

History for all

History in English schools 2007/10

This report evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of history in primary and secondary schools. It is based principally on evidence from inspections of history between April 2007 and March 2010 in 166 maintained schools in England. Part A focuses on the key inspection findings in the context of rising standards since the previous report in 2007. Part B discusses some of the key issues facing history teachers and describes the essential components of effective learning in history. Both parts of the report give examples of good practice. This report builds on Ofsted's 2007 report, *History in the balance*.

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Contents

Executive summary	4
Key findings	5
Recommendations	7
The context of history in schools in England	8
Part A: History in primary and secondary schools	9
Achievement in history	9
Primary schools	9
Secondary schools	12
Key Stage 3	13
Key Stage 4 and post-16	14
Teaching in history	17
Primary schools	17
Secondary schools	21
The training of secondary history teachers	26
Assessment	27
The curriculum in history	30
Primary schools	30
Secondary schools	35
Key Stage 3	36
GCSE and A level	39
Leadership and management in history	40
Primary schools	40
Secondary schools	43
Part B: Issues in history	45
Developments in Key Stage 3	45
Using ICT to promote achievement in history	50
Ensuring the best learning in history	53
History and young people's social responsibility	56
Notes	58
Further information	60
Publications by Ofsted	60
Other publications	60
Websites	61
Annex A: Schools visited	62

Executive summary

This report is based on evidence from inspections of history between April 2007 and March 2010 in 83 primary schools and 83 secondary schools. Part A of the report evaluates standards and achievement in history, and the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning, curriculum provision and the quality of leadership and management in the schools visited. Part B discusses some key issues in history. It considers the extent to which the subject is in danger of becoming marginalised and losing its integrity in many of the schools visited. It also looks at good practice in teaching history, and evaluates how effectively history teachers are using information and communication technology (ICT).

There was much that was good and outstanding in the history seen for this survey: achievement was good or outstanding in 63 of the 83 primary schools and 59 of the 83 secondary schools visited. The use of ICT was much more evident than in the previous three-year survey period, and pupils had more opportunities to take greater responsibility for their own learning. History was generally taught well and the subject was well led. Most pupils enjoyed well-planned lessons that extended their knowledge, challenged their thinking and enhanced their understanding.

History teaching was good or better in most primary schools, and most pupils reached the end of Key Stage 2 with detailed knowledge derived from well-taught studies of individual topics. However, some pupils found it difficult to place the historical episodes they had studied within any coherent, long-term narrative. They knew about particular events, characters and periods but did not have an overview. Their chronological understanding was often underdeveloped and so they found it difficult to link developments together.

In part, this was because many primary teachers did not themselves have adequate subject knowledge beyond the specific elements of history that they taught. In addition the curriculum structure for primary schools was itself episodic and militated against pupils grasping such an overview. There is a pressing need for primary teachers to be better supported in their professional development in history, and for the curriculum to ensure that pupils study overview as well as in-depth topics so that they can develop a coherent chronological framework for the separate periods and events that they study.

In the secondary schools visited, effective teaching by well-qualified and highly competent teachers enabled the majority of students to develop knowledge and understanding in depth. It also helped students to develop their ability to support, evaluate and challenge their own views and to challenge the views of others. Many students displayed a healthy respect for historical evidence, along with the skills to use it robustly and critically to support their explanations and judgements. In these ways the teaching of history is helping pupils to develop important and broadly applicable skills.

However, decisions about curriculum structures within schools have placed constraints on history, and other foundation subjects, at Key Stage 3. In 14 of the 58 secondary schools visited between 2008 and 2010, whole-school curriculum changes were having a negative impact on teaching and learning in history at Key Stage 3. Some of these changes included introducing a two-year Key Stage 3 course, assimilating history into a humanities course or establishing a competency-based or skills-based course in Year 7 in place of history and other foundation subjects. Where these developments had taken place, curriculum time for teaching had been reduced and history was becoming marginalised.

At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, history was generally taught very well. Teachers had a clear picture of what was expected at GCSE and A level; they prepared students thoroughly and achievement in public examinations was good and improving. For the past three years, history has been one of the most popular optional GCSE subjects, and numbers taking the subject at A level have risen steadily over the past 10 years. However, in some of the schools visited the students were restricted in their subject options at GCSE and some had been steered towards subjects which were perceived to be less demanding than history. Entries for GCSE varied greatly between different types of schools: students in independent schools were almost twice as likely to study GCSE history as those in maintained schools, while entries for GCSE history from academies were significantly lower than for maintained schools overall.

Key findings

- In the schools visited history was generally a popular and successful subject, which many pupils enjoyed. Achievement was good or outstanding in 63 of the 83 primary schools and 59 of the 83 secondary schools visited. It was inadequate in only two schools.
- Although pupils in primary schools generally had good knowledge of particular topics and episodes in history, their chronological understanding and their ability to make links across the knowledge they had gained were weaker.
- History teaching was good or better overall in more than three quarters of the primary schools visited. However, teachers found it difficult to establish a clear mental map of the past for pupils. In part, this was because they lacked expertise in the subject and also because the National Curriculum specifications treat topics in a disconnected way.
- In most of the primary schools visited, there was not enough subject-specific expertise or professional development to help teachers to be clearer about the standards expected in the subject and to improve their understanding of progression in historical thinking.
- In just under half of the 35 primary schools visited where the teaching of foundation subjects, including history, had become based on cross-curricular

topics or themes, planning for progression in developing historical knowledge and thinking was limited.

- In most cases, links between secondary schools and their local primary schools were weak, so that expertise in the secondary schools was not exploited to support non-specialists in teaching history in the primary schools.
- History was successful in most of the secondary schools visited because it was well taught, notably in examination classes at GCSE and A level. The large majority of these history teachers were very well-qualified. In the large majority of the schools visited, the quality of the provision also reflected the strong leadership of the history departments.
- Attainment in history in the secondary schools visited was high and has continued to rise, particularly at GCSE and A level where results compare favourably with other subjects.¹
- Patterns of entry for GCSE history varied considerably between different types of school: only 30% of students in maintained schools took the subject in 2010 compared with 48% in independent schools. In academies, the proportion was lower still at 20%.
- While most work in the sixth forms visited was well-resourced, in some schools an over-dependence on set text books, linked to specific AS and A-level specifications, did not prepare students well for the challenges of higher education.
- Overall, achievement was weaker in Key Stage 3 than in Key Stage 4 because of a number of factors: more non-specialist teaching; reductions in the time that schools allocated to history; and whole-school curriculum changes in Key Stage 3 in an increasing number of schools. Nearly one in every three lessons observed at Key Stage 3 between 2007 and 2010 was at best satisfactory.
- The National Curriculum orders and programmes of study in Key Stage 3 have led to much high-quality teaching and learning in history. However, in one in five of the secondary schools visited, curriculum changes, such as the introduction of a two-year Key Stage 3 that allowed some students to give up history before the age of 14, and thematic approaches to the curriculum, were associated with teaching and learning that was no more than satisfactory.
- The view that too little British history is taught in secondary schools in England is a myth. Pupils in the schools visited studied a considerable amount of British history and knew a great deal about the particular topics covered. However, the large majority of the time was spent on English history rather than wider British history.
- Three years after Ofsted's previous report on history, teachers had responded positively to developing independent learning in history. The most effective

¹ GCSE, AS and A-level results in history are available at: www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/.

schools used a well-focused enquiry-based approach to achieve this. In addition, more schools were incorporating ICT into history. However, its impact in accelerating gains in pupils' historical knowledge and understanding varied, particularly in the secondary schools visited.

Recommendations

The Department for Education should:

- review the requirements for initial teacher education and the provision of subject-specific professional development opportunities nationally to support primary school teachers more effectively in their work on history
- ensure that, as a result of the National Curriculum Review, pupils in primary schools experience history as a coherent subject which develops their knowledge, thinking and understanding, especially their chronological understanding, and that all students in secondary schools benefit from a significant amount of history to at least the age of 14.

Secondary schools should:

- ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum in history are met in Key Stage 3
- ensure that pupils have a greater understanding of the history of the interrelationships of the different countries which comprise the British Isles
- ensure that technology is exploited to best effect in the teaching and learning of history
- ensure that sixth form history students read widely in preparation for the demands of higher education.

Primary schools should:

- focus on developing pupils' secure understanding of chronology as well as improving their thinking and knowledge in history.

All schools should:

- develop formal and informal networks, clusters and federations to provide greater opportunities for teachers of history to work together on subject-specific training.

The context of history in schools in England

1. Since the Education Reform Act of 1988, history, along with the other foundation subjects, has been compulsory for all pupils from ages 5 to 14 in maintained schools. In 1998, the increased focus on English and mathematics in primary schools led the government to suspend temporarily the requirement to teach the full National Curriculum in foundation subjects.² The suspension was removed two years later and, since 2000, all primary schools have been required to teach the full National Curriculum in all subjects, including history.³
2. Since the early 1990s, revisions and amendments to the National Curriculum, notably in 1995, 2000 and 2007, affected the teaching of history in primary and secondary schools in a number of ways. On the one hand, the changes reduced the amount of prescribed content which had to be taught. On the other hand, they built on and strengthened the structure of the curriculum by supporting the principles of coherence, continuity and progression.
3. The 2007 revision to the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3 reiterated the requirements that pupils were to be taught a substantial amount of British history and that history was to be taught through a combination of overview, thematic and depth studies. 'Key concepts' underpinned the history curriculum and 'key processes' were set down which pupils needed to learn to help them make progress.⁴ These new terms re-labelled what was in the programmes of study already.
4. In England, history is currently not compulsory for students beyond the age of 14 and those in schools offering a two-year Key Stage 3 course can stop studying history at the age of 13. England is unique in Europe in this respect. In almost all the countries of the European Union, it is compulsory to study history in some form in school until at least the ages of 15 or 16. History is compulsory until the age of 14 in Northern Ireland, the Netherlands and Wales, and all pupils study history as part of their broad general education in Scotland until they are 15.

² The National Literacy Strategy was introduced in primary schools in September 1998; the National Numeracy Strategy was introduced a year later.

³ The Education Reform Act 1988;

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/40/contents/enacted?timeline=true.

⁴ The history curriculum at Key Stage 3 can be found at: <http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-3-and-4/subjects/key-stage-3/history/index.aspx>.

From 2007 a framework of concepts and processes shaped all subjects at Key Stage 3. The key concepts in history are: chronological understanding; cultural, ethnic and religious diversity; change and continuity; cause and consequence; significance; interpretation. The key processes are: historical enquiry; using evidence; communicating about the past.

5. From September 2009, revised courses have been taught at GCSE.⁵ The subject criteria require that at least 25% of the syllabus has to cover 'a substantial and coherent element of British history and/or the history of England, Scotland, Ireland or Wales'.⁶ In England, all students now study either Modern World History or the Schools History Project course, apart from a small number who study the History Pilot course offered by the Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations board (OCR).⁷
6. The criteria for A-level history have also been revised and new courses started in September 2008. The principal structural changes included: an increase to 25% in the amount of British history, and/or the history of England, Scotland, Ireland or Wales, that had to be studied; the stipulation that students had to cover a different period or country in both AS- and A-level specifications; and the making of coursework compulsory for the first time.⁸ In contrast with GCSE where specifications have been focused to just two from each of the three examination boards, the changes at A level have resulted in more options and combinations of options.

Part A: History in primary and secondary schools

Achievement in history

Primary schools

7. Achievement in history was good or outstanding in 63 of the 83 primary schools visited between 2007 and 2010. It was outstanding in nine of these schools. Achievement was not inadequate in any of the schools visited.
8. Where history was thriving, pupils were developing a good knowledge of historical topics, acquiring a detailed understanding of the past, and learning to ask questions, research evidence, draw conclusions and communicate their findings. The pupil who talked to an inspector about the wars that the class had studied commented: 'Sometimes we keep repeating similar mistakes, though', which showed how effectively he was learning to make valid judgements.
9. Pupils' attitudes to history were good or better in the schools visited. They enjoyed their lessons, regarded history as fun, were well motivated, and were

⁵ Information on the GCE and GCSE history specifications for the three examination boards in England are listed in the Further information section of this report.

⁶ The GCSE subject criteria for history can be found at: www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/qca-07-3454_gcsecriteriahistory.pdf.

⁷ For further information on the GCSE history pilot, see: www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/type/gcse/hss/history_pilot/index.html.

⁸ The GCE subject criteria for history can be found at: www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/qca-06-2854_history.pdf.

determined to learn something new and to succeed; this was illustrated by the Year 8 pupil who said to an inspector, 'It makes us think.'

10. In most of the lessons observed in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children made good progress in understanding the passage of time and how things change over time. However, in a minority of lessons teachers interpreted 'Knowledge and understanding of the world' in terms of an understanding of place rather than time. In the best lessons, children listened to stories that introduced people from the past and teachers provided numerous opportunities for the children to use the correct language, such as 'yesterday' and 'past', and look at the differences between 'long ago' and 'now'. As a result, children became more confident in asking questions about artefacts, suggesting what they might be used for, and in making accurate comparisons between modern and old objects. In turn, this helped to develop their chronological understanding and their interest in history.
11. At Key Stage 1, good and outstanding achievement in history showed pupils being able to recount stories accurately and to suggest why people and events were important. They had a good understanding of the importance of basing their ideas on evidence. They were given artefacts to handle and analyse and were encouraged to ask questions about them and to consider how they might also find out the answers. In effect, they were developing the skills of hypothesising, questioning and investigating, skills which they would use regularly when studying history and also other subjects. As a result, they could reflect on the significance of what they had learnt and could be thoughtful and perceptive in their thinking. This is illustrated by the pupil who, when asked whether he would like to have lived in Tudor times, replied, 'Well, it depends if you were rich or poor' and followed this up with a brief yet accurate explanation of the differences in daily life in this period.
12. Where achievement in history was outstanding, by the time they had completed primary school, pupils could evaluate a range of historical sources and make perceptive deductions about the reliability of sources in answering historical questions. They had gained an understanding of change and continuity, and they understood the significance of people in a wider historical context. They could identify anachronism—the ability to recognise when things were placed in the wrong time period—and were aware of different views about the events they had studied. They used historical terms accurately and could make pertinent and valid comparisons between periods.
13. Outstanding achievement in history was well illustrated by the following example:

When the pupils entered the school, their skills in language and literacy were well below average. As a result of high-quality teaching and a curriculum which emphasised that 'history is all around us', pupils of all abilities and backgrounds made outstanding progress in history. They

acquired historical skills rapidly and their knowledge and understanding of the topics they studied were well above that usually found.

