

The Development of the History Curriculum in English Primary Schools: Analysis of Data and Identification of Trends from the British Historical Association's 2011 Primary Survey

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Abstract

Through the 1990 introduction of history as an English National Curriculum subject a Conservative government statutorily embedded history in the English primary curriculum as a de facto new subject. The 1990 English National History Curriculum was a sophisticated blend of three elements:

- *the British political elite's deeply entrenched view of British history as a Master Narrative of the development of a liberal parliamentary democracy i.e. The Whig Interpretation of History;*
- *the academic history community's New History that replaced The Whig Interpretation of History with the histories of all citizens from multiple perspectives, e.g. class, culture, society, gender, ethnicity and locale;*
- *a powerful, democratic pedagogy based upon the New History as an academic discipline with high level skills, protocols, procedures and disciplinary concepts.*

By the 1980s The New History had radically affected and altered the approach to the teaching of history in England both in terms of content [facts – propositional or substantive knowledge] and teaching approaches [pupils 'Doing History'– procedural knowledge or syntactic knowledge].

From 1997-2000 a new Labour government marginalised history in primary schools with a focus on standards and the wholesale introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. In 2010 the Labour government was voted out of power. Its mainly Conservative replacement announced it would introduce a primary curriculum in 2014 organised along disciplinary lines, in which British Master Narrative History could play a major role.

To inform the ensuing debate on the 2014 primary curriculum The Historical Association of Great Britain carried out a national survey of history teaching English primary schools.

Our paper reports the main findings of the survey. The survey revealed that despite a decade of marginalisation and neglect history has unexpectedly become an integral element of the English primary school curriculum. The paper's conclusions

relate to Bourdieu's concept of 'cultural capital' and the role of history in educating for a plural, liberal democracy.

Keywords

Bourdieu, Citizenship, Cultural Capital, National Curriculum England, Henrietta Marshall, Historical Association, History Education, Identity, Master narrative, New History, Pedagogy – history, Primary, Primary survey, The Whig Interpretation of History.

Introduction

The setting is Melbourne, 1905. “What a funny letter, Daddy,” said Spen... “Do you think so?” said Daddy, “It is from home... The old country.” Daddy then talked about home, England ‘the little island *in the west*’ to which we belong, and where I used to live” and the ties between the little island and the big one that was their home, Australia. Daddy told Spen and his sister Veda that he would ask someone to tell them the story of how ‘the big island and the little island belong to each other’. And that was how Henrietta Marshall [the someone] came to write *Our Island Story*, probably the most significant British children’s history book of the 20th century (Marshall, 1905).

Our Island Story consists of 110 short tales strung sequentially on a chronological thread that runs from before Caesar’s invasion of Britain in 55 B.C. to the end of Queen Victoria’s reign and the Boer War, 1899-1902. Henrietta Marshall also provides a chronological list of the rulers of England - its Kings and Queens - since 1066 to help the reader see the relationship between them and her overall narrative.

Henrietta Marshall recognises that story, myth, legend and uncontested historical narrative combine to form the British master narrative. She argues that *Our Island Story* is a book of stories that may not be true. As such, it complements the uncontested stories that are central to the British master narrative. Marshall’s view of the past is implicitly positivistic – history as an objective, scientific, factually accurate body of knowledge grounded in the academic literature.

By the mid-20th century a clearly defined *British master narrative* history syllabus was entrenched in English selective [Grammar] schools that was identical to that of Henrietta Marshall’s. The *British master narrative* is a selection from the collective memory of early 20th century British society, a ‘conventional wisdom’ (Galbraith, 1958). Master narratives are an area of confusion and complexity. Frequently there are competing mutually exclusive master narratives, or different and contested views on whether there is even a master narrative and the form it should take. The outcome in politics with multiple national, regional and community narratives can be political, religious, social and communitarian conflict that can result in civil conflict.

The *British master narrative* draws upon the ‘cultural capital’ of the British political nation (Plumb, 1967): that sector of society from which is drawn its ruling elite. As

such, it consists of firmly held, unquestioned, ideas, values, beliefs and attitudes rooted in an unquestioned, and even unacknowledged view of the past.

Educationally *the British master narrative* aims to inculcate children with a collective sense of national identity rooted in *Britain's past*. Identity's tap roots penetrate the chronologically ordered strata of the past. Side roots permeate these strata and draw sustenance from the richness of their record of the past, viewed through interpretive lenses that reflect attitudes, values and beliefs. History is the most powerful of cultural media for transmitting shared values, beliefs, ideals, attitudes and a raft of commonly acknowledged 'markers' that meld into a common, shared national identity.

The British Master Narrative, The Whig Interpretation of History and Identity

Our Island Story has an English curricular context. Following the 1902 Education Act, the British government's Board of Education in 1904 defined a certificated four year curriculum including history: English language and literature, geography, a foreign language, mathematics, science and government with, drawing, manual work, physical training and for girls, housewifery (Gillard, 2011). The 1904 history requirement was built upon government recommendations for a school history syllabus (Aldrich and Dean 1991, 96-97). 1904 also saw the publication of a seminal textbook Mongan's *The Oxford & Cambridge English History* for this syllabus. Its content is that of *Our Island Story* with identical detailed chronological coverage, topics and tales, ending with the Boer War (Mongan, 1904).

This *British master narrative* provided the foundation for teaching history in schools. The rationale for teaching history in elementary schools was clearly stated in successive *Handbooks of Suggestions* issued by the Board of Education from 1905 onwards. The subject was important to help children learn the origins of their rights and duties and 'to learn something about their nationality which distinguishes them from the people of other countries...'. Stories about men and women living in the past were the backbone of the history curriculum (Board of Education, 1905).

