

History Department

1. Aims

The main aim is to encourage an interest in the past, and to show that the study of the past is enjoyable and that, since "History" covers such an enormous range of topics that there is something for everybody to enjoy in its study. We also aim to develop certain skills such as examining evidence, distinguishing between different kinds of evidence, making considered judgements about the past.

2. Principles, Policies, Techniques

We try to use as many sources as possible for all age groups; literary, primary and secondary, archaeological, oral. All pupils are encouraged to follow their own interests as far as time allows. Films, film-strips, television and tapes are used where appropriate. We arrange visits to sites, e.g. Colchester Castle, Orford Castle, West Stow Saxon Village, Sutton Hoo, The National Maritime Museum and The Science Museum.

3. Syllabus

1st Year - Invasions of Britain, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Viking, Norman.

2nd Year - Topics in 20th Century British and World History, African and Caribbean History. Examples - Education, Trade Unions, The World Wars, The Slave Trade.

3rd Year - Schools History Project. The 3rd year is the first year of a three year course and is centred on learning historical skills, evidence-based learning, empathetic reconstruction and problem-solving detective work. Topics include the Sutton Hoo Ship Burial, Tollund Man, The Fate of the Russian Royal Family at the Revolution.

4th Year - A Set: Schools History Project continues with Medicine Through Time, Modern China, Britain 1815-1851.
B Set: CSE British Economic & Social History 1750-Present.

5th Year - A Set: Schools History Project
CSE Set: British Economic & Social History 1750-Present.

6th Form - 'A' level: 16th & 17th Century British & European History.

4. Marking

All books are checked after every homework, and books are collected for grading at least once a fortnight. 5th Form and 'A' level pupils are tested regularly. Where pupils are setted, marks are awarded according to the standard expected of the set; in sets where the ability range is wide the marks are awarded according to the individual's ability.

Pupils who make above-average efforts with their work receive a '+' mark on the 3-weekly mark sheets. Pupils who receive two grade A marks in succession are given commendations.

Pupils not making the required effort are punished with extra work and reported to their housemasters.

5. Homework

Is set as required by the timetable and checked in the lesson following the homework day.

6th formers are required to write notes, and to produce an essay every week.

6. Record Keeping

All marks are recorded in teachers' mark books so that their progress and development of skills can be checked throughout the year.

7. Communication

Regular and frequent discussion takes place between the three members of the department on all aspects of teaching, pupil progress, curriculum and the ordering of materials.

8. Multi-Ethnic Education

History lends itself easily and well to the examination and discussion of the issues related to race relations. The syllabus contains such topics as African and Caribbean History which we hope will broaden the outlook of the pupils. Our policy is to use historical evidence, whenever it occurs in the various syllabuses, as an introduction and background to the discussion of such issues as prejudice, intolerance, persecution. This often leads to useful and fruitful talking between pupils of different ethnic backgrounds and will, we hope, help them to understand and overcome their own prejudices. Obvious examples of historical topics which can be used in this way are: The Slave Trade, Persecution in any period of History, Nazi Racial Policy, "Wars of Religion" in 16th and 17th Century Europe. We find that discussion is usually difficult to start but once started is extremely beneficial and rewarding.

9. Examinations

All pupils are entered for external examinations. 5th Form pupils take the East Anglian CSE Mode 1 or the Schools History Project 16+ set by London. The 'A' level board is Cambridge.

10. Examination Results 1985

'A' level: Two candidates both of whom failed as they never applied themselves seriously to the work.

16+ : Fourteen candidates who were the school's first entrants for the Schools History Project 16+ exam, in which course work counts for 40% of the mark. Failure to complete all the course work was the reason for the disappointing results - five passes.

CSE: Nine candidates, all of whom obtained a grade - the first time we have had no grade 'U's. One boy achieved grade 3, five grade 4, three grade 5.

11. Finance

The department manages to keep within its spending limit. Most of the expenditure now goes on books and materials for junior forms so that we can provide adequately for the increasing proportion of less able boys.

We are building new stocks for the second and third year boys.

12. Staff

Mr. Sadler: 2nd Year Set
3rd Year B Set
4th Year CSE
5th Year CSE
6.2 European History

Mr. Woollett: 4th Year 16+ Set
5th Year 16+ Set
6.2 English History

Mr. Southgate: 2nd Year Set
3rd Year A Set

2nd Year groups are mixed ability. 3rd, 4th and 5th Year sets are decided according to ability.

13. The major problem facing the department is staffing. Mr. Sands left in July to take up a post at Parkhamsted School and he was replaced by a non-historian. The groups he used to teach are now taught by the Headmaster and by Mr. Southgate whose subjects are R.E. and English. It is essential that as soon as the opportunity arises, a historian is appointed.

The exam results were disappointing, although predictable, except for CSE where nearly all the candidates were from the Special Needs Department. The 16+ candidates will need to be pushed to complete the course work which is crucial in this exam. With GCSE in mind we have investigated various syllabuses and discovered that both our 16+ and CSE courses are very close to, or identical with, proposed GCSE syllabuses.

