



Education and Training Inspectorate
Report of a Survey

Provision in Geography and History in a Sample of Primary Schools in Northern Ireland

INSPECTED:
September 2001 - June 2003

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The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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A number of quantitative terms are used throughout the report when commenting on aspects of provision for in geography and history. These terms should be interpreted as follows:

almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
most	-	75%-90%
a majority	-	50%-74%
a significant minority	-	30%-49%
a minority	-	10%-29%
very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision for geography and history, the Inspectorate relate their judgements to four performance levels which may be interpreted as follows:

GRADE	
1	Significant strengths good (ranging to outstanding)
2	Strengths outweigh weaknesses satisfactory (ranging to good)
3	Weaknesses outweigh strengths fair (ranging to satisfactory)
4	Significant weaknesses poor

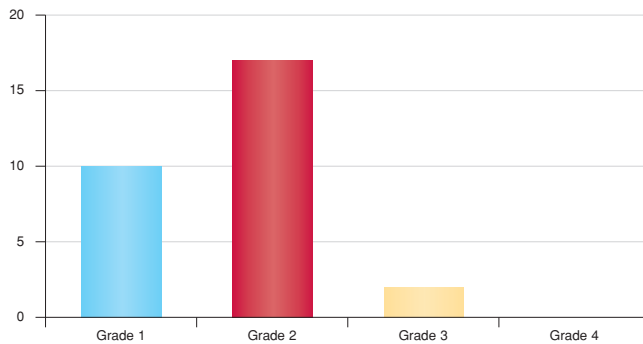
1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between 2001 and 2003, the Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) undertook a survey to evaluate the quality of learning and teaching in geography and history in a sample of primary schools.
- 1.2 The main purpose of the survey was to evaluate the current position and quality of provision in geography and history in key stages (KS) 1 and 2.
- 1.3 The survey involved visits to a total of 30 primary schools. The visits to the schools involved discussions with the principals, the co-ordinators or teachers in charge of geography and history, and with class teachers; the experiences in geography and history of some of the children in years 6 and 7 were also explored in discussions. Inspectors observed over 130 lessons, evaluated relevant school documentation, spoke with children as they worked in class, and examined samples of their work in workbooks and on display around the school. Additional evidence was drawn from a scrutiny of inspection reports published between 1996 and 2002.
- 1.4 In interviews with representative groups of year 6 and year 7 children in a number of the schools visited, the children were very favourably disposed to both subjects, and spoke knowledgably and well about their experiences in each. In particular, the children spoke appreciatively about their enjoyment and participation in project work, fieldwork, educational visits, and local studies, and highlighted also their appreciation of educational broadcasts and television programmes.
- 1.5 Their comments were often perceptive, and they were able, for instance, to highlight clearly the type of work they liked, and the work they found least interesting and attractive in geography and history, and in other subjects. For example, they often expressed the view that they would wish to have additional time for both subjects.

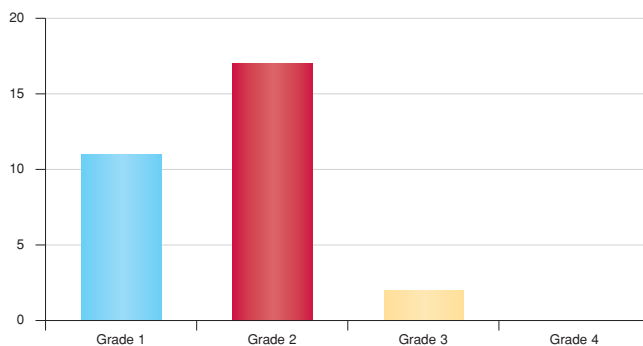
2. PLANNING FOR GEOGRAPHY

- 2.1 The quality of the teachers' planning for geography is good or very good in a significant minority of the schools inspected, and satisfactory in the majority. In the few remaining schools notable weaknesses existed in the planning for geography. There is clear evidence that planning for geography is improving, reflecting the good work of most co-ordinators, individual teachers, and the effective work of the Curriculum Advisory and Support Services (CASS) of the Education and Library Boards (ELBs). Improved planning is making a positive contribution to the promotion of geographical learning. A policy statement supported by schemes and guidance materials are almost always available where the planning for geography is sound or better.
- 2.2 Where the written planning is good, it reflects appropriately the programme of study of the Northern Ireland Curriculum (NIC). The teachers provide sound guidance on the systematic and progressive development of the children's geographical knowledge and skills. There is often a strong focus on promoting the children's knowledge and understanding about their local area and about places which are much more distant. Key components of the geography curriculum, map work and the study of the weather are often well planned. Increasingly, the written planning provides the older children with opportunities for individual recording and research. In general, the planning for geography takes insufficient account of the range of the children's abilities within classes.
- 2.3 Effective planning takes due account of the children's experiences and their existing geographical knowledge. In addition, it recognises the need to raise awareness of local and global environments, through the use of good case study materials. Increasingly, the planning ensures that information and communication technology (ICT) is utilised to promote the children's skills in researching and communicating about aspects of their work in geography. Further, planning which encourages the use of these new sources of information generally enables teachers and children to obtain data and evidence which is up to date and topical.

Planning for Geography in KS1



Planning for Geography in KS2



In a medium sized rural primary school, the planning for geography was comprehensive and systematically set out to guide all teachers. Much of the work in years 1 and 2 was cross-curricular and as a minimum entitlement a time limit of 15 minutes on three days each week was suggested; in KS2, this was extended to 1.5 hours. The school's documents contained comprehensive aims that touched on promoting the children's interest and knowledge about the world, their mapping skills, and their environmental awareness. The plans also encouraged investigative work and recognised the contribution of geography in promoting numeracy and literacy. The topic grids provided clear evidence of progression and strong links with other subjects such as history and science. A record-keeping section provides space for comment on the children's work and enables the teachers to assess and comment on the children's geographical knowledge, skills and understanding; however, in practice, limited action has been made on assessment and the school recognises that this is an area for further development.

- 2.4 Where there is an open approach and discussion among the staff and effective co-ordination and leadership, the planned outcomes for the children are usually good. In a majority of the schools, the teachers have sufficient opportunities to share their experiences and expertise and to reach an agreed view of the nature and value of geography and of its relevance to the education of the children.
- 2.5 In a small number of the schools, the planning for geography promotes strongly its contribution to developing aspects of the children's communication and mathematical skills. Where the written planning is weak, however, classroom opportunities to promote language, numeracy and other skills are often missed. There is some evidence of the teachers using geography as a context to develop the children's mathematical skills; data-handling, and the measurement of distance and direction are promoted generally in all the schools but the treatment is generally limited and the opportunities to extend the children's learning in both geography and mathematics are often underdeveloped. The best planning ensures that the children collect, record and use statistical data to assist them in making descriptions, in offering explanations, and in looking for patterns and relationships in various graphs and maps.
- 2.6 In both key stages, the planning ensures that the children have fairly frequent opportunities to use books, magazines, journals, atlases and other texts; this assists them in developing their reading and in researching for information. In many of the schools the geography programme identifies regular opportunities and good access to attractive reading and pictorial resources.

3. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING OF GEOGRAPHY

- 3.1 In a majority of the schools, geography is taught in years 1 to 3, often as a component of topic work. This practice can, at times, continue into KS2, although in years 5 to 7, while there is some integration and cross-curricularity, geography is usually taught separately.
- 3.2 While the programmes of study facilitate flexibility in the teaching of geography, there is much similarity between the schools in terms of the

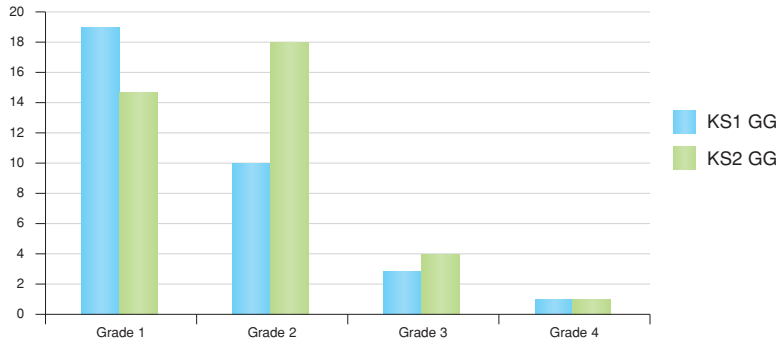
content taught; the main differences amongst the schools lie in the nature of the local environments chosen and in the breadth and depth of treatment of the topics.

- 3.3 Across the schools, the quality of the teaching of geography ranges from satisfactory to excellent; in the main, it is good. The most effective teaching employs a range of current and attractive resources and is enthusiastic and dynamic; in the best lessons, there is a clear partnership in learning between the teacher and the children. The topics chosen are treated in depth and are often appropriately linked to other curricular areas. This good quality teaching focuses on developing a suitable subject vocabulary and makes use of relevant and appropriate maps. Displays of the children's work and well-chosen commercially produced materials help to develop the children's interests in the natural environment. Good teaching employs case studies which are both topical and well resourced. The best teaching ensures that the children develop a sense of wonder, an interest in and enthusiasm for the natural world, and are stimulated to find out even more about those topics which have interested them.

In a year 5 class, the children were learning about dairy farming past and present. The teacher outlined on a flipchart the intended learning outcomes for the lesson. The children were reporting back to the class on interviews and research they had conducted into local farming. The teacher summarised their findings on an overhead projector transparency to support writing tasks later on. In groups, the children also analysed a series of prepared questions and elected a secretary and a spokesperson to report back. Sensitive and encouraging questioning by the teacher elicited an enthusiastic and lively discussion. A major strength of the lesson was the involvement of all of the children, their interest in the topic, and the depth of their local rural knowledge.

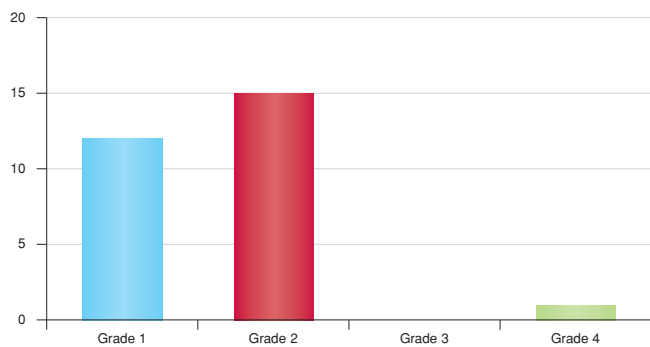
- 3.4 While effective whole-class teaching predominates, a range of other strategies is employed to complement and extend the children's learning. Role play is frequently used in KS1 to develop an understanding of occupations and people and at times in KS2 when the

LESSON GRADE SUMMARY - GEOGRAPHY

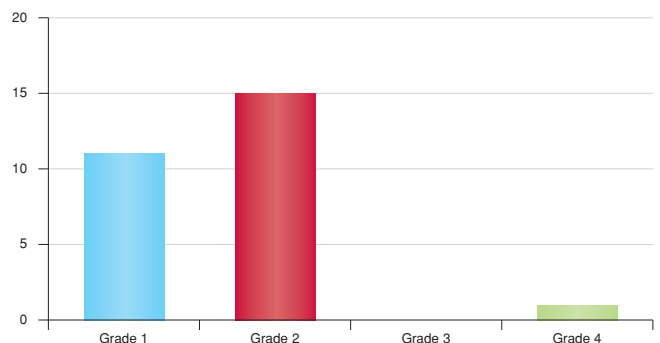


children are involved in defending contrasting opinions while engaged in debates and discussions on contemporary issues. The work in geography generally becomes more challenging as the children progress from KS1 into KS2. This additional complexity and challenge are reflected in study of a wider range of places, more in-depth studies of locations, and, occasionally, useful opportunities for independent research and the completion of individual projects. Textbooks, while still an important resource, are being increasingly supplemented by a wider range of materials.

Teaching of Geography in KS1



Teaching of Geography in KS2



- 3.5 In KS1, the quality of teaching in geography is generally satisfactory and often good. In the early years, imaginative sessions of structured play and integrated cross-curricular approaches to relevant topics and themes are used to good effect in promoting geographical learning. The children engage in activities which involve them in identifying similarities and differences between homes, occupations, modes of transport and places. The use of educational visits and visitors is well developed in the vast majority of the schools. The interviewing of familiar people from the locality is an important source of interest for the children and a valuable geographical learning resource.

In a year 2 class, the children had been learning about occupations in the local area, people who care for them in the school and elsewhere, and about regular visitors to the school. They prepared for a visit of the local community nurse, composed questions for an interview with her, and engaged in a role-play situation. There were good preparation and follow-up activities; displays in the classroom supported the work, and the visit was recorded on video to assist with additional work. This visit was part of a rich range of activities planned over a number of weeks.

- 3.6 Increasingly, a wider range of resources, including ICT, is used to promote geographical learning; for example, effective use is made of the overhead projector, data projector and the computer to develop aspects of geography. While a variety of topics is taught across the schools, there are also many common topics and themes including studies of European countries and cities, developing countries in Africa and Asia, migrations past and present, and comparisons between weather and climate nationally and globally. There is good evidence that an investigative enquiry-based approach to teaching geography is being used more widely. For example, some teachers in upper KS2 support the children in developing a systematic approach to investigating environmental issues. The teachers guide the children through a series of steps involving the observation and collection of data, its analysis and presentation, and in the formulation of valid conclusions. This scientific approach to studying geography works best when the guidance and structures are clear for the children, and the issue or topic stimulates or accommodates their specific interests.