Indeed in the first few decades of the twentieth century, as the influence of the church declined, the inculcation of values through history was emphasised (Harnett, 1998) and history was seen as contributing to children's 'moral training'. Stories provided opportunities for children to learn about 'the splendour of heroism, the worth of unselfishness and loyalty, and the meanness of cruelty and cowardice' (Board of Education 1927, 139).

Rooted in the ancient civilisations of Egypt, Greece and Rome *the British master narrative* is Anglo-centric with chronological markers that are tokens, symbols, of British identity. A suggested *Alphabet of History* published in 1923 by the Board of Education outlined 32 key events which pupils should know, ranging from the birth of Julius Caesar to The Great War. Political and constitutional events dominate this *British master narrative* (Board of Education, 1923). *The Alphabet* provides an account of the British fight for and spread of liberty and related rights and benefits, together with the expansion of British influence and Empire.

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Henrietta Marshall highlights this mission throughout the 110 chapters of *Our Island Story*, chronologically presenting British history as a story involving key figures, movements, developments and events. In 1931 Herbert Butterfield (Butterfield) argued that the *British master narrative* was in fact a *Whig Interpretation of History*, an argument which has been widely accepted since (Evans, 2011). Henrietta Marshall's *Whig Interpretation of History* concludes:

From the very beginning of our story you have seen how Britons have fought for freedom, and how step by step they have won it, until at last Britons live under just laws and have themselves the power to make these laws. (Marshall 1905, Chapter 110).

The spirit of Henrietta Marshall lived on in the publications of R.J.Unstead whose textbooks dominated the teaching of History in English schools from the 1950s until the 1990s. Unstead was equally explicit about the citizenship role of his textbooks through the medium of their British master narrative (Unstead, 1962).

These views were propagated elsewhere and not confined to history lessons for primary aged children. Reading primers in the nineteenth century had traditionally drawn on a range of history stories in their collections to support children's awareness of civic values (Heathorn, 1995). More recently this tradition continued in popular reading schemes published in the twentieth century, although the inculcation of specific values was less explicit, e.g. *Through the Rainbow* published by Schofield and Sims. Other publications widely read by primary aged children post Second World War included the Ladybird History Stories series. These small books with their colourful illustrations and lively accounts of famous personalities and events were very popular with young readers and had a place on all library bookshelves. In addition, the increasingly popularity of school radio broadcasts also offered opportunities for listening to history stories, enlivened with exciting sound effects.

The Whig Interpretation of History and the British Revolution in History Teaching, c. 1970-1990

The school history curriculum from 1900 to the 1970s reflected the Whig history of the 19th century academic community. By the 1970s academic history in Britain had radically changed, resulting in *The New History* with a different set of foci and related methodologies. Academic history departments from the 1960s produced a generation of history teachers and educationalists working in schools, Higher Education, Local Authorities, Examination Boards, government agencies, the Historical Association and publishing houses who translated the academic 'New History' into a school history that was also known as 'The New History' (Rogers, 1979). Cumulatively, by 1989 this had resulted in an English Revolution in History Education (IJHLTR.9.1, 2011) that transformed perceptions of history's curricular role and pedagogy. It replaced the *Whig Interpretation of History's* view of history as a positivist master narrative with the argument that history was a process of enquiry that resulted in the creation of historical knowledge grounded in history as an academic discipline.

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Central to that enquiry was the holistic inter-relationship of disciplinary concepts: one of which was chronology, another historical narrative and accounts. 'The New History' researched the historical backgrounds of all aspects of modern society: not only the history of the political elite that had ruled Britain from Westminster. 'The New History' taught pupils to interrogate and deconstruct narratives through questioning and examination of interpretations.

The New History's main influence by 1989 was upon the teaching of history in the secondary sector, 11-18; its influence on primary practice was more limited. Blyth's School Council Project (1976) *Time, Place and Society 8-13* outlined key inter-related concepts, skills, values and attitudes which were helpful for planning history, geography and social studies curricula, but it was not taken up widely by schools. The dissemination of New History ideas in primary education rested mainly in the hands of a few enthusiastic and interested individuals and some local education authorities.

HMI expressed concern on the quality of teaching and of children's learning in history in the Primary Survey 1978 (DES, 1978) and in subsequent reports (DES 1982, 1989). TV began to take on a more important role in history education, presenting children with exciting stories and glimpses of different ways of life in the past. However, programmes often presented uncritical views of the past and did not necessarily support the development of historical skills and concepts (DES, 1989). The extent of history specialist teaching in the primary sector was minimal: what good practice there was incidental to it being an extension of effective primary pedagogy (Knight, 1991).

The British Master Narrative, the New History and the English National Curriculum, 1989/90-2010

From 1989 the *British master narrative* history curriculum in English schools as a *Whig Interpretation of History* is far more than an academic, esoteric interest. In 1989 it became the Conservative government's *raison d'être* for the inclusion of history as a subject in a subject-based English national curriculum. The minister of education, Kenneth Baker, told the Conservative party conference's October conference (Samuel, pp. 89-92):

... I want our children to know about the main events in our history, because it is these events which have shaped us as we are today: the creation of the Church of England under the Tudors; the development of Parliament under the Stuarts; the transformation of the world through the industrial revolution; the extension of the franchise to women and young people; the spread of Britain's influence for good throughout the Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. All these things are matters in which we should take pride. A power of language and a sense of history are essential to the well-being of any nation. For too long some people have written off our past and have tried to make us feel ashamed of our history. Britain has given a great many things to the world. That's been

our civilising mission. Our pride in our past gives us the confidence to stand tall in the world today.

