

History in the Primary School: the Contribution of Textbooks to Curriculum Innovation and Reform

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Abstract *The paper explores some of the key themes in the construction and implementation of the primary history curriculum within the last fifteen years and analyses ways in which textbooks contributed to the introduction and subsequent implementation of the history National Curriculum in primary schools. The introduction of the National Curriculum in England provided an impetus for publishers and a range of new textbooks were published for primary schools. The new textbooks therefore provide some of the earliest interpretations of government policy and of the National Curriculum. As the curriculum continues to evolve through practice and fresh policy initiatives, textbooks may continue to mirror ongoing curriculum change.*

Keywords National Curriculum, Primary history curriculum, Government policy, Curriculum change

Textbooks provide one feature in the context of text production identified by Bowe et al. (1992) as one of the three contexts where policy is created. The context of text production reflects the interpretation of policy within different texts and has a dynamic and symbiotic relationship with other contexts, namely the context of influence, the site where public policy is normally initiated, and the context of practice where policy is implemented.

As the history National Curriculum became established in primary schools in England during the 1990s and was revised, textbooks needed to take cognisance of new policies and priorities. Textbook analysis therefore may be used to reflect changing government priorities and also to evaluate the role of textbooks in policy interpretation. It thus raises questions linked with the dissemination of new ideas: the multiplicity of readings relating to policy texts and their potential impact on practice. In addition, textbooks may also respond to practice and develop from assessments of ways in which the curriculum is implemented in school. In this respect, the links between publications and Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) reports, together with teachers' reported concerns, provide a further avenue for investigation.

The content and shape of curriculum subjects change as the curriculum evolves. Goodson rejects descriptions of subjects as, 'monolithic entities', and argues that they are, 'a shifting amalgamation of subgroups and traditions' (Goodson, 1994, p.42). As contributors to this 'shifting amalgamation of subgroups', textbooks have an influential role; they reflect the views of different traditions incorporated within the curriculum, but also respond to new situations and fresh priorities. In this respect, an historical analysis of textbooks can contribute to a developing understanding of the evolution of a school subject (Marsden, 2001) and can provide perspectives on the present through elucidating 'the precedents, antecedents and constraints' (Goodson et al., 1998, p.17), surrounding the contemporary curriculum.

Textbook research also permits analysis of the development of the subject within the broader curriculum. Prior to the National Curriculum, primary school children often learned history in English schools through integrated approaches, combining a selection of school subjects. The history National Curriculum however, gave status to history as a

subject within the primary school and the 1990s marked the development of history within a strong classificatory frame. Bernstein argues that subjects with strong classifications claim to have unique identities and voices with specialised rules about how knowledge is organised within the classification. Their distinctiveness and clear subject boundaries set them apart from other subject areas. Whilst classification is used to describe the relationship between different subjects within the curriculum, Bernstein also uses the term 'framing' to refer to the context in which knowledge is transmitted and received in terms of the relationship between teacher and pupil. Bernstein argues that when subject classifications or framings alter, key questions such as who is instigating change and what values are reflected in the changes need to be addressed (Bernstein, 1996).

The notion of strong and weak subject classifications and framings provides a way of conceptualising and describing developments within the school curriculum over a period of time which may be reflected within different textbooks. Analysis of the content of textbooks linked to the strength of subject classification and framing may provide useful evidence for determining a subject's status and relationship with other curriculum subjects.

The content of history textbooks has been researched in terms of the values embedded within the text and their likely impact on children's learning. Analysis has taken into account the selection and omission of different information, the use of images and the textbook narrative (Cowans, 1996; Foster, 1998, 1999; Washburn, 1997). Whilst the above impacts indirectly on classroom pedagogy, there has been less research to analyse the representation of particular pedagogical practices within history textbooks and the ways in which texts respond and are responsive to contemporary classroom practices. Through their use of suggested pupil activities and teacher guidance notes some textbooks may be seen to be overtly influencing particular classroom practices. In terms of curriculum change therefore, textbook analyses may provide evidence of changing classroom practices, although as Marsden (2001) observes, currently there is little research to indicate how texts are actually used in the classroom.