In the Reception class, children's chronological skills were enhanced very effectively through comparing photographs of children at different ages. They were encouraged to talk about their birthdays and showed their skills by telling the class what they could do now which they could not do when they were babies.

In Key Stage 1, pupils produced timelines on the life of Florence Nightingale and also wrote a small biography of her life, using both textual and visual prompts. They were able to make extended comments about her work at Scutari Hospital and why she was so successful.

In line with the school's emphasis on pupils finding things out for themselves and taking responsibility for their own learning, pupils in Key Stage 2 were adept at finding information to answer the questions they had set themselves. Using the details they had gleaned on a visit to the local museum, pupils in Year 4 had written at length on the impact of the Second World War on the immediate locality, and they could talk extensively about the different experiences of the visitors who had come into school to explain what life had been like for them at the time.

Pupils in Year 5 talked accurately and confidently about living conditions at the time of King John, and in Year 6 they demonstrated an excellent awareness of how historians arrived at their judgements.

Older pupils were fully aware of the way in which bias had an impact on the conclusions that could be drawn from sources and pupils throughout the school used correct historical vocabulary competently.

14. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils generally knew about topics in some depth and, as they moved through the primary years, they learnt in greater detail about the different topics that they studied. However, their chronological understanding, and in particular their understanding that the intervals between the periods they had studied varied, was no better than satisfactory. Their ability to relate what they had learnt in one topic to what they discovered in another was also no better than satisfactory. This meant that many pupils ended up with an episodic knowledge of history and their sense of time was unclear. This weakness was pronounced in the schools where the teaching was no better than satisfactory.
15. Although pupils studied more topics and in greater depth as they moved from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2, the level of challenge did not always increase. As a result, the level of historical thinking required and the understanding gained were sometimes no greater in Year 6 than in Year 3.

16. Pupils regularly investigated evidence but it was not always evaluated, and their understanding of interpretations, dealing with how and why the past is represented and interpreted in different ways, was hazy. No matter how enthusiastic many teachers were about history, their subject knowledge was often limited. As a result, they were unclear about the standards expected, did not fully appreciate progression in historical thinking, and had a hazy understanding of how to assess pupils' learning in history effectively.

Secondary schools

17. Achievement was good or better overall in 59 of the 83 secondary schools visited; it was outstanding in 17 of these schools. In 22 schools achievement was satisfactory and in two it was inadequate. This reflects the pattern seen in the schools visited in the previous inspection cycle. However, there is an improving national trend at GCSE and at A level.⁹
18. Overall, achievement was weaker in Key Stage 3 than in Key Stage 4, and was weaker in Years 7 and 8 than in Year 9. This relative weakness was frequently associated with the deployment of non-specialist teachers.¹⁰ Achievement at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form was predominantly good.
19. Students in the secondary schools visited, and especially those taking examinations in Key Stage 4, became increasingly sophisticated in explaining why history is important. They commented, for example, that studying history helped one to be 'more tolerant' and to 'respect people more', and they could justify their points with reasoned arguments based on evidence from the topics they had studied.
20. Where they had been encouraged to compare and contrast the different topics they studied, the students were able to make perceptive links. This is illustrated by the GCSE students who, having studied the Depression in America in the late 1920s and early 1930s, could identify precise similarities and differences in the way that the recent economic crisis in the world had developed and been handled. One of them said, 'History does not repeat itself, but it can help us to see how similar problems have been tackled in the past. It might also prevent us from making some of the mistakes that previous generations have made.'
21. Students interviewed as part of the survey almost always recognised that one of the most important reasons for studying the subject was that 'it helps us

⁹ The Statistical First Releases from the Department for Education provide information on GCSE, AS- and A-level results in history. For further information, see: www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/.

¹⁰ A similar finding about the differences in the quality of teaching across the two key stages is reported in *Geography: learning to make a world of difference* (090224), Ofsted, 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090224.

form our own opinions' or, in the words of one student, 'History liberates the mind.' Another crisply summed up her view when she said that history enabled her to 'read between the lines'.

22. Older students were articulate about the value of history in developing their wider skills, for example 'in researching, in improving our communication skills, in interrogating evidence, in devising our own questions, in extracting information, and in helping us to understand the world in which we live'.

Key Stage 3

23. Where achievement at Key Stage 3 was at least good, students:
- acquired knowledge and understanding in greater depth than at primary school
 - had a good grasp of how to undertake historical enquiries and could evaluate sources well
 - understood significance and appreciated clearly how to undertake a historical investigation, select relevant evidence, evaluate it and communicate their findings effectively
 - enjoyed the subject, readily absorbed themselves in their learning, and made excellent progress.

These features are illustrated in the example below.

The students across Key Stage 3 were adept in using and evaluating sources. A mixed-ability Year 7 lesson was particularly successful in helping the students to use sources to establish different viewpoints. A stepped approach enabled students to:

- identify types of questions
- look at the reliability of different sources in relation to the questions
- apply their learning through extended writing.

What they had to write varied, reflecting the needs and abilities of the students. Peer- and self-assessment were used well in most cases to evaluate progress. The students understood clearly that all sources of evidence, including biased ones, were valuable to historians because, as one student put it, 'Once we've worked out a source might be biased, we then need to ask why it is biased, and look at the motives of the person who produced it.'

24. Although their ability to think historically was usually good, students' understanding of interpretations continued to vary considerably. However, it was better overall than it was in the schools visited during the previous three-year survey. In a minority of the schools visited for this survey, this weak

understanding of interpretations arose when teachers thought that students had to come up with their own interpretations and were not aware that a broader approach was needed. Understanding of interpretations is concerned, not least, with how historians and others have interpreted the past, why they have interpreted the past in that way and the validity of the interpretations. The example below illustrates students' effective understanding of this aspect of history.

There is a deliberate and successful development of students' understanding of how and why historical interpretations change across time.

Students in Year 7 considered why people's interpretations of King John have changed over the years. Students in Year 8 analysed the changing attitudes towards Oliver Cromwell from the 17th to the 20th centuries and, in Year 9, they looked at changing attitudes to the British Empire. The work on Cromwell used the writings of Victorian and 20th century historians as well as contemporary historians. In the work on the British Empire, the students designed an Empire plate, having looked at contemporary and modern sources of information, including the work of historians such as Niall Ferguson. Through these approaches students developed a clearer understanding of the context in which history is written, created and interpreted.

Key Stage 4 and post-16

25. History continues to be a popular subject at Key Stage 4. During the three-year period of the survey, there were more examination entries for history than for any other optional subject at GCSE level, apart from design and technology. The number of students in England choosing to study history has remained stable for the past 10 years.¹¹
26. Entries have varied considerably across types of schools. In 2010, 30% of students in maintained schools took GCSE history compared with 48% in independent schools. Students in academies were less likely to study history at GCSE than students in other types of maintained schools; in 2010, for example, only 20% of students in academies were entered for GCSE history.¹² In the same year, 40% of students took history at GCSE in specialist humanities

¹¹ The Statistical First Releases from the Department for Education provide information on GCSE, AS- and A-level results in history. For further information, see: www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/.

¹² Although the numbers involved are small, the number of academies that did not enter students for history at GCSE has increased from four in 2007 to 18 in 2010.

colleges. In 2010, 70 maintained secondary schools entered no students for GCSE history, compared with 62 in 2009.¹³

27. Standards in history at GCSE compare favourably with other subjects and have continued to improve. Results for 2010 indicate that 70% of students gained grades A* to C in history compared with 67% in 2007. The proportion of students failing to attain any grade has fallen while the proportion achieving grades A and A* has risen. Although a higher than average proportion of students took history in humanities colleges in 2009, they achieved similar results to the national average. Nearly all students who took history in independent schools in 2010 achieved at least a grade C.
28. Two further recent developments have been the fall in the number of students taking a GCSE short course in history and a decline in the number of students taking the entry level examinations.
29. Entry level is the only other form of accreditation available at Key Stage 4 in history and is intended for students who find GCSE too demanding. However, the declining number of students taking this examination reflects not only a lack of confidence that entry level meets the needs of those for whom it was intended, but also decisions by curriculum leaders to avoid a course that does not contribute significantly towards their school's attainment profile. In a small number of the schools visited, lower-attaining students were prevented from studying history to age 16 because the subject was seen as too demanding for them.
30. History is a popular subject in sixth forms and colleges. In 2010 it was in the top five subject choices at A level. As a proportion of total entries at AS and A level, the figure for history has remained remarkably stable, while the actual number of students taking the subject at AS and A level has risen steadily for the last 10 years.
31. Results at AS and A level compare favourably with other subjects and have continued to rise. In 2009, 55% of students taking A-level history gained grades A and B, compared with 52% for all subjects. Results for 2010 indicate that 56% of students gained grade B and above in history compared with 52% in 2007. The picture has been similar but less marked in AS examinations. In 2009, 40% of students taking history obtained grades A and B, compared with 33% for all subjects. Results for 2010 indicate that 39% of students gained grades A and B in history at AS level which is similar to the 2007 figure.

¹³ Data sourced from underlying data to SFR1/2011, 'GCSE and Equivalent Results in England 2009/10 (revised)', published by DfE on 31 March 2011.

32. During the survey visits, inspectors regularly saw high standards and good progress in examination classes at GCSE and in the sixth form, as illustrated in the example below.

Students in Year 13 were analysing a range of source materials to discover factors to explain the achievement of independence of countries in East Africa between 1956 and 1980. The lesson had been carefully structured so that students were obliged to consider and reflect on the possible factors, from all points of view, before drawing valid and sustainable conclusions. At the end of the lesson the inspector wrote:

'Achievement in this lesson was first-rate. Excellent preparation of resources before the lesson and first-rate teaching in the lesson meant that the students made outstanding progress. By the end of the lesson they had a much clearer grasp not only of the events surrounding independence for countries in East Africa, but also of the varying arguments explaining what happened. More than this, the activities in the lesson had reinforced their historical thinking and their ability to make inferences, look for evidence and establish what was known and what was not known, analyse points of view, look for additional evidence before making a judgement on the validity of an argument, and challenge each other's viewpoints.

The students left the lesson with a better understanding not only of what was required for the examination but also of what a logical argument looked like in history and thus how to be a better student of history.'

33. When achievement was good or outstanding in history at GCSE and in the sixth form, students:
- gained knowledge and understanding in depth, of people, events and contexts from a range of historical periods
 - learnt to think critically about history, formulate and refine their own questions and lines of enquiry, and communicate ideas confidently in language appropriate to a range of audiences
 - engaged enthusiastically in their learning, developed a sense of curiosity about the past, understood how and why events are significant, and how and why people interpret the past in different ways
 - consistently supported, evaluated and challenged their own views and those of others, using detailed, appropriate and accurate historical evidence from a range of sources
 - showed respect for historical evidence and an ability to use it robustly and critically to support their explanations and judgements
 - embraced challenging activities readily, including opportunities to undertake high-quality research across a range of history topics.

Teaching in history

Primary schools

34. Teaching was good or better in 65 of the 83 primary schools visited between 2007 and 2010. No school was visited in which the teaching of history was inadequate.
35. In the nine schools in which teaching was outstanding, the pupils made exceptional progress in their historical knowledge, thinking and understanding. Teachers fired their imaginations and pupils became absorbed by their learning.
36. The lesson described here exemplifies outstanding teaching and learning in history. It also helps to explain not only why many pupils enjoy history and do well, but also why history plays such an important role in their education and personal development.

The planning and preparation for a Year 1 lesson were outstanding. Clear objectives were linked to the levels of attainment and to graduated success criteria. The pupils were to learn about things that might be found in an old house and the rooms in which they might be used. The vocabulary to be developed was identified, as were the resources needed. The activities had been carefully thought through, and differentiated to meet the needs of all the pupils. A plenary session, involving probing questions, had been thoughtfully planned.

The teacher immediately captured the pupils' imagination by telling them that she had asked her grandma for some old things. She had been to the attic to get a suitcase of things from her great grandma's Victorian house. She had lived in the house from 1870 to 1910. The pupils wanted to know what was in the suitcase and the teacher used the moment well to say that she had never seen the suitcase before, and had no idea what was in it. The sense of excitement and expectation was tangible. Some pupils could not sit still and were desperate for the lid to be opened.

Gradually, the teacher took out the objects, each of which was carefully wrapped. In pairs the children were asked to feel the object and comment on what they could feel and what they thought it was. The teaching assistant recorded the descriptions and guesses for later in the lesson and for the display on 'Homes and houses'. The pupils then unwrapped the items to see how close they had come to identifying them. Each of the 15 objects was shown to the class and identified. The teacher made sure that this stage was crisply done and did not lose momentum.