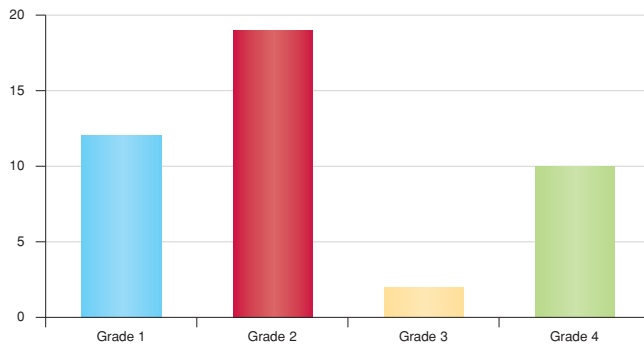
- 3.7 Less effective teaching practice was observed in a small number of lessons. In these instances, the teaching was overly directed, poorly resourced, and provided few opportunities for the children to engage in a range of learning activities, or to develop their interests through investigations or projects. In a minority of the lessons observed, poorly designed worksheets requiring a limited response from the children were used.
- 3.8 The effective use of ICT to enhance the teaching of geography is evident but its use overall remains uneven. The potential of ICT to promote geographical knowledge and improve graphical and written presentation is still underdeveloped in a significant number of the schools. In a few notable instances, digital cameras, CD-Roms, data projectors and websites are deployed effectively by the teachers and the children to enliven the subject. Further, many children make use of their own home-based computers to search for information about peoples and places and to word-process individual and group reports. In contrast, in a significant minority of the schools, there is some ineffective use of the computer as a source of information. This often results in the printing out of large amounts of material, which are often irrelevant, or too complex, for the children to work with.
- 3.9 There are many examples of very good teaching in KS2. In these lessons, the intended learning outcomes are clear, the children are engaged enthusiastically, and the teachers have high expectations. Further, the teachers employ a range of approaches and resources and, in the best lessons, audio-visual equipment is used competently. In addition, at different stages of the lesson, opportunities are given to the children to work independently in pairs or in a larger group; the children readily assist one another. When the lessons are linked to relevant experiences outside the classroom, the level of interest and motivation is high.

In a composite year 4/5 class, the children were learning about life in Kenya. The teacher had researched the topic in advance and had made available to the children a range of attractive photographic and diagrammatic resources. The children had been comparing Kenya's climate, rural housing, agricultural produce, occupations and transport with their own locality. The teacher, with experience of living in Africa, was also investigating stereotyping, and challenged the positive and negative views and images which people have about some African countries. The room was decorated with Kenyan artefacts, maps, photographs and samples of the children's written work.

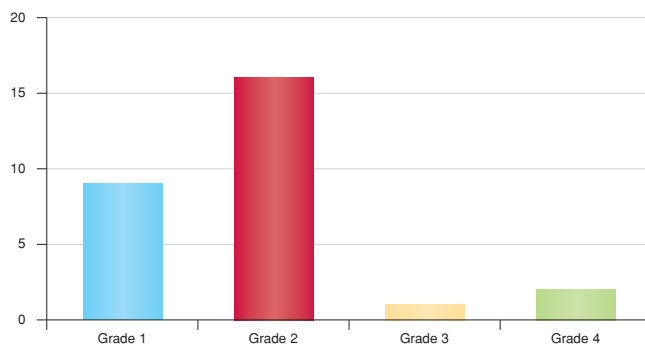
4. THE QUALITY OF LEARNING OF GEOGRAPHY

- 4.1 In the schools visited, the children who achieve well at KS1 use geographical terms appropriately. They are often highly motivated and enthusiastic in demonstrating their locational knowledge, particularly of their home area. Personal experiences of journeys to school and to places of local interest provide them with opportunities to construct and use simple maps. In the best practice, they make interesting and accurate oral and written comparisons of the features of their own locality with distant places. Excellent work was observed when the study of places is based on personal experiences and contacts using mail, e-mail and actual exchange visits. In these schools, the study of other countries often promotes an interest in the more exotic or unknown which is developed further by skilful teaching and planning, and often by introducing children to unusual artefacts. Various schools have well-established links with children in other countries; these links enrich the learning and teaching in geography and in other curricular areas.
- 4.2 In both key stages, the children often take an enthusiastic interest in the weather, its daily and seasonal variations, and its influences on people's lives. Increasingly, ICT is facilitating the study of weather, by providing improved opportunities for the children to obtain accurate and current data, attractive graphics, and to view weather or climatic simulations.

Learning in Geography in KS1



Learning in Geography in KS2



- 4.3 In both key stages, but especially in KS2, some work of high quality was observed when the children engage maturely with issues of local and global concern. The best work resulted in good fieldwork experiences including, site visits and surveys, accompanied by letter writing and interviews and talks with influential and knowledgeable visitors. Some of the topics chosen were of immediate relevance to the children and their families; for example, topics such as, mining, quarrying, waste disposal, pollution and road safety often motivated the children. High expectations by the teachers encouraged the children to achieve good standards in data collection, observation, analysis, and in the presentation of their work. In these circumstances, the children were confident, articulate and well informed in debate about controversial environmental issues; some have become expert on a local problem and have influenced decision making through written and personal contacts.

The school has developed a range of work arising out of a proposal for a lignite mine in the area. This engaged the children in studying the impact of an environmental issue in their immediate locality. Over time, the children became very knowledgeable about lignite and the potential impact of open-cast mining on the environment and on people and animals. In researching the topic, they found out about the impact of mining, created maps of lignite mining in Australia, Germany and of other possible sites in Northern Ireland; in this work, they made good use of the Internet to research aspects of the topic. The amount of individual research and response to the topic is a strong feature of the high standard of this work; the classroom display is rich with information and evidence of the children's work. The children have become engaged in a local anti-mine campaign, have considered key issues, written letters and have collected and studied press releases. The topic has also enthused the children to look at other environmental issues, for example, whaling.

And in another rural school:

In a year 7 class, the children had been working on a recycling theme. Over time, the children had collected waste for recycling. The teacher had obtained videos on aspects of recycling and the children had to summarise key points from the videos and share these with the class; then the teacher summarised the main points for the class using an overhead projector. The children were directed to specific recycling sites and to a waste disposal game on the Internet to be accessed at home. Finally, the children designed posters to encourage the school and local community to recycle waste products.

- 4.4 The poorer attainment in geography of the children in a minority of the schools is due to a combination of factors. The more able children are insufficiently challenged or stimulated by the tasks set; the time-consuming colouring of maps, the completion of limited, unimaginative

worksheets, and repetition in the topics studied are common weaknesses. Further, limited opportunities to use ICT, to investigate topics individually or in small groups, and to engage in outdoor activity or fieldwork, all contribute to the children's underachievement and lack of interest. Insufficient resourcing, inappropriately chosen audio-visual aids, and a lack of maps and textbooks diminish the potential quality of the work. The dominance of over-directed teaching reduces the opportunities to develop the children's investigative skills, inquisitiveness and interest in the world about them. At worst, some children acquire a very superficial knowledge about aspects of geography because their learning opportunities are underdeveloped.