The creation of the history curriculum in England was hotly contested. Phillips (1998) analyses the fierce debates within the History Working Group (HWG) which was responsible for outlining the key features of the history curriculum. Although many of these debates were related to teaching history in secondary schools, they did impact on primary provision since there was an over-riding aim to ensure continuity and progression between different key stages. Contrasting views of the subject were voiced in debates linked with historical knowledge and content, teaching methodologies and assessment. In turn, these debates impacted on textbook production; what content was prioritised or ignored; how the subject was to be taught and assessed. Textbook research may therefore contribute to a greater understanding of how some of these debates were interpreted and resolved.

There is limited research on primary history text books. Knight (1987) analysed primary school texts on the Middle Ages in terms of the views of history embedded within the text. Criteria for analysing history textbooks are discussed in Knight's and Green's (1993) review of Key Stage 2 textbooks. More recently, Blake et al. (2003) have explored language in primary history texts and discuss the importance of selecting texts to aid children's explanatory understandings in history.

The above lines of enquiry relate to the textbook consumer; consideration however, also needs to take into account the nature of relationship between the curriculum producer and textbook producers. In England the government is dependant on publishers for dissemination of the curriculum. Publishers were quick to recognise the commercial potential of the National Curriculum and responded with a range of different textbooks across curriculum areas. In terms of history, new schemes were introduced and a variety of different support materials produced to supplement them, including pictures and artefacts and more recently documentary sources. The first schemes provided an initial interpretation of the history National Curriculum and as such may be seen as central to curriculum innovation and dissemination. However, as policy was revised in subsequent years, publishers might be deeply conservative, resisting future reform which might prejudice their original investments in different textbooks. Questions might therefore be raised concerning the tensions between commercialism and educational practices.

The selection of primary history textbooks

Primary history textbooks published at different intervals since the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1990 until the present day were selected. They include both history schemes and also texts which are designed to support teachers in the primary classroom. The Ginn *Primary History* scheme (Blyth et al., 1991) was first published in 1990 and comprises a range of pupils' books and teachers' handbooks for both Key Stage 1 (5-9 years) and Key Stage 2 (7-11 years). The scheme was later augmented with *Group Discussion Books* focusing on visual sources and a series of readers for children in Key Stage 2. Scholastic's *Curriculum Bank* (Forrest & Harnett, 1996a, 1996b; Harnett, 1996) is essentially a scheme for teachers. The three books provide a series of lesson plans and photocopiable resources for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. Scholastic followed this scheme with further publications included in the Primary Foundations series (Andreetti & Doull, 2000a, 2000b; Cox et al., 2000). These three books, for children 5-7 years, 7-9 years and 9-11 years respectively, provide a series of lesson plans focusing around key historical enquiries. Finally, textbooks from the recently published Oxford *Connections* series, *History Through Literacy* (Palmer, 2003), were analysed. This series comprises four pupils' books for different years in Key Stage 2 with corresponding teachers' notes.

Analysis focuses on how these different textbooks map onto the emerging history curriculum in English primary schools in the 1990s and early twenty first century. It explores the ways in which textbooks represent the changing discourse about the nature and content of the history curriculum in terms of historical knowledge and understanding and pedagogic practice. With an increasing emphasis on accountability, ways in which children's progress and learning are to be assessed are also investigated in the textbooks. Furthermore, as history establishes its place within the primary curriculum, the textbooks are analysed in terms of how they reflect the status of history in primary schools and the relationship of the subject with other curriculum areas.

The history curriculum in primary schools: a developing discourse

The National Curriculum provided history with a strong identity with specific knowledge to be taught to different aged children to ensure continuity across all key stages. There was an emphasis on children's progressive introduction to the subject from five years to sixteen. Building on Bruner's notion of the spiral curriculum, even the youngest children were entitled to learn history. For these children at Key Stage 1, history comprised a wide range of stories and opportunities to learn about personal and family histories,

together with changes in the everyday lives of the British people since world war two and a period of the past beyond living memory. The programme of study at Key Stage 2 built on these foundations and incorporated a range of core British history units (Invaders and Settlers, Tudor and Stuart times, Victorian Britain and Britain since 1930) and two core world history units (Ancient Greece and Exploration and Encounters 1450-1550). For each core study unit specific knowledge to be taught was identified. In response to concerns expressed by archaeologists, schools were expected to select a supplementary unit involving the study of a past non-European society. A further supplementary unit was based on local history and, reflecting the popularity for studying history within a topic approach, units involving the study of a theme over a long period of time were also introduced.