The pupils guessed some of the rooms correctly; reasons were carefully considered. The emphasis was on asking focused questions. The rooms that the items came from were shown on the whiteboard through a short

video game. This allowed the player to 'visit' Victorian times and Victorian houses. Particular emphasis was placed on scullery items because one of the activities was to recreate a Victorian washday with tub, dolly, washboard, brush and pegs. Items borrowed from a local gallery showed good use of local resources. The focus of their work was also explained: together they were going to make a book: 'What you need in a Victorian Kitchen.'

Group work was arranged as follows:

- a small group, working outside with a teaching assistant, recreated washing in a scullery; accurate vocabulary was developed as well as an understanding of the process
- lower-attaining pupils (with a trainee teacher) worked in pairs to put old item cards or real dolls' house items into the right rooms of a dolls' house, before drawing and labelling the items
- average-attaining pupils (with the teacher) worked on a guidebook to a Victorian house and rooms, before playing a matching game, using cards of old and new household items to reinforce what was being learnt
- higher-attaining pupils (with an adult helper) researched more about each item in books in order to draw, label and write captions for kitchen items; they also had to provide dates for items so that they could work out which came first, sort them out from oldest to most recent and locate them on the class timeline; the pupils were also encouraged to explore the Victorian period – what else could they find out?

At the end of the group work, the pupils worked as a whole class to describe what they had discovered. The teacher's questions encouraged the pupils to make links and to see how the information built a bigger picture. The guide book was used to show what everyone had learnt and to prompt discussion. This was an excellent example of teaching using the pupils' ideas. The pupils were eager to know more and asked when they would be 'doing history again'.

37. This outstanding lesson exemplified particularly effective teaching in history because:

- all the pupils made excellent progress in their knowledge and understanding – on this occasion of Victorian times
- their enquiry and research skills were strengthened, as was their chronological understanding
- the pupils were motivated and enthusiastic about what they were doing and wanted to know more

- the teacher had planned and prepared the lesson meticulously, matched activity to ability, considered expectation and challenge, thought about questions and activities, and made sure that the two-hour session had pace and purpose.
38. Other features of good or outstanding teaching were:
- thorough planning focused on clear learning outcomes
 - careful assessment during lessons of the progress and understanding of all pupils
 - thoughtful cross-curricular links which ensured that historical understanding was nurtured through other opportunities
 - opportunities for pupils to ask questions, find answers and present their work to their peers; for example, Year 4 pupils debated perceptively whether both Guy Fawkes and King James were bad men and how the differences between them could be resolved
 - opportunities for pupils to collaborate in questioning historical evidence: for example, in Year 5 pupils investigated life in Victorian boarding schools by studying letters written by children at the time
 - a range of activities including practical sessions which motivated pupils; for example, in an excellent Year 2 lesson, pupils acted as 'penny lick' and ice cream sellers and explained confidently why ice cream was a luxury in Victorian times
 - opportunities to use and evaluate artefacts and real historical evidence; for example, Year 3 pupils investigated the impact of the Blitz on the local area by studying newspaper reports and old photographs
 - imaginative use of the internet and the interactive whiteboard to bring variety to lessons but also to gain access to a wealth of resources
 - a creative balance between teacher-directed learning, which set the guidelines in which the learning took place, and independent learning, which allowed the pupils to get to grips with historical questions
 - sensitive teaching so that pupils understood the changing views of the past, how and why interpretations and representations change, why history matters and why what they are taught is worth knowing.
39. In the best lessons, pupils started to become historical detectives. Through Key Stages 1 and 2, they refined their questioning skills and their thinking became more sophisticated. The demands placed on them, in terms of knowledge and thinking, became more challenging.

40. When teaching was less effective:
- pupils tended to be passive, work was not challenging enough and they were expected to listen to the teacher for too long
 - teachers did not adequately assess the progress of each pupil during their lessons, so not all pupils were learning effectively
 - goals were not always focused sufficiently on history-specific skills and did not help pupils to make better progress
 - opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing were insufficient and they did not have enough time to reflect in depth on what they were learning
 - tasks set did not always challenge higher-attaining pupils sufficiently, often those who were gifted and talented
 - the criteria for judging performance in history were often unclear to pupils and, sometimes, also to the teachers.
41. The vast majority of teachers in the primary schools visited were not history specialists, although they enjoyed teaching history. Many were fascinated by the subject and welcomed the change from teaching English and mathematics. However, their lack of deep subject knowledge and only limited awareness of how to develop pupils' chronological understanding or their skills of effective enquiry were the principal stumbling blocks to improving primary pupils' achievement in history.
42. Newly qualified and recently qualified teachers in primary schools interviewed during the survey said that they had had little training in history but that they were very often expected to teach some history when they were on their school experience placements. It was left largely to the trainees themselves to tackle their needs in history, and in any of the other foundation subjects, that had been revealed through audits of their subject knowledge. This assumed that the schools in which they were teaching either had appropriate expertise, or could access it, to meet those needs.
43. Recently, teachers' opportunities for continuing professional development in history have been limited. During the survey, some history coordinators said that they had not been able to find any relevant training in history in their areas. Focusing teaching and learning consultants in local authorities on English and mathematics has meant that support for foundation subjects has decreased.
44. Teachers in some of the schools visited had qualifications in history beyond GCSE level and kept up-to-date with current developments and thinking

through their membership of the subject association.¹⁴ This had a positive impact on their teaching and, subsequently, on the progress of their pupils. Some of the schools that had no teacher with a qualification in history had sensibly sought assistance from neighbouring primary schools where such expertise was available.

45. The expertise and time of teaching assistants were generally used well to support pupils' individual needs, especially the youngest and those who found learning difficult. However, not all assistants were clear about their role and some were too willing to do the work for the pupils they were supporting rather than promoting the pupils' independence.

Secondary schools

46. Teaching was at least good in 64 of the 83 secondary schools visited and was outstanding in 16 of these. It was satisfactory in 18 schools and inadequate in one. The proportion of schools in which teaching was judged to be good or better was similar to that noted in previous reports.¹⁵
47. Teaching was particularly strong in examination classes at GCSE and especially at AS and A level where 91% of the lessons seen were judged to be good or outstanding, compared with 78% at Key Stage 4 and 69% at Key Stage 3.
48. Although there was good and outstanding teaching at Key Stage 3, nearly one in every three lessons observed at Key Stage 3 between 2007 and 2010 was at best satisfactory.
49. Satisfactory or inadequate teaching was frequently associated with curriculum changes. In some schools, these meant that history was no longer taught as a discrete subject by specialist teachers. As has been reported in religious education and in geography, most of the less effective teaching was observed in lessons in Years 7 and 8 where history was being taught as part of a thematic, cross-curricular, or generic skills course, which did not focus adequately on subject-specific knowledge, thinking and understanding.¹⁶ The implications of such curriculum changes are discussed in Part B.
50. Good or outstanding teaching in secondary schools reflected many of the features already described in primary schools. The particular characteristics of

¹⁴ The principal subject association for history teachers is the Historical Association. For further information, see: www.history.org.uk/

¹⁵ *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools 2004/5; school subject reports: History in secondary schools*, Ofsted, 2005; <http://live.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/annualreport0405/>.

¹⁶ *Transforming religious education* (090215), Ofsted, 2010; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090215. *Geography: learning to make a world of difference* (090224), Ofsted, 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090224.

highly effective teaching in secondary schools, which motivated students and strengthened their learning, included:

- teachers' excellent subject knowledge, clear exposition and judicious selection of teaching strategies, including the use of ICT
- a high level of challenge which obliged students to make well-considered judgements based on evidence that was robust and increasingly broad in its range
- high-quality activities: students were engaged in presenting and developing ideas, arguing about the past and re-evaluating their thinking in the light of what they had been learning
- sufficient opportunities for students to listen, discuss and debate questions and to respond thoughtfully so that others could comment
- the development of historical thinking, analysis and evaluation at the heart of the lesson rather than as an afterthought at the end
- a climate of historical enquiry in which trying to find the right answer really mattered to the students and where they developed an understanding of the complexities of the past
- out-of-classroom activities, available for all students, which enriched learning
- careful monitoring of progress by teachers during lessons and regular assessment, including peer- and self-assessment, which enabled students to know how well they were doing and what they had to do to improve.

51. The success of history in secondary schools owes much to the high quality of the teaching workforce for history. According to data collected by the Training and Development Agency for Schools, trainee history teachers are the best qualified of all secondary trainees. At 78%, the proportion of trainees in history who had at least a 2:1 classification for their first degree in 2008/09 was higher than that for any other National Curriculum subject. The latest *Secondary school curriculum and staffing survey*, published in 2007, showed that 76% of all history teachers had a post A-level qualification in history or a related subject. Science was the only other subject in which a higher proportion of teachers held a subject-specific degree.¹⁷

52. The subject knowledge of the specialist history teachers in the secondary schools visited was almost always good, often it was outstanding and,

¹⁷ These data are provided with permission from the Training and Development Agency for Schools; <https://dataprovizion.tda.gov.uk/specialist>.
Secondary school curriculum and staffing survey 2007 (RR DCSF-RR026), DCSF, 2007;
<http://publications.education.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-RR026&>.

occasionally, it was encyclopaedic. Inspectors found so much good and outstanding teaching because the teachers knew their subject well.

53. Highly effective teaching was underpinned by a vibrant environment for learning. This engaged teachers and students collaboratively in history. The subject was meaningful to the students. They developed a desire to learn and were excited about history. These aspects are illustrated vividly in this example.

Comprehensive planning, excellent relationships and an overriding concern to meet the needs and interests of all the students were three of the most important characteristics of the outstanding teaching in one of the history departments visited. In addition, the teachers' knowledge of history was very secure and they passed on their enthusiasm to their students. They had high expectations and modified their methods to ensure that individuals' learning needs were met.

Students enjoyed the lessons and the many opportunities they had to take part in historical drama, debates and discussions. They rose to challenges and were keen to express their opinions and justify their views with evidence. The best lessons seen developed as a dialogue between students and between students and the teacher.

All the teachers used the interactive whiteboards with a high level of skill. They had prepared thought-provoking resources for their students that included detailed revision booklets.

Assessment was of high quality and the teachers monitored the progress of their students rigorously, intervening rapidly if they noticed underachievement.

Academic guidance was excellent and the students had a keen understanding of how well they were doing and how to meet their challenging targets. As one student commented, 'Our teachers constantly encourage us and are always there to help.' Students also benefited from a variety of extra classes, revision sessions and individual tuition.

54. Less effective teaching was characterised by:
- planning which was too focused on content rather than on what the students should learn and how the lesson fitted into a sequence of work
 - insufficiently challenging activities, based on procedural and descriptive work, and a lack of historical enquiry
 - poor monitoring of progress during lessons, including a teacher's readiness to assume that because one student had answered a question successfully, the rest of the class was ready to move on

- assessment that was insufficiently focused on subject-specific objectives, especially in relation to progression in skills; insufficient checking of progress; insufficient monitoring of historical errors
- imprecise marking of written work which lacked subject-specific comments to help students to improve
- insufficient cognitive challenge for all students, especially the most academically able: tasks for them were not challenging enough for them to make sustained progress
- teachers' weak subject knowledge, reflected in explanations and responses to students that added little to their understanding.

55. One of the most serious concerns about poor provision was the tendency for teachers to try to cover too much content and 'spoon-feed' students. As a result, teachers talked too much, lessons were rushed, opportunities for debate and reflection were missed, and students lost interest. Such a lesson is illustrated here.

A mixed-ability Year 7 class was looking at what happened to people in Nazi Germany who had been involved in perpetrating the Holocaust and why. At the start of the lesson, the teacher had focused the students effectively by asking them to consider what happens to criminals today. Moving on to the events in Europe, the students read extracts which told them about what happened to Goering, Hess and the people who lived near and worked in the death camps. When the teacher said that some Nazi scientists were 'let off' and 'spirited away to work for the Allies', several students expressed surprise and could not understand why this had been the case. However, there was no discussion of this issue and the teacher moved swiftly to the next activity, missing an opportunity to explore why some Nazi scientists had been treated this way. As the lesson progressed, the students became less and less focused.

How might this have been improved?

Rather than aiming to complete the activities and cover the material in the lesson plan, the teacher could have allowed the students to suggest reasons why the Allies had reacted in this way towards some scientists. This might have enhanced students' understanding not only of the events at the end of the Second World War but also of what motivates leaders and victors at different times in history.

56. In three quarters of the secondary schools visited, the development of independent learning skills in history was judged to be good or better and in five of the schools visited it was outstanding. History lends itself well to providing opportunities for students to work on their own or in small groups on

enquiry-based activities. Many teachers' skilled questioning and the provision of focused tasks prompted students to think and learn independently.

57. Such activities, however, were more common for younger students. Opportunities declined as students began examination courses. Teachers often told inspectors that the demands of the examination specifications militated against using independent learning tasks. However, in good history departments, teachers ensured that students at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form were actively involved in their learning, while still meeting course requirements, as in this example.

Year 11 students were studying the treatment of the Sioux Indians as part of the Schools History Project depth study on the American West.¹⁸

An effective activity at the beginning of the lesson reminded students of what they knew so far about the homes and lifestyle of the Sioux Indians, especially in relation to buffalo hunting. Using this knowledge, students, working in groups, devised criteria to judge any modern interpretation of what happened to the Sioux. In this case, they considered a Hollywood film. Once the draft criteria had been discussed, reviewed and re-drafted, the students watched several sequences from the film. At key points, prompted by the students, the teacher stopped the film to review this interpretation. Close checks were made against the criteria. Gradually a view emerged of the reliability of the film's interpretation. Good questioning helped the students to develop their own ideas and all of them were involved in the discussions.

Why was this lesson effective?

