

## **Why is diversity so important? How can we approach it?**

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Imagine what the following tell you about the past - a Tudor role play of Queen Elizabeth visiting Kenilworth Castle; a photograph of London during the Blitz; a picture of Viking warriors attacking Lindisfarne monastery. The first of the images can perhaps draw on a family visit to an event or a school trip, provide a sense of fun and relate to ways in which the past is typically presented to people. Each image provides a vivid picture of a time in the past and is a great lead into a topic. However, if they are the only images which children have of different times in the past they would clearly present a stereotypical view of the periods in which each event happened. We believe that teaching diversity provides an essential means of ensuring that children and adults can critically evaluate how well such images relate to different times by providing insights into the lives of different people who lived at different times in the past.

### **What does the current National Curriculum say?**

The current National Curriculum makes a broad reference to diversity. When defining purposes of studying history it states that it should include:

...the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time DfE, 2013.

The aims of the new curriculum include the following: reference to 'these islands', 'how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world', 'characteristics of past non-European societies', 'understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history' DfE, 2013. Non-statutory examples that illustrate diversity include Rosa Parks and Mary Seacole as significant individuals at KS1 and topics such as Benin and Islamic Civilisation at Key Stage 2. Although they reflect Black or non -Anglocentric perceptions of the past they only go so far in helping children to understand the diverse experiences of people in the past. There is a need to plan for diverse experiences of people within and between societies as a matter of course in order to provide a holistic understanding of the past.

If you refer to the Historical Association website, the section relating to Diversity has an article by Ilona Aronovsky which provides a rich range of examples and approaches to developing diversity within the history curriculum. This article sets out to complement this by providing some strategies for implementing an approach to diversity organically in your history teaching.

### **From Big Picture History to Diversity**

How then can diversity be developed to provide a more holistic understanding of the past and in so doing enable us to teach primary history as effectively as possible? In order to appreciate that there was more to life than living in Elizabeth's court or being a marauding Viking it is necessary to find out what different people were doing and what was happening in different places at that time. By looking at the rich, poor and a range of jobs, homes and peoples' lives in different localities we can get a more broadly based understanding of the time. However, given that you cannot teach everything it is necessary to have some criteria for selecting what we teach. Overall, we agree with Claire (1996) who used the following to do this:

In the real world everyone belongs to all three categories since each of us is

male/female, and middle, upper and working class, and from an ethnic minority or the white English group in British society. In an inclusive curriculum there are good reasons for not treating race, gender and class separately, not just to match the real world but also to avoid the danger of creating hierarchies or forgetting links. (Claire, 1996: 10)

You need to relate this to Big Picture History - which requires providing children with a chronologically secure knowledge of the past, together with teaching British, local and world history which provides a structure for understanding the past. At the same it requires us to consider people in 'these islands, together with those from different localities and the nations of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland' and in other parts of the world. Diversity requires us to consider strands such as gender, rich and poor and the experiences of people from different ethnicities within societies. By acknowledging links, similarities and differences between all of these dimensions it is possible to provide a more meaningful appreciation of the past than one which does not go beyond narrowly focusing on the exploits of Elizabeth 1st, London during the Blitz or Viking Warriors. It is also possible for this to provide a basis for pupils to identify different aspects of the past and use it as a background to understanding the world in which they live. You could contrast our stated scenarios with the following - the role play of Queen Elizabeth I could be contrasted with the meeting between Queen Elizabeth and the 'pirate' Grace O'Malley alias Gaelic Chieftain Granuaille or pictures of a variety of women in Elizabethan times; while teaching the London Blitz you could produce a photo of Ita Ekpenyon - an African air raid warden in Marylebone and Viking warriors could be contrasted with accounts of Vikings engaged in domestic chores.

### **How can we plan for this?**

In planning we need to consider the following:

ensuring that children have the opportunity to study a range of people's experiences within topics - men, women, people from different ethnicities, regions and localities. At Key Stage 1 select individuals such as Rosa Parks, Grace O' Malley, Mary Seacole and Nelson Mandela as well as Florence Nightingale. Some topics such as the Romans, Saxons and Vikings could also be linked to broader themes such as people who have come to Britain up to the present day.

ensuring that children are involved in developing their understanding of diversity through the process by which we teach it. We need to allow them to ask open questions of pictures and sources and not be too worried if we can't always provide the answers. This is a learning point in itself. It is a good way of broadening children's understanding. For example, children can start by exploring the life of Elizabeth 1st and deciding what this tells them about the time. This could be followed by exercises which look at the experiences of rich and poor people, together with Black migrants in Tudor times. This could be followed by reflecting on their perceptions of the time once again. This will enable them to have a more profound understanding of diversity in the past and challenge their own and other's misconceptions.

ensuring that children treat diversity historically. For example, a study of World War 1 could start by focusing on the life of Walter Tull, a footballer who became the first black officer. He was exceptional; it would be inappropriate to assume that his experience reflected the experiences of all black soldiers. A local study at Key Stage 2 could have the question - How far would soldiers from our locality have recognised Walter's story? Another example would be Anne Frank and how representative she is of the experience of Jewish children during World War II. This doesn't mean we shouldn't use Anne Frank but just need to broaden their understanding of her world by looking at the

experiences of other children. Her experience can be compared with and contrasted to the experiences of evacuees and the Kinder Transport.

ensuring that children are aware that there are gaps and omissions in a variety of sources e.g .textbooks, pictures and that women and people from ethnic minorities are often either under represented or not acknowledged. For example, making children aware that Roman soldiers were likely to have come from different parts of the Empire; the variety of roles that women have played at different times in the past.