The framing of the English National Curriculum relied upon government appointed working parties, including one for history. The history working party significantly included a number of pragmatic, experienced 'New History' practitioners who were able to work with an open-minded chairman.. In terms of the primary phase, 5-11, the working party had a tabula rasa since there was minimal teaching following the precepts of 'New History'

The outcome of the 1989/90 history working party's deliberations was a history curriculum for English schools that ingeniously married the chronological *British master narrative* with the New History's treatment of history as a form of knowledge, an academic discipline that was grounded in research and scholarship. The National History Curriculum established that all 5-14 year olds would receive a full entitlement to learning history and that children would have a progressive introduction to history since the curriculum prescribed which periods of history were to be taught at different Key Stages.

While an English National History Curriculum addressed the English dimension of the *British master narrative*, the British government avoided the major problems of competing Irish, and Welsh national master narratives through the simple, ingenious strategy of setting up Northern Irish and Welsh working parties charged with the production of their own history curricula [Scotland was autonomous, free from Westminster's control]. Significantly, in the context of their own national identity the Welsh produced a counter-narrative to the *British master narrative*. The Welsh stressed their country's distinctive development of identity in opposition to English imperialism, colonisation and control. Northern Ireland also eschewed the *British master narrative* through creating a neutral Irish narrative designed to meet the views of both the Protestant and Catholic communities.

From the start, there were problems in implementing the English National History Curriculum in primary schools. Challenges of curriculum organisation, planning for progression in the acquisition of historical skills and concepts, monitoring, assessment and recording of children's learning, insufficient subject knowledge and resourcing emerge as key issues in OFSTED reports throughout the 1990s and continue until the present day (OFSTED 1993a, 1993b, 1995, 2002a, 2004, 2007b, 2011).

The English National History Curriculum was implemented, modified and refined from 1990-1997. Following the Conservative government's defeat in 1997, the new Labour government marginalised the foundation subjects within the curriculum, including history. Such subjects lost their statutory status for a couple years as the new government focused on the implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies 1998-2000. When history did regain its statutory status in 2000, history's place on the timetable was squeezed alongside all the other foundation subjects on the primary timetable. The government responded by encouraging schools to think more imaginatively about curriculum organisation in primary schools (e.g.;

Excellence and Enjoyment: a Strategy for Primary Schools (DfES, 2003,) and *The Curriculum in Successful Primary Schools* (OFSTED, 2002b).

More recently, the *Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum* sought to make the primary curriculum more manageable through linking history with geography and social understanding studies (DfE, 2009). These proposals formed the basis for a new English National Curriculum which was to be implemented in schools from September 2011. *The Independent Cambridge Review of Primary Education* also advocated more subject integration, but on the basis not of timetabling constraints, but on how subjects relate to each other and enrich understanding (Alexander, 2009).

However, in 2010 the situation changed radically: a new predominantly Conservative government replaced the Labour government and immediately announced the scrapping of the new national curriculum, with plans for it to be replaced with an alternative in 2014. The 2014 curriculum is to have a strong academic disciplinary basis: one of its subjects is likely to be history – but history in a form that specifically reflects Henrietta Marshall's whiggish *Our Island Story*.

History and the English National Curriculum: 2010/11 – Present into Future and The Historical Association's 2010 survey of history teaching in English Schools to 3-11 year olds

Background

The government's 2010 White Paper (DfE, 2010) on education and its public statements indicate that history could have a substantial place in a new National Curriculum for England in a form that draws upon ministerial memories of the *Whig Interpretation* enshrined in *Our Island Story*, representing both ministers' individual and collective educational 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1986). The English Prime Minister, David Cameron said "It [*Our Island Story*] is written in a way that really captured my imagination and which nurtured my interest in the history of our great nation." (Hough, 2010, **page**). The English Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, declared in October 2010:

Children are growing up ignorant of one of the most inspiring stories I know – the history of our United Kingdom.

Our history has moments of pride, and shame, but unless we fully understand the struggles of the past we will not properly value the liberties of the present.

The current approach we have to history denies children the opportunity to hear **Our Island Story** [my bold]. Children are given a mix of topics at primary, a cursory run through Henry the Eighth and Hitler at secondary and many give up the subject at 14, without knowing how the vivid episodes of our past become a connected narrative. Well, this trashing of our past has to stop. (Gove, 2010a).

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The government initiated 2010/11 debate on the English National History Curriculum deals with many of the issues extensively and fully explored during its 1989-90 development and subsequent revisions and modifications. How accurate is the 2011 English government's interpretation of the teaching of history to 3-11 year olds in English state schools? And, related to this, what are the factors that a new English National History needs to consider for it to be successful? Both questions are central to the *Historical Association* of Great Britain's 2010 survey of history teaching in England for 3-11 year olds (Historical Association, 2011) and a companion edition of the Historical Association's journal for the primary sector, *Primary History, What History Should We Teach, 5-14* (Primary History 57, 2011).

The survey

The survey took the form of an on-line questionnaire. It targeted The Foundation Stage for 3-4 year olds as well as Key Stages 1 & 2, i.e. the 5-11 age range. The HA drew upon the expertise of its officers and its Primary History Committee of nationally recognised experts on history education to create the questionnaire. Its 33 questions were predominantly closed, with some open-ended responses invited. The questions related to the number, nature and location of schools; the teachers; the form and content of the English National History Curriculum; assessment and progression in children's historical learning; the future form of history in the curriculum and the professional development needs of both trainee and practicing teachers.