This highly effective lesson encouraged students to develop their own ideas, to consider issues in depth, and to test out interpretations of history. Guided by the teacher, the students devised the criteria and judged the film. They left the lesson not only with a clearer understanding of how and why Hollywood had interpreted the treatment of the Sioux in such a way but, more importantly, they also had a firmer grasp of what happened to the Sioux and why it happened. The lesson had absorbed the students and they had been actively and enthusiastically engaged in their learning.

58. Lower-attaining students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, received satisfactory support in the schools visited. In the best lessons, planning identified clear expectations and appropriate challenges for these students. Teaching assistants were deployed effectively to ensure that

¹⁸ For further information on the Schools History Project, see: www.schoolshistoryproject.org.uk/index.htm.

the students they were supporting made progress that was as good as that of their peers.

59. In just over a third of the schools visited, inspectors focused particularly on provision for the most able students. This was good or outstanding in 16 out of 32 schools; in two schools it was outstanding and there were no schools in which the provision for these students was inadequate.
60. Although the challenge for more academically able students at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form was often good or outstanding, in half the schools visited the work at Key Stage 3 was too undemanding. This was particularly so when the students were taught by non-specialist teachers. Specifically, those who were not specialist history teachers did not know how to provide activities for students which were sufficiently challenging to meet their needs. This was because the teachers did not understand the complexities of the historical thinking required.
61. In the 16 schools where the provision was less effective, the planning for lessons did not indicate clearly how the most able students were to be challenged. In addition, the pace of the lessons was too often matched to the middle- and lower-attaining students; it failed to engage the most able sufficiently, who lost interest.
62. The needs of the most academically able were met most effectively by the teachers who had an excellent grasp of the intellectual structure of the subject. They had an extensive knowledge of all that students learnt in history and their planning reflected this. In the best schools visited, the teachers did not rely solely on differentiation by outcome. This is when all pupils undertake a common task and differentiation is sought on the basis of the quality of response or outcome. Instead, the teachers used a variety of approaches. Some identified activities that matched the abilities and aptitudes of different groups of students. When this was the case, differentiation took place because there was a different level of difficulty inherent in each task. Students' progress and achievement were enhanced considerably where teachers did not rely totally on one approach but instead employed a range of techniques.

The training of secondary history teachers

63. Ofsted's recent inspections of initial teacher education found that secondary trainee teachers, both on PGCE courses and on the employment-based Graduate Teacher Programme, were well qualified and well trained. One of the most important factors in successful training was the quality of the schools in which the trainees were placed.

64. Although the mentors assigned to the trainees were highly committed to supporting them, the quality of their work varied considerably. In the best provision:
- trainees were challenged and supported through incisive feedback on their lessons and assignments
 - mentors and others set clear and coherent targets for trainees
 - mentors had high expectations and excellent knowledge and understanding of the pedagogy of the subject.
65. One training establishment required all its mentors and trainees in history to read and debate an agreed work of historical scholarship. Trainees said that this had made them think critically about their own understanding of issues and reflect upon their approach to teaching history. It helped them to keep up with historical scholarship.
66. Such good practice was not always the case. Notable weaknesses in the training of secondary trainees on the Graduate Teacher Programme were reflected in:
- trainees' limited understanding of how to meet the needs of all students through effective differentiation
 - trainees' limited awareness of current thinking about teaching and learning in history
 - limited preparation for teaching in nationally diverse communities
 - insufficient understanding of how to implement the revised curriculum in history at Key Stage 3.

Assessment

67. The quality of assessment was good or outstanding in 34 of the 67 primary schools visited in which it was specifically judged. It was satisfactory in all but one of the remaining schools. Assessment was therefore a relatively weaker aspect of provision in the primary schools visited and was a particular issue at Key Stage 2. At the heart of the problem was non-specialist teachers' lack of confidence in history.
68. The accuracy of schools' assessments varied. In a small number of the schools visited, assessment was very accurate. In the schools where assessment was, at best satisfactory, a minority of the teachers tended to under- or over-estimate how well pupils were doing. The example below is typical of a school where assessment was good, but in which aspects still needed development.

The assessment system worked well. It enabled teachers to set work of varying difficulty and helped to deploy teaching assistants effectively.

What the teachers did, they did well and the pupils responded well. Assessment was used effectively but it was predominantly about content rather than pupils' thinking and learning in history.

The school's plans to formalise assessment more in terms of National Curriculum levels were likely to provide teachers with sharper data to inform their teaching. The move towards simplifying levels so that pupils could understand them also had the potential to help in defining progression in learning.

69. The quality of assessment was good or better in 40 of the 67 secondary schools visited in which it was specifically judged and was not inadequate in any of the schools. Generally, inspectors judged assessment to be better in the schools visited in the last year of the survey (2009/10) than in either of the two previous years.
70. The use of performance data by teachers and departments as a whole to monitor students' progress and identify possible underachievement was better than in those schools visited for the previous history survey. Teachers, especially those teaching examination classes, were skilled in using data to decide which students needed additional intervention to support and challenge them. Examination results were analysed closely and action was taken to remedy deficiencies in teaching and learning. However, this was not widespread at Key Stage 3: too often teachers made too little use of performance data in class work and examination work to determine the next steps in students' learning.
71. Peer- and self-assessment were becoming more common and, when done effectively, markedly enhanced students' learning. Analysing how to answer examination questions, undertaking practice questions and considering mark schemes all helped students to understand what was expected, as in the following example of excellent practice.

The teacher used the examination mark scheme with Year 11 students to help them to analyse the reasons for the marks they had been awarded and how they might improve, following their trial examination paper.

Self- and peer-assessment were integral to the lesson as students evaluated their work against the criteria. Pertinent questions and commentary from the teacher extended the students' understanding. Their comments showed their very secure ability to appraise their own work, including identifying their own strengths and areas for improvement.

Four factors contributed to the effectiveness of the lesson:

- the teacher had expert knowledge of both history and the requirements of the examination
- the teacher knew the students very well and had structured the lesson to target their needs carefully
- because relationships were excellent, the students were open about the weaknesses as well as the strengths of their work. Humour was used very effectively to reinforce learning.
- the students' attitudes were excellent, firmly rooted in the students' confidence in the teacher and their experience of enjoyable and worthwhile history throughout their time at the school.

72. When feedback was highly effective, students' work was marked regularly, teachers made evaluative comments about the quality of the history, targets for improvement were identified, and students knew clearly what they had to do to improve. Marking was useful for students because it clearly enhanced their progress.
73. Less effective assessment and feedback, particularly in primary schools and in Key Stage 3, were characterised by:
- irregular marking that often emphasised presentation rather than focusing on subject-specific knowledge, thinking and understanding
 - only cursory checking of books so that basic errors of spelling, grammar and punctuation were uncorrected
 - assessment which was neither frequent enough nor specific enough to ensure that targets were always adequately challenging
 - little evidence of dialogue in books about work that had been marked, for example pupils' responses to a teacher's comments.
74. In most of the secondary schools visited, there was too much superficial focus on National Curriculum levels, with many teachers making sweeping judgements about the level that students might have achieved in class, often based on flimsy evidence. This left students with little understanding of what the level meant for them.
75. Some teachers had made the level descriptions more relevant to students. Where this had been undertaken carefully, it had helped students to understand what they need to do to improve, especially where these adapted descriptions of the levels were in their exercise books or on large posters on the classroom wall.
76. In most of the history departments visited, teachers were using sub-levels in their assessments, usually in response to demands from senior leaders. This trend affected not only history but has also been noted in other foundation

subjects, notably religious education and geography. Such practice was largely unhelpful since the levels were not intended for such minute differentiation or to be used so frequently. They were intended to be used sparingly and holistically to judge several pieces of work at the end of a key stage or, at most, at the end of a year. They were never intended to be used, as inspectors observed in some of the schools visited, to mark individual pieces of work. However, schools that had developed portfolios of students' work, and used level descriptions to assess achievement across a range of work, were much better placed to judge students' progress accurately.

The curriculum in history

Primary schools

77. The quality of the curriculum was good or outstanding in 60 of the 83 primary schools visited, and of these it was outstanding in eight. In the remaining schools it was satisfactory. In no school was the curriculum judged to be inadequate.
78. Where the curriculum in history was most effective, teachers:
- focused clearly on bringing the programmes of study to life for pupils through a range of experiences, not only inside the classroom but also through extensive enrichment activities which made excellent use of local expertise and local provision, for example, museums and sites of historical interest
 - planned effectively for progression in developing pupils' knowledge, thinking and understanding in the subject
 - adapted the curriculum imaginatively by adding, for example, additional topics in response to pupils' needs and interests but always having a regard to developing a sense of chronology and an overarching narrative
 - promoted learning and understanding in history through effective cross-curricular links.
79. The features of an outstanding curriculum were well displayed in this school:

The history curriculum is a real strength within the school. It more than meets the basic requirements. It is based on capturing pupils' imaginations through creative activities, stimulating stories and adventurous re-enactments, such as drama day when pupils become Vikings, or Knights debating around the huge wooden round table in the school grounds. Also in the grounds are two large stockades which are regularly used to enable pupils to learn about sieges, military tactics and settlement life at different times.

Cross-curricular links are extremely strong throughout the history curriculum. Literacy is very well developed and boys in particular benefit hugely from the imaginative games they play as a precursor to writing and making presentations for class display. Other subjects, such as art and geography, are also used to develop different aspects of history where appropriate.

Pupils have many opportunities to visit relevant places of historical interest and experts (some of them from local families) are regularly invited to school to reinforce the living history approach adopted by the school.

80. In the schools visited in which the curriculum was only satisfactory, relative weaknesses included:
- an absence of coherence in planning the curriculum and insufficient links made between different periods so that pupils had little idea of a developing historical narrative; they found it difficult to build up a chronological overview and experienced history simply as a series of episodes
 - rigid interpretation of the guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA): this inhibited some teachers from being more creative in ensuring that the curriculum met pupils' needs fully
 - inconsistencies, both within as well as across schools, in planning to develop subject-specific knowledge and thinking progressively
 - an unbalanced curriculum with too much attention paid to particular topics at the expense of others.
81. The scheme of work below, based on the National Curriculum programmes of study, relies heavily on the guidance from the QCDA. It is not dissimilar to a scheme of work included in Ofsted's previous history report and is included here to make the point that curriculum planning in many of the schools visited had not moved on. While the curriculum shown here has breadth and covers local, national, European and world history, its principal weaknesses are the disconnected topics and the potential for the pupils to be left with a fragmented overview.

Year	Term 1	Term 1	Term 2	Term 2	Term 3	Term 3
Three	Romans and Celts – why have people invaded and settled?		Ancient Egypt – what can we find out from what has survived?		What can we learn about history by studying a famous person?	
Four	Why did Henry VIII marry six times?	Tudor times - rich and poor; exploration			What was it like to live here in the past?	
Five	Victorian children		Victorians – how this area changed since Victorian era		World War Two	
Six		Ancient Greeks			Britain since 1948	Britain since 1948

82. In the best schools visited, the teachers worked hard to make links and give pupils an overview of the narrative of history. However, this was not widespread because a curriculum structured as above militates against teachers providing, and pupils grasping, such an overview. Most of the primary teachers in the schools visited did a good job of implementing the statutory curriculum, but they did not have the subject-specific knowledge or confidence about the elements of history that they did not teach to establish a clear mental map of the past for pupils. This was the fundamental weakness in the primary schools where the curriculum was no better than satisfactory.
83. In a minority of the schools visited, their focus on the core subjects had squeezed the foundation subjects. In Year 6 in particular, teachers said to inspectors that the foundation subjects were 'not a priority'. However, as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills has said: 'More generally, focusing too much on the three core subjects can have negative effects on the curriculum in terms of breadth, balance and pupils'

enjoyment. In the most effective schools, pupils do well in [the national] tests without this unduly restricted approach to teaching and learning.¹⁹

84. In 35 of the 83 primary schools visited, the foundation subjects, including history, were taught through cross-curricular topics or themes. In 16 of these schools, the history was not explicit enough and planning for progression in historical knowledge and thinking was undeveloped. The cross-curricular framework was diluting the subject's identity in these schools. This year's Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills found as follows:

'Where topics have not been well planned, pupils' experience has been fragmented and progression in subject-specific skills and knowledge has been compromised. The subjects most affected have been history, geography, religious education, art, and design and technology.'²⁰

Pupils' progress in history tended to be slower in the schools visited that did not teach history as a discrete subject than in those that did.

85. Pupils' perceptions of history were unclear in some primary schools where a cross-curricular framework had been introduced. When some pupils in Years 5 and 6 were asked by an inspector about what they had recently studied, there was silence. The inspector prompted them by mentioning that he thought they had studied the Ancient Greeks. A Year 6 pupil replied, 'That's not history, that's topic', reflecting well how topic work was endangering the integrity and identity of history as a subject.
86. Including history in a thematic approach did not of itself undermine the integrity of the subject. Integrated work succeeded where the development of the knowledge and thinking of each subject was emphasised. When this was done well, pupils made good progress. For example, one school visited had developed an excellent thematic curriculum in which history had a high profile. The local authority had used it to show other schools how subjects could retain their individual characteristics within a framework of general topics. The curriculum focused well on developing historical thinking and pupils made considerable progress in this as well as in their knowledge and understanding.
87. Enrichment in history was a strength of the provision in the large majority of the primary schools visited. Learning outside the classroom was common. Visits to places of historical interest, such as castles and museums, were used effectively to support learning. Visits and visitors engaged and motivated pupils,

¹⁹ *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08* (HC 1114), TSO, 2008; www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Annual-Report-2007-08.

²⁰ *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2009/10* (HC 559), TSO, 2010; www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Annual-Report-2009-10.

strengthened their knowledge and understanding, broadened their experiences, and brought depth to their learning. Pupils recognised the value of these experiences, more often than not saying that such learning 'brought history to life'. Although local history was explored, the opportunities were not always fully exploited, partly because of the time needed to research topics and prepare resources.

