SECTION 1
INTRODUCTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

It is now more than a decade since the 1988 Education Reform Act heralded the introduction of the national curriculum. Given this and the current process of national curriculum review, it is an opportune moment to examine how teachers, pupils and parents or guardians (hereafter referred to as parents) responded to the first ever English national curriculum in history. This research project addresses that question by focusing on the classical components of the key stage 2 history curriculum, referred to in this report as the Ancient Greeks and the Romans (for full details see Appendix 2).

Research tools and plans were piloted in two Cambridgeshire schools in autumn 1997, then employed in 10 English schools through the spring and summer terms of 1998. These varied in location from rural and suburban to inner city areas, and their catchment areas as defined by Ofsted inspection techniques were socioeconomically diverse. Roll sizes ranged from 89 to 676 children and the sample included a range of school types such as junior, middle and grant-maintained schools (for full details see Appendix 1).

Nine of the 10 schools had recently been inspected by Ofsted, whose inspection reports judged that their standards of achievement for history were 'in line with national expectations' in seven instances and 'above average' in two. The quality of learning was 'satisfactory' in five schools, 'satisfactory or better' in two but included 'shortcomings' in the other two. The quality of teaching was 'satisfactory' in three schools, 'satisfactory or better' in four and 'good' in the last two schools. This sample avoided extreme examples of 'best or worst practice', and 'favoured or deprived schools'. The aim was to research with teachers, children and parents who would feel confident enough to submit their views, planning and classroom practice to scrutiny; but still to work in schools which reflected some of the typical challenges and problems faced in primary education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that:

1 *History should be retained in the revised primary curriculum.* History was a popular curriculum subject at key stage 2 with the children, parents and teachers interviewed during the research. In particular:

- most children questioned thought it was important for children of their age to learn history. They had a clear understanding of the broad nature of the subject and a positive attitude to it (section 3)
- most parents questionnaired valued history highly: for specifically historical reasons, and for broader educational and social reasons (section 5)

- teachers valued history equally highly. They adopted a range of different planning approaches to promote it as a subject and valued history for what it contributed to children's key skills and broader values (section 2).

2 *The classical study units should be retained within key stage 2 history.* Study of the Ancient Greeks and the Romans was highly valued by teachers and parents:

- teachers observed that children developed language skills, study skills and the motivation to learn through engaging with the classical world. They valued the distinctiveness of such content (section 2) and the contribution it could make to children of all attainments (section 3)
- most parents thought the classical study units were still relevant to children's lives today, with justifications focused upon cultural and physical legacy (section 5).

3 *The revised national curriculum should give teachers the flexibility to choose the focus of study within the Ancient Greece and Romans in Britain study units.* Two themes from Ancient Greece ('Relations with other peoples' and 'Influences upon the modern world') were covered in relatively little detail by teachers (section 2) and did not spring to pupils' minds when asked to recall what they had learnt of interest about the Ancient Greeks (section 3). The evidence also revealed little awareness of the importance of city states and geography in children's understandings of Ancient Greece. Teaching and learning through myths, legends, artistic and architectural remains were far more common, suggesting that these are more natural areas to concentrate upon in primary schools. Similar patterns in children's knowledge and teachers' views were discernible with regard to the Romans in Britain, although the physical invasion of Britain by Rome seemed to make political and military aspects of Ancient Rome easier to teach than those of Ancient Greece.

4 *The national literacy strategy should take greater account of how to support children's writing beyond the literacy hour and within the broader curriculum.* Many teachers viewed learning history as a valuable way of developing children's literacy (section 2). Furthermore, children themselves referred to Ancient Greek myths and legends with ease and enthusiasm and many were stimulated by the classical study units to pursue independent reading and other research activities (section 4). The samples of children's writing in history, however, included relatively few examples of creative and extended writing (both fiction and non-fiction). This suggested that current written activities in history were not meeting the expectations of The National Literacy Framework (DfEE, 1998).

5 *Continuing professional development is needed to support the promotion of literacy, numeracy and ICT within curriculum areas such as history*. Some primary teachers continue to address core skills through cross-curricular planning. Since such planning practices are unlikely to be altered by centralised changes in the national curriculum (sections 2 and 5) it may be more profitable to improve standards of teaching and learning through building upon them. History was considered by teachers to have an important role in supporting the development of key skills such as literacy and ICT (sections 2 and 4); yet a significant proportion of teachers held low expectations of children's writing in history as presently constructed (section 3) or failed to offer ICT opportunities in history lessons (section 4).

