

History

"Gifted and Talented" provision in History

Introduction:

The history department at St. John Fisher are dedicated to furthering the historical understanding of all students in years 7-13 and adopt a wide range of strategies to enable each student to reach their potential. Students who are identified as gifted in History (see below for characteristics) are afforded the opportunity to study the subject to an appropriately high level to enable them to develop their skills as young historians. The department runs various activities to ensure high-attaining students can develop their understanding of the discipline further, these include:

- History "Gifted and Talented" clubs for Years 8 and 9

Year 8 students currently undertake a project linked to the history of the local area. The project is overseen by teachers: however the students are responsible for orchestrating the project, working as a team, and developing their understanding of local history.

Year 9 students look in detail at events that shaped our world including aspects of the Cold War and counterfactual history.

- Extension activities for students in Years 12 and 13

High-attaining students in the sixth form are given the opportunity to explore the intricacies of historiography and issues concerning historical research methods through attending Advanced Extension Award Seminars and the school's Historiography Society (post-2008/9). Furthermore sixth form students are offered the chance to join the school's popular Debating and Public Speaking Society which has represented the school in national competitions.

Mr M Spiers, History Department Gifted and Talented coordinator

Pupils who are gifted in History are likely to have :

Knowledge and Understanding:

- An ability to see patterns across time without much prompting
- Able to spot anachronisms pretty much straightaway
- They can link and sequence events in a very sophisticated fashion without having a great deal of contextual information to help them
- As regards essays, conclusions in particular show an awareness of context and of the 'bigger picture', thinking 'outside the box'
- Able to almost instinctively categorise answers to a question, and yet can also see the weaknesses of the categories chosen
- They are able to make substantial and surprisingly accurate inferences from sources and pieces of information
- Note taking and extended writing are mature and show a level of sophistication beyond their years

Skills:

- They have a real *passion* for History
- Presentations to the rest of the class are far more imaginative than a simple reading out

of the facts

- They are able to make analogies out of certain events to show them in another, totally different, context; yet demonstrate their understanding in a much deeper way by developing the similarities.
- In role-play, they are able to develop their role and enter into it having been given only basic information- using their imagination
- Orally, they can contribute incisive and irrefutable points to class discussion/debate
- Their answers to debatable questions will automatically show balance and awareness of more than one point of view
- They will want to apply their creativity to History- in terms of, for example, showing their understanding pictorially rather than via writing
- Feel passionately about certain issues and events raised by the History courses- and willing to communicate and defend those views to the end
- Often, they will question more than they answer- or their work will involve a great deal of questioning, coming from a desire to know more rather than wanting to irritate!

Approach to Work:

- Passionate about History, but not necessarily willing to write in depth about it (girls may 'buck' this trend a lot!)- often feel they have answered the question, and so there is no need to expand upon it.
- Probably more willing to talk than to write- but their talk is focused very much on the issues in hand.
- They want to be pushed and forced to *think* about things, to be asked to use their imagination and creativity

Year 7

Specific examples of tasks set.

Election campaign surrounding race for the throne in 1066.

Use of ICT.

Who am I? presentations linked to cross-curricular day

Opportunities for enrichment.

- Visit to Fountains Abbey (likely to commence Summer 2010)

Year 8

Specific examples of tasks set.

- Extended writing – Why did Henry 'Break with Rome' and what effects did it have?
- Exploring change over time – Life in London during the Seventeenth Century and the Blitz
- Mock Trial. – Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot.

Opportunities for enrichment.

- A wide range of specialist textbooks available for those undertaking research

- Joint trip with the English department to the Battlefields of the Great War

Year 9

Specific examples of tasks set.

- Research Project – ‘Life in the Trenches’.
- Exploring change over time in the Cold War: Berlin a case study.
- Use of ICT - JFK Project work.

Opportunities for enrichment.

- ICT based resources
- Access to a wide range of sources to enable wide research

Years 10 & 11

Specific examples of tasks set.

- Multiple source tasks.
- Discussions linked to the predisposition of historical accounts.
- Exploring different perspectives during the Cold War.

Opportunities for enrichment.

- School library containing many specialist textbooks
- Visit to Munich, Nuremberg and Berlin

All Years 7 - 11

- Opportunities are provided for pupils to draw together information from a wide range of sources and for decisions to be made into both the reliability and usefulness of sources.
- Tasks are set so as to encourage and allow pupils to think creatively, explore and develop ideas and try different approaches.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to follow their own enquiry questions coming to informed and advanced decisions.