The HA sent the survey to subscribers to its *Primary History Newsletter* and its *Primary History Journal*, Higher Education Institutions and others involved in primary history education including teacher trainers/educators, advisers and museum curators. The timing of the survey is relevant when reviewing its data. The questionnaire was issued in September 2010 at a time of considerable uncertainty and change following the new coalition government's withdrawal of a new primary National Curriculum due to be implemented in the 2011/12 academic year. The closing date for returns was 30th October 2010. The data were collated in the Primary Survey Report. (Historical Association, 2011).

Findings

Below we report findings for five main areas – these we discuss in the next section.

1. Respondents and their schools

There were 344 responses with 65% from teachers in a cohort of c. 220 schools. The responses indicated that history was embedded in their school curricula in the form that it had developed as a national curriculum from 1990-1997. Geographical coverage of England was extensive, with returns from 82 out of 150 Local Authorities. 70% of schools had over 200 pupils on role, compared to the English national average of 51% of schools. Survey schools with less than 200 pupils were predominantly located in rural areas. DCSF data (2006) indicate that the most common size of primary schools is between 201-300 pupils on roll which is 24% of

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the total number of schools who responded. 30% of schools who responded have over 400 pupils on roll.

2. Curriculum Organisation: What form does the history curriculum take in schools?

No specific question focused on how history was planned in the Foundation Stage [3/4 year olds] since the subject is not organised within a discrete subject, but rather within the area of learning, *Knowledge and Understanding of the World*. This area is designed to prepare children for subsequent study in subjects such as science, design and technology, history, geography and information and communication technology.

At Key Stage 1 [5-7 year olds] 202/222 of the schools taught history, 33 taught it as a discrete subject, 52 as an element in project based learning and 121 as part of an integrated cross-curricular programme. At Key Stage 2 of the 214 schools that taught history, 67 taught all or some of their history as a separate subject, 55 as an element in project-based learning and 116 within an integrated, cross-curricular programme.

The figures indicate that the majority of Key Stage 1 schools do not organise the history curriculum within a discrete subject area. It is most frequently organised within an integrated scheme of work drawing on a number of subject areas, or within a project. In contrast, at Key Stage 2 history is organised as a separate subject by nearly a third of the respondents, although the predominant modes of organisation still remain either project-based or integrated cross curricular teaching.

3. Curriculum content: What history is taught to 5-11 year olds in English schools?

For the Foundation Stage, 3-4 year olds *My Family and Ourselves* were the mostly popular topics identified with 94% and 82% of respondents indicating they were taught as part of the history curriculum. Other topics in order of popularity included *Toys* (30%) *Local history* (25%) and *School* (16%). The Foundation Stage curriculum is particularly open to teachers' interpretations of *Knowledge and Understanding of the World*. Personal and family histories together with locality studies are commonly taught areas of history. As such, they illustrate Early Years practitioners' concerns of teaching from the familiar and children's existing experiences.

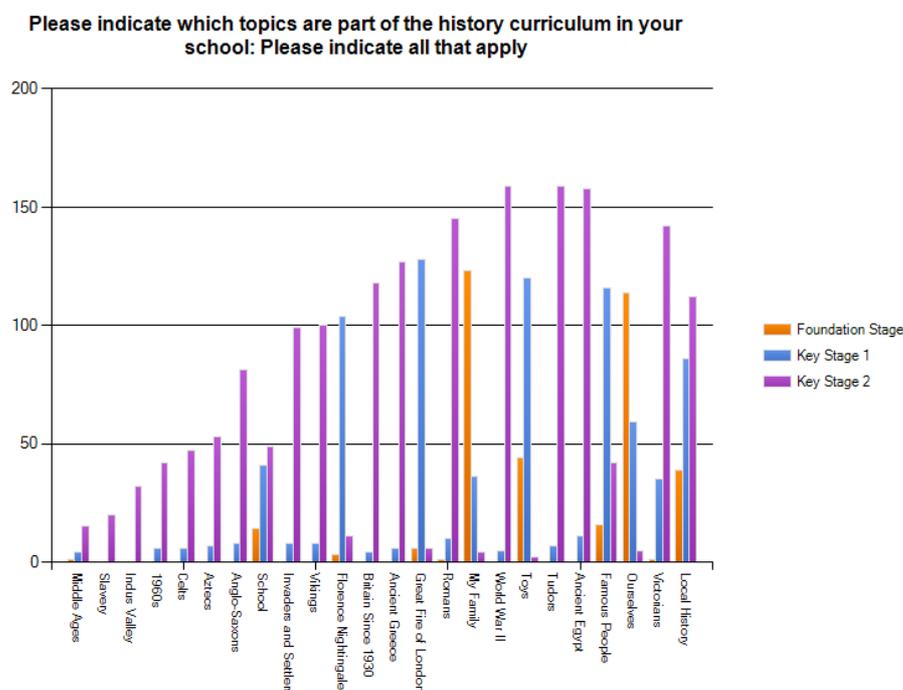
The most popular topics indicated for Key Stage 1 were the *Great Fire of London* (124) *Toys* (117) *Famous People* (112) and *Florence Nightingale* (100). *Local history* was also popular with 83 responses. Other Key Stage 1 National Curriculum topics such as *My Family* (32), *Ourselves* (55) *Victorians* (34) and *School* (38) were recorded widely. There were also indications from the data that some Key Stage 1 children were following the Key Stage 2 programmes of student for history.