The history National Curriculum provided a real commercial opportunity for many publishers and was seized with alacrity. Ginn decided to make the most of the publishing opportunities presented by a new curriculum. While the History Working Group (HWG) worked on its final report for the history National Curriculum, Ginn's commissioning editors sought to recruit writers and consultants to produce a scheme which 'brings history to life with exciting and colourful materials for children', and whose 'comprehensive and straightforward approach provides complete coverage of the National Curriculum and exceptional support for the non-specialist teacher' (Ginn, 1991).

Deadlines were particularly tight; delays in the HWG's recommendations meant that the Final Report was not published until March 1990 (DES, 1990). Following consultation, the History Task Group (HTG) was charged with framing the statutory orders which were finally published in March 1991 (DES, 1991) and followed by Non Statutory Guidance (NCC:1991) in April. Such deadlines posed real challenges for publishers who wanted new material to be ready for schools to purchase as they introduced the new curriculum in September 1991.

The Ginn primary history scheme is a fully comprehensive scheme for children 5-11 years. It represents one of the earliest attempts to identify appropriate history activities for children at Key Stage 1. Prior to the National Curriculum young children's experience of history had been very limited. HMI comment that in '2 out of 3 infant classes, history received little or no attention' (DES, 1989, p.8). Some historians suggested that history was too complex a subject for very young children to study.

Twelve stories with a word limit of three hundred and fifty words were written for Key Stage 1 children. The stories are written by different authors and illustrated by different artists. They use a range of strategies including the use of direct speech, text repetition and pictorial clues to enable young children to derive meaning from the text. The stories cover a range of historical periods and people from the past, including true stories about famous personalities and fictionalised accounts of people and children living in the past. Women and children are represented in the list of titles and some account of cultural diversity is taken with the inclusion of Mary Seacole and Tutankhamen. Alongside the stories, five topic books introduce children to ways of life in the past since the second world war utilising simple text, original photographs and artists' illustrations.

At Key Stage 2, Ginn was selective in the number of study units which it decided to publish and children's textbooks covered only the core study units and one supplementary unit, the Ancient Egyptians. Decisions to include only the core study units inevitably effected the popularity and status of other history units. Teachers were

often reluctant to embark on supplementary units where there was insufficient support available.

The HWG debated whether children's sense of chronology was developed through learning history in chronological order. Since research appeared inconclusive, the HWG recommended that the units should be taught in chronological order where possible. The Ginn Key Stage 2 texts reflect this recommendation with books aimed at 7-9 year old children focusing on the Ancient Greeks, Ancient Egyptians and Invaders and Settlers, whilst books for older children include Exploration and Encounters, Tudor and Stuart times, Victorian Britain and Britain since 1930.

Examples of knowledge to be taught for all the core units were included within the programmes of study. Since no advice was given on the selection of knowledge within the core units, publishers tended to include all the information within their textbooks. This resulted in superficial coverage of some topics within the study units, with few in-depth studies and was a particular challenge in the pupils' book for the study unit Invaders and Settlers which attempts to cover over a thousand years of history in forty nine brief pages.

Teachers' handbooks provided support for teachers in understanding the history National Curriculum. At Key Stage 1 a comprehensive Teachers' Resource Book (Blyth et al., 1991) explains the history National Curriculum and describes how Ginn history enables teachers to meet all the requirements. Sections on historical background information for the children's books are included to support teachers in their subject knowledge. Similarly, the Key Stage 2 Teachers' Handbook (Harnett, 1991) provides background information on the supplementary study units and describes how they might relate to the core units. Separate teachers' handbooks for each study unit also provide background information for the content in the children's books and activity sheets.

Phillips (1998) describes the debates relating to the acquisition of historical knowledge and the development of historical skills which was finally resolved within Attainment Target 1, knowledge and understanding of history. For many primary teachers this presented a real change in their patterns of teaching history; skill based work in history had not featured widely in children's experience prior to the National Curriculum. Indeed, HMI comment on the poor application of skills and the undue concentration on TV programmes, secondary sources of information and stories in many primary classrooms in the 1980s (DES, 1989).