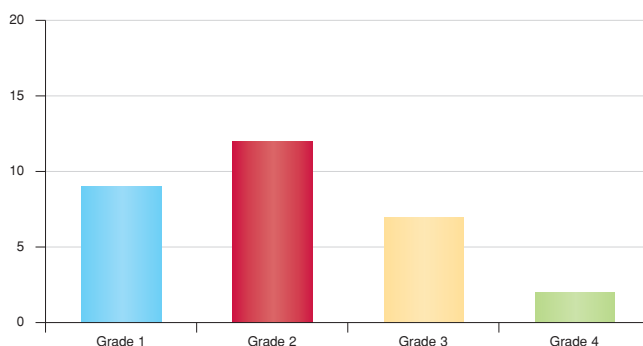
- 4.5 In most of the schools, the children are asked to speak and write about what they know and understand, and to make use of relevant geographical terms; in the best lessons, the teachers ensure that the children use a range of writing to record their work. However, in a significant number of the schools, this awareness of promoting literacy is not sufficiently well developed in the children's work. For example, while interesting discussions and debates, prompted by skilful and challenging questioning occur, the written work which arises from these sessions does not always match the efforts and excellent learning points which emerged in the course of the lessons.

In one school, the children in KS1 observed and talked about the main features of their locality. They recognised physical and human features and understood the purpose of local buildings. They suggested ways of improving local facilities and produced a collage using drawings and paintings of their own homes and recognisable important and local landscape features. In KS2, the majority of the children became increasingly more competent and confident in understanding scale, compass direction, patterns, and links and relationships between people and places. In addition, most of the children in KS2 attained a good specialist vocabulary, were competent in using maps at different scales, and an increasing number were developing a competent understanding of the process of enquiry.

5. THE QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

- 5.1 Most of the schools have a geography co-ordinator. The effectiveness of the subject co-ordinator in geography has continued to improve. This positive development has been facilitated by a number of factors. Increasingly, the co-ordinators have a relevant qualification or have developed a commitment to geography. The increased support from senior management through the allocation of time and resources has led to much improved whole-school planning for geography. Over recent years, courses organised by the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) for co-ordinating geography have provided useful guidance and encouragement to many teachers.

Quality of Co-ordination in Geography



- 5.2 The more effective co-ordinators are pro-active in their work; at best, they provide information to colleagues, review schemes of work and, in a small number of schools, evaluate samples of the children's work to gain an overview of progression and standards. The monitoring role of co-ordinators remains underdeveloped. Effective co-ordination is essential to maintaining and raising standards in geography but the outcomes of the survey reveal that the quality of co-ordination is still uneven.
- 5.3 The most effective co-ordinators in the schools visited monitor planning and standards across the school, and often have a good knowledge of the strengths and areas for improvement in geography. They are open to new ideas, attend in-service courses, and disseminate information and resources to support their colleagues. Often their planning is well set

out, including sample lesson plans and the effective highlighting of appropriate and useful cross-curricular links. The most effective co-ordinators have credibility amongst their colleagues and lead by example in the teaching of geography.

- 5.4 In a minority of the schools, the role of the geography co-ordinator is underdeveloped. In these schools, the co-ordinator takes little responsibility for the development of the subject. In some schools, the co-ordinators do not have adequate support from senior management in promoting geography throughout the school. In these circumstances, geography tends not to occupy a significant place in the school's development planning. In recent years, however, school development planning has begun to focus on areas other than English, mathematics and science and this is having a positive impact on subject co-ordination in geography. Increasingly, in these schools, more staff discussion, at times supported by CASS, is leading to improved provision for geography.

6. THE QUALITY OF ASSESSMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

- 6.1 Only a small number of the schools formally assess the children's progress or attainment in geography. In most of the schools, reference is made in reports to the parents focusing on the children's interest in geography but rarely is much additional detail offered. In a few of the schools, project work and/or class tests are used by the KS2 teachers to assess the children's progress. Almost no use is made of level descriptors to guide the teachers in assessing the children's attainment. The marking of geography classwork and homework is often cursory and variable in quality within and across the schools; marking is usually secretarial, at best, but often ignores the geographical content or skills. Generally, the marking fails to provide the children with a clear indication of what they know and understand, and on the standards they have achieved; often, it does not indicate how the children can improve on their work.

7. SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN GEOGRAPHY

7.1 The survey highlights significant strengths in the learning and teaching of geography in primary schools. These include the:

- recent improvements in provision in geography, particularly at KS2;
- good quality of much of the teaching of geography in both key stages, including instances of imaginative and high quality practice;
- enjoyment and enthusiasm shown by most of the children, and the interest and commitment of the majority of the teachers to promoting work in geography;
- effective use of the local environment, educational visits, fieldwork and visitors to enhance geographical learning;
- increasing use of an investigative or enquiry-based approach in upper primary classes, often resulting in projects of good quality;
- effective use of maps, visual materials and, more recently, ICT equipment to support work in geography;
- children's improving locational knowledge and awareness of environmental issues;
- effective cross-curricular links with art and design, history and science;
- increasing realisation of the contribution of geography to support work in literacy and numeracy;
- improved planning and co-ordination of the subject;
- improved resourcing and the more effective use of available resources.

7.2 The survey also identified areas for improvement in learning and teaching in geography. These include the need:

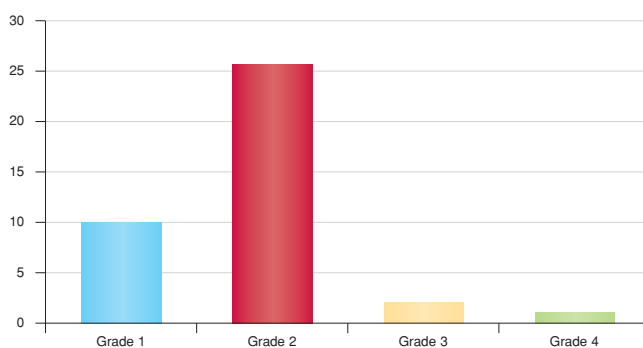
- to ensure progression in key aspects of geography;
- for children to have more challenge in their work and more opportunities to investigate topics and to develop their skills of enquiry;
- for more rigorous subject co-ordination in a number of the schools, particularly in the monitoring and evaluation of geographical provision and standards;
- to ensure that geography makes a stronger contribution to the development of the children's literacy and numeracy. In addition, more work is required to ensure that ICT is effectively used to enhance geographical provision;
- to improve the assessment and marking procedures used to determine the children's progress and attainment in geography;
- for the children to study a wider range of places and localities beyond their local area;
- to raise the attainment of the children in a minority of those schools where the subject profile and provision are not high enough.

8. PLANNING FOR HISTORY

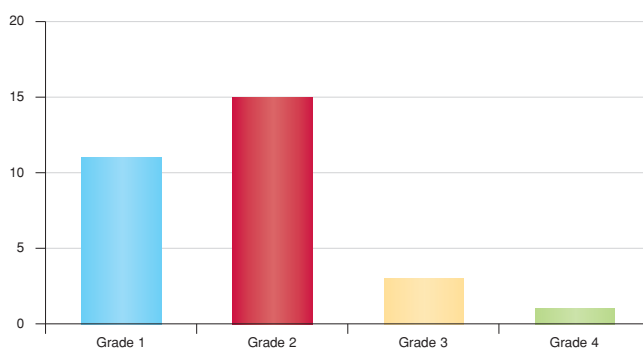
8.1 In most of the schools, the schemes of work that guide the teaching of history consist of sequenced outlines of the content and the associated teaching and learning activities. A significant minority of the schools identify learning outcomes that usually relate to specific aspects of the topic being studied. In the best practice, a small number of the schools define the learning outcomes in terms of the concepts and skills outlined in the history programme of study.