6 *Teachers should be helped to continue improvements in history education, building on gains made through the national curriculum*. History as a subject and classical history as one of its elements were seen as popular and worthwhile in their own right by parents (section 5), children (section 3) and teachers (section 2).

7 *More pupils should be offered access to 'hands-on' learning in history*. Parents highly valued school visits to museums and sites because of the opportunities they provided for practical, hands-on learning (section 4). Pupils similarly rated educational visits and using artefacts as valuable ways of learning history (section 4). Increasing school visits and developing ways of bringing museums and sites to the classroom are priorities, aided by electronic resources accessed through the national grid for learning.

8 *More detailed research should be undertaken into young children's understanding of history*. Although the data showed that children in the key stage 2 age range had an understanding of what history was and valued it highly (section 3) more detailed research at key stage 1 and key stage 2 would help to:

- develop motivating history teaching materials and methods (sections 3 and 4) to improve children's reading and writing skills
- improve teachers' formative and summative assessments in history (section 5)
- inform the future development of learning materials through the national grid for learning and other means
- guide future continued professional development in history and inform future curriculum development.

9 *Urgent priority should be given to providing all pupils with frequent access to computers and the internet in school*. The research showed that pupils had few opportunities to make use of information and communication technology in history at school, but that a significant number were able to do so at home (section 4). While the latter was encouraging, the findings highlighted the disadvantages faced by pupils without access to a computer at home.

10 *Close consideration should be given to the practicalities of developing the national grid for learning to meet the subject-specific needs of primary teachers*. The audit of school resources (section 4) raised concerns about the appropriateness of a significant proportion of the classical history resources reviewed and highlighted inconsistencies of provision across the 10 research schools. The Virtual Teachers' Centre on the national grid for learning may help address such concerns if, for instance, it can include kite-marked sites with reliable information, detailed reviews and regularly updated expert summaries.

SECTION 2
TEACHERS' VIEWS ON HISTORY, THE CLASSICAL STUDY UNITS AND PLANNING

A. Introduction
B. Teachers' views on the classical study units
C. Teachers' planning: mediating the national curriculum
D. Planning and the key elements

A. Introduction

The research team investigated the teaching experiences of 28 teachers (including two deputy heads and nine history co-ordinators in the 10 research schools), as well as their broader views about history as a curriculum subject. Although the sample of teachers was significantly smaller than the 120 pupils or 635 parents canvassed (see sections 3 and 5), this was partly offset by the consequent ability to pursue issues in greater depth through extended interviews, questionnaires and consultation.

Twenty of the 28 teachers interviewed could describe some broader benefits of learning history. Ten cited children comparing past and present to gain a better understanding of the world today, whilst nine saw learning about past cultures as an end in itself. None expressed the view common among parental responses (see page 29), that children should be learning from the mistakes of the past. Nor did teachers focus, as did parents, upon the concepts of change and progress, and how history could teach children to appreciate the benefits of British twentieth-century life. Two teachers actually argued the opposite - that history showed children how advanced past civilisations were.

Eight teachers highlighted the importance of history in giving pupils a sense of roots and origins. Legacy was a term used in five of these responses, although the importance of diversity and balance in history was also mentioned:

> It is important to give children that feeling of status in their own country's past or origins…We try to teach 'black history' as well. We give a balanced view… (London teacher).

B. Teachers' views on the classical study units

When asked whether the Ancient Greeks and the Romans offered any unique learning opportunities, 26 of the 28 teachers replied 'yes'. Unprompted, they went on to describe some of the educational gains they had witnessed children make from encountering such subject matter. These gains were led by three main types:

The development of study skills

Seventeen teachers referred to opportunities provided by these study units for developing study skills and eight mentioned 'research' by name. These skills included making full use of contents pages and indices but also extended to 'piecing things together, organising, looking at things' (Kirklees teacher) and 'cooperative and independent learning' (Norfolk teacher). One London teacher highlighted the importance of enabling pupils to find information independently as an essential skill of later life; another argued that encountering classical history helped pupils develop an enquiring mind and encouraged them to ask questions. (See page 25 for evidence that pupils built on research skills in independent study.)

The development of language skills

Fourteen of the 28 teachers linked these areas of history, the development of pupils' language and useful contexts for pupils to extend their reading and writing skills:

> History is useful for developing higher order reading skills (Kirklees teacher).
>
> If they are particularly imaginative they can go for the stories and so on. If they are somebody who is interested in reading reference books then there is that sort of area (Bristol teacher).