Ginn responded to this challenge by incorporating analyses of different historical skills and concepts and guidance on ways in which children's historical understanding may be developed in the teachers' books (Blyth et al., 1991; Harnett, 1991) To support teachers further, the photocopiable activity sheets all include reference to specific skills and historical understandings which may be developed through their use. The pupils' books and later Group Discussion Books also provide a range of sources of evidence for children to work from. In contrast to earlier textbooks which had relied mainly on artists' illustrations (Unstead, 1974), the Ginn series provides a range of photographs and pictures of artefacts, buildings and paintings to develop children's understanding of the past.

The nature of assessment was keenly debated within the HWG and by politicians and the general public. It was seen as central to the whole learning process and the

publication of the Attainment Targets in the opening pages of the history National Curriculum prior to the content of the study units reveals the importance which was attached to it. Three Attainment Targets with ten levels of attainment to record children's progress in knowledge and understanding of history, interpretations of history and the use of historical sources are included. Few primary school teachers were familiar with assessing children's progress in history and prior to the National Curriculum HMI comment that assessment in history was particularly unsatisfactory with few schools attempting to systematically record children's progress in terms of increased knowledge, understanding and skills (DES, 1989a). Instead, as Knight (1991) indicates, primary school teachers were more likely to assess children's progress in terms of their engagement and enjoyment of different tasks.

The Ginn Handbooks sought to support teachers in assessment by providing step by step guidance on what to assess and appropriate assessment ideas and activities. In terms of the context of text production, they provide one of the earliest interpretations of the statutory assessment requirements. Advice from central government on assessing children's learning was not published until 1993 when the School's Examination and Assessment Council (SEAC) published *Key Stage 1 Standard Assessment Tasks (SATS)* (SEAC, 1993a) and *Children's Work Assessed: Geography and History* (SEAC, 1993b).

Within the Handbooks, sections on evaluating children's responses suggest ways in which to develop children's understanding further in a range of key historical skills and understandings and support is provided in recording children's progress and attainment. However, in recording children's progress, the Handbooks continue to refer to Profile Components which were included in HWG's Interim (DES, 1989b) and Final Reports (DES, 1990), but which were omitted in the National Curriculum (DES, 1991); an example of how the rush to publish and predict the future National Curriculum impacted on the accuracy of information within the scheme.

One of the key issues for primary schools in 1990 was organising the curriculum to include the nine National Curriculum subjects. The strong subject classification of the National Curriculum was at variance with much existing practice in primary schools, where subjects were planned in more integrated ways around common themes. Initially, it appeared that schools would 'bolt on' the new National Curriculum requirements to their existing practice. The Ginn handbooks provide advice on the relationship between history and other curriculum subjects and identify historical activities which link to attainment targets in other curriculum areas. Guidance on planning the history curriculum across different key stages is included, together with support for developing mid term plans for history. The Ginn Handbooks thus represent one of the earliest attempts to offer guidance in terms of curriculum organisation and structure. Read alongside the Non Statutory Guidance (NCC:1991) published at the same time, they provide an example of the multiplicity of readings which emanate within the context of text production.

Curriculum consolidation

As with other National Curriculum subjects, the history National Curriculum was imposed in primary schools in a top down approach to curriculum reform and innovation. Implementation presented many challenges to primary schools. Primary teachers diligently tried to cover all the detailed content in the statutory orders, often at the

expense of failing to teach children sufficient historical skills and understandings (OfSTED, 1993a). Many teachers however, felt very under-confident in their subject knowledge. Indeed Bennett's survey indicates that primary school teachers' confidence in teaching history declined from 54% to 38% between 1989 and 1991 (Bennett et al, 1992).

HMI note that there were particular difficulties in teachers' understanding of the relationship between the acquisition of historical knowledge and the development of skills and understanding. The historical content within the study units was not integrated with the Attainment Targets (OfSTED, 1993a, 1993b). Teachers were also uncertain about conducting historical enquiries and the nature of different historical interpretations (Ofsted, 1993a, 1993b, 1995).