8.2 The vast majority of the teachers integrate the planning of history and geography for years 1 to 3; most plan for history separately from year 4 onwards. In most of the schools, the teachers' planning for their history lessons is sound; in a minority of the schools, it reflects comprehensive coverage of the topics and the teaching and learning activities are linked well to the learning outcomes specified in the schemes of work. The teachers with composite classes usually ensure satisfactory coverage through an appropriate rotation of the topics. In a small number of the schools, the planning relates to an outdated version of the history programme of study. While most of the planning for history refers to literacy and ICT, the references are insufficiently specific and do not reflect progression in either of the areas.

Planning for History in KS1



Planning for History in KS2



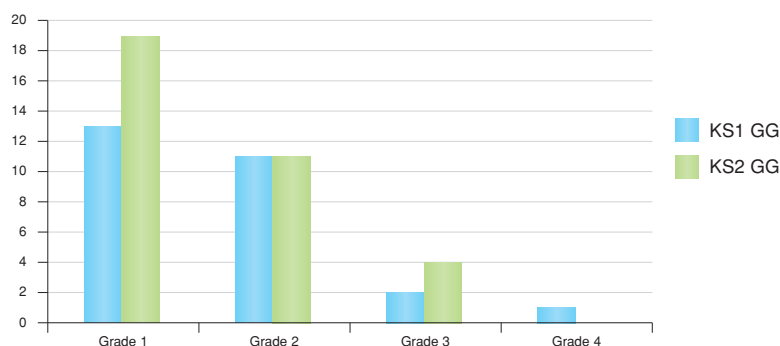
8.3 In most of the schools, the work in history becomes more challenging as the children move up the school. In the majority of the schools, the additional challenge consists of a greater emphasis on detailed historical information and addressing the topics in a more complex manner. A

small number of the schools plan explicitly for progression in the key elements and concepts of the history programme of study, such as chronology, change over time, cause and consequence, perspectives of people in the past, and the use of evidence. Only a very small number of the schools seek to identify progression through linking their planned learning outcomes to the lines of progression indicated in the programme of study level descriptors. In contrast to this general picture, there are instances in a minority of the schools where individual teachers, with high expectations of their children, use the key elements of the programme of study to plan imaginative tasks that catch the children's interest. These tasks challenge the children to think analytically and reach conclusions through synthesising relatively sophisticated information.

9. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING OF HISTORY

9.1 The quality of teaching of history in KS1 is generally satisfactory and often good. In the early years, the teachers place an appropriate focus on developing the children's sense of the past through studies of their personal and family histories, subsequently moving to the history of the wider community through festivals and traditions. Activities which involve the children making comparisons between homes, farms, clothes, school, travel and leisure in the past and present, introduce the children to the concepts of change and continuity over time and are good vehicles for the development of their understanding of the language of time. In a minority of the schools, the children carry out research projects, often through the medium of questionnaires to their families.

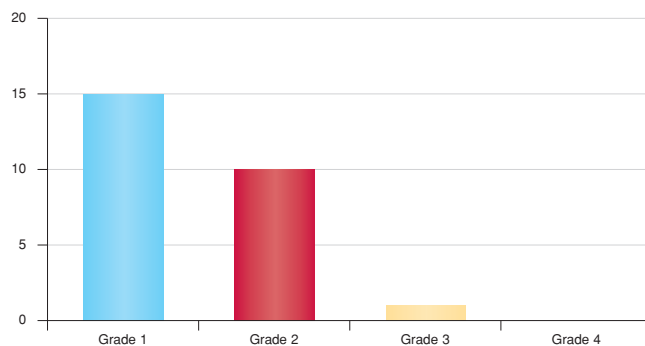
LESSON GRADE SUMMARY - HISTORY



9.2 Most of the teachers make good use of a variety of timelines to clarify and consolidate the children's sense of chronology. In addition, many teachers effectively use stories and studies of a wide variety of mythical and historical personalities to introduce aspects of life in the past. A significant minority of schools have built up impressive collections of historical artefacts, displayed in school museums or distributed around the classrooms. In a corner of one year 3 classroom:

the teacher recreated the kitchen she remembered from the 1950s in her own home. This included a large fireplace, flowered wallpaper, sewing machine, utensils, games, books, coronation memorabilia, family photographs and albums. This was an impressive exhibit, both in scale and accuracy.

Teaching of History in KS1



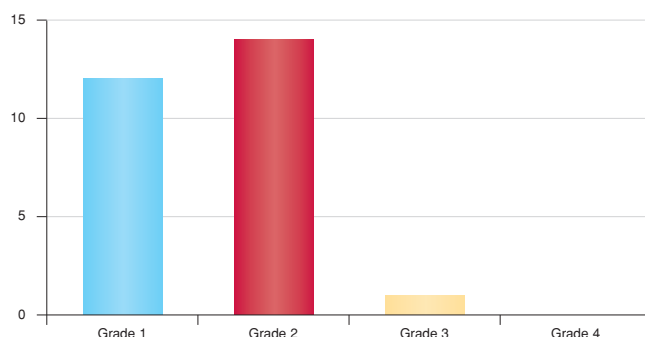
9.3 Activities connected with artefacts, particularly opportunities to handle the objects and to speculate on their purpose and use, are effective ways of developing the children's sense of the past. In many of the schools, the children in year 4 carry out detailed studies of life during the Second World War and during the post-war decades. For example, in one school, year 4 children study:

the outbreak of the War, the evacuation of the children and its effect on their lives, the home front including the Blitz, blackouts, shelters, women at work, food during wartime, including rationing, the effects of war in other countries, including the story of Anne Frank in Holland and the contrasting life of a young boy in Berlin towards and at the end of the war. The study ended with an overview of the impact of war, including the material destruction and its consequences for people's lives.

9.4 In a minority of the schools, this period of history is brought vividly to life through the children's involvement in dramatic and musical re-enactments and productions.

9.5 The quality of teaching in KS2 is generally satisfactory; it is often good and, in some instances, it is excellent. The teaching, in year 5 of the unit "Life in Early Times" is good in a significant minority of the schools. The teachers introduce the concepts of historical evidence and change over time through consideration of the shift from hunting and gathering to farming. In a minority of the schools, the teachers emphasise effectively the achievements of the period, through studies that contrast ancient societies and their tombs in Britain and Ireland with those in Egypt. In year 6, the majority of the schools carry out detailed studies of the Vikings, including consideration of life in Scandinavia, the Vikings as travellers and raiders, their artefacts and their impact upon life in Britain and Ireland. In the best practice, the teachers draw on archaeological evidence and sources, such as Viking sagas, to pose the children challenging questions for investigation.

