters and accounts of the time are available. There is also an interactive timeline. However these materials are not specifically designed for Key Stage 2 pupils and often rely on text to communicate. One particularly useful resource in terms of emotive and controversial topics includes an interactive timeline showing the many aspects of genocide and persecution in Germany between 1933 and 1945.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/genocide/launch_tl_persecution_genocide.shtml

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the BBC History website. The page is titled 'Genocide Under the Nazis' and features an interactive timeline. The timeline is a 3D perspective view of a road leading into the distance, with a central white circle on the ground. The road is flanked by a dark, textured wall. The timeline is set against a dark background with a light blue sky. The text on the page describes the timeline as a 'non-Flash version' and provides a 'Launch the Timeline' button. The page also includes a sidebar with navigation links and a search bar. The browser's address bar shows the URL: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/genocide/launch_tl_persecution_genocide.shtml. The browser's status bar at the bottom shows the time as 19:29 on Wednesday.

For The Tudors <http://www.tudorbritain.org/>

This website is run by the National Archives and the Victoria and Albert Museum. It contains games and information gathering activities that are 'ready made' for teachers to deliver in the classroom. There is an interesting section on religion, which, while providing some useful information and activities about attitudes to religion in Tudor times, provides only weak links to issues around religion today.

The main National Archive Website, the learning curve, also offers teachers ready-made activities using original sources. There is a wide range of topics

For Invaders and Settlers Good websites for recent history make the most of original available resources such as still and moving images and recorded testimony. Websites for periods in history where we have less evidence need to be more creative about their design in order not to fall into the trap of relying too heavily on text. One such website is the Battlefields Trust, which uses photos and maps as well as text <http://www.battlefieldstrust.com/resource-centre/viking/> . The BBC History website contains a wide range of resources for teaching issues of invasion and settlement. However, while presenting a range of views on the impact of changes in Britain's make up and society, some of the activities (including a Viking Invasion game http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/vikings/launch_gms_viking_quest.shtml) trivialise the issues.

Children's Historical fiction and biography

There is a wide and interesting range of Historically based fiction available for children in the Key Stage 2 age range, including picture books, biography, stories that relate to many Key Stage 2 topics. The following is not an exhaustive list of the books, but intended to illustrate how children's historical fiction can be applied to the curriculum.

World War II

Rose Blanche by Ian McEwan
Erika's Story by Ruth Vander Zee
War Boy by Michael Foreman

Victorian Britain

The Lottie Project by Jacqueline Wilson
Victoria's Room in Britannia by Geraldine McCaughrean

Tudor Britain

The Pirate Meets the Queen by Matt Faulkner

The power of illustrations is shown below. This carefully drawn and picture is substantially empty of humans, yet the 4 figures represented are crucial to the story. The picture would be an excellent starting point for a discussion about Erika's story of abandonment by her mother, who was on her way to Auschwitz.



The increasing quality and quantity of historical fiction for children was discussed in section 2 of this report. The examples given here are a range of good quality books. There is a range of advice for teachers who are considering using historical fiction in their teaching (Bracey 2003; Hoodless 2005; Jones 2005). Teachers should consider:

- Using stories as a context for teaching history
- That stories can give a new perspective on a familiar topic
- That given a range of stories, children will develop crucial historical skills in comparing and contrasting the perspectives of the protagonists.
- That story can engage pupils and that this means that they will begin to understand complex concepts.

Conclusions and recommendations for development of these issues

This conclusion makes an assumption. That is that the teaching of emotive and controversial topics in history is both possible and desirable at Key Stage 2. Nothing was found in the research that suggested that this was not the case. In fact there were a number of identifiable benefits, chief of which are that children can develop a tolerant approach to the community in which they live. This is more important than ever in today's Britain.

The conclusions of this report are in three main areas:

1. The curriculum at Key Stage 2 provides lots of opportunities to tackle emotive and controversial issues in appropriate ways. However these opportunities are often lost and some of the curriculum ends up being delivered in a tokenistic and unchallenging way. There is potential for emotive and controversial topics to be drawn out in all aspects of the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum but the areas which most readily lend themselves to it are:

- World War II – where the issue of human conflict is illuminated by the difficulties of identifying rights and wrongs during conflicts and where the contribution of different social groupings is explored, including the role of women and allied soldiers from outside the warring countries. In addition the evacuation of children during the blitz has substantial possibilities.
- Britain between 43CE and 1066CE – the invasions and settlements. Although this is a distant period in history, ideas about natives and immigrants pervade this topic and when well taught, it can help undermine assumptions and prejudice about modern day natives and immigrants.