88. Most of the schools visited were adept at making the best of their situation. Where historical sites were nearby, schools made the most of them and undertook visits. If sites of historical interest were too far away, the schools concentrated instead on bringing visitors into school. These experts were used in a variety of ways, for example by:
- telling pupils about their experiences and involving them actively in thinking about history, for example through role play
 - allowing themselves to be interviewed by pupils, such as the local resident who was quizzed about his childhood before the Second World War
 - enabling pupils to explore how history is presented and to show how historians act as detectives, for example when staff from a local museum brought artefacts into school
 - helping pupils to understand change, as in the case of an architect who helped pupils to investigate how local houses and other buildings had changed.
89. A few of the schools visited also organised a focus week devoted to history, as in this example:

Each year group chose a period of history and spent the whole week studying it. The week was a mixture of in-school activities with teachers and visitors, for example a theatre company, visits and role play. This was a highly successful community event. Over 300 parents, grandparents and carers took part during the week and attended the presentation by each year group: children in the Foundation Stage on the history of toys; Years 1 and 2 on Victorian children; Years 3 and 4 on exploration; and Years 5 and 6 on the 1960s, including a 'Peace' demonstration with parents all dressed in period costume. Pupils said how much they enjoyed the week and teachers spoke of the positive impact the activities had had on pupils' knowledge and understanding.

90. The most successful enrichment activities always involved a pre-visit to the site or a pre-meeting to work out how the visit or visitor could be best exploited, and successive lessons built on what had been learnt through these activities. The activities also had a clear impact on pupils' progress. Although some of the schools visited evaluated the impact of visits and visitors on learning in the classroom, this was not common.

Secondary schools

91. The quality of the curriculum in history was good or outstanding in 56 of the 83 secondary schools visited. It was outstanding in 14 schools. The curriculum was satisfactory in 26 schools and inadequate in one.
92. Where the curriculum was judged to be most effective, it:
- was based on a clear rationale which all teachers fully understood and which informed the planning of rich learning experiences
 - was built on a comprehensive understanding of students' needs, interests and aspirations
 - included breadth and depth with high-quality coverage of local, British, European and World history
 - provided clear and planned opportunities to build coherence in students' knowledge and chronological understanding
 - was underpinned by a clear sense of progression built on rigorous and effective systems of assessment
 - was enriched by wide-ranging out-of-classroom opportunities which complemented students' knowledge and historical understanding.
93. These features are well illustrated in this school:

The curriculum met the statutory requirements and was an ideal balance between the story of history and students' acquisition of historical skills. As a result, more and more students wanted to study history. They consistently reached above-average standards in the subject.

The schemes of work were always under review and the teachers worked hard to provide courses which interested students of all abilities. Topics built on previous learning and also ensured that students saw the links between history and other subjects.

The range of extra-curricular activities was wide and the students benefited from a variety of visits and visitors. Trips to Berlin and to the battlefields of Belgium were key features. Sixth-form students enjoyed their university lectures on Elizabethan England and aspects of Russian history. In addition, students' empathy with the victims of the Third Reich was reinforced by their discussions with Holocaust survivors.

Revision clubs before school prepared students very well for external examinations while email and text messages reminded students of the content they needed to research and the skills they had to practise. As students in Year 7 said, 'History in our school isn't just about the

classroom!’ Sixth formers agreed, adding, ‘We opted for history because the department offers so much more than just lessons.’

94. The most effective departments in secondary schools used enrichment activities regularly to support students’ learning. Teachers had made the link between securing high achievement and providing well-planned enrichment activities which introduced students to new contexts and experiences for their historical thinking. As in the primary schools, these activities usually included visits to places of historical interest and the use of visitors in school. Some departments ran weekly history clubs and presented a history reading challenge to all students. Others organised debating clubs and film clubs. Some schools had developed partnerships with neighbouring schools to share ideas and experiences. In others, links had been established with researchers and historians from universities or the local community. The students attended regular sessions at their local university to develop their thinking in history through activities that were focused but also enjoyable. Although learning outside the classroom was not seen as frequently as in the primary schools, when used well it enabled students to appreciate their studies from a different, and usually more active, perspective.
95. Where the curriculum was no better than satisfactory, common features were:
- the absence of a clear rationale to inform planning
 - a lack of planning for the development of students’ subject-specific thinking
 - a lack of coherence with regard to content, which often resulted in a range of stand-alone units with no underpinning or interlinking theme
 - an absence of rigorous assessment to test how well students were doing and how much progress they had made
 - a lack of effective strategies to evaluate the curriculum because teachers had not established the criteria against which success was to be judged.
96. The result was that students who studied history in a department where such thinking and planning were weak tended to make less progress in the subject: they ended up with a far from comprehensive overview of the past, their understanding of developments across time was hazy, and their ability to link together the topics and issues they had studied or to draw out themes and show how they had evolved was poor. These issues were highlighted by the previous history report in 2007 and are still a concern.

Key Stage 3

97. Weaknesses in the secondary curriculum tended to be concentrated in Key Stage 3. In the schools visited, history in Key Stage 3 was almost always taught most effectively when it was delivered as a discrete subject, taught by history

specialists, with adequate time allocated to it in the curriculum. Part B of the report discusses recent developments in the Key Stage 3 curriculum.

98. The extract overleaf from a three-year Key Stage 3 curriculum is an excellent example of where teachers had thought very carefully about how the parts of the curriculum fitted together.²¹ In this school, history was the largest optional subject in Key Stage 4, with two in every three students in Year 10 choosing to pursue history to GCSE. Achievement in history was outstanding.
99. The school's model was based on clear, systematic and detailed planning, and contains a good mixture of overviews and in-depth studies. The teachers knew how each unit of work covered the expectations and opportunities set out in the revised curriculum and they had planned carefully how they would develop historical knowledge and thinking. Such high-quality planning ensured that the students valued history highly and had a very secure grasp of its value and importance.

²¹ Notes: in this school, students moved up a year in the summer term. As a result, the summer term topic ran over into the autumn term. Students began their GCSE courses in the summer term of Year 9. Departmental documentation indicated that all elements of the revised Key Stage 3 curriculum were covered in sufficient depth.

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Year 7 From Iron Age to Medieval Era	<p>Mystery of the skeletons</p> <p>Overview: from Iron Age to the Romans</p> <p>Why did the Romans want an empire and how did it affect the lives of others?</p> <p>Into the Middle Ages</p> <p>Overview: history of war in the Middle Ages</p> <p>Norman Conquest</p>	<p>Overview: castles, weapons and armour</p> <p>The Crusades</p> <p>Could a king do whatever he liked? (including King John and the barons)</p> <p>Overview: who were the best kings in the Middle Ages?</p> <p>What was it like to live in the Middle Ages?</p> <p>Wonders of Baghdad</p>	<p>Black Death and Peasants' Revolt – which was more significant?</p> <p>Who was the most significant ruler in India and England? (1)</p>
Year 8 From the early modern period to the Victorian era	<p>Who was the most significant ruler in India and England? (2)</p> <p>When was the best time to be alive?</p> <p>What were the biggest turning points in life in a village in India and in the school's neighbourhood 1450–1850s?</p> <p>Who was Oliver Cromwell?</p> <p>Interpretations of Cromwell</p>	<p>Does religion only ever cause problems?</p> <p>Was religion the most important cause of the Indian Mutiny?</p> <p>Who invented slavery?</p> <p>Trans-Atlantic slave trade from beginning to end</p>	<p>How should we use sources to find out about slavery?</p> <p>Why was it difficult to catch Jack the Ripper? (1)</p>
Year 9 From the Victorian era to the modern world	<p>Why was it difficult to catch Jack the Ripper? (2)</p> <p>Why don't the Chinese play cricket? How and why did interpretations of empire change between 1870 and 1970?</p> <p>Was the 20th century one long war?</p> <p>Changing nature of warfare over the 20th century</p>	<p>How did Hitler control the German people?</p> <p>What can we learn from the sources about Hitler's methods of control?</p> <p>How should we remember the Holocaust?</p>	<p>Independent project: what have you always wanted to study?</p>

100. In the schools visited where history was taught as a discrete subject, students often benefited from its links with other subjects. In many of the schools visited excellent work was observed to develop students' skills in reading and writing in history and opportunities were taken to improve their speaking and listening. Other examples of good practice included:
- work with the English department in explaining the context for the poetry of the First World War and the works of Shakespeare
 - across each year in Key Stage 3, collaboration with the religious education department to look at religious intolerance and persecution, including the Holocaust
 - joint work with the art department on the art of war, especially the First World War
 - work with the science department on the ways in which historians and scientists use evidence and work on understanding some of the medical problems studied on the GCSE course
 - collaborative work on citizenship on the theme of political liberties.
101. Where history remained a discrete subject, a course in some form on 'What is history?' was common in the first term of Year 7. Schools visited made the most effective use of this introduction by recognising, in what they taught and how they taught it, what historical knowledge and understanding primary school pupils brought with them to secondary school. In these schools, the element of 'What is history?' was threaded skilfully through an enquiry unit which focused on the acquisition of knowledge and historical understanding, as well as on historical thinking.
102. However, a minority of the schools visited had yet to establish a base line of achievement in Year 7 against which they could measure students' progress accurately. This had much to do with teachers' lack of confidence in how to do this, but it also reflected the tenuous links between some primary and secondary schools.
103. Overall, curriculum liaison in history between Years 6 and 7, other than in specialist humanities colleges, was insufficient and contacts between neighbouring primary and secondary schools were not well developed. As a result, subject-specific expertise in the secondary school was not being used to best effect in supporting local primary schools.

GCSE and A level

104. The curriculum at GCSE and at A level was good or outstanding in almost all of the schools visited. History departments had thought carefully about meeting the needs of their students and had chosen their courses accordingly. The national concern that most students study modern world history at GCSE and

again at A level has some basis. However, it is a popular and inaccurate myth that students at GCSE and A level only study Hitler. The recent changes to the subject criteria for both GCSE and A level mean that students at both levels are required to study a range of topics including a substantial amount of British history.

105. Evidence from schools visited which were involved in the GCSE history pilot course indicates that it has had a positive impact on students and teachers. The course was started in September 2006; three cohorts of students have now received their final grades. Students particularly liked the approach to assessment and teachers noted that the option was attracting students of all abilities. The mix of topics and themes adopted by different schools allowed them to exploit local opportunities, learn about aspects of the heritage industry, and study international and medieval history. Given the prominence of modern history topics studied by most students at GCSE, it was encouraging to note that students on the pilot course had been enthused by the medieval topics and the most able students could clearly explain the relevance of what they were studying.
106. Although the subject criteria for history were recently revised, there has been little change in the form of assessment since 2007. The types of examination questions at GCSE, especially about dealing with sources, have become formulaic and, increasingly, teachers have been able to drill students to do well in them.
107. In recent years, more textbooks have been written specifically for the examination course specification, both at GCSE and A level. The textbooks, often written by the chief examiners for the courses, are generally endorsed by examination boards and gain the status of a 'set text'. The history teachers in the schools visited were well practised in supplementing these with additional materials as necessary. However, it was clear that, at A level, the mushrooming of course-endorsed and linked textbooks was having a negative impact. They stultified teachers' thinking and restricted students' progress. The weaker students relied on the textbook as being sufficient preparation for the external examinations and were less willing to read beyond the 'set textbook'. Their written and oral work revealed how their understanding of the topics they studied was narrowed. It also meant that students were not as well prepared to meet the challenges of higher education where independent learning and extensive reading were required.

Leadership and management in history

Primary schools

108. The leadership and management of history were good or outstanding in 61 of the 83 primary schools visited; they were outstanding in 13 of these schools.

Leadership and management were satisfactory in 22 schools and were not inadequate in any of the schools visited.

109. The following features were typical of good and outstanding leadership and management:

- senior leaders' and managers' high regard for history
- a well-articulated vision for history, translated by all teachers into a programme which developed pupils' historical knowledge, thinking and understanding
- subject coordinators' high level of commitment
- regular subject-specific training for teachers and teaching assistants
- effective use of resources to support excellent teaching and learning
- high-quality monitoring, self-evaluation and review which involved observing teaching and learning and focused clearly on improving pupils' progress.

110. The following example illustrates this good practice.

Quality of leadership

There was a well-articulated view about history, its place in the curriculum and a vision for improvement. The subject coordinator knew the strengths and weaknesses of the subject in the school very well and was well-informed about current issues about the curriculum and pedagogy. She was beginning continuing professional development to enhance her understanding of gifted and talented pupils in history. She had used the Primary National Strategy effectively to improve the curriculum, teaching and learning. Although not a qualified history teacher, she had motivated her colleagues to do their best.

Quality of management

History was reviewed fully and rigorously once every three years, as were the other subjects. A tight set of review activities—lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, monitoring of lesson plans, and the tracking of pupils' progress—led to evaluations of quality. The pupils themselves were involved in the evaluation. In the two years when history was not the subject of review, it was monitored less rigorously, but minor reviews and amendments were made as necessary. This worked well for the school. Excellent use was made of quantitative and qualitative data to monitor and track pupils' progress. The improvement plan was manageable and reviewed regularly. Resources were used efficiently, including the expertise and time of teachers and teaching assistants.