Fitting (or squeezing) all the subjects into the timetable was a real concern (Campbell & Neill, 1991, 1992; Webb, 1993). Whilst the National Curriculum is described in terms of subjects, the Non Statutory Guidance comments, 'this should influence how the curriculum is planned, but does not determine it', and provides suggestions for different approaches for topic organisation (NCC, 1991, Chapter 9). HMI observe that schools continued to employ integrated curriculum planning (OfSTED, 1993b, 1995), but there was growing unease about topic work (NCC, 1993a, 4.12). This unease was further echoed in the discussion paper, *Curriculum Organisation and Classroom Practice in Primary Schools* which notes that 'there is clear evidence to show that much topic work has led to fragmentary and superficial teaching and learning. There is also ample evidence to show that teaching focused on single subjects benefit primary pupils' (Alexander, Rose & Woodhead, 1992, para 3.4).

By 1993 concerns about curriculum implementation at both primary and secondary levels prompted the government to review the curriculum. The Dearing review considerably reduced the size of the National Curriculum; nine ring binder files for each curriculum subject were replaced by a document no more than a centimetre thick for primary schools. In history, the number of study units was reduced and the thematic supplementary units deleted. There was greater clarification of the relationship between historical knowledge and key skills and understandings within the Key Elements and assessment was simplified within one Attainment Target and the best fit level descriptors.

The Dearing review was met by renewed interest from publishers, keen to produce fresh materials for the new curriculum (DfE, 1995). This time however, there was a range of evidence from the experience of curriculum implementation (OfSTED, 1993a, 1993b) and guidance from the National Curriculum Council (NCC, 1991, 1993a, 1993b, 1993c, 1993d), SEAC (1993a, 1993b) and the Schools' Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA: 1993, 1994a, 1994b).

The publication of Scholastic's *Curriculum Bank History* (1996) reveals the key concerns of the mid 1990s. *Curriculum Bank* does not include pupils' texts, but rather is a series of support materials for teachers. The three texts in the series are described as 'essential planning tools for devising comprehensive schemes of work as well as an easily accessible and varied bank of practical, classroom tested activities with photocopiable resources' (Harnett, 1996, p.5). The series offers support for planning and implementation of, 'progression, differentiation and assessment', through a range of activities with, 'clearly stated learning objectives' which will, 'allow busy teachers to put

the ideas into practice with the minimum amount of preparation time.' There is advice on assessment, differentiation and record keeping and opportunities for using ICT and creating displays are also included.

Similarities may be noted with the Ginn series in that *Curriculum Bank* also offers teachers an interpretation of the National Curriculum requirements. It describes the programmes of study for each Key Stage and also explains the Key Elements suggesting ways in which they might be developed in the classroom in the introductory sections.

Each activity within the *Curriculum Bank* series identifies learning objectives and provides detailed guidance on how they might be achieved through appropriate activities. There are thus direct links between this guidance and concerns voiced by HMI on teachers' inadequate planning and difficulties in developing appropriate activities for learning history (OfSTED, 1993a, 1993b). Yet, whilst *Curriculum Bank* does provide step by step planning for individual activities, it offers little guidance on how activities might link to children's overall experiences of learning history. The concept of a bank of activities from which teachers could make a selection, tends to focus on children's engagement with isolated activities. There is little support for progression in planning which was to be an issue later on in the decade and children's experience of historical narrative is considerably underplayed.

Assessment within *Curriculum Bank* is less complex than in earlier publications and is in line with the simplification reflected in the revised history National Curriculum. Each activity outlines opportunities for assessment and assessment is viewed as integral to children's learning.

By the mid 1990s, fewer schools were following cross curricular approaches to curriculum planning, and the primary curriculum was being replaced with more tightly focused subject units of work. Although cross curricular links are identified within Curriculum Bank, there is less emphasis on them than in earlier publications.

Clear links between the concerns voiced by HMI in their inspections in the early 1990s and official publications designed to support teachers in particular areas of weakness may be identified within the Curriculum Bank series. Whereas Ginn history draws on the context of influence and provides an interpretation of the history National Curriculum within the context of text production, Curriculum Bank has additional links with the developing context of practice. Material within the Curriculum Bank series originates as a response to practice, as well as linking with key ideas in the context of influence such as increased subject teaching and reduced assessment, and provides further interpretations within the context of text production.