The statutory national curriculum history studies were all represented in responses to topics included in the Key Stage 2 curriculum. The *Local History* study figured less than the *British, European and World History studies*. In terms of *World History* the

most popular topic was overwhelmingly *Ancient Egypt*, followed by the *Aztecs* and the *Indus Valley*.

The data indicated that at Key Stage 2 schools include Key Stage 1 topics within their history curriculum, in particular the inclusion of famous people (39).

Figure 1: Topics that are part of the history curriculum



4. Curriculum development: Which aspects of history teaching do you currently include in your history teaching and which topics would you like to be included in a revised English National History Curriculum?

The teachers listed aspects of teaching and learning in history that their schools provided in rank order.

Figure 2:

1. The development of knowledge and understanding (157/175, 90%)
2. Making links between the past and today (149/176, 85%).
3. Learning through museums and site visits as important (142/173, 82%)
4. A variety of teaching methods (131/166, 79%).
5. Social history, the lives of ordinary people (123/164, 75%),
6. Differentiation according to ability (121/164, 74%)
7. Local and community history (120/164, 75%).
8. Development of historical thinking (94/174, 54%)
9. World History (75/143, 52%)
10. Diversity today (51/127, 51%)

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11. Multicultural British History (34/136, 34%)
12. Gender history (16/110, 15%)

The following figure indicates the topics which teachers would like included in a revised English National History Curriculum.

Figure 3: Teachers' views on aspects of teaching and learning in history which they would like to develop further in a revised English National History Curriculum

1. Multicultural Britain (111/136, 87%)
2. Gender history (97/110, 88%)
3. Diversity (90/127, 71%)
4. Development of historical thinking (108/174, 62%)
5. World history (81/143, 57%)
6. Local and community history (64/164, 40%)
7. Social history, the lives of ordinary people (62/164, 37%)

5. The future of history education in primary schools: What provision is there for history in initial and continuing professional development? What form should Continuing Professional Development [CPD] take?

The questionnaire investigated the field of professional development covering both Initial Teacher Training [ITT] and Continuing Professional Development [CPD].

143/193 (74%) of replies identified lack of Initial Teacher Training as a concern. Half of the history subject leaders had received little or no training, in relation to CPD, only one third of the respondents knew of a history adviser: 82/259 (34%). Understandably, the overwhelming majority of teachers identified lack of opportunity to attend CPD as a concern, 178/197 (90%). Local Authorities were the main providers of CPD 102/223 (46%), followed by museums, archives and libraries 63/223 (28%). Internal support, both from school colleagues 47/223 (21%) and from colleagues in other schools 14/223 (6%) plays some part. Interestingly, Teachers TV 35/223 (16%) was of significance, while Higher Education 34/223 (15%) and Subject Associations 24/223 (11%) also had some role. The Teachers TV figure is interesting, bearing in mind the small number of history programmes that Teachers TV produced for primary history – less than ten.

A major aspect of professional development is subject leadership or co-ordinatorship. It was a role that the majority of the respondents held among multiple responsibilities. 108/220 (49%) said that they had had very little or no leadership training. A major element in CPD is teacher release from school to attend externally provided events or courses. 45% indicated their school would release them, 47% did

not know if it would. Of the 222 schools very few were prepared to spend more than £ 75-100 per delegate on a CPD event

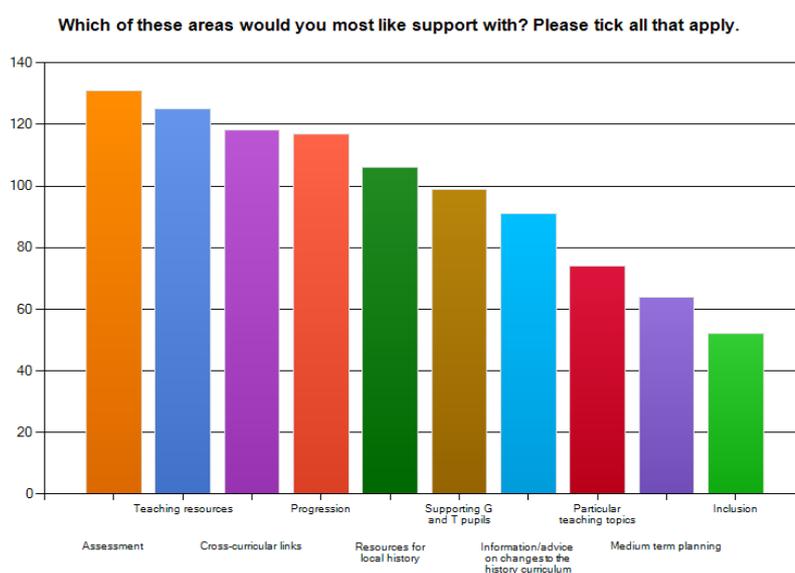
The teachers were asked about their preferred forms of CPD, figure 4, and areas which they would like CPD to focus on, figure 5.

