Cultural Capital in History

Developing a Sense of Place and Belonging

At Pear Tree Primary School, we believe that history should help children understand not only the events and people of the past, but also the place in which they live and the communities to which they belong. Our History curriculum is designed to develop children's cultural capital by giving them a rich understanding of the past, with a particular emphasis on Nantwich, Cheshire and the wider North West. We want our children to recognise that history is not something that only happened in distant places or long ago. The streets they walk along, the buildings they see, the names of local places and the communities around them all have their own stories. Throughout our curriculum, national and global history is therefore connected wherever possible to local people, places, events, buildings and landscapes. This allows children to make meaningful connections between what they learn in the classroom and the world immediately around them.

History on Our Doorstep

Our local history approach begins in the Early Years, where children develop an understanding of the past through their own experiences, families, stories and the local environment. This provides the foundations for children to recognise similarities and differences between life in the past and life today. As children move through the school, the local area becomes an increasingly important part of their historical understanding.

Year 1 – Changes Within Living Memory

When learning about Toys, children explore how toys and childhood have changed over time, with a particular focus on Nantwich homes, shops and families. Children can compare toys used by grandparents, parents and themselves, explore how local shops and markets have changed, and consider how childhood experiences have differed between generations. When studying Hospitals and Healthcare, children explore how healthcare has changed in Nantwich and Cheshire, including the role of local hospitals, doctors, pharmacies, carers and nursing professionals. These topics allow children to understand that the history they are studying can be found within their own families and local community.

Year 2 – Disaster, Rebuilding and Power

The Great Fire of London provides an opportunity to explore how towns change following disaster. Children make connections with Nantwich's historic buildings and timber-framed streets, considering fire risk, rebuilding and how historic buildings are protected today. When studying Kings, Queens and Castles, children investigate castles, manor houses and royal connections within Cheshire. They explore how wealth, power, defence and status shaped communities in the past. This helps children to look at familiar buildings and places differently, recognising the stories and historical significance behind them.

Year 3 – Prehistoric Cheshire and Ancient Civilisations

Our Stone Age to Iron Age study gives children the opportunity to investigate prehistoric Cheshire. They explore early settlement, farming, tools, homes and the ways in which people used the local landscape. Children consider how life in Cheshire changed as communities developed, making links between migration, settlement, trade and industry. When studying Ancient Egypt, children compare the importance of the River Nile with the role that rivers, waterways and canals have played in Cheshire. This enables pupils to understand how the environment influences where people settle, how they farm and how communities trade.

Year 4 – The Romans and the North West

When studying Ancient Greece, children consider how ideas such as democracy, sport, theatre and education have influenced the modern world. Links are made to modern local democracy, helping children recognise that historical ideas can continue to influence their own lives. The study of the Romans provides a particularly strong local connection. Children investigate Roman Cheshire and Deva Victrix (Roman Chester), exploring Roman roads,

forts, trade routes and military control across the North West. They consider how Roman rule affected local settlement, travel, trade and everyday life. This helps children to understand that the area around Nantwich has been connected to major historical developments for thousands of years.

Year 5 – Anglo-Saxons, Vikings and Local Identity

The study of Anglo-Saxons and Vikings provides an important opportunity to explore the origins of local identity. Children investigate how Anglo-Saxon and Norse settlement influenced Cheshire's landscape, communities and place names. They consider how people settled, farmed and defended the land and compare local evidence with wider changes taking place across Britain. This allows children to look at familiar place names and begin to understand how language, migration and settlement have shaped the identity of the communities in which they live. When studying the Maya, children compare Maya settlements, farming and trade with the development of communities in Cheshire. This encourages children to recognise both similarities and differences between societies and develops their understanding of the diversity of human history.

Year 6 – Cheshire at Times of Change and Conflict

In Year 6, children undertake a detailed study of World War Two, with a particular focus on Nantwich and Cheshire during the war. Children investigate the experiences of evacuees arriving in Cheshire, the contribution of local towns, villages and farms, rationing and community life. They also explore why Cheshire was strategically important because of its industry, agriculture, transport links and geography. The enquiry question, "Why was Cheshire important during World War Two?", encourages children to investigate the contribution of their local area to a major national and international event. Our study of Crime and Punishment also has a strong local focus. Children explore how crime, policing and justice have changed in Cheshire over time, including local courts, prisons, stocks, punishment and policing. They consider how ideas about authority, law and justice have changed and how these changes affected communities such as Nantwich.

Developing Historical Curiosity

Our local approach encourages children to become historians of their own community. Children are encouraged to ask questions such as:

- Why does Nantwich look the way it does today?
- What can local buildings tell us about the past?
- How has our local community changed over time?
- Why did people choose to settle here?
- How have migration and settlement influenced Cheshire?
- What role has Cheshire played in national events?
- How can we use local evidence to understand the past?
- What can the history of Nantwich tell us about wider British history?

By investigating these questions, children develop an understanding that history can be found in buildings, streets, place names, landscapes, objects, photographs, documents and stories.

Connecting Local, National and Global History

Our curriculum deliberately moves between local, national and global history. Children might study Ancient Egypt and then consider the importance of rivers in Cheshire. They might study the Romans and investigate their impact on Chester and the North West. They might explore Anglo-Saxon and Viking settlement through local place names before considering wider changes across Britain. This approach enables children to see that communities are interconnected and that events taking place far away can influence the places in which we live. It also ensures that our children develop a strong sense of both local identity and their place within the wider world.

Our Aim

Our History curriculum aims to give every child a rich understanding of the past and a strong sense of connection to their local community. By the time children leave Pear Tree Primary School, we want them to be able to walk through Nantwich and see its history: to recognise that buildings, streets, landscapes and place names are evidence of the people and events that came before them. We want our children to be proud of their local area,

curious about its past and confident in understanding how Nantwich and Cheshire are connected to the wider story of Britain and the world. Through our curriculum, we aim to develop children who are not only knowledgeable about history, but who understand that they are part of an ongoing local story and have a role to play in shaping the future of their community.