Teaching of History in KS2



- 9.6 In year 7, through contrasting rural and urban life and the lives of the rich and poor, most of the schools focus on aspects of the Victorian age, including studies that develop the children's knowledge of different perspectives of the past. In a minority of the schools, especially those which draw on original source materials, this results in good studies of the lives of working children or of people confined to workhouses. Many of the schools include a detailed study of the Famine, often in tandem with the children's class novels. Through a consideration of the causes and effects of the Famine and the resultant emigration, the teachers develop the children's sense of empathy with people in the past. Only a small number of the schools succeed in introducing the children to the dynamic nature of change over the Victorian period.
- 9.7 In addition to the core study units, a significant minority of the schools make good use of the flexibility in the programme of study to teach units of their own choice. In a significant minority of the schools, this work is of a high quality and challenges the children to think critically about history and develop their own ideas. For example, in one year 6 class, the children's study of the Tudors included:

an investigation into the Spanish Armada, involving an analysis of its causes, the children acting as Philip II's advisers in planning the attack and then making a comparison between their own plans and the actual plans and events. The children discussed and wrote about the failure of the Armada from both the English and the Spanish points of view. The children then researched the consequences for the scattered ships and survivors, using The Girona as a case study. Having considered the purposes of the objects found on The Girona, the children completed their study by building a model of a Spanish galleon.

- 9.8 Other schools carry out detailed studies of the history of an aspect of their locality. These studies often draw on the specific interest or expertise of members of the staff or of local people and are enlivened by investigative fieldwork in the local area. For example, the children in one school:

worked with a local historian to carry out a detailed field study of the old local railway. The children visited several old railway stations and used maps to follow the route of the railway. To stimulate an investigative approach, the school prepared workbooks containing a wide variety of information and local people's anecdotal memories of the railway.

In another rural school:

after the discovery of an old local farm gate, the children took the lead in a study of the life of the local blacksmith who had made this gate, over 150 years ago. Local writing, stories and poems were integrated into the work. The gate was refurbished and became a central exhibit in the school's environmental garden. To make the link between the past and present, the school involved the blacksmith's descendants in this installation.

- 9.9 The teaching of history is less effective in the schools where the work is overly structured, providing the children with few opportunities to use original historical sources or develop independence through researching the topics. This work often makes excessive use of unchallenging worksheets.
- 9.10 The schools' use of ICT to enhance and extend the teaching of history is uneven. In many schools, the teachers' competence and confidence in the use of ICT have been increased through their New Opportunities Funding (NOF) ICT Training; however, only a minority are making full and effective use of ICT in the teaching of history. The children's most common experience of ICT involves its use to improve the presentation of their work. In the best instances, this involves the integration of graphics and illustrations with text and, in a few instances, the use of presentation software to communicate their findings to the rest of the class. A minority of the children produce mock newspapers to present different perspectives of historical events and people. In addition, there is evidence of an increase in the children's use of computer encyclopaedias and CD-Roms to locate information about their history topics.

- 9.11 In a minority of the schools, the children use the Internet to research their history topics. An increasing number of these children show growing competence and independence in their work, a minority using their home computers to complement and extend their in-school work. However, many of the children continue to make indiscriminate use of the Internet, copying or printing out large amounts of undifferentiated information, much of which is couched in language beyond their understanding. The teachers need to place a greater emphasis on teaching the children how to carry out research and to make more selective use of the extensive information available on the Internet.
- 9.12 A significant minority of the schools make effective use of videos to show stimulating school broadcasts and other related material. Others are using digital cameras to record aspects of the children's work in class and during visits to places of historical interest. Most of the teachers make insufficient use of data projectors to increase the effectiveness of whole-class teaching.
- 9.13 In the vast majority of the schools, history in KS1 is taught through integrated topics, including homes and buildings, transport, school and farming. There are also instances of productive links between history and other subjects, such as reading historical stories and novels in English lessons, linking floating and sinking science experiments to building model Viking boats and the playing of traditional street games in physical education. A focused study of the local area often provides a good context for developing links between subjects. In one school, children in KS2:

studied the history of the towns in their local area and linked this work to a study of aspects of tourism and conservation. Through the use of old records, photographs, maps, old newspapers and oral memories, the children developed a good understanding of change and continuity and the older children were able to see the local area as a dynamic, ever-changing place, underpinned by tradition and values.

9.14 Imaginative and effective links between art and design and history are features of the work in many of the schools. The children's knowledge and understanding of aspects of history are deepened through making models, paintings and artefacts. Work of a very high quality includes detailed and convincing models of rural cottages and Neolithic homes and tombs, accurate models of Viking ships, weapons and jewellery, striking recreations of Mesolithic cave paintings, Pharaoh masks and paintings of historical landscapes. In one school, through its involvement in the Arts Council's "Art Generations 2000" project the children:

worked with experienced artists to express and enhance aspects of their work across the curriculum. The work related to history included a large, bold and colourful mural that, through paintings of personalities and events, depicted changes from the 1940s to the 1960s. Other work reflected the children's studies of Celtic art and the patterns of housing in the neighbourhood of the school.

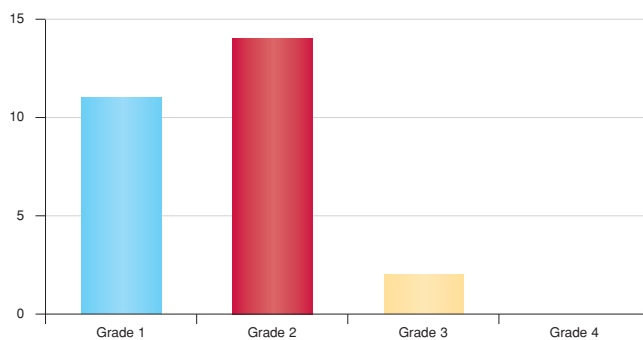
9.15 Most of the schools provide the children with lively experiences of the past through visits to places of historical interest. In a minority of the schools, these visits are linked to Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) programmes that involve the children studying history on a cross-community basis. The children enjoy and benefit from visits to National Trust and other properties and to a wide variety of museums and local heritage centres. Many of these centres provide a stimulating range of activities, often including opportunities for the children to re-enact aspects of life in the past. These activities and the follow-up lessons in the schools deepen the children's knowledge and understanding of life in the past and help them develop a sense of historical period. The children also benefit from opportunities to listen to and question a wide variety of visitors to the classroom.

10. THE QUALITY OF LEARNING OF HISTORY

10.1 In the vast majority of the schools visited, the children, in both key stages, enjoy their work in history and most show a high level of interest in the events and the lives of people in the past.

10.2 In KS1, most of the children have a sense of their own history and can describe how some aspects of life have changed over time. Many can use elements of the vocabulary associated with historical time. By the end of the key stage, most of the children are beginning to consider the thoughts and feelings of people in the past and to understand how change affects people's lives. When given the opportunity, a minority of the children demonstrate a growing awareness of the need for evidence to explain the past, using their observational skills to draw inferences from old photographs and historical artefacts. Many of the pupils in year 4 are aware of the experiences of people during the Second World War and can identify some of the changes in family life, fashion, entertainment and leisure from the 1940s to the 1960s. In a minority of the schools, the children can recall key events from these periods, including the development of space flight and the deaths of President Kennedy and Martin Luther King.