Greek myths and legends were seen as especially useful vehicles for helping pupils develop language skills with six teachers referring specifically to drama and role-play. Three teachers also linked classical history to the literacy hour:

> (Ancient Greece) has very strong links with other subjects - especially useful with the literacy hour using drama and the myths and legends (Kirklees teacher).

A Norfolk teacher also saw a potential problem:

> I am concerned if literacy gets pushed the way it has been. You have got to have literacy skills to cope with historical aspects - why can't you use the two together?

Improved pupil motivation

Ten teachers offered spontaneous comments about the capacity of these history study units to motivate and interest pupils. For instance a London teacher described history 'inspiring' year 5 pupils to 'do their own research':

> They really went down the paths of enquiry, to the extent that they had gone home and drawn Greek pots, gone to the library to find out information, written about the Greeks at home.

A Bristol teacher commented similarly that:

> There is such a wide range of work you can do [with the Ancient Greeks and the Romans]. Whatever the child's interest, there is something to catch them.

Such views recurred in response to a different question: 'Would you continue teaching about the Ancient Greeks and Romans in Britain if they were no longer compulsory?' Twenty six teachers answered 'yes' and expanded upon ideas mentioned above:

> It is an area that interests the children. Particularly here, any area of the curriculum that you can spark their imagination is useful, particularly for literacy skills. Since we've spent quite a lot of money on ICT multimedia that's another thing that really fires them up, makes them want to learn… (Kirklees teacher).

> I have found these units easily capture children's imagination and interest, sparking enthusiasm for learning. They have the same effect on parents, improving the home/school link and encouraging provision of educational visits/opportunities out of school (Norfolk teacher).

Teachers also displayed a strong interest in *cross-curricular planning* through history. A structured questionnaire showed 90 per cent of the sample judging that literacy teaching and learning was 'always' or 'often' planned for during the Ancient Greece study unit, split equally between the two. For Romans in Britain the equivalent was 'always' for 38 per cent and 'often' for 46 per cent. As a Kirklees teacher commented for the Ancient Greece unit 'The potential links with English are large - extended writing, reading, comparisons, developing arguments.' A South Gloucestershire teacher echoed that: 'It is cross-curricular, a lot of literacy is based on the Romans.' Over half the teachers also said the Ancient Greece unit 'always' or 'often' offered cross-curricular links in geography, religious education, ICT and art, with the same being true for Romans in Britain, apart from religious education.

Uncertainty was apparent when teachers talked about their future teaching of the classical elements: 'Depends ... If the time is available 'yes'. If the time was reduced then something would have to go' (Kirklees teacher). Another contrasted responding to children's motivation with following centralised teaching prescriptions:

> If there was time and they said you can fill it with anything you like, then perhaps I would, because I know it is a subject the children absolutely love, and they would say 'yes please, can we have a Roman lesson?' (Essex teacher).

A Kirklees teacher summarised this problem: 'We need to teach less in more detail in order to raise standards. At the moment we teach too much in too little detail in order to "get through it".' When asked the supplementary question whether 'insufficient time' would be a problem in teaching these study units in the future, 22 teachers predicted it would, through 'pressure on the timetable from the numeracy and literacy hours' (London teacher). A Norfolk teacher described how: 'In the summer term there are SATs tests which affect the amount of time available for other subjects. This time will be further eaten into by the literacy hour. This might lead to covering only the essential bits and to "dry" learning.'

C. Teachers' planning: mediating the national curriculum

Our studies of school level curriculum planning suggest that teachers did not follow a standardised or national blueprint to implement national curriculum history.

Individualising medium-term national curriculum planning

Although teachers' *medium-term* planning was shaped in different ways, 11 out of 20 responses identified the contribution of individual teachers as important. Four respondents

mentioned whole staff influence through discussion but as a London teacher commented 'We take the plans and adapt them for our own class'. Half of the lesson plans for the Greeks and almost two-thirds for the Romans were planned in smaller teams, but relationships between team and individual planning were still fluid:

> Though we might have a [team] lesson on the Roman army … we take that and we will perhaps do an individual plan, though we don't as a school do single lesson plans, only for ourselves if we need them (Essex teacher).