111. Self-evaluation was a strong feature of leadership and management with 57 of the 67 schools visited being good or outstanding in this respect. Excellent practice in reviewing provision and progress, revising action plans, and embedding improvement strategies regularly helped the schools to have a clear idea of their strengths and the areas which needed attention.
112. The following features were often evident when the leadership and management of history were no better than satisfactory:
- coordinators had limited time in which to undertake their responsibilities, and many had to divide their time across a number of subjects
 - coordinators were not aware of developments in teaching and learning in the subject and of how pupils' historical knowledge and understanding might be developed effectively
 - there was a lack of support from senior leaders and managers who did not recognise the value to pupils of studying history
 - monitoring of what was happening in lessons and how well pupils were progressing was ineffective
 - guidance concentrated on developing resources rather than on improving teachers' practice and, ultimately, pupils' achievement.
113. An important issue was the near-absence of appropriate subject training. Of the 65 schools visited in which the quality of subject training was specifically inspected, it was good or outstanding in only 15 of them. In 28 of the schools it was satisfactory and in 22 it was inadequate. In one of the schools visited there had been no professional development in history for at least the previous seven years. Many of the coordinators wanted to make links with history departments in local secondary schools, but found this difficult.
114. Irrespective of whether they were specialists or not, a small number of subject coordinators had developed the subject successfully. They had researched widely and focused on introducing and embedding developments which strengthened provision and achievement, as in the school described here.

What was particularly exciting was the enquiry-based approach which underpinned history teaching and was the result of a well-researched project undertaken by the coordinator. Following an audit of strengths and areas of development in history, the coordinator enlisted the help of the local authority adviser for primary history to train all the staff in progression in skills in primary history. At the same time she read widely about teaching and learning in history, consulting materials produced by the Historical Association and by the Nuffield Primary History Project, as well as Ofsted's 2007 history report, *History in the balance*. She also consulted a local primary Advanced Skills Teacher for history. As a direct outcome of this school-based research project, all the staff, teachers and

teaching assistants, were trained how to develop pupils' skills through an enquiry-based approach to teaching and learning in history. This took place over a series of twilight training sessions.

At the time of the visit, the revised approach had been in place for just over a year. Careful monitoring of classroom practice and the rigorous assessment procedures introduced by the coordinator showed that the training had had a direct impact on improving pupils' achievement. Self-help and commitment had led to exciting teaching, as well as enthusiastic and engaged pupils who were making excellent progress.

Secondary schools

115. The leadership and management of history were good in 62 of the 83 secondary schools visited; they were outstanding in 18 of these schools. Leadership and management were satisfactory in 19 schools and inadequate in just two.

116. The following features were typical of good and outstanding leadership and management:

- subject leaders were energetic and thoughtful, were clear about their approach, showed visionary leadership, highly efficient management, and had an excellent understanding of current developments and new thinking in history
- self-evaluation was accurate, rigorous and well-informed by the effective analysis of students' performance
- excellent collaboration among teachers included joint planning and the effective sharing of good practice
- the professional development needs of all staff were effectively and comprehensively assessed and met
- regular contact with the primary and middle schools from which students were drawn and the exchange of information strengthened the transfer of pupils into the secondary schools and bolstered primary teachers' expertise in the subject
- ambitious aims, based on a clear rationale for the subject and its place in the students' education, were communicated well to staff and students, and were realised by the skilled deployment of resources, including staff.

117. Some of the following weaknesses were evident in the schools where leadership and management were no better than satisfactory, although it was rare to find all of them in one school:

- the lack of a shared, coherent rationale for the subject

- subject leaders who were not well informed about current initiatives in history
 - schemes of work which did not provide adequate support for teachers and, where they existed, action plans which lacked specific focus
 - performance data which were not being used to inform the planning of lessons
 - key statutory requirements for the subject were not being met
 - a failure to share the limited amount of good practice which existed
 - teachers' professional development needs which were rarely being considered or met
 - resources which were not deployed well because the subject leader did not have a clear sense of priorities.
118. A minority of the secondary schools visited provided well for non-specialist teachers in terms of preparation, training and guidance. However, in the majority of the schools, non-specialists were not considered to be members of the history department. As a result, they were rarely involved in the discussions among the history specialists about how to improve teaching and learning or how to make assessment purposeful. Although they often received summaries of the meetings held, they were rarely present. The training needs of most non-specialist teachers were not being met.
119. Access to training for history was an increasing concern for all teachers – not just non-specialists. In 28 of the 64 secondary schools visited in which this aspect was specifically inspected, access to subject training was only satisfactory and in 10 of the schools it was inadequate. In one in every five schools visited, training by the examination board was, and had been for several years, the only type of out-of-school subject-specific professional development for history teachers.
120. In the schools visited where the training was good or outstanding, continuing professional development was characterised by some, although rarely all, of the following elements:
- the training needs of all teachers were being considered regularly and met
 - regular in-house training involving subject-specific sessions helped to improve, for example, teaching
 - high-quality, external subject-specific training undertaken was shared systematically and comprehensively with colleagues in school
 - membership of the Historical Association (including its magazines and monthly newsletters for primary and secondary teachers and its online professional development guidance) was being used

- training sessions by examination boards were attended
- teachers were actively encouraged to become examiners and moderators at GCSE and/or A level and to use the expertise gained in school to help students and teachers
- effective links existed with neighbouring schools, either within a local cluster or as part of a local authority network.

121. The most effective departments were aware of training needs, recognised the importance of self-help and actively sought the most appropriate and cost-effective training. Examples of good practice included teachers:

- deciding to make links with a local school for the purposes of improving moderation of assessments at Key Stage 3
- combining with colleagues in other schools in the area who taught the same examination course to invite the Chief Examiner to conduct a training session about their concerns in preparing students for the examination
- using their own expertise in joining teachers from neighbouring schools to discuss concerns and advise each other, following a survey of what training they might offer
- taking opportunities to observe colleagues teaching, in their own school and in neighbouring schools.

Part B: Issues in history

Developments in Key Stage 3

'It can't be important because we don't spend much time on it.' (Year 8 student)

'History helps us to understand the world as it is.' (Year 10 student)

122. For over 40 years, historians and history teachers have claimed, at different times, that history in schools has been 'in danger'. With the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1990 its position was somewhat assured. Until recently, all students studied history until the end of Year 9. However, with the introduction of a two-year Key Stage 3 in some schools, an increasing number of students are terminating their study of history before they reach the age of 14. This limits the time that these students spend on history compared with those following a three-year Key Stage 3. In other schools, the introduction of thematic courses, principally in Year 7, has meant that less time is spent on history during these years.

123. Of the 58 secondary schools visited between 2008 and 2010, 10 had moved to, or were planning, a competency- or skills-based curriculum in Key Stage 3. The courses being adopted included 'Opening Minds' and 'New Basics' but most

were hybrids, creating a bespoke approach to suit the perceived needs of their students.²² A further five schools visited had either introduced or were considering a two-year Key Stage 3 curriculum.

124. The introduction of either a skills-based course in Year 7, and sometimes in Year 8 as well, or an integrated humanities course which included history had led to some benefits in students' general learning skills. Also, the demands of a competency-based curriculum were not inherently incompatible with the demands of separate subjects. However, in seven of the 10 schools visited between 2008 and 2010 in which these curriculum changes had been made, history, with other foundation subjects, had suffered as these schemes were created and developed. For example:

- a series of themes was created and history teachers were required to make artificial links to them; in one school, the theme for Year 7 was 'water', so the history curriculum linked to the theme but lacked coherence and undermined progression in history
- schemes of work and lessons were created in which subject specialists had limited or even no input; the result was superficial and simplistic teaching and learning; feedback to students was of limited value because it lacked subject-specific comments about how they might improve
- the work set was not as challenging as when students were specifically taught history in discrete lessons by subject specialists; lessons observed within a competency curriculum framework were more often no better than satisfactory, with students saying that the work was 'too easy'
- in some schools, insufficient time was given to planning the 'new' curriculum
- emphasising generic skills had shifted the students' focus from historical content and the development of subject-specific thinking and so undermined their learning in history.

125. The following example illustrates some of the main concerns about thematic courses revealed by inspection.

The school had introduced a thematic curriculum in Years 7 and 8. This involved discrete teaching of the core subjects and physical education. However, all other subjects were integrated and students followed a series of modules. These cut across subjects and aimed to bring disciplines together.

²² Information on the Royal Society of Arts' 'Opening Minds' can be found at: www.thersa.org/projects/opening-minds. The New Basics Project was developed in Queensland, Australia and is now used in a small number of schools in England. For further information, see: <http://education.qld.gov.au/corporate/newbasics/>.

In a Year 7 lesson on the Built Environment, two classes were looking at the building of Stonehenge through a range of sources. The students' progress was, at best, satisfactory. For some, progress was inadequate because the activities did not challenge them; at times the teaching was inaccurate, the explanations were superficial, and the learning was poor.

All of this was not surprising since the history department had made no contribution to planning either the scheme of work or the individual lessons. The lessons observed were taught by non-specialists who had received limited training before they had begun teaching this work.

126. Given that history in primary schools is taught mostly by non-specialists, this means that an increasing number of students are taught by a specialist history teacher for no more than two or three of their 11 years of compulsory education. If non-specialists also teach some of these groups as well, it is entirely possible for students not to be taught history by a specialist history teacher at all during their school career.
127. In a small number of the schools visited, history had been linked with geography and other arts and humanities subjects as part of a 'carousel' approach to subject teaching. This resulted in significant gaps and encouraged an episodic understanding of the past. A carousel approach damaged continuity in developing subject-specific thinking and building a sense of chronology. As a result, each time students started learning history again, a major revision of what had been studied previously was required. This approach to teaching and learning is never considered for core subjects such as English and mathematics for precisely the reasons which have been outlined.
128. A key issue has been the failure of some subject leaders, as discussed earlier, to provide a rationale for why what is being taught has been chosen and why it is being covered in a particular way. During the inspection visits, a handful of subject leaders struggled to give a confident explanation for the choices they had made. Where such a rationale was lacking, changes made were piecemeal and led to an uneven, even incoherent, experience for students. The following short examples illustrate this.

In one school visited, leaders and managers viewed history as a vehicle to develop skills and therefore regarded the choice of content as irrelevant.

In another school, changes had been made to the curriculum in Years 7 and 8 with no thought given to the impact on Year 9.

In a third school, the whole-school curriculum model allowed a large majority of students to drop history at the end of Year 8. The subject leader's lack of a sufficient and adequate response to this model meant that these students did not study enough 20th century history.

129. In the schools where history provision was strongest, school leaders had been determined to preserve the integrity of history, and other foundation subjects, irrespective of their approaches to whole-school curriculum renewal. History was valued as a subject which placed high academic demands on students, but was accessible for all. It was championed by subject leaders who could articulate strongly both the subject's intrinsic value and its capacity to develop students' personal learning and thinking skills.
130. The 2007 revision to the history curriculum allowed schools three transition years, so that the revised curriculum would be fully in place from September 2011. Inspectors acknowledged that schools were in the process of change and that, in many of the schools visited, the curriculum at Key Stage 3 was work in progress. On the whole, history teachers welcomed the changes and appreciated the opportunities and flexibility that the National Curriculum now offered. However, in practical terms, their responses to changing their curriculum and the schemes of work varied. Some of the departments visited had undertaken a major revision; some had made a few changes to fit in some of the topics which now had an increased emphasis; some had done very little apart from minor adjustments.
131. In some of the schools visited, planning for progression in the development of knowledge, understanding and subject-specific thinking was weak. Only a small number of the schools had considered fully how different a student's thinking in history in Year 9 is expected to be compared with that in Year 7, or mapped their expectations about how this thinking should develop. In just under half the schools where there had been curriculum changes, what had been previously taught in three years at Key Stage 3 had been shoehorned into the new two-year timeframe and curriculum structure. This had led to courses that were unbalanced and rushed.
132. In the weakest curriculum planning, revisions to provision for history at Key Stage 3 had not been thought through carefully enough. The result was that courses lacked coherence and balance. In 28 of the 58 secondary schools visited between 2008 and 2010, schemes of work in history had not been revised systematically to maximise opportunities and make them meaningful for students. In these departments, students had few opportunities to do the following.
- Study history through overview and thematic studies, 'to identify changes within and across periods, making links between them'; as a result, students' chronological understanding was not sufficiently well developed: they had a good understanding of topics and events in depth, but a poor sense of the historical narrative.
 - Study the different histories and changing relationships through time of the peoples of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales; provision for this aspect of history was consistently poor. This was not a strength in any of the schools

visited and too many schools were giving this episodic and occasional coverage as part of larger investigations. Typically, while schools covered some of the key events in the changing relationship between Great Britain and Ireland, and indeed between England, Scotland and Wales, events such as the siege of Drogheda in 1649 were almost always taught in isolation as part of a study on Cromwell with no real attempt to consider a wider British Isles perspective.

- Study the impact of the movement and settlement of diverse peoples through time: to, from and within the British Isles; too much work on multi-cultural Britain was at a low level.
- Investigate aspects of personal, family or local history and how they related to the broader historical context; while some departments made excellent provision for the study of local history, in most of the schools visited local history was virtually ignored. This included schools which were very favourably situated with regard to local history. As a result, opportunities to make history relevant, to build students' understanding of the local community, and to build bridges between different sections of the community were missed.
- Appreciate and evaluate, through visits where possible, the role of museums, galleries, archives and historical sites in preserving, presenting and influencing people's attitudes towards the past; while many departments had good provision for enrichment, opportunities were regularly missed for students to develop their understanding of historical representations and interpretations through consideration of museums, for example, as types of interpretations and representations.
- Use ICT to research information about the past, process historical data, and select, categorise, organise and present their findings.
- Consider the significance of events, people and developments in their historical context and in the present day; this inhibited students' historical thinking and their understanding of the relevance of history in informing them about the world in which they live.
- Consider, understand, compare and evaluate historical interpretations; while students were commonly given the opportunity to form their own opinions and interpretations, opportunities to consider, contrast, compare and evaluate the interpretations and reconstructions of the past, by historians and others, were limited. This inhibited students' understanding of history as a dynamic, contentious and highly politicised discipline. It also hindered the development of their understanding of the language of history.