In conclusion, consider diversity when deciding both what to teach and how this relates to children's learning of the past. The following case studies draw on the above principles.

### **Case Study 1: Does learning about Elizabeth 1st tell us all we need about Tudor Women?**

Queen Elizabeth was exceptional in her power and authority as a monarch which is usually a male role while other women in Tudor times were unable to do certain jobs such as becoming lawyers or holding political power. However rich women could be significant at court and play important roles in organising family estates and giving medical help to the poor. Poor women did a wide range of jobs - silk making, printing, working on the land and shop keeping for example.

**Stage 1:** Select a picture of Queen Elizabeth I. Ask the question - What does this suggest about the lives of women in Elizabethan times?

**Stage 2:** Look at four other pictures of other Elizabethan women. Ask the question - What more do these tell you about the lives of Elizabethan women? How typical was Queen Elizabeth I?

**Stage 3:** Create a grid with the following titles: Rich, Poor, Jobs, Punishments, Power, Other. The children sort cards relating to different characteristics of women's lives in Tudor England. These cards are one of the resources you can download with the Primary History Scheme on the HA website: Elizabethan Times: All Banquets and Fun?

**Stage 4:** Children assess a textbook or school website as to how accurately it reflects the diverse nature of women's lives in Tudor times.

**Stage 5:** How well does our study of Elizabeth I tell us about women's lives in Tudor times?

### **Case study 2: What does the Lant Street teenager tell us about Roman Britain?**

In 2015 2,000 skeletons were found in London dating back to Pre-historic and Roman times. Using DNA, the archaeologists have made some very interesting discoveries, including the skeleton of a 14 year old girl, since named the Lant Street Teenager. The website shows a reconstruction of what she may have looked like together with a clip of an archaeologist telling us what it tells us about her - that she came from Africa, had lived in London at least three years and was blue eyed. Other skeletons include Mansell Street Man whose ancestry was North African, a Gladiator from Eastern Europe and Harper Road woman who was a native Briton who adopted Roman ways soon after the conquest. As this involves using skeletons, you may want to look at the website to reflect on any sensitive issues that may be involved. You will find useful background information including a video clip of an archaeologists talking about the skeleton.

We suggest this could be used in several different ways.

**Stage 1:** You could begin with the picture of a typical Roman soldier or a picture in your textbook of Romans in Britain. The children consider the following questions - What does it tell you about the Romans? What doesn't it tell you?

**Stage 2:** Look at the picture of the skeleton of the Lant Street teenager. Children decide in small groups what questions they would like to ask the archaeologists about the skeleton to find out more about them.

**Stage 3:** Teacher is hot seated as an archaeologist using the reconstruction picture from the website. You could also draw on other finds that you have found - Mansell Street Man whose ancestry was North African, the Gladiator from Eastern Europe and Harper Road woman. The children could watch **Septimius Severus and black Roman soldiers** BBC Bitsize to see how far this answers points raised during the hot seating.

**Stage 4:** Children consider how far this has changed their views of the Romans in Britain

**Case study 3: What has a 20th century Polish grave in Worcester got to do with our lesson on the Romans?**

**Figure 1**



**Stage 1:** Look at the picture of the Polish graves. Ask children the following questions: What can you learn about the people who came to this country? What questions do you have? How far does information card help you to answer them?

### Information card

Polish people have been coming to the UK since the early twentieth century. They mainly came for employment or to set up their own businesses. During World War II the majority of Poles came to the United Kingdom after the German and Soviet Union invaded their country. The Polish and made a significant contribution to Britain during the war and many then settled here after it ended.

One place where we found evidence of them was at Astwood cemetery, Worcester. Jan , whose grave is shown below came as a soldier(zolnierz) in World War2- as should be spotted from the dates on his grave

**Stage 2:** Using a map of Britain, Europe and the world, the teacher models where s/he comes from, his/her parents and grandparents. Children given maps and given five minutes to talk about their backgrounds to each other (5 minutes each). Ask a couple of children to say what they've learnt about each other.

**Stage 3:** Get the children to look at an information card that tells you why the Polish community came to this country after the war.

**Stage 4.** Children sequence cards (See Table 1) showing why people have come to Britain from earliest times to the present day.

**Stage 4:** Children group the cards into reasons why people came to Britain

**Stage 5:** children group cards have got more in common with why the Romans came?

**Stage 6:** The children group cards have got more in common with the reasons why Polish people came in the 1940s and 1950s?

**Review question:** The class discusses the following question - Has finding Jan's grave in Worcester got anything in common with our lesson on the Romans or not? Explain why you think this.