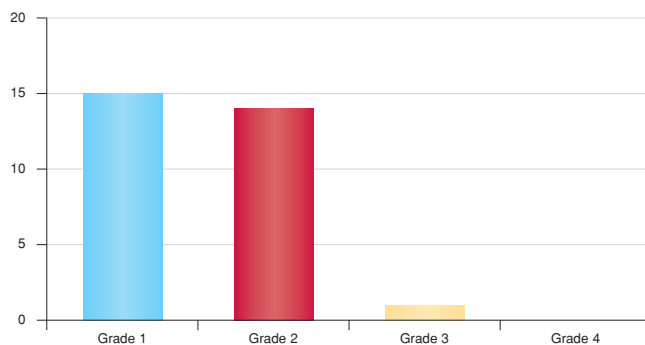
Learning in History KS1



10.3 In KS2, most of the children improve their historical knowledge and skills and show greater understanding of the historical periods studied in the core units. By the end of the key stage, many children have a better understanding of the varieties of historical evidence and that some evidence has limitations. Most of the children have a sound understanding of the main changes in people's lives from Mesolithic hunters and gatherers to Neolithic farmers. A majority of the children can recall the reasons why the Vikings left Scandinavia, how they travelled and their impact on the places they raided and settled. In the best practice, a minority of the children can discuss conflicting historical

interpretations of the Vikings. Through their studies of aspects of the Victorian period, the majority of the children have a sound knowledge of the causes and consequences of the social contrasts that marked the period. In addition, many of the children have a good knowledge of the reasons for the Famine, the nature of the suffering it caused and the subsequent perils facing those who emigrated.

Learning in History KS2



10.4 In a small minority of the schools, where the topics are taught in insufficient depth or in a fragmentary manner, the children have an uneven experience of history. While they may know about some specific events or personalities, they do not have adequate knowledge of the wider historical context and are unable to link-up their knowledge to give them a coherent understanding of the topic or historical period they are studying. While there are examples of good practice in a minority of the schools, a majority of the children have limited enquiry skills and need more opportunities to develop their independence by learning how to locate, comprehend, select and synthesise information to answer historical questions.

10.5 Despite the increasing emphasis being given to numeracy in many of the schools, there is little evidence of the teachers using history as a context to develop the children's mathematical skills. Due to the high profile given to literacy in many schools, the majority of the teachers are more aware of history's potential contribution to the development of the children's literacy skills. However, in a significant minority of the schools, this awareness is not yet reflected significantly in the children's work. Interesting oral work involving the children in lively discussions is a

feature of many history lessons. In the best practice, the teachers' probing questions help the children clarify their ideas and elicit more extended and complex responses. Reporting back on the outcomes of group work also provides the children with good opportunities to extend their language skills. In a minority of the lessons, the teachers use oral work effectively to prepare the children for follow-up writing tasks.

10.6 The study of history provides the children with frequent opportunities to develop their reading skills, especially to develop those of skimming and scanning to locate and extract relevant information. In a minority of the schools, the teachers place too great an emphasis on comprehension of the text, to the detriment of the development of the children's historical thinking. However, in a significant minority of the schools, the children have opportunities to read from a wide variety of texts, including historical novels and electronic media. In a minority of the schools, the children's reading is extended effectively through the use of original source materials, such as street directories, old newspapers, letters, diaries and other historical documents. The children take pleasure in the challenge implicit in this type of work.

10.7 In most of the schools, history provides the children with opportunities to develop their versatility as writers. In the best practice, the children write extended accounts using their own words. Children's written work observed during the survey included descriptions of the history of their local area, letters from wartime evacuees, imaginative recreations of the lives of hunters and gatherers, imagined television reports of the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb, newspaper reports on Viking raids told from the perspectives of the raiders and the monks, diary accounts of Victorian street and factory children, empathetic accounts of life in workhouses or at hiring fairs, and profiles of historical personalities. The best work occurs when the children have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the topic to ground their writing in the historical record. Conversely, the quality of the children's history writing is weakest when they use too narrow a range of sources or have to rely excessively on their own imaginations. The resulting work lacks historical accuracy and frequently contains historical anachronisms. In a minority of the schools, there is an over-emphasis on the transcription of notes and the completion of photocopied worksheets that require only brief and largely uniform responses from the children.

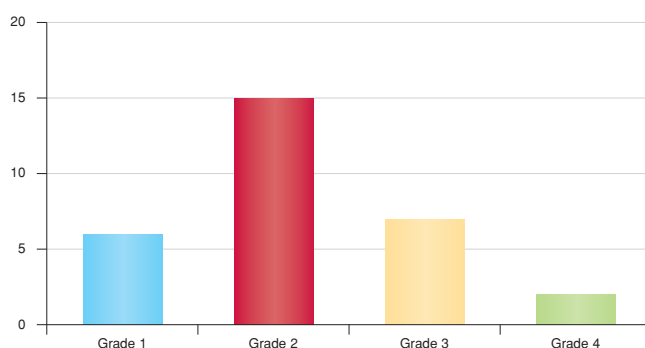
11. THE QUALITY OF ASSESSMENT OF HISTORY

11.1 Only a small number of the schools formally assess the children's progress in history; in most of the schools, assessment of history is left to the discretion of individual teachers. While a small number of the teachers use individual history projects to assess the children's progress, a significant minority use end of topic or term tests. The latter focus largely on the factual recall of historical information. There is no significant use of the programme of study level descriptors to gauge the children's attainment in history. While most of the children's work in history is marked, there are only a few instances where the teachers provide the children with specific feedback on the quality of the history in their work, and offer advice on how to improve it.

12. THE QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT OF HISTORY

12.1 Most of the schools have a member of staff designated as the history co-ordinator. In a majority of these schools, the co-ordinator takes responsibility for the school's history policy and the development of the schemes of work, while ensuring that the teachers have sufficient resources to teach the subject. In a small number of the schools, due to the absence of a history co-ordinator, there is no whole-school view and the development of the subject is left to each individual teacher. In a small number of the schools, the co-ordinators produce an end of year report on their work. However, only a small number of the co-ordinators actively monitor and evaluate the quality of the work in history and the standards being achieved by the children. As a consequence, a majority of the co-ordinators do not have a clear overview of the strengths and areas for improvement within their schools. A small number of schools make use of the Education and Training Inspectorate's documents "Evaluating History" and "Improving History" to assist the process of self-evaluation.