Reviewing the curriculum and planning schemes of work

In terms of subject status and identity, history was becoming well established in the primary curriculum. History focused topics were replacing more integrated approaches, particularly at Key Stage 2 and considerably strengthened history's status. It might appear that, following the Dearing review, history's place as a subject within the primary curriculum was assured. No further changes were promised for five years and primary teachers could begin to consolidate their existing practice and curriculum planning. Schools were generally finding the curriculum more manageable and changes to the history curriculum were leading to improvements in schools (SCAA, 1996). HMI note

continued improvements in standards, although assessment and reporting were still judged ineffective in one third of the schools inspected, with difficulties often arising from teachers' insufficient knowledge of progression of children's learning. Planning in history was still judged poor in nearly a quarter of schools and history co-ordinators were urged to translate policies into effective schemes of work (Hamer, 1997).

The election of a new Labour government in 1997 heralded a change in educational priorities. *Excellence in Schools* notes the key aim of education is to ensure children are both literate and numerate, and from that base to use literacy and numeracy as opening '...the door to success across all the other school subjects and beyond' (DfEE, 1997a, para 1.30). To achieve higher standards in these subjects, the statutory requirements to teach the foundation subjects, including history, were suspended from September 1998 and inspection reports would not comment on teaching in these subjects either. In addition new Frameworks for teaching were announced which incorporated detailed strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy in primary schools (DfEE, 1998, 1999).

The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies were to dominate primary curriculum planning and teaching at the end of the twentieth century. The status of other subjects was considerably eroded, although the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) mounted a brave defence of a broad curriculum in *Maintaining Breadth and Balance* (QCA, 1998a). Throughout this document there is an emphasis on schools making their own decisions relating to curriculum provision and organisation through prioritising specific aspects of different subjects, combining or reducing particular aspects. In terms of support for teachers, the first schemes of work were published to help teachers with their plans (QCA, 1998c).

The history schemes of work provide examples for planning historical enquiries. Clear learning objectives are identified which relate to possible teaching activities and learning outcomes are outlined. Teachers are given advice on vocabulary, resources and possible links with other subjects. The schemes of work were designed to assist teachers in their planning, but in practice many schools discarded their own curriculum plans and adopted them completely; the schemes of work in effect became another version of the National Curriculum.

While the new initiatives were crystallising, QCA continued to monitor the curriculum and report on experience in school. The history curriculum was generally well liked by primary school teachers (Watson, 1998). A new History Task Group (HTG) was established to advise on the history curriculum and its proposals were incorporated within a new National Curriculum Handbook, to be implemented in 2000 (DfEE & QCA, 1999). This new version of the curriculum reveals the extent to which the primary history discourse had developed during the 1990s. Key features of historical study are identified in the rationale and within the Programme of Study. The relationship between historical knowledge and processes is apparent in the links identified between skills, knowledge and understanding in the historical content of breadth of study. Assessment of children's progress is matched against the best fit level descriptors. Interestingly, the knowledge base of primary history remained remarkably stable throughout the 1990s with only some minor modifications.

A new curriculum in 2000 provided further publishing opportunities and Scholastic responded with a series, *Primary Foundations*, which aims 'to break down the current subject requirements into manageable units of work which can be used as a basis for

planning a significant scheme of work or as a supplement to any existing scheme' (Cox et al., 2000). Different units of work centre on a key historical investigation which comprise several enquiry questions. Learning objectives are identified which link with teaching activities. Children's learning outcomes are described and potential links with literacy and other subjects outlined. In this respect, the format for *Primary Foundations* adheres closely to that of the already published schemes of work (QCA & DfEE, 1998c).

However, the series also provides more detailed support for implementing the units in the form of individual lesson plans and follows a similar format to that adopted in the earlier *Curriculum Bank* publications. Lesson plans include background information for the teacher, advice on preparation and step by step instructions to implement the lesson. Advice on differentiation and assessment is also included alongside opportunities for ICT and follow up activities.

The introduction to the series reveals the changing context of the primary curriculum. In contrast to earlier publications identified above, the teachers' introduction is brief. There is little explanation on the nature of history, how to plan and teach the subject, and assess children's learning, which had all been important features in earlier publications. Instead the introduction focuses more on the place of history within the primary curriculum and its relationship to other subject areas and includes a rationale for teaching history. Reflecting increasing interest in citizenship and values education following the Crick Report (QCA, 1998b) and the statement of values at the beginning of the revised curriculum (DfEE & QCA, 1999a), the introduction also discusses issues linked with equality, links between history, citizenship and personal, social and health education and history's contribution to the promotion of positive attitudes.