- Britain in Tudor times – although this period is seen in traditional unreconstructed histories as a ‘golden age’ of Britishness, the influence of the wider world on Britain was substantial at this time, and when this topic is well taught, it will provide pupils with ideas about how British development happened as a result of what happened in other countries.

2. The nature and quality of resources is very important to the ways teachers teach and pupils learn. There is a wide range of resources available to teachers, including textbooks, resource books and websites. These vary in quality and appropriateness for Key Stage 2. The central principle, however, is that teachers should choose a range of sources. They should consider carefully how sources represent the evidence. If teachers have this critical approach to resources selection they are likely to pass it on to pupils more. It should also be emphasised that especially in the area of Historical fiction there are some really excellent resources that would support teachers in tackling emotive and controversial issues in their teaching.

3. Much of what would make good quality teaching of emotive and controversial history is closely allied to good Primary phase practice. Curriculum development and good quality teacher education, both initial and in service, are very important. With the inception of the Primary National Strategy, there is potential for curriculum reform in the Primary phase. In addition, this has led to a re-assessment of teacher support for continuing professional development. Whereas resources and time were, in the past, closely focussed in raising standards in literacy and numeracy, there is now a move to explore the Primary curriculum more holistically.

Recommendations in the three areas:

1. The National Curriculum and supporting QCA materials be examined, and if necessary revised, to make the most of opportunities to teach emotive and controversial topics. The Primary National Strategy [PNS] to support the teaching of specific history skills as well as promote links between History and other subjects, particularly citizenship
2. The electronic and traditional publishing industry becomes more aware of how topics can promote engagement with emotive and controversial history.
3. The PNS could and should be used as a vehicle to promote the development of History teaching in all areas, including the teaching of emotive and controversial history. This should be supported by good quality professional development opportunities for all teachers.

Case studies

In selecting the case studies for this report, it was difficult to find an example or lesson which was, in itself the ‘magic bullet’, the solution to the issue of teaching emotive and controversial history at key Stage 2. Instead I have selected 3 instances where issues related to the teaching of emotive and controversial history at Key Stage 2 are raised

Case Study 1 – The place of Britain on the wider world in Tudor times

Context This unit is described by Cooper (Cooper 2000) as an example of how Britain in Tudor times can be taught from a perspective which avoids tokenistic and Eurocentric attitudes. The unit is designed for years 5 and 6, and explores the history through the topics of ‘houses’ and ‘ships’. This is a good example of a history topic that is often held up as an example of the ‘golden age’ of Britain actually should be

given a wider perspective. The study of the Armada within a Europe wide context is particularly useful in avoiding jingoistic views of the idea of Elizabethan Britain as a great civilising power in the late medieval world.

How it is taught Cooper suggests a range of teaching approaches including:

- Constructing a timeline
- Analysing pictures
- Group writing tasks
- Drawing and designing tasks
- Using portraits as sources
- Visit to historical sites

The plan for the unit involves the children in individual, group and whole class activities. This, combined with the wide variety of activities, should mean that pupils with a range of learning styles should be able to engage with the topic.

Overcoming constraints The main constraints cited in this report are child development, the curriculum, resources and teacher expertise. Cooper addresses the issues of curriculum and resources well in this example. A number of resources which illuminate the non-British aspects of the story of Tudor prosperity are suggested, especially those which link to the Indian subcontinent and the Mughal empire. Approaches to the curriculum include cross-curricular links with Geography and Mathematics as well as some good opportunities to practice a range of English and Art skills. The real strength of this example as good practice in teaching emotive and controversial history topics is in its multicultural perspective. Many of the problems of the way that history curriculum is categorised are related to the way in which it isolates issues of 'British' history. This unit looks at a British history in a much wider way.

Examples of resources/supporting materials Resources that are particularly noted for their usefulness are:

- School council booklet *Akbar and Elizabeth*
- The Globe theatre website
- Extracts from the film 'Shakespeare in Love'

This range of resources emphasises the importance of a multimedia approach to teaching resources.

Evidence of impact In the case study, several examples of children work are reproduced. The unit asked children to work collaboratively on a newspaper front page about the Armada. These examples demonstrate that the children not only learned a ranged of subject knowledge which is relevant to the topic, but crucially that they engaged emotionally in the stories. One child demonstrates an ability to empathise with the King of Spain:

(T)he Duke of Palma mucked up our invasion plan because he was not ready in Dunkruk to sail. Phillip II was very angry when he found out. On the other hand Phillip was pleased with the Duke of Medina Sidenia because he had reached Calais but loosing too many ships and not having a sea battle with Englande (Cooper 2000)

In the children's work it is possible to see evidence that they have engaged with a variety of perspectives, both British and non-British, during the topic.

