



Historical Association Quality Mark Final Report

Visit to: London Fields Primary School, London

Date: 7.7.15

Context:

London Fields is a larger than average primary school with two classes per year group in KS1 and three classes in KS2. The number on roll is 450 (04/02/14). It is situated in Hackney, and the majority of children live in the Queensbridge ward within the Borough. The school was rated Outstanding by Ofsted in 2011 and again this year (2015). The school has incorporated the principles of Visible Learning and SOLO taxonomy into their planning for learning.

The school has a challenging context with FSM, MEG and EAL all far in excess of the National Average.

In their self-evaluation some areas were identified as being Silver rather than Gold. However these judgements were made at the start of the process and were used to identify priorities for development this year. The school's current judgement is that the school fulfils the requirements for the award of Gold.

1.) Teaching and Learning:

The Assessor agreed that the evidence meets the Quality Mark Criteria for 'Gold'.

Students enter the school with a range of challenges as outlined in the context above. The school's Ofsted report stated that Teaching is consistently good and very often outstanding. This would be an accurate representation of the teaching observed during the Quality Mark Assessment.

Across the school, teachers are consistently working to build students understanding of the purpose of studying history. Developing this understanding of purpose is very much part of the school's drive to develop metacognitive thinking in order to deepen pupils learning experiences. At present this practice is implicit within teachers planning and the next step is to make this a more explicit element of pupils learning.

Teaching enables pupils to make outstanding progress from a variety of starting points. This was exemplified in lessons observed and the book scrutiny undertaken during the assessment. Teachers and the history coordinator have high expectations for their pupils. This is matched by carefully planned tasks built around enquiries. Pupils understanding and knowledge is excellent due to the high quality of teaching in the school. This was exemplified by pupils in a lesson about propaganda. The teacher guided pupils through a series of steps that enabled

them to develop their understanding effectively, map work and carefully structured questioning set the context. One student commented that the Empire was shrinking and gave the example of Ireland at the time of Queen Victoria's death. A WWII British recruiting poster and leaflet aimed at the Commonwealth/Empire and particularly West Africa were used to great effect. Pupils' evidential thinking was carefully and thoughtfully used to establish the message and purpose of the sources and then this was used to determine the nature of propaganda.

Teachers use a wide range of strategies to ensure progress in lessons. For example; periods of time have been set aside to further develop pupils' historical writing, building upon and extending learning. Pupils 'build' displays lesson by lesson, clearly illustrating their achievement and providing further evidence of the continuity and consistency of high quality teaching across the school. The monitoring of the quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers work together to reflect on practice and this is used to inform subsequent planning and practice, detailed records of this are maintained and this is linked to the school's PM system. This process is continual and feeds into the very detailed whole school planning that supports teachers, as well as teachers own specific lesson planning.

Pupil's books contain a very high quality of work reflecting their enjoyment of history and providing further evidence of the excellent progress they make. This progress is greatly supported by the highly effective marking and assessment undertaken by teachers. Marking is regular and provides the opportunity for pupils to reflect upon and respond to teachers comments using their 'green pen', thus supporting and extending pupils understanding and achievement.

A key priority for the school this year has been to develop independent learning. In history this is built into whole school planning in every year group. In a Year 5 class observed students were developing their own questions in response to artefacts from the Anglo Saxon period. They worked together to form a hypothesis and then test this as more clues were revealed to them by the teacher. Groups of students referred back to prior learning in their exercise books to piece together their enquiry. In one example students were given specific dates as a clue, some students recognised the dates as something they had already learned about. They then researched their exercise book and were able to link King Alfred to their artefact, (the Alfred Jewel).

2.) Leadership

The Assessor agreed that the leadership of the subject met the Quality Mark Criteria for 'Gold'.

The Head Teacher has a high regard for the leadership provided by the subject coordinator and for her, history education is a real priority, in her words to the coordinator 'we love our history'! Because of this the status of history in the school is very high. In every classroom visited and in the corridors there are displays of pupils history work.

The organisation and management of history across the whole school is outstanding. Detailed plans exist for all year groups providing clear guidance for teachers. This includes detailed guidance regarding activities and key milestones for students to attain throughout each academic year. Planning includes links with other curriculum areas, learning opportunities beyond the classroom, ICT, and the development of literacy. The literacy development includes the development of key vocabulary, extended writing, and links to texts. Planning is therefore rigorous and expectations are consistently high. In Key Stage 2 well-developed historical questions provide a strong enquiry basis for pupils learning. A next step should be to ensure this approach is made even more explicit in KS1 planning.

Monitoring is very thorough. Learning walks, observation and collaboration of staff are used to identify priorities, as is the termly collection of progress data. This all feeds into the Development Plan where specific actions are detailed and their impact monitored robustly. This has resulted in key initiatives that have successfully tackled the gap between boys and girls performance and issues around literacy. Overall this approach ensures a high degree of consistency as teachers have a shared commitment and understanding based upon the progress made by pupils.

The subject coordinator has supported staff to successfully meet priorities by investing in both resources and CPD, including that provided by the HA. The HA website and Key Stage History website have both been used to support development of the curriculum. The school works with a wide range of external and community based organisations, including supporting teaching in another school.