Figure 4: Preferred form of CPD

1. Face To Face	147/223 (66%)
2. Locally	137/223 (62%)
3. During School Day	135/223 (60%)
4. On-Line	96/223 (43%)
5. After School	89/223 (36%)
6. Distance Learning	65/223 (29%)
7. Peer Mentoring	55/223 (25%)

Figure 5: Areas for Continuing Professional Development

1. Assessment	131/220 (60%)
2. Teaching Resources	125/220 (57%)
3. Cross-Curricular links	118/220 (54%)
4. Progression	117/220(53%)
5. Resources for Local History	106/220(48%)
6. Supporting Gifted & Talented Pupils	99/220(45%)
7. Information on Changes to the History Curriculum	91/220 (41%)
8. Particular Teaching Topics	74/220 (34%)
9. Medium Term Planning	64/220(29%)
10. Inclusion	52/220 (24%)



The cohort of 220 schools indicated six areas of major concern,

1. Lack of training in Initial Teacher Training/Education
2. Lack of opportunity to attend Professional Development events/courses for serving teachers.
3. Transition to secondary school
4. Lack of preparation time, two thirds say it is a concern or could become one
5. Lack of funding for resources
6. Uncertainty over the future of the history curriculum

Discussion

Schools

Within c. 220 schools in the survey, history emerges strongly as an integral element of the curriculum. The data indicate that schools at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are meeting the English National History Curriculum's statutory requirements to teach Local, British, European and World History studies. The overall impression that the Key Stage 1 & Key Stage 2 primary history curriculum gives is of Euro-centricity with a focus on the development of Western civilisation rooted in the ancient world of Egypt, Greece and Rome,

The curriculum

The periodisation is also Anglo-centric as part of the wider National Curriculum for England, 5-14: the primary phase's main focus was on the Ancient World and the post Roman period of invasion and settlement, c. 500-1000 A.D., with three later topics - *Tudors*, *Victorians* and *Modern Britain, 1930+*, with often a focus on World War II. The ways in which children make sense of this British master narrative however, may be limited. HMI (OFSTED, 2007b) comment on the fragmented nature of children's understanding of key events. The teachers also recognise the importance of other, minor narratives: the personal and familial, the local, the communitarian, the social, the multi-cultural and the global/world dimensions and children's inabilities to make links between historical knowledge which they have learned over different periods of time. This continues to remain a concern in 2011 and Michael Gove has stated that a key objective of the present government is to ensure that 'all children gain a secure knowledge of British history and key events in world history' (Gove, 2010b).

There appears to be no particular pattern as to when specific historical periods are taught, which reflects the lack of definitive guidance from the government and also the constraints of mixed year classes in small primary schools. Mixed year classes make impossible a chronological Plato to NATO structured history curriculum. This factor the developers of the National Curriculum for History in 1989/90 built into their curriculum planning – its presence is intentional.

The English National History Curriculum has also been criticised as presenting a southern English dimension, however a majority of schools (75% of the total

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responding to the question) taught local and community history which given the geographical distribution of the respondents suggests that there is possibly a range of regional histories being taught.

Successive versions of the National History Curriculum have emphasised the importance of including a British dimension within the curriculum, including the histories of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Data from the survey do not indicate whether the British dimension is in evidence. However, if schools were following many of the government's Qualifications and Curriculum Agency's [QCA] schemes of work closely, it is unlikely that this dimension would have been well developed.

Curriculum organisation and planning

The original history curriculum first introduced in schools in 1991 and refined in 1995 following Dearing's review, provided little guidance on curriculum organisation and planning which was left very much to individual schools. However, subsequent QCA guidance published in 1998, have almost universally been followed by schools. Consequently the topics taught and their phasing in school are very often those designed by the QCA (QCA and DfEE, 1998).

At Key Stage 1, survey responses indicate the influence of the QCA guidance and schemes of work; significant people and events are from those included within the schemes of work. Although the English National History Curriculum encourages teachers to teach about a range of significant individuals, including, 'artists, engineers, explorers, inventors, pioneers, rulers, saints, scientists.' (DfEE and QCA, 1999). The most frequently selected persons are Florence Nightingale and Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Similarly, with events: The Great Fire of London and Guy Fawkes dominate the curriculum.

Here is a case of guidance becoming de facto prescription: unsurprising when the National Curriculum introduced history as a new subject on the curriculum in 1990 that was inspected in primary schools. Understandably too, as many teachers had limited pedagogic content knowledge, both in terms of substantive historical knowledge and also in terms of the processes of doing history, that schools seized on the QCA schemes of work and planned and followed them in accordance with the zeitgeist of a teaching profession working in a climate of target setting, national testing of pupils, league tables and compliance through external inspection with draconian powers of enforcement.

The survey data also correlate with national enquiries made to the Nuffield Foundation's Nuffield Primary History website, with over 186,240 site visits from February 2010 to February 2011 with over 700,000 page views covering the topics above.

Knowledge, understanding and identity

The teachers' map of the historical knowledge and understanding that National Curriculum History develops produces a rich, comprehensive and multi-faceted dimension of pupil learning.

History education through introducing key episodes of English history within a chronological narrative framework plays a crucial role in children's development of personal identity, social awareness, acculturation, socialisation and communitarianism associated with being British. What is of equal interest is that the breadth of these key historical episodes and the contrasting and complementary narratives which reflect the sea change in academic history from being rooted in the *British master narrative* of civilisation's progress – *the Whig interpretation of history* - to The New History that is diverse and reflects the importance of the histories of all members of our society. Understandably this is reflected in the areas the teachers identify for development of the National Curriculum for History (gender, multi-cultural Britain, citizenship and diversity).

Such areas also reflect current social and political contexts in 2011 and indicate ways in which society has changed within the past 20 years since the initial National History Curriculum was written particularly with reference to the roles of women in society and the wider range of ethnic backgrounds represented within the population. In addition, the Crick Report (QCA, 1998) and more recently the Diversity and Curriculum Review (DFES, 2007) have emphasised history's links with citizenship and social cohesion.