Half of the schemes of work for the classical study units contained lesson-by-lesson plans, but these were often modified at the point of teaching: 'We don't use the same lesson plans as last year. We just write our lesson plans' (London teacher). A fixed planning framework was useful, so long as it was flexible: 'Short term plans must take children's abilities into account. Plans change as needed, but subtle rather than overall changes' (Kirklees teacher). After evaluation (see below) teachers also changed plans: 'They are changed each year, so each time we do the topic you will drop things that may not have worked, or some new material may come out' (Bristol teacher).

Monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning

During discussion teachers described different procedures to monitor and evaluate children's learning. Roughly a third wrote evaluations on short-term planning sheets, or checked outcomes against objectives, or reported being self-critical about lessons: but formal and structured self-evaluation appeared neither general nor easily sustainable. A London teacher admitted 'At the moment I use none. Before I used a daily review. But the pressures of teaching are such that I just couldn't continue.'

This Norfolk teacher typically mixed such formal with more informal evaluations:

> I have a policy of making it clear to children what I expect them to be able to do, so they will know whether they have succeeded or not. And if they have done that then, yes I suppose the lesson's gone well. On the other hand you have your gut feeling as to … what degree of enthusiasm they've had for it.

A wider range of less formal evaluations was also cited, clustered around children's responses:

*Assessing children's interest level*s (approximately a third of the teachers). A South Gloucestershire teacher evaluated lessons through assessing motivation: 'If the children are on task, I think you can usually tell if they are enjoying it.' A Kirklees teacher used different criteria 'The response of the children, you can tell straight away if they're bored to tears, the quality of the work they've produced, and the fact that they want to stay in at playtime to carry on'.

Monitoring questions and answers (cited by over half the sample). As an Essex teacher simply put it 'Questioning the children, looking at their work to see if they have achieved the objective of my lesson'. Questioning was also often associated with the beginnings and endings of

lessons: 'Mostly questioning at the end and the beginning of the next lesson … sometimes they have really strange conceptions of things, so by asking them I can find out and redirect them' (London teacher).

Focusing upon learning outcomes (in about half of the teacher responses). A London teacher 'looked at their books, you can check this way'. Sometimes this linked to teacher-planning 'By outcome … what they have produced at the end of the day. If it hasn't worked well then we tend to look at it again, review it next time' (Kirklees teacher). Often judgements were professionally intuitive:

> Quite often the outcome. Also on your next lesson whether they have understood what they have learned previously. It's quite difficult to assess … it's whether they can do the same skills in two weeks time (South Gloucestershire teacher).

Coverage of prescribed content

Although only 21 teachers were in a position to comment on coverage of Ancient Greece and 17 on Romans in Britain, the evidence suggests that teachers chose to study some content in depth with their children and other content superficially. Despite assurances of anonymity and the generally confident nature of the research schools, the teachers appeared reluctant to admit to any omission of national curriculum content as printed in official guidelines.

Table 1: Teachers' coverage of aspects of Ancient Greece

	Great depth	Some detail	Basic outline	Not covered
Athens and Sparta	2	11	8	0
Arts and architecture	2	16	3	0
Myths and legends	12	7	2	0
Relations with other people	0	7	13	1
Influences on modern world	2	14	5	0

Table 2: Teachers' coverage of aspects of Romans in Britain

	Great depth	Some detail	Basic outline	Not covered
The Roman conquest and its impact on Britain	3	10	4	0
Everyday life in Roman Britain	3	10	4	0
The legacy of Roman rule	1	6	10	0

Variations in coverage highlight two important findings. Firstly, what may have seemed a straightforward topic when the national curriculum was being designed (eg 'Relations with other people' or 'The legacy of Roman rule') did not appear so to teachers out in schools. As will be seen clearly in section 3, the consequences were reflected in what children learnt.

Secondly, despite stark variations in coverage, only one response out of 156 admitted to 'not covering' anything. As one teacher remarked: 'There is a dilemma here. Am I honest or do I say what it is expected of me to say?' Teachers seemed reluctant to omit 'statutory' content, or at least to admitting they did so, however obtuse or inappropriate they may have believed such content to be: such apparent conformity, even insecurity in attitudes merits further research and attention.

D. Planning and the key elements

Teachers' planning for national curriculum history's key elements during these units displayed comparable features.

