

History and Politics

Curriculum Statement



Intent

The History and Politics curriculum has been designed with the aim of stimulating student interest in and enthusiasm for both of these subjects. It is deliberately ambitious in its scope to encourage student knowledge and understanding as to why events happened in the past, how these have been recorded and the different ways in which they have been interpreted. The curriculum is sequenced through a number of study units to provide breadth and depth of exploration for students and differentiated to match their needs, abilities and aspirations.

The department recognises the importance of integrating substantive & disciplinary learning through a range of pedagogical techniques. Such an approach enables students to develop their intellectual understanding in terms of their knowledge of the curriculum as well as an inquisitive, open minded, balanced, reflective and thoughtful approach to learning. This helps to promote a greater sense of empathetic awareness. With an emphasis on independent, peer and group learning the department has helped nurture a courageous approach by emphasising the importance of qualities such as determination, integrity and confidence among students.

Implementation

a) Content & Skills

The integration of content and skills form the basis of the curriculum in the department so as to ensure all students acquire substantive knowledge of the breadth and depth components of the subject which are covered. KS3 is initiated through an on-line department designed unit based on embedding core skills in transition from KS2. All of these are re-visited in Years 7 and 8 with learning monitored through a range of formative assessment exercises notably West African Civilisations and the Process of Enslavement (KS3 History Diploma). Integration of substantive and disciplinary learning is maintained in Year 9 through a department designed course focusing on areas of 20th century history including the Black Civil Rights Movement in the UK 1945 to 2000. Attention has been paid to the development of blended learning using Google Meets as a platform for students in response to gaps in their learning as a result of the school closures which occurred as a result of Covid-19.

For GCSE at KS4 and the IB Diploma at KS5 although the content of the courses which are followed are very much prescribed by examination boards, the department continues with its ethos of integrating substantive and disciplinary learning for students as part of a planned policy of reinforcing their understanding of History. Identification of individual learning needs of both students in the process of completing courses based on external assessment as well as those embarking upon them during 2020 to 2021 has formed part of this process and as with KS3 the platform of Google Meets has been used for blended learning purposes and has assisted in providing opportunities for revisiting parts of the curriculum.

b) Learning environment

At KS3 the History curriculum is delivered to students in form groups of 32 & in Year 9 they are taught in smaller groups of 24. At KS4 and KS5 students are taught in option groups. In all cases students are in mixed ability classes. Most classes are taught in the department in specialist rooms. Several trips exist as part of an extra curricular programme, including Dover Castle (Year 7), WWI Battlefields (Year 9), Berlin and Krakow (Year 10 residential), Imperial War Museum & Churchill War Rooms (Year 10) and Washington DC and New York (Years 12 and 13 residential) as well as a KS3 History Club and Subject Prefects in Years 12 & 13.

c) Assessment & Feedback

At KS3 assessment is based on a department mark scheme with feedback including “What Worked Well” and “Even Better If”. Opportunities for self and peer assessment are initiated in Year 7 for some exercises & developed through the years as part of a planned programme. The marking criteria for such formative assessment tasks are based on substantive and disciplinary learning. This approach is modified and embedded for assessment and feedback for students in Year 9, KS4 & KS5. During 2020 to 2021 the department has paid particular close attention to assessment and feedback to students as part of supporting them in their “catch up” learning as a result of the gaps created by school closures due to Covid 19.

d) Monitoring

Monitoring the quality of provision across all key stages of the curriculum takes place with completion of data mark sheets for standardised assessments at KS3 and Year 9 and for past examinations at KS4 History and KS5 History and Global Politics. Work scrutiny in department meetings is used to ensure consistency in marking. To ensure consistency in terms of curriculum delivery, learning walks and lesson observations take place & use of class context sheets takes place to ensure that there is an awareness of the precise learning needs of all students (SEND, disadvantaged and most able) and that the most effective strategies for learning are being used. This has been a priority during 2020 to 2021 for the purposes of identifying learning gaps and putting in place additional scaffolding measures.

Impact

IB History and IB Global Politics: Student performance for History in 2021 was broadly in line with expectations set by the school (Higher:7-6:72.7% & 7-5:100% and Standard:7-6:58.3% and 7-5:100%) as was the case for Global Politics (Higher:7-6:80% and 7-5:93.3% and Standard:7-6:0% & 7-5:100%) with students obtaining their places in Higher Education (12 for PPE, Politics and International Relations and 3 for History).

GCSE History: Student performance in 2021 was broadly in line with expectations set by the school (9-7:67% and 9-5:100%) as a result of strategies employed by the department to provide the evidence for their Centre Assessment Grades.

PTI: The department continues to achieve annual recognition for its efforts in delivering the curriculum and enhancing provision with this being achieved on an annual basis since 2009.