Curriculum development – the teachers' perspective

It is fascinating to note teachers' views on how National Curriculum History should be developed in figure 3. The current National History Curriculum's content framework has largely remained unchanged since its introduction in 1990. The survey indicates strongly that this curriculum needs modification to reflect developments since the 1990s. Those areas accorded highest priority (over 70% of those responding) – gender history, multi-cultural Britain and diversity represent different aspects of Britain's current pluralist society. Concerning wider curricular issues and concerns, different replies included controversial and emotional history, linking literacy and history, differentiation and inclusion, creativity, historical dance and oral history.

This indicates that present day teachers now have concerns about creating an inclusive history, a concern only partially acknowledged in the English National History Curriculum of 1990.

In terms of current provision, the contrast between the 157(90%) responses describing the development of knowledge and understanding and the 94 (54%) responses for the development of historical thinking is striking (Figure 2). It could suggest that currently schools are more pre-occupied with curriculum coverage and the inclusion of specific factual historical knowledge rather than the development of

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children's historical thinking. Significantly, 62% of replies said that historical thinking needs development; a finding that mirrors HMI's (OFSTED, 2007) comments that many children are 'often weak in important historical skills', and that often insufficient attention is paid to children's progression in the development of historical skills and concepts.

Initial and Continuing Professional Development

Any curriculum change depends massively, if not totally, upon the provision of professional development for the staff implementing the change. The replies provide a clear picture of the current state of professional development that gives serious cause for concern in several dimensions, particularly if we accept the argument that the cohort of schools we are drawing on is one that has optimal commitment to the teaching of history. Discussion of the professional development of serving teachers must start from the baseline of the current intellectual and professional 'teaching capital' of the teaching profession. The history education 'teaching capital' of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) is very low, minimal indeed, consisting often of less than two days in a four year Initial Teacher Training course. Some providers require their trainees to select which foundation subjects they are trained in. Other providers which provide the full range of foundation subjects are only able to provide limited coverage. Understandably 74% of the teachers indicated that Initial Teacher Training was a cause for concern. The crisis in professional development for history for serving teachers is that 90% of teachers, i.e. 9 out of 10, stated there was a lack of opportunity to attend CPD – in other words, there isn't any.

The returns detail the essential areas for successful implementation of history as a National Curriculum subject, reflecting the knowledge, skills and understanding to be developed. Whilst the survey appears to indicate that teachers in the Foundation Stage are relatively confident about their teaching of History, we note some worrying observations by HMI in their 2007 survey that in over a quarter of the 144 settings visited, too little consideration was given to curricular balance within each area of learning. HMI record that children did not always experience the 'breadth and richness' of the early years curriculum and insufficient attention was accorded to a number of areas, which in Knowledge and Understanding of the World, included children's sense of time and place and understanding of culture and belief (OFSTED, 2007a).

Conclusion

There is much to celebrate in primary history, our survey matches closely the most recent report and presentation from HMI on the teaching of History in English schools (OFSTED, b,2011). Children are receiving a sound foundation in the narrative of British history. The National Curriculum for History is being taught, with comprehensive chronological, topic and period coverage. British, European and World History are all being taught – this is not a narrow curriculum confined to the teaching of Henry VIII and Hitler as has been claimed for the secondary history curriculum (Gove, 2010a). Children are also receiving a grounding where history is

well taught in the high level skills, processes, protocols and procedures of history as an academic discipline – a mode of enquiry.

It is important to include teaching and learning, assessment, differentiation and progression when considering the pedagogy of the subject. Pedagogy is also dependent on robust, systematic, continuous and progressive professional development for trainees and practising teachers to ensure that children have the best possible historical learning experience, drawing upon its full richness and dynamic vitality. The picture that the survey's responses from c. 220 schools paints of professional development is deeply worrying, particularly when we consider that the questionnaire evidence suggests that these respondents are motivated teachers of history. As we have noted, professional development is the key to successful teaching and learning, yet this is an area under the most severe threat.

Current provision of Initial Teacher Training and Continuing Professional Development is totally inadequate. Not only is there no provision in the majority of Local Authorities but Higher Education also now plays a minimal role. There is also little evidence of teacher networking and mutual support. Indeed, there is no evidence that schools are following government requirements for foundation subjects like history in the support of Newly Qualified Teachers [NQTs] 'to teach the foundation subjects with the support of a more experienced other'. The future looks grim: the current financial crisis, with the Local Authorities under threat, museums and libraries undergoing severe retrenchment, Higher Education withdrawing almost totally from CPD and the closing of Teachers' TV paint a picture that is deeply worrying.

At a deeper level the survey reveals a crisis in the enhancement of teacher professionalism that affects their orientation i.e. up-to-date academic and educational subject knowledge of history and the values, beliefs and attitudes that underpin expert history teaching. Teachers requested a viable, effective discourse with external providers such as the Historical Association, museums, national institutions and providers and Higher Education Institutions to facilitate access to professional knowledge, much of which is detailed in the national criteria for Masters Level qualifications.

Teachers identified their greatest need for support in two areas: expert pedagogy and resources (teaching resources and resources for local history). In terms of pedagogy, assessment, planning for cross-curricular links and progression are all important. At a time when the curriculum is currently being reviewed, it is not surprising that these rank amongst teachers' concerns. The current government halted the implementation in September of the Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum's Recommendations for a new primary curriculum (DfE: 2009). However, many schools had already begun to plan for a new curriculum and the concerns which they raise in the survey reflect some of the challenges which teachers are currently meeting as they plan a more integrated curriculum. In this context please note HMI reporting (OFSTED, 2011) that history was the most extensively taught of the foundation National Curriculum subjects, that it was popular with pupils and teachers and that it made a major all-round contribution to pupils' education.