Table 3: Teachers' coverage of national curriculum history key elements during planning and teaching Ancient Greece and Romans in Britain

		Always	Often	Occasionally	Never
KE1	Chronology	14	8	2	0
KE2	Range and depth of historical knowledge and understanding	9	10	5	0
KE3	Interpretations of history	5	10	8	1
KE4	Historical enquiry	11	7	6	0
KE5	Organisation and communication	11	9	4	0

Once again only one response out of 120 admitted to 'never' incorporating an element of the national curriculum into their teaching. The 25 responses in the 'occasionally' column may also under rather than over-estimate the proportion of teachers who felt uncomfortable about teaching the national curriculum's conceptual processes. Key element 1 (Chronology), key element 2 (Range and depth of historical knowledge and understanding) and key element 5 (Organisation and communication) nevertheless appeared regularly planned for and taught by substantial majorities of teachers. Key element 3 (Interpretations of history) was problematic for a large minority and key element 2 (Range and depth of historical understanding) and key element 4 (Historical enquiry) slightly less so.

What could not be judged from the interviews was the extent to which teachers were able to make use of the key elements in their teaching to enhance children's historical understanding. While the data on children's learning in the next section suggests they held generally clear and accurate ideas about history as a subject, specific enquiries into their writing and learning about the Ancient Greeks and the Romans point to a less straightforward relationship between national curriculum key elements, teachers' planning and children's learning.

SECTION 3
CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES ON LEARNING HISTORY

A. Introduction
B. Pupils' understanding of history
C. Pupils' recall of 'interesting things learnt' about the Ancient Greeks and the Romans
D. Pupils' written work in history
E. History across the attainment range and special education needs

A. INTRODUCTION

This section draws on in-depth research with a wide range of children, all of whom had studied the Ancient Greeks, the Romans in Britain, or both (see also Appendix 1). In every research school 12 pupils were individually interviewed in sessions lasting 20-25 minutes, and then a record made of their written work in history. This sample of 120 children was made as representative as possible by choosing from each class a boy and girl perceived by their class teacher as being of below average, average and above average attainment in history. Pupils from year 3, year 4, year 5, year 6 and year 7 were interviewed, with a slightly uneven distribution across the year groups.

The pupils in the sample were asked whether or not they thought it was important that children of their age learnt history, and to explain their views by answering two further questions. Analysis of their explanations outlined these key stage 2 children's understandings of why they were being asked to study history at school.

The great majority (97 per cent) thought it was important to learn history and the more intrinsic justifications summarised in this paragraph (70 per cent) communicated extremely positive messages about their expectations and experiences of history learning. For instance, nearly one third of responses, mainly older pupils, explained history as important because of learning from the past (30 per cent): 'It helps us realise how times have changed' (Norfolk Y7 boy) or 'So we know where we are from and how our country was formed' (Kirklees Y6 girl). Occasionally a pupil mentioned skills learnt from history: 'Helping us find out things that happened in the past, using clues and evidence' (Y5 girl Kirklees). Equal numbers referred to learning in general (30 per cent), especially younger pupils. A year 4 girl from Bristol described how 'When you are older you have less time and it is more important to learn when you are younger and have a better memory.' A year 3 girl from an inner London school saw history broadly: 'So we can learn more about other countries and people different from us.' Other responses justified

history's curricular place through positive personal feelings (10 per cent) about it as in 'Because it is very interesting' (South Gloucestershire Y4 boy).

A smaller proportion (30 per cent) offered extrinsic reasons or were negative, as in referring to current school demands (13 per cent): 'So that you know what teachers are talking about when it is history time' (Kirklees Y6 girl). Others led with references to future education or employment (15 per cent): 'For the seniors - you can do quite a lot' (South Gloucestershire Y6 girl) or 'When you are older you need to know it to get a good job' (Bristol, Y3 boy). A very small minority of responses *saw no reason for studying history* (2 per cent) including 'I don't see how it can get you a job really' (Norfolk Y6 girl) and 'I don't like it - so much work' (London Y5 boy).

B. Pupils' understanding of history

The children were also asked 'What is history?', to assess their understanding of the discipline. Although 14 generally younger children (12 per cent) did not know, could not answer or offered unclassifiable answers, 106 children (88 per cent) offered clear and recognisable responses. The majority of these fell into two discernible categories: answers led primarily by *referring to the past* (45 per cent) or *referring to knowledge, learning or enquiry* (43 per cent).

***Category 1**: Defining history by reference to the past*

A progression could be sketched here through four stages:

1 *Simply the past* (4 children) eg 'About the past' (Norfolk Y4 girl) or 'The past' (Essex Y4 boy).