Using ICT to promote achievement in history

'It helps us find things out for ourselves.' (Year 7 student)

133. The previous history report, covering the period 2004–07, noted: 'Overall, the use of ICT in primary (and secondary) history is developing well after a slow start.' It went on to add that school history could deal with the criticism that it 'fails to reflect enough the way the subject is studied, enjoyed and communicated in contemporary society at large' most obviously by, among other things, 'the better use of ICT for research and communication; photography, sound recording and video'.²³
134. Three years on, the use of ICT in primary and secondary classrooms was better than in the schools visited previously. The hardware available, teachers' levels of confidence and competence in using the equipment, and pupils' access to and use of computers and other media have shown noticeable improvements. However, the impact of ICT in accelerating gains in historical knowledge and understanding remains variable, particularly in secondary schools.
135. Overall, primary teachers were more confident and competent than secondary teachers in using ICT equipment and in creating tasks which involved pupils using ICT. Despite much good practice, progress in using ICT in history in some of the secondary schools visited had stalled, where teachers failed to exploit interactive whiteboards or digital projectors fully. In some cases, the whiteboard was as static as the blackboard it replaced.
136. Teachers who used ICT well to promote good or outstanding learning in history presented pupils with a much wider range of historical evidence than before. For example, they were no longer limited to the images in textbooks or poor quality photocopies. Inspectors saw many examples where teachers used video and media clips effectively to build pupils' understanding. This was most common in teaching modern world history in secondary schools, where many teachers routinely used video clips to build understanding of particular historical issues, as illustrated in these brief examples.

Students' understanding of conditions in the First World War was enhanced in one school through the use of an online trench simulation. In another school, short DVD clips, together with digital flipcharts and a PowerPoint presentation, were used to build students' understanding of the causes of the Vietnam War. In a Year 12 lesson, students gained an excellent understanding of the key events of the Korean War because the teacher skilfully combined short media clips, digital maps and electronic timelines with good-quality questioning.

²³ *History in the balance* (070043), Ofsted, 2007; www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Education/Curriculum/History/Primary/History-in-the-balance h.

137. Multimedia clips worked best when they were short and sharply focused on developing knowledge, understanding or historical thinking; and when pupils understood precisely what they were looking for. In one school, teachers were trialling hand-held portable devices in lessons. They were able to project images, sources and films onto the units. This benefited all the students because they could work at their own pace, fast-forwarding or rewinding video clips as necessary.
138. Flexible digital resources also enabled teachers to share high-quality work more easily. They allowed managers to be more aware of teaching across their departments and were particularly helpful in supporting non-specialist and less effective teachers.
139. Increasingly, teachers were using the opportunities presented by ICT to promote learning outside the classroom, particularly through developing virtual learning environments. Such opportunities were being exploited well, especially in secondary schools, to raise achievement through using:
- the school intranet to upload presentations used in lessons as aides-mémoires for pupils completing homework and revision
 - the school internet to post revision materials and hyperlinks to websites for revision and examination boards
 - mp3, mp4 and iPod technology to provide resources and revision materials for pupils to use at home as well as in the classroom
 - the school's virtual learning environment for pupils to upload their work, including their own animation films, their own blogs on significant figures in history, and their own quizzes to be accessed by other pupils for homework, as well as providing access for pupils so that they could track their own progress in history.
140. In most of the schools visited, pupils were given good opportunities to use ICT in lessons. It was most commonly used for ICT research, to present information and to access history-based activities through commercial websites. An increasing number of departments were exploiting other media to provide opportunities for pupils to make their own short films and documentaries, for example on Greek Theatre or on the key events at Stalingrad.
141. ICT promoted learning in history most effectively when:
- teachers were selective in using digital presentations to support teaching
 - presentations were time-limited, sharply focused and supported teaching strategies which ensured that all pupils were fully engaged
 - teachers had planned carefully how using ICT could develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and thinking in history

- there was frequent liaison with specialist ICT teachers to ensure that ICT being used in history was sufficiently challenging and matched fully to pupils' needs and attainment in ICT.
142. Where teachers used ICT less effectively, overuse of digital projectors led to teaching which was too didactic. When pupils were expected to focus for long periods on their teacher standing at the front of the classroom, this sometimes got in the way of engaging the whole group in learning. In these lessons, the teachers were not sufficiently alert to the impact of the teaching on the whole group. In some of the lessons seen during the survey, it was also clear that using electronic media to present lessons had skewed teachers' focus away from learning and back on to teaching. A mundane learning activity remained a mundane learning activity even when it was supported by high-quality images and media clips.
 143. In a small number of the secondary schools visited, teachers did not introduce media clips as historical interpretations – which in fact they are. Documentaries were presented as an accurate representation of past events, with limited opportunities to discuss the purpose, context or rationale of the interpretation. The teachers missed opportunities to discuss, for example, the tone of the documentary, the purpose and impact of the accompanying music, the language used, and the intentions of the makers of the documentary. This undermined the development of pupils' skills in making historical enquiries and their understanding of historical interpretations – a fundamental concept in understanding history as a discipline. When so much history, and other information, is broadcast electronically through different media, including the internet, understanding the importance of interpretation also prepares students for lifelong learning in a digital age.
 144. Some of the electronic presentations produced by pupils did little to develop their historical understanding or their ICT skills. In the worst examples seen, pupils spent more time on formatting styles or background effects than on the content. In these lessons, inspectors watched pupils copying and pasting large amounts of text from websites, often written in language they did not fully understand. These weaknesses were exposed further when the same pupils presented their work; often, they simply read from the text they had imported onto their presentation slides. The success criteria were not demanding enough to ensure that pupils made progress in history and in developing their analytical, ICT and presentational skills.
 145. Liaison between history teachers and ICT subject specialists in the schools visited was rare. Sometimes, similar activities were seen in primary and secondary schools, namely research and presentation, with no evidence that there was planning for progression in using ICT in history, within and across phases.

146. On the whole, teachers in both the primary and secondary schools visited had been slow to respond to the opportunity to process historical data, as noted in the programmes of study for Key Stages 2 and 3. In around half of the primary and secondary schools visited, teachers did not give pupils sufficient opportunities to use ICT to process and analyse historical data. Similarly, opportunities for pupils to use online conferencing to discuss historical questions were seen only rarely. Good examples included one primary school that had used video conferencing to link up with 16 other schools during Black History Month, and another that had used video conferencing for pupils to discuss Henry VIII with experts from the National Archives.²⁴
147. Developments in ICT had been slowed in a small number of the primary and secondary schools visited by limits that had been placed on teachers' and pupils' use of ICT.²⁵ In these schools, restricted access to the internet was preventing teachers from showing relevant video clips, or pupils from undertaking online searches to interrogate appropriate historical websites. As a result, pupils missed opportunities not only to engage with a wide range of historical materials but also to interrogate and assess the value of different websites.

Ensuring the best learning in history

'We like history because we have to think for ourselves and give reasons for our opinions.' (Year 5 pupil)

148. The best learning in history took place when the teaching developed pupils' historical knowledge and historical thinking and, as a result, enabled them to show their historical understanding. Historical thinking demands the ability to investigate, consider, reflect and review the events of the past. Consequently, pupils acquired historical knowledge which they learnt to communicate in an increasingly sophisticated way. Their historical understanding was revealed in the way that they communicated the developments they had studied.
149. Particularly effective practice was characterised by teachers who not only had good subject knowledge but also good subject pedagogy, that is, a good understanding of how pupils learn in the subject. However, teachers' understanding of how pupils learn in history varied in both the secondary and primary schools visited. The quality of their understanding had a direct impact on pupils' progress.

²⁴ Black History Month takes place every October in Britain. It aims to promote knowledge of Black history, culture and heritage, disseminate information on positive Black contributions to British society, and heighten the confidence and awareness of Black people regarding their cultural heritage.

²⁵ In 2010 Ofsted reported on the relative merits of 'managed' and 'locked down' approaches to ICT in schools. For further information, see: *The safe use of new technologies* (090231), Ofsted, 2010; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090231.

150. Ofsted's recent reports on mathematics and religious education have stressed the importance of subject pedagogy in underpinning effective teaching and learning.²⁶ The same is true in history.
151. Teachers in the secondary schools visited had a good knowledge of the topics they taught, managed their classes well and developed a positive rapport with their pupils. Teachers in primary schools knew how to engage their pupils and had a good generic understanding of how pupils learn. Both groups of teachers had effective classroom practice. However, weaknesses existed in both primary and secondary schools in teachers' grasp of subject pedagogy, especially in planning for progression and in their awareness of the increasing complexity of how pupils understand history.
152. The most effective subject pedagogy, which ensured high achievement in history, was shown by teachers whose approach focused on well-structured enquiry, embracing independent thinking and learning. This approach was generally more evident and successful in the schools visited for this survey than in those visited for the previous 2004–07 survey. The following example illustrates highly effective practice in developing pupils' enquiry skills.

Students in Year 9 were given the task of investigating changes in bombing strategy, comparing the First and Second World Wars. They devised their enquiries and structured them appropriately with individual guidance from the class teacher. Each student had her or his own laptop and used both academic and general interest websites to research data and find different interpretations. This valuable exercise led to some valid independent work. It was enhanced by the fact that, although students were given a broad framework and a key question which they were required to answer, the structure of the enquiry was not prescribed and the students were able to develop their own styles and structures.

153. In the very best lessons seen, teachers developed pupils' enquiry skills by:
- providing a clear framework and sense of direction for the investigation
 - controlling the scope of pupils' expectations and encouraging them to identify and pursue valid lines of enquiry
 - ensuring that research activities were matched by high levels of cognitive challenge
 - encouraging pupils to think for themselves and giving them sufficient time to consider what they were studying and what this told them about, for example, the importance of an event, or the consequences of an action

²⁶ *Mathematics: understanding the score* (070063), Ofsted, 2008; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070063.

- maintaining a relentless focus on subject-specific thinking which helped to develop pupils' willingness to work things out for themselves, pose high-quality historical questions and propose hypotheses about the past.

154. The development of enquiry skills in history was least effective when teachers:

- interpreted independent learning as an opportunity to let pupils get on with the work on their own with little guidance
- gave pupils insufficient time in which to think things through and, where ICT was being used, insufficient guidance on the most appropriate use of the technology
- demanded that pupils merely found out about a specific period or event and were satisfied with pupils simply repeating random information, frequently copied from the resources provided
- planned tasks which were too open-ended; as a result, some pupils were overwhelmed when faced with so many questions to choose from and so found it difficult to manage their own learning.

155. A superficial focus on independent learning and, indeed, other personal, learning and thinking skills, and a separation of this from historical thinking, hindered rather than contributed to learning, as in this example.

Year 8 pupils were asked to decide how Oliver Cromwell should be remembered. The assessment at the end of the lesson focused on the development of independent learning skills rather than the quality of pupils' evaluations. Because the teacher had not established any clear criteria for assessing independent learning, pupils' self-evaluation was limited to a 'thumbs-up' or 'thumbs down', rendering the activity meaningless.

A much more valuable challenge would have been for pupils to assess the quality of their evaluations on Cromwell by using clear subject-specific assessment criteria.

156. On other occasions, pupils' concentration on good evaluative tasks was interrupted by a teacher asking them to assess their skills in working as a team or as self-managers. More often than not, the questions were tokenistic and not integrated fully into the lesson. The skills that pupils were asked to assess had not been highlighted at the start of the lesson, did not feature as a learning objective and were not underpinned by any clear assessment criteria.
157. In the most effective primary and secondary schools visited, a culture of resourcefulness, investigation and problem-solving in history provided excellent preparation for later study. It also developed pupils' skills in research, analysis, evaluation and communication which would be valuable for future employment.

History and young people's social responsibility

'Studying history stops people believing rubbish.' (Year 8 student)

'We need to know about the past as it helps us to respect people more.'
(Year 9 student)

158. History is well placed to enhance pupils' sense of social responsibility. The history curriculum at Key Stage 2 says that pupils should be taught about 'the social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of the societies studied in Britain and the wider world'. At Key Stage 3 the history curriculum explicitly requires pupils to study 'the impact through time of the movement and settlement of diverse peoples to, from and within the British Isles'. Pupils are expected to explore 'the wide cultural, social and ethnic diversity of Britain from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century and how this has helped shape Britain's identity'. As a result, pupils should be able to 'reach an informed understanding of, and respect for, their own and each other's identities'.²⁷ These are vital components of an education for young people today. History provides the essential context for contemporary issues and, as a result, this makes the subject relevant for all pupils.
159. The National Curriculum for history published in 2000 says that history is important because, as they study it, pupils 'see the diversity of human experience, and understand more about themselves as individuals and members of society'. The 2007 revision to the curriculum at Key Stage 3 explicitly set down as one of its aims, helping young people to become 'responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society'.
160. During the period 2009 to 2010, inspectors focused, among other things, on how history in primary and secondary schools contributed to pupils' understanding and appreciation of their role and responsibilities in living and working in an increasingly diverse society and in helping to ensure a community in which there was greater respect for all citizens. In four of the 28 primary schools and seven of the 27 secondary schools where this aspect was a focus, the contribution that history made to this understanding and appreciation was insufficient.
161. There was, however, some excellent practice:

Plans were in place for pupils in the school and in a partner school in Pakistan to study a comparative historical event in each country. The

²⁷ The history curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 can be found at: <http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/history/index.aspx>.