The Cambridge Review raises the question whether with increasing demands being made on primary teachers' knowledge and skill, is the 'generalist class teacher system inherited from the 19th century still up to the job?' (Alexander 2009, 431), The complexity of the knowledge, skills and understandings required of primary teachers to teach history evidenced in this survey, is a further indicator of the need for a radical re-think of both Initial Teacher Training and Continuing Professional Development . These, and other recommendations based on the survey and other evidence, are contained in Appendix 1.

The Historical Association survey needs setting in a wider context – the concept of the educationally grounded 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1986) of the English political elite at Westminster and its relation to the historical dimension of 'the cultural capital' of the primary sector – both its teaching work force, school management, parents, governors and other stakeholders. History's role in the education of pupils directly depends upon the historical 'cultural capital' of the teachers and its more pervasive influence upon their knowledge, behaviours, beliefs, values and attitudes. The Historical Association survey raises the crucial issue of the education and training of the teaching work force to influence and shape a powerful democratic pedagogy to counter the totalitarian pedagogy of extremism, influencing jihadic terrorism. The powerful content and democratic pedagogy of the 1990 English History National Curriculum, modified and developed to meet the changed circumstances of the 21st. century, could be a most significant and effective element in the education of pupils to be active citizens in a plural, liberal democracy.

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Figure 1 Topics that are part of the history curriculum

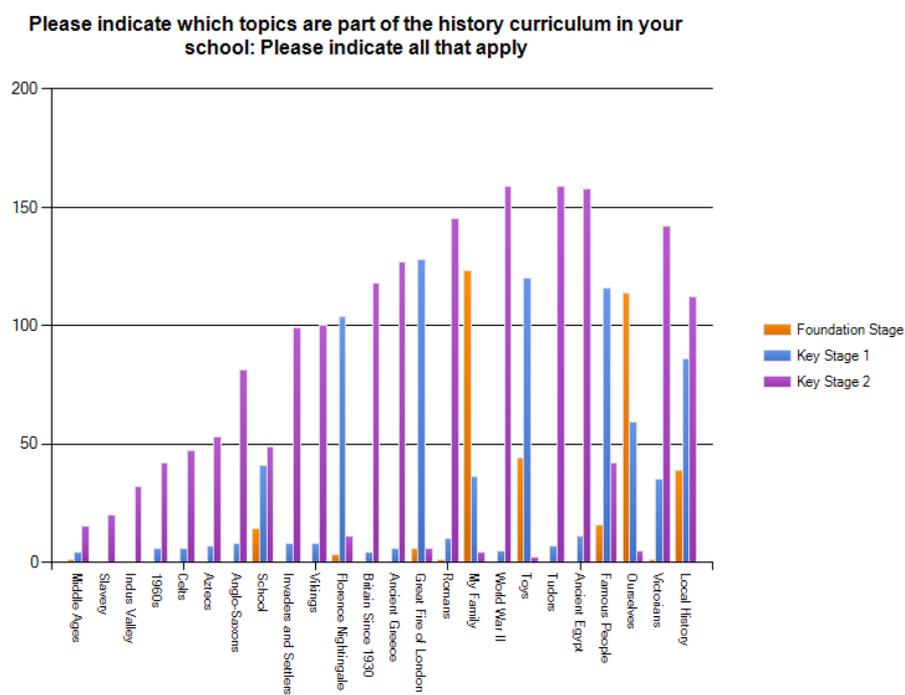


Figure 2.

1. The development of knowledge and understanding (157/175, 90%)
2. Making links between the past and today (149/176, 85%).
3. Learning through museums and site visits as important (142/173, 82%)
4. A variety of teaching methods (131/166, 79%).
5. Social history, the lives of ordinary people (123/164, 75%),
6. Differentiation according to ability (121/164, 74%)
7. Local and community history (120/164, 75%).
8. Development of historical thinking (94/174, 54%)
9. World History (75/143, 52%)
10. Diversity today (51/127, 51%)
11. Multicultural British History (34/136, 34%)
12. Gender history (16/110, 15%)

Figure 3 Teachers' views on aspects of teaching and learning in history which they would like to develop further in a revised English National History Curriculum

1. Multicultural Britain (111/136, 87%)
2. Gender history (97/110, 88%)
3. Diversity (90/127, 71%)
4. Development of historical thinking (108/174, 62%)
5. World history (81/143, 57%)
6. Local and community history (64/164, 40%)
7. Social history, the lives of ordinary people (62/164, 37%)

Figure 4 Preferred form of CPD

1. Face To Face	147/223 (66%)
2. Locally	137/223 (62%)
3. During School Day	135/223 (60%)
4. On-Line	96/223 (43%)
5. After School	89/223 (36%)
6. Distance Learning	65/223 (29%)
7. Peer Mentoring	55/223 (25%)

Figure 5 Areas for Continuing Professional Development

1. Assessment	131/220 (60%)
2. Teaching Resources	125/220 (57%)
3. Cross-Curricular links	118/220 (54%)
4. Progression	117/220(53%)
5. Resources for Local History	106/220(48%)
6. Supporting Gifted & Talented Pupils	99/220(45%)
7. Information on Changes to the History Curriculum	91/220 (41%)
8. Particular Teaching Topics	74/220 (34%)
9. Medium Term Planning	64/220(29%)
10. Inclusion	52/220 (24%)