**Table 1: Some people who have come to Britain from earliest times to the present day**

<b>Stone Age hunters &amp; gatherers</b>  We followed herds of animals and ended up here.	<b>AD 43</b>  We invaded and our armies took over.	<b>The Saxons 400AD</b>  We invaded & settled here after we had been driven from our own homes.	<b>The Vikings - 789 - 1066</b>  We came as invaders and traders.
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<p><b>The Normans 1066</b></p> <p>We came as invaders and our leader became King of England.</p>	<p><b>Flemish weavers - 1200-1400</b></p> <p>We came to weave cloth in the wool trade.</p>	<p><b>Africans - AD 43</b></p> <p>Some of us came over as Roman soldiers and settlers.</p>	<p><b>Jewish people - late 19th/mid 20th centuries</b></p> <p>We came because we were being attacked because of our religion.</p>
<p><b>Huguenots 16th /17th century</b></p> <p>We came because we were being attacked because of our religion.</p>	<p><b>Irish people Mid 19th century</b></p> <p>We have come for work for many years but especially when there was a famine in our country.</p>	<p><b>Caribbean people - especially 1940s onwards</b></p> <p>We helped Britain in the First and Second World Wars and have come here to work.</p>	<p><b>People from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan- especially 1940s onwards</b></p> <p>We helped Britain in the First and Second World Wars and have come here to work.</p>
<p><b>People from Poland and Eastern Europe - 1940s</b></p> <p>We came over because our countries were invaded during and after the Second World War</p>	<p><b>People from Poland and Eastern Europe - Today</b></p> <p>We have come for work.</p>	<p><b>People from Australia, New Zealand and Canada - especially 1940s onwards</b></p> <p>We helped Britain in the First and Second World Wars and have come here to work.</p>	<p><b>Africans in the 17th and 18th century</b></p> <p>Many of us were brought over as servants and slaves</p>

## Resources

### Websites

BBC (2007) Septimius Severus and black Roman soldiers. BBC Bitesize. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/z4sfb9q>

Ghosh, P. (2015) DNA study finds London was ethnically diverse from start. *BBC News* Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-34809804> -

The National Holocaust Education Centre. Acre Edge Road, Laxton, Newark, Nottinghamshire, NG22. Website: <http://www.nationalholocaustcentre.net/>. This museum has a Key Stage 2 exhibition called Journeys which focuses on kindertransport as well as presentations from survivors.

IIS (n.d) *Ireland in Schools*. Available at: <http://www.iisresource.org> This site includes a range of resources which relate an Irish dimension to wide aspects of diversity.

*Moving Here. 200 years of migration in England*. Available at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.movinghere.org.uk/>

NBHA (n.d.) *Northampton Black History Association*. Available at: <http://www.northants-black-history.org.uk/> The education tab in this includes several teaching resource such as KS1 and KS2 packs related to Walter Tull.

Westminster City Archives *Westminster At War*. Available at: <http://www.westendatwar.org.uk/page/itaekpenyon05?path=0p3p11p> - Ita Ekpenyon

Zosia Biegus, Polish Resettlement Camps in the UK 1946-1969.  
<http://www.polishresettlementcampsintheuk.co.uk/camps2.htm>

## HA Resources

Go to Curriculum Issues on the HA Website and go -Diversity in the History Curriculum. Download the following [Aronovsky. I.pdf](#) (248.1 KB PDF document)

This is taken from the following article in *Primary History* which has a range of articles devoted to diversity *Primary History*. Autumn 2013 Issue 65.

Bracey, P. (2015) From Home to the Front. World War I (1914-18) in the Primary Classroom. *Primary History*. Issue 69, pp 14-19. This article relates Walter Tull, a footballer and first black officer in World War 1 to teaching diversity.

*Beyond Elizabeth's Court? What was it like to live in Elizabethan times? Primary Scheme of Work*. Historical Association. The Primary Scheme on the HA website includes the card Tudor Women card sorting activity resource.

## Some other resources

BBC (n.d) *Black Britons*.DVD London: BBC

## Books and teacher resources

Podcasts on the HA website related to Women or Society will provide you with academic subject knowledge relating to women or Black History e.g. Women in Ancient Greece and Rome.

Bracey, P. Gove-Humphries, A. and Jackson, D. (2011) Teaching diversity in the history classroom. In: Davies, I.(ed) *Debates in History Teaching*. London: Routledge.pp172-185.

This chapter is in process of being revised to relate to National Curriculum 2014. The chapter includes references to debates associated with diversity.

Claire, H. (1996) *Reclaiming our Pasts: Equality and Diversity in the Primary School*. Although written some time ago this texts provides useful insights and support in teaching diversity.

University of York /The National Archives (2016) England's Immigrants 1330-1350. University of York /The National Archives. Available at [www.englishimmigrants.com](http://www.englishimmigrants.com). At present this is a academic history site but it makes reference to a new education project related to Key Stage 2-5 which may provide an opportunity to develop migration as a post 1066 British History topic.

DfE (2013)*The National Curriculum in England Framework* Department for Education. Available at:[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/239035/PRIMARY\\_national\\_curriculum\\_-\\_History](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239035/PRIMARY_national_curriculum_-_History)

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