Curriculum re-organisation: the development of cross–subject links

Since the introduction of the revised curriculum in 2000, primary schools have continued to focus on setting targets for children's achievement in literacy and numeracy. The literacy and numeracy strategies continue to occupy a large amount of timetable time and there is a continuing squeeze on the other curriculum subjects. In terms of curriculum planning, therefore the temptation is to look for more productive links between different curriculum subjects. HMI comment on the effectiveness of cross-subject links, including literacy, in *The Curriculum in Successful Primary Schools* (OfSTED, 2002). Examples of how cross-subject work is being promoted may be seen in QCA's Geography and History Curriculum Development Project and the forthcoming history schemes of work which include suggestions on how to adapt existing units and also to combine units with those from different subjects (QCA, 2003).

Links between history and literacy are acknowledged within *History and the Use of Language* (SCAA, 1997). However, concern has also been voiced that these links must not be to the detriment of good history teaching. Blyth (1998) reminds us that literacy is the tool, not the master for history.

Developments such as these are represented within the most recent history publications; Scholastic's *Teaching with Text* series (Hoodless, 2002a, 2002b) provides historical source material from a range of different literary genres. The *Oxford Connections* series also provides a range of different text genres for children to work with (Palmer, 2003). Palmer bases the series on different sorts of frameworks which are used to introduce children to a range of different text genres and to encourage children to deploy them in

their writing. As the introduction explains, 'The books will help you teach literacy through a science, geography or history-based topic' (Palmer, 2003, p.3).

Whilst a series such as this clearly relates closely to the demands made by the national literacy strategy, one must also consider whether this detracts from the historical content. For example, are recipes from *Cookery and Housekeeping by A Veteran Housekeeper, 1886* really key sources for learning about the lives of Victorian children?

Historical activities are identified but these appear to be accorded less priority than the literacy strategy objectives. The contents table on the back cover of the pupils' books illustrates this shift in priorities. It begins with text types and national literacy strategy objectives, followed by historical objectives. Similarly, the teachers' book emphasises literacy activities and the suggestions for activities to develop historical understanding are less substantial.

The *Oxford Connections* series represents a response to some of the key policy ideas developed within the context of influence and the over-arching aim of the Labour government to raise standards in literacy. It also represents a response to practice in schools where HMI have noted the benefits of cross-curricular links. Yet in terms of subject identity, subject boundaries are weakened. In comparison with schemes published throughout the 1990s, the strength of classification is considerably reduced.

Textbooks and the production of policy texts

The above discussion reveals ways in which publishers respond to different policy contexts; account is taken of key ideas and policy priorities within the context of influence, and publishers also respond to contemporary practice. Yet as policy is implemented, publishers also draw on the network of interpretations and readings to be found in the context of text production. In this respect, publishers may be seen both to respond and to be responsive to different policy contexts.

This paper outlines the real support which textbooks provided in interpreting the initial implementation of the National Curriculum. In the first instance, textbooks connected directly with the history National Curriculum, but as the curriculum was implemented in schools and a range of support materials was developed, publishers became drawn into interpreting not only the National Curriculum, but also networks of curriculum guidance and other policy texts, produced by NCC, SEAC, SCAA and QCA. Analysis of texts published in the later 1990s therefore takes into account the dynamic relationship between the contexts of practice, influence and text production.

Publishers' potential contribution to the successful implementation of the National Curriculum was acknowledged from the beginning by central government and both the NCC and later SCAA ran series of conferences to inform publishers of curriculum developments and also to consult with them on major challenges facing the effective implementation of National Curriculum history. Later, as part of a general monitoring of the National Curriculum, the NCC commissioned a review of history text books, which was completed by SCAA in 1994 (SCAA, 1994a).

In this review, SCAA acknowledges that 'Publishers and authors were often pioneers, trying to turn the theory of the Statutory Orders into resources for practical classroom use', and that 'Authors' interpretations of the Statutory Orders were significant because

teachers who felt insecure about any part of the history National Curriculum often turned to published materials to find answers to their questions' (p.2).

The issues raised within SCAA's Report reveal the complex processes involved within the context of text production. Some concerns relating to the level of accuracy in some texts are expressed. For example, the stereotype of Vikings as pagan raiders is cited. In attempting to cover the range of historical material in the History Study Units, many children's books only touch briefly on particular events or features. The Report notes that detailed narrative accounts of events are rare, and that lack of detail considerably reduces children's opportunities for making considered judgements about the past.