Quality of Co-ordination in History



12.2 In a small number of the schools, the co-ordinators, often with the strong support of the Principal, are more active in promoting history throughout the school. These co-ordinators involve the whole staff in thorough and constructively critical audits of their schools' provision. In addition, they have begun to monitor the quality of provision through regular reviews of the teachers' planning, periodic scrutiny of the children's books, and focused discussions with the teachers. This work results in improvements to the schools' documentation and greater clarity and purpose in the teaching of the subject. For example, in one school:

the principal provided in-house training for the subject co-ordinators to improve their capacity for self-evaluation. As a consequence of this work, the co-ordinator for history, assisted by a Curriculum, Advisory and Support Service (CASS) officer, audited the school's schemes of work against the requirements of the history programme of study and reviewed the nature and quality of the school's resources. She also identified contexts within the history programme that could contribute significantly to the school's work on literacy and numeracy. The co-ordinator subsequently discussed the work with the whole staff and agreed a programme of development to effect further improvement.

12.3 In a minority of the schools, the role of history co-ordinator is ill-defined or underdeveloped. In these schools, the co-ordinators play little part in the development of the subject; the reviews of provision are superficial and do not impact significantly on the quality of work in the classrooms.

12.4 In most of the schools, the whole-school priorities for development focused on aspects of the curriculum other than history. As a consequence, few schools requested in-school or attended centre-based support from CASS. The few schools that made use of CASS support, usually to assist in the review of schemes of work or to help identify possibilities for local history, found the support beneficial. The majority of the schools continue to make occasional use of resources produced by CASS, in particular, those relating to the use of ICT in history.

13. SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN HISTORY

13.1 The survey highlights significant strengths in the learning and teaching of history in the primary schools surveyed. These include the:

- enjoyment and enthusiasm shown by most of the children and the interest and commitment shown by the majority of the teachers for history;
- satisfactory quality of the teaching of history in both key stages; in a minority of instances, it is excellent;
- good knowledge and understanding of history shown by a significant minority of the children;
- quality of many of the classroom museums and the opportunities the children have to handle historical artefacts and to discuss their purpose and use;
- quality of many of the schools' studies of local history;
- valuable contribution made by art and design to the children's studies in history;
- benefit the children derive from visits to places of historical interest;
- good quality of talking and listening shown by the majority of the children and of writing on historical topics by a significant minority of children.

13.2 The survey also identifies areas for improvement in learning and teaching of history. These include the:

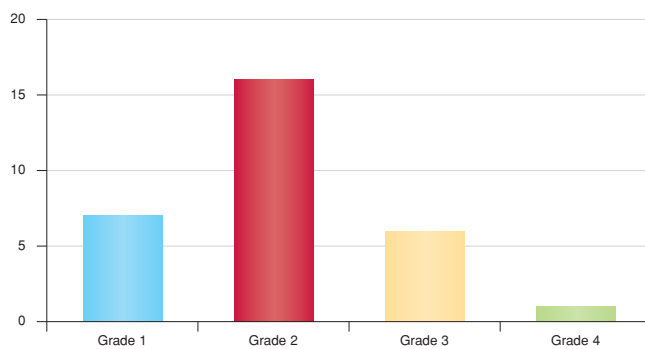
- need to plan explicitly for progression in the key elements, concepts and skills of the history programme of study;
- more specific and explicit identification in the teachers' planning of the contribution of history to the development of the children's literacy, numeracy and ICT, and the provision in Special Education Needs;
- provision of more opportunities for the children to use original historical sources and to develop enquiry skills;
- need for the teachers to place greater emphasis on teaching the children how to use the Internet to carry out research;
- increased use of the level descriptors in the programme of study to gauge the children's progress and attainment in history;
- development of more rigorous approaches by the history co-ordinators to monitoring and evaluating the quality of the children's work in history and the standards being achieved.

14. CONCLUSION

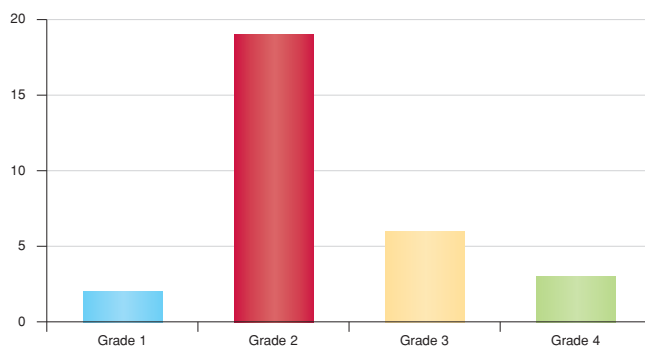
14.1 The survey found that both geography and history remain popular and valued subjects in the primary curriculum. Although most schools are focusing on other curricular priorities, in particular, literacy, numeracy and ICT, the vast majority of schools continue to devote adequate curriculum time to both geography and history. The links between the two subjects are exploited well in KS1; these links are evident in only a minority of schools during KS2.

14.2 A key finding of the survey relates to planning. In a minority of the schools, the written planning for the two subjects makes insufficient reference to the school's local context. Further, in the majority of the schools, there is little explicit planning for differentiation, numeracy or literacy. The written planning for geography and history rarely considers how special educational needs might be addressed explicitly through work in the two subjects.

Contribution of Geography and History to Literacy



Contribution of Geography and History to Numeracy



14.3 Many of the schools visited in the survey take the opportunity, within their geography and history programmes, to provide the children in both key stages with a range of learning experiences in the areas of cultural heritage (CH) and EMU. Many teachers have given substantially of their time, effort and commitment, often outside normal working hours, to help develop this area of the curriculum.

14.4 A wide and interesting range of educational visits and fieldwork often provides the children with good opportunities for local cross-community involvement and linkages. In addition, there is evidence of increasing contact, particularly through the medium of ICT, with schools in many European countries and beyond. Taken together, all of these local, national and international contacts offer good opportunities for cross-curricular work and learning.

14.5 At its best, work to develop the children's awareness of others within the local community is well focused and effective. Despite this, in the main, the experiences the children receive, though worthwhile and important, have the potential, albeit at a level commensurate with the age and maturity of the children involved, to become more challenging in terms of developing their knowledge and understanding of living in the divided, yet increasingly multi-cultural and multi-ethnic, society that is Northern Ireland.

APPENDIX

PRIMARY SCHOOLS WHICH ENGAGED IN THE SURVEY

All Children's Integrated Primary School
Ballycastle Primary School
Ballyholme Primary School
Bessbrook Primary School
Carrowdore Primary School
Castleroe Primary School
Clare Primary School
Donacloney Primary School
Downpatrick Primary School
Dromara Primary School
Dromore Primary School, Co Tyrone
Edwards Primary School, Castleberg
Elmgrove Primary School
Fair Hill Primary School
Fivemiletown Primary School
Glencraig Primary School
Harmony Hill Primary School
Legamaddy Primary School
Lisnadill Primary School
Mossgrove Primary School
St Brigid's Primary School, Londonderry
St Canice's Primary School, Dungiven
St Columba's Primary School, Kilrea
St Malachy's Primary School, Camlough
St Malachy's Primary School, Ballymoyer, Whitecross
St Mary's Primary School, Newtownbutler
St Michael's Primary School, Ravenhill, Belfast
St Patrick's Primary School, Loughguile
The Diamond Primary School, Cullybackey
Woods Primary School