The Headteacher of this school has described the high quality support provided by London Fields School, from an initial subject audit to joint learning walks, observations, work scrutiny and co-planning. She stated that the impact of this support has been to develop her teacher's confidence and build capacity for on-going improvements in history education in her own school.

The views of parents and staff are carefully and regularly collected and considered through

surveys and the school's website. Feedback from parents has resulted in the school's PTA subsidising historical visits and in the provision of more information about the curriculum via the school's website. In particular feedback from teachers has played a key part in developing practice in the school. An example of this is the CPD activity the coordinator led in order to improve chronological understanding across the key stages. The portfolio evidence tracks this from the outcome of the staff questionnaire, to the CPD activity, and on to the outcomes of students as a result of implementing the practice in the classroom.

The history coordinator has also presented detailed information to the Governing Body regarding the development of the curriculum. As a result of our discussions during the Assessment the curriculum leader started to formulate plans to assess students using video in order to capture the rich verbal responses of students. This exemplifies the creative and innovative approach adopted by the school's leadership.

3.) Curriculum:

The Assessor agreed that in both its content and approach to curriculum development practice met the Quality Mark Criteria for 'Gold'.

The programmes of study for all key Stages are designed to meet the needs of students within the school's context. The Head of Faculty has carefully mapped progression and the delivery of first and second order knowledge across the entire curriculum. There is a clear vision for 'history' within the school, shared by the Senior Leadership Team, but clearly driven by the Coordinator.

The school has completely re-worked the curriculum in line with the new National Curriculum orders. However, it has managed to accomplish this in an innovative and creative manner that takes account of pupils' needs and the community in which they live. The use of the SOLO taxonomy to deepen pupils understanding is an example of this. Rather than act as a straightjacket, it has been used thoughtfully to create a curriculum that stimulates the interest in and love of history. The concept of a 'Growth Mindset' fosters high challenge, whilst providing a framework for teaching and learning that promotes high achievement.

The carousel approach adopted in KS1 has been successful in building thinking skills and providing time for reflection and a focus on developing conceptual thinking. Curriculum time for history is good. Local Study and special projects, including opportunities to work outside of the classroom, provide significant enhancement to students' experience of history education. The range of these is particularly impressive as is the levels of student participation.

The range and balance of the curriculum is impressive. Pupil's studies range from the

Egyptians and Mayan Civilisations to the Stone Age, Anglo Saxons/Vikings, Tudors, Fire of London, Famous people through the ages, and World War II. This incorporates a balance between national, local and international history. This was illustrated by a wide ranging discussion where pupils drew upon local and national examples to illustrate their knowledge and understanding. One young man was able to provide an explanation for the start of WWII that would have put many a Year 11 to shame!

4.) Achievement

The Assessor agreed that the achievement of students met the Quality Mark Criteria for 'Gold'.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding based upon their starting points and within the context already described.

The Coordinators excellent subject knowledge and awareness of progression, together with a thorough knowledge of pupils learning/progress, result in high quality provision that enables students to make outstanding progress. This can be seen in lessons and clearly emerges from the wide range of students work that was scrutinised. The quality of Whole School planning is outstanding, this is particularly important in a Primary setting where history is taught by a number of non-specialists.

Monitoring of progress is regular and thorough. Pupil progress is broken down into a number of categories:

- Historical content and knowledge
- Vocabulary
- Using sources

The school is currently working towards developing forms of assessment around a 'mastery' model.

As has already been mentioned pupils work is celebrated throughout the school in the form of high quality displays in corridors and classrooms. In addition there are Headteacher Awards and Star Awards. Evidence of these could be seen in student's exercise books. The ethos is very much one of challenge and enjoyment. This was evident in discussions with students, in classrooms and in the high quality of presentation and content in pupils' books and display work.

5.) Enrichment

The Assessor agreed that enrichment was a particular strength of the Department and met the Quality Mark Criteria for 'Gold'.

The school's corridors and classrooms are full of student's history work and these displays reflect the high quality of provision.

The range, depth, quality and impact of the Department's enrichment activities are a real strength of the school. The school has effectively harnessed history enrichment activities to developing pupils SMSC. The Democracy Week gave pupils the opportunity to visit the Magna Carta exhibition and the Royal Courts of Justice.

The range and variety of the activities is impressive and is on-going. Pupils have worked alongside other schools in activities at Hoxton Hall, participated in workshops at the Museum of London and visited sites as far afield as Hampshire and Kent. As a result of one project a student's work is being displayed in the Museum of London. This exemplifies the high quality work that emerges from enrichment and reflects the enthusiasm students have for history education at their school.

Within school there are strong links with other subjects, especially music and science. These links add another dimension to pupils learning. Student Voice activities play an important part in each history unit, pupils are consulted about their learning and there are opportunities for the co-construction of learning.

Final Comments:

The Assessor spent the morning at the school and would like to thank everyone at London Fields for the warm welcome received.

Award made? Yes
Level: Gold

Date of Award: July 7 2015

Renewal Date: July 2018