The Key Stage 3 history curriculum can be found at: <http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-3-and-4/subjects/key-stage-3/history/index.aspx>.

pupils in Pakistan would investigate the Viking invasion of Britain in AD 759 and those in England would study the Arab invasion of 712 CE. The project relied on using a range of digital resources for the pupils to share their findings with each other across both of the schools. At the heart of the planning, however, was a desire to improve pupils' understanding of the role of local history within a framework of national and international events. It focused on helping pupils to appreciate the similarities and differences in human development and activity and thus create greater understanding of the interrelationship between communities in different parts of the world.

162. In the best practice seen, schools had explicitly considered how history might contribute to pupils' sense of social responsibility and they had built this into teaching and learning. Pupils could explain clearly how history gave them a greater understanding of the various communities in which they lived, at the local level through to the regional, national and international levels. For these pupils, history had immediacy and relevance.
163. In the majority of schools visited, a sense of social responsibility was promoted well through the study of history. A carefully constructed curriculum provided good opportunities to study the development of communities from local, national and wider perspectives. In many of the schools visited, the history topics, themes, and controversial and sensitive issues were rich and varied. However, the depth and quality of coverage were uneven and opportunities to make strong links within history and across the curriculum were not always apparent. Consequently, the teaching missed opportunities to show the relevance of history to contemporary society in Britain and the wider world.
164. In the very best practice seen pupils had the opportunity to:
- explore the history of their local community and recent changes in it as a result of migration and settlement
 - study communities and cultures other than their own, particularly for communities where pupils rarely travelled
 - strengthen their understanding of world cultures through visits to historical sites in Europe and contacts with different cultures through links with schools in Africa and Asia
 - investigate the historical roots of some contemporary issues as presented by national and international events and initiatives, for example, Black History Month and Holocaust Memorial Day
 - become engaged with issues such as British identity, political literacy, religious intolerance and freedom, including sensitive and controversial issues.

165. In the best practice observed in the survey, pupils' understanding of how places, people and events in the past had had an impact on today's society was at least good. The pupils understood the relevance of the history they studied to the contemporary world because it had been made clear to them. Good practice was seen where schools ensured that, whenever they created their own events, such as a diversity week, the historical dimension was an integral part of the activities that took place.
166. A school's location affected the opportunities which were readily available for pupils to have firsthand experiences of, for example, the impact of migration. Some relatively isolated but determined schools overcame potential obstructions, often through using ICT creatively. They achieved this by linking up either with a school situated in a more culturally diverse part of this country, or with a school in a country from which people had historically migrated to Britain.
167. In less effective provision and practice, history's contribution to strengthening pupils' sense of social responsibility was achieved more by accident than design. Strategies to promote a greater understanding of social responsibility were not planned across the history curriculum, so that coverage across the key stages was uneven. This was most notable in pupils' limited knowledge and understanding of how the United Kingdom had developed as an ethnically and culturally diverse society. This might have been done, for example, by exploring settlement and migration across time. In some of the schools visited, the study of local history was limited and, on occasions, undervalued. Their pupils struggled to explain how the history they had studied contributed to creating a more or less harmonious society.

Notes

This report is based on evidence from inspections of history education by Her Majesty's Inspectors and Additional Inspectors between April 2007 and March 2010 in a range of state funded schools in England. The 83 primary and 83 secondary schools visited were located in a range of geographical contexts and of different institutional types, including middle schools, voluntary-aided schools, schools with specialist status in a range of subjects, and academies. Inspectors visited schools which were judged to be outstanding, good and satisfactory in their last whole-school inspection but no school judged to be inadequate in its last whole-school inspection was included in the sample.

During the visits, inspectors evaluated achievement, teaching, curriculum provision, and the leadership and management of history education. They held discussions with senior staff, teachers, subject leaders, trainee teachers, students and pupils.

Aspects of history education selected for specific attention during the survey included provision for the most academically able pupils, the use of ICT to promote achievement in history, and the development of independent learning in history.

The report also draws on evidence from inspections of initial teacher education during this period; from Ofsted's previous reports; from national examination results; and from discussions with those involved in history education, including local authority advisers, consultants, academics and teacher trainers, as well as others within the wider history education community.

Further information

Publications by Ofsted

History in the balance (070043), Ofsted, 2007; www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Education/Curriculum/History/Primary/History-in-the-balance h.

Improving primary teachers' subject knowledge across the curriculum (070252), Ofsted, 2009; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070252.

Learning outside the classroom (070219), Ofsted, 2008; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070219.

Planning for change: the impact of the new Key Stage 3 curriculum (080262), Ofsted, 2009; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080262.

The importance of ICT: information and communication technology in primary and secondary schools 2005/08 (070035), Ofsted, 2009; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070035.

The safe use of new technologies (090231), Ofsted, 2010; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090231.

The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2009/10 (HC 559), TSO, 2010; www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Annual-Report-2009-10.

Other publications

National Curriculum for history in primary schools;
<http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/history/index.aspx>.

National Curriculum for history in secondary schools;
<http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-3-and-4/subjects/key-stage-3/history/index.aspx>.

GCSE subject criteria for history;
www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/qca-07-3454_gcsecriteriahistory.pdf.

GCE subject criteria for history; available from:
www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/qca-06-2854_history.pdf.

GCSE, AS and A level results; available from:
www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/.

GCSE history pilot; available from:

www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/type/gcse/hss/history_pilot/index.html.

GCSE and GCE history specifications; available from:

<http://web.aqa.org.uk/qual/subjectindex-h.php>;

www.edexcel.com/subjects/History/Pages/default.aspx;

www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/subjects/history/index.html.

Websites

Euroclio

Euroclio is the European Association of History Educators.

www.euroclio.eu/site/index.php.

Eurydice

The Eurydice Network provides information on and analyses of European education systems and policies.

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index_en.php.

INCA

The INCA website is funded by the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency and describes government policy on education in other countries.

www.inca.org.uk/.

The Historical Association

The Historical Association is the principal subject association for history teachers.

www.history.org.uk/.

The Historical Association's surveys of secondary history teachers in 2009 and 2010 are available at:

www.history.org.uk/news/news_415.html;

www.history.org.uk/news/news_869.html.

The Nuffield Primary History Project

The Nuffield Primary History Project provides support for teaching history in primary schools.

www.primaryhistory.org/.

The Schools History Project

The Schools History Project was established in 1972 to reconsider the purpose and nature of school history.

www.schoolshistoryproject.org.uk/index.htm.

Annex A: Schools visited

Primary schools	Local authority area
Acomb Primary School	York
All Saints Church of England Primary School Stockport	Stockport
Avenue Primary School	Sutton
Bare Trees Primary School	Oldham
Barlby Bridge Community Primary School	North Yorkshire
Barrow Hill Junior School	Westminster
Barton CofE VA Primary School	Cambridgeshire
Blacklands Primary School	East Sussex
Blakesley Church of England Primary School	Northamptonshire
Boughton Primary School	Northamptonshire
Brookwood Primary School	Surrey
Brougham Primary School	Hartlepool
Byers Green Primary School	Durham
Castlechurch Primary School	Staffordshire
Childer Thornton Primary School	Cheshire
Clarendon Primary School	Bolton
Collis Primary School	Richmond upon Thames
Coombe Bissett Church of England Primary School	Wiltshire
Coton-in-the-Elms CofE Primary School	Derbyshire
Crich Junior School	Derbyshire
Davington Primary School	Kent
Dawley Church of England Primary School with Nursery	Telford & Wrekin
Durrington Church of England Controlled Junior School	Wiltshire
Ecton Village Primary School	Northamptonshire
Edith Moorhouse Primary School	Oxfordshire
Farcet CofE Primary School	Cambridgeshire
Follifoot Church of England Primary School	North Yorkshire
Grange Community Primary School	Cheshire West and Chester

Great Doddington Primary	Northamptonshire
Hardwick Junior School	Northamptonshire
Harrogate, Coppice Valley Community Primary School	North Yorkshire
Hillview Primary School	Gloucestershire
John Emmerson Batty Primary School	Redcar & Cleveland
Kidmore End Church of England (Aided) Primary School	Oxfordshire
Kingsdown and Ringwold CofE Primary School	Kent
Kingsland CofE(E) Primary School	Stoke-on-Trent
Knottingley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior and Infant School	Wakefield
Langham CofE (Controlled) Primary School	Rutland
Langho and Billington St Leonards CofE Primary School	Lancashire
Lathom Junior School	Newham
Little Bowden School	Leicestershire
Little Spring School	Buckinghamshire
Longmoor Primary School	Derbyshire
Malvern Wells CofE Primary School	Worcestershire
Morton Primary School	Derbyshire
Neroche Primary School	Somerset
Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Alcester	Warwickshire
Portishead Primary School	North Somerset
Preshute Church of England Primary School	Wiltshire
Princess Frederica CofE Primary School	Brent
Ringstead Church of England Primary School	Northamptonshire
Roger Ascham Primary School	Waltham Forest
Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School	Knowsley
Scantabout Primary School	Hampshire
Sheepy Magna Church of England Primary School	Leicestershire
Sowerby Community Primary School	North Yorkshire
Spofforth Church of England Controlled Primary School	North Yorkshire
St Anne's Catholic Primary School	Birmingham

St Austin's Catholic Primary School	Liverpool
St Budeaux Foundation CofE (Aided) Junior School	Plymouth
St Cedd's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Bradwell	Essex
St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School, Andover	Hampshire
St John's CofE (C) Primary School, Wolverhampton	Staffordshire
St Martins CofE Primary School	North Lincolnshire
St Mary's Bryanston Square CofE School	Westminster
St Nicholas' Primary School	Kingston upon Hull
St Pauls CofE VA Primary School	Cambridgeshire
St Philip's CofE Primary School	Bradford
St Stephen's Tockholes CofE Primary School	Blackburn & Darwen
St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Parkfield	Wolverhampton
St White's Primary School	Gloucestershire
Stockbridge Primary School	Hampshire
Stoke Bishop Church of England Primary School	Bristol
Suckley Primary School	Worcestershire
Sywell Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	Northamptonshire
Tilery Primary School	Stockton
Walton Holymoorside Primary School	Derbyshire
Warthill Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	North Yorkshire
West Cliff Primary School	North Yorkshire
Whitwell Primary School	Derbyshire
Windmill Primary School	Northamptonshire
Wolvey CofE Primary School	Warwickshire
Woodlands Primary School	Kent

Secondary schools

Archbishop Sancroft High School
 Bishop Stopford School
 Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College
 Bodmin College
 Boroughbridge High School
 Boston Spa School
 Brentside High School
 Brigshaw High School and Language College
 Brimsham Green School
 Caludon Castle School
 Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School
 The Causeway School
 Chaucer Business and Enterprise College
 The Catholic High School, Chester A Specialist Science College
 Cirencester Kingshill School
 Colne Valley Specialist Arts College
 Cox Green School
 Crawshaw School
 Dayncourt School Specialist Sports College
 De La Salle Humanities College
 De Lisle Catholic School Loughborough Leicestershire
 Devonport High School for Girls
 Featherstone Technology College
 The Folkestone School for Girls
 Fowey Community College
 Great Barr School
 Guilsborough School
 Guiseley School
 Harrow Way Community School
 Helenswood School
 Herschel Grammar School

Local authority area

Norfolk
 Northamptonshire
 Brighton & Hove
 Cornwall
 North Yorkshire
 Leeds
 Ealing
 Leeds
 South Gloucestershire
 Coventry
 Liverpool
 East Sussex
 Sheffield

 Cheshire
 Gloucestershire
 Kirklees
 Windsor & Maidenhead
 Leeds
 Nottinghamshire
 Liverpool
 Leicestershire

 Plymouth
 Wakefield
 Kent
 Cornwall
 Birmingham
 Northamptonshire
 Leeds
 Hampshire
 East Sussex
 Slough

Highfields School	Derbyshire
Hillside High School	Sefton
Holbrook High School	Suffolk
Icknield Community College	Oxfordshire
Intake High School Arts College*	Leeds
King Edward VI Humanities College	Lincolnshire
King Richard School	Portsmouth
Kirk Hallam Community Technology College and Sports College	Derbyshire
Knutsford High School	Cheshire East
Lady Manners School	Derbyshire
The Lakelands School, Sports and Language College	Shropshire
Lampton School	Hounslow
Lowton High School A Specialist Sports College	Wigan
Lyndon School Humanities College	Solihull
Marriotts School	Hertfordshire
The McAuley Catholic High School	Doncaster
Mildenhall College of Technology	Suffolk
Moulsham High School and Humanities College	Essex
Nether Stowe School A Specialist Mathematics and Computing College	Staffordshire
Noel-Baker Community School and Language College	Derbyshire
Park Community School	Hampshire
Pensby High School for Girls	Wirral
Plymstock School	Plymouth
President Kennedy School and Community College	Coventry
Birchensale Middle School	Worcestershire
Riverside Business and Enterprise College	Leicester City
Sacred Heart High School	Newcastle upon Tyne
Saddleworth School	Oldham
Salesian School, Chertsey	Surrey
Saltash.net community school	Cornwall
Sawston Village College	Cambridgeshire

Sheldon School
Southfield School for Girls
South Hunsley School
Springfield School
St Bernard's High School and Arts College
St John Fisher Catholic College
St Mary's Catholic College
St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School
St Peter's Church of England Aided School
Stowupland High School
The Holt School
The Thomas Alleyne School
Treviglas Community College
Tring School
Trinity School
Trinity School, Belvedere
Uplands Community College
Walthamstow Academy
Westborough High School
Wootton Upper School
Wright Robinson Sports College

Wiltshire
Northamptonshire
East Riding of Yorkshire
Portsmouth
Southend-On-Sea
Staffordshire
Blackpool
Bristol
Devon
Suffolk
Wokingham
Hertfordshire
Cornwall
Hertfordshire
West Berkshire
Bexley
East Sussex
Waltham Forest
Kirklees
Bedford
Manchester

* Now closed.