Several texts are commended for their selection of attractive visual source materials, although there is some concern relating to the comparative neglect of documentary sources. The provenance of sources is not always acknowledged and the Report notes difficulties in interpreting sources with the limited background information which some texts present. Uncertainty relating to the Attainment Targets and assessment is also noted and the integral relationship between skills and historical knowledge is not always developed within suggested pupils' activities. However, central government's dependence on publishers to interpret and disseminate policy raises questions on the extent to which published textbooks may be criticised.

The Report (SCAA, 1994a) reveals the multiple readings created by different readers (in this case authors and publishers) of policy texts and focuses on some of the potential tensions between publishers and central government. Whilst publishers seek to follow policy closely, since they know that this will sell their publications, they also have a commercial agenda. Some decisions which publishers take might effect the implementation of the curriculum in different ways. For example, few publishers were prepared to take the risk and publish materials for the supplementary study units; this had the effect that the ancient civilisation units, apart from the Ancient Egyptians, were considerably under resourced and undoubtedly this effected the willingness of teachers to teach these units in school. International markets dictated the coverage of some aspects of ways of life in Ancient Greece and the Aztec civilisation. Fixed budgets controlled the selection of pictures from picture libraries and heavy investment in initial schemes meant that publishers were generally reluctant to change as the curriculum was modified in the 1990s, and indeed exhorted SCAA to keep the alterations to the curriculum review as minimal as possible.

The extent to which textbooks influence practice in schools requires further investigation. In terms of the textbooks analysed above, there is some evidence to suggest that the inclusion of photo-copiable sheets within the Ginn and Scholastic schemes did contribute to developing practice in schools. The publication of the Ginn scheme coincided with the increasing use of the photocopier; teachers were able to make multiple copies of prepared worksheets, rather than preparing their own. Excessive use of worksheets is criticised by HMI (OfSTED, 1993b, 1993c). Their use also reflects changing priorities within teachers' professional roles in the 1990s; creating and tailoring work for individual pupils was replaced by uniform worksheets for the 'average' child. These materials in the early schemes could be seen as precursors to later developments whereby teachers teach following pre-existing plans and selected resources and are removed from the stages of planning. Currently most primary teachers teach from

prescribed plans and selected resources; their responsibility for initiating their own plans and developing their own teaching ideas is thus considerably reduced.

The account of the development of the history National Curriculum through textbook analysis offers a further perspective on Goodson's view of the continual evolution of school subjects. Textbooks referred to in the paper reflect the shifting nature and status of history as a curriculum subject in primary schools. The textbooks also reflect changes in the way history as a subject is classified and framed. Currently, it could be argued that the focus on literacy is weakening the distinct subject boundaries belonging to history and this in turn is effecting history's unique identity and its status within the primary curriculum. Paradoxically, whilst the rationale for teaching history has developed and become more explicit within the last decades, it would appear that history's place within the curriculum is less secure.

Textbook analysis also reveals shifting emphases in what counts as learning in history. The Ginn scheme offers traditional narrative accounts of the past. In *Curriculum Bank*, narrative is underplayed in the selection of isolated activities presented by the scheme. In later schemes narrative is more explicit, yet there appears to be a shift in focus. Rather than textbooks presenting the narrative, children are encouraged to develop their own narratives and interpretations of the past, through conducting historical enquiries and exploring different text genres.

This emphasis on children's interpretation of the past is also re-inforced through the growth of a range of historical sources of information, other than textbooks. The 1990s saw a considerable increase in the publication of ranges of photo-packs. The sale of replica artefacts has provided alternative means for children to experience the past in schools, and films, videos and TV programmes have packaged the past for children in a variety of ways. Publishers are also developing the potential of ICT. Heinemann *Explore* provides CD roms with a range of historical sources of information. In addition, the popularity of historical fiction for children is reflected in increasing publications.

Thus at the time of writing, textbooks now represent only part of the network of interpretations of policy within the context of text production. Future research will need to take into account the wide range of materials and resources, other than textbooks which are available for children and teachers today, and which respond and are responsive to policy and practice in schools.

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