Case study 2 – Immigrants and Natives, racist attitudes in history – a historical issue in its modern context

Context Another popular aspect of British history is a study of the invaders and settlers who came to Britain between 43 and 1066CE. This topic is fraught with emotional and controversial language including invader, settler, native, immigrant, invasion, migration, conquest and so on. All these words, and the ideas that they engender are emotive and controversial in our society today. Therefore this topic needs to be taught in a positive and inclusive way, avoiding stereotypical ideas of 'goodies and baddies' and of 'us and the other'. Hilary Claire (Claire 2002) examines this topic in detail.

How it is taught Claire suggests that teachers choose aspects and approaches of the substantial subject matter in this topic that challenge assumptions that are often made. For example, she suggests that we

- Challenge the stereotype of the violent invader, particularly where the Vikings are involved
- Look for stories which include women and children, for example the story of Boudicca's rebellion against the Romans
- Emphasise the multicultural nature of groups involved. It is inaccurate to assume that the population of Britain in 42CE before the Roman invasion shared a sense of Britishness. Equally most 'Roman' soldiers who acted as the occupying force were not from Rome, many of them coming from North Africa, Syria and Greece.

Overcoming constraints The main constraint here is that of teacher subject knowledge. Many of those delivering this aspect of the curriculum would have been exposed to traditional and unreconstructed versions of the first millennium CE. Therefore it is important that teachers widen their perspectives. Claire suggests a wide range of materials that are available and challenge stereotypes in this topic.

Examples of resources/supporting materials Kevin Crossley- Holland's story *Sea Stranger*, *Fire Brother*, *Earth Father* is cited as a good example of children's fiction, along with Marilyn Tollhurst's book about a Viking Street. The importance of good quality children's fiction has already been discussed in this report but these are two good examples of fiction providing powerful teaching materials.

Evidence of impact In summary, Claire offers two alternative perspectives on the topic. In one case children can easily:

..acquire a mind set which they apply uncritically to the history of invasions, imperial projects and conquests in subsequent periods. Quite subtly, historical impartiality is undermined and opportunities are missed for children to think critically about perspectives.

On the other hand if children start with this unit as part of their history education, and consider the absence of evidence from the defeated people, an improved outcome can be expected.

They (the children) can be presented with evidence of immigration and multiculturalism dating from the very early history of Britain.

This history unit provides a lens through which children can begin to question and challenge preconceptions and stereotypes about immigration and race.

Case study 3 - Perceptions of Germany – the influence of teaching about World War II on pupils attitudes to contemporary Germany

Context This is a small scale but illuminating study into how children's perceptions of Germany are affected by the ways in which they learn about World War II (Gray 2005). Gray also suggests what teachers can do to avoid stereotyping and misrepresenting the war so as to influence pupils' perceptions of the modern country, and their perceptions of other countries involved in conflicts.

How it is taught The project took place in a large city-edge primary school in Autumn 2002. It aimed to both elicit and discuss their perceptions of modern day Germany and Britain. Key findings included the following statistics from the Year 5 pupils:

- 27% of boys and 9% of girls believed Britain to be wrong in fighting World War II
- 93% of boys and 91% of girls described Hitler in negative terms
- Over 50% of boys and girls implicated that Pakistan, India and Afghanistan as serious threats to global peace

These statistics reflect both on the ways that history is taught and also on how this might influence children's perceptions of current global events. In his conclusions, Gray calls upon teachers to consider, in their teaching of World War II:

- Cross curricular development to combat the development of Anglo-centric viewpoints
- The importance of links with geography and PSHE
- The potential of the Primary National Strategy in making these developments meaningful

Overcoming constraints One interesting aspect of this study is the differences that Gray found between girls and boys in their views. How boys and girls respond differently to history is not explored elsewhere in this report, but the differences found indicate that this should be a topic for further research and investigation.

Examples of resources/supporting materials Gray cites a number of texts that examine the issue of children's development of national identity. He cites that Cullingford's book *Prejudice :From Individual Identity to Nationalism in Young People* refers to the 'triumphalism' of the history curriculum. Importantly the study examines in detail how the teaching of the QCA scheme of work unit 11b requires teachers to teach about the actions of another national group on the United Kingdom in its last home front war. Teachers should look in detail at the curriculum and consider it carefully

Evidence of impact Gray concludes that, at least in the short term, combating prejudice and stereotyping in History is best dealt with by 'teachers on the ground'. This assertion is both empowering to teachers and places a substantial responsibility upon them. Teachers need to be confident in delivering the curriculum and to do this they must understand the issues and the subject knowledge well.

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