2 *Events in the past* (13 children) eg 'Things that happened in the past' (described independently in 6 different schools) or 'A thing that has been done' (Kirklees Y6 boy) or 'About something that is past' (Bristol Y3 girl).

3 *Events from particular times* (27 children) combining the past, events and chronological qualifiers to define history as eg 'Things that were done in the past ages ago' (South Gloucestershire Y6 girl), 'About the war times' (London Y5 girl) or 'People like the Romans who lived a long time ago' (Norfolk Y4 girl).

4 *Past happenings or evidence of particular types* (10 children) eg 'People and what clothes they used to wear, what things they used' (South Gloucestershire Y4 boy) or 'About people who lived in the past. What they did, what they made and what they invented' (Kirklees Y6 girl).

***Category 2**: Defining history by reference to knowledge, learning or enquiry*

These also fell into four groups, though without a clear progression between them:

1 *Learning led by schoolwork* (10 children) in two cases rather hazily as 'Topic work that relates to a place' (Essex Y3 boy) or 'Work that is back in the past - what animals were, extinct animals' (London Y3 boy). More typical answers included 'Subject that most schools do learn about - the past' (Kirklees Y6 girl) or 'Learn from books and teacher tells us about things that happened in the past' (London Y3 girl).

2 *Learning as broad knowledg*e (7 children) as in 'Nearly everything I know' (Norfolk Y4 girl) or 'What it was like hundreds of years ago. Stories that are real. Evidence in the museum' (London Y3 boy).

3 *Learning about the past* (18 children) eg 'Learning about World War 2' (Essex Y4 boy) or 'When you learn about things that happened a long time ago' (Essex Y3 boy). Some showed self-awareness as in 'Something you learn that helps you about the days that you were not around' (London Y5 boy).

4 *Learning led by enquiry and curiosity* (17 children) ranging from 'Find out what happened a long time ago' (Essex Y3 girl) through the specific eg 'Old things that archaeologists find out' (Essex Y4 boy) to the wide-ranging eg 'Something that happened a long time ago - dig to find things underground about them' (London Y5 girl). Some responses contained affective elements as in 'Something in the past. Finding out something amazing' (South Gloucestershire Y4 boy).

Discussion

Data in this and the previous section indicates a predominantly positive attitude to learning history amongst the great majority of 120 children interviewed. It also displays a clear, accurate and growing understanding of the discipline by over 80 per cent of the sample, and a more sophisticated appreciation by a significant minority. The relationship between these children's attitudes and understandings, schooling and the introduction of national curriculum history cannot be proved as causal through this research, since alternative sources and stimuli for such knowledge exist (eg home, family, friends, play, leisure, television and other media). However, circumstantial evidence throughout this report suggests that primary pupils' (and teachers') understandings of the purposes and nature of history have been significantly enhanced by its introduction as part of a national curriculum.

C. Pupils' recall of 'interesting things learnt' about the Ancient Greeks and the Romans

To test responses specifically to classical history a further question was asked: 'What are the three most interesting things you have learnt about the Ancient Greeks (59 children) and/or Ancient Romans (100 children)?' Although a larger sample and more sophisticated questioning and categorisation would be needed to make this preliminary study statistically reliable, categorising children's responses under headings of what 'should' have been taught according to the 1995 national curriculum history document revealed clear trends from both sets of interviews.

Table 4: 'Three most interesting things learnt about The Ancient Greeks' classified according to national curriculum headings (DFE, 1995, Appendix 2)

Topic	%
Athens and Sparta	26%
Arts and architecture	24%
Myths and legends	43%
Relations with other peoples	1%
Influence on the modern world	2%
Other	4%

Children rarely offered 'interesting things learnt' for the Ancient Greeks from the national curriculum history categories 'Influence on the modern world' and 'Relations with other peoples'. 'Influences on the modern world' defined in national curriculum history (DFE, 1995, page 8) as "politics, language, sport, architecture, science" were hardly ever cited as such. Indeed the only child to make a clear connection between Ancient Greece and contemporary Britain was a year 4 boy from Bristol who said 'how our language is related to theirs'. The same held true for 'Relations with other peoples' with the same boy quoting 'how Romans admired Greeks' and one further tenuous reference to the 'Hoplites - how fought' (Essex Y3 boy). Only two children cited places: a Norfolk year 5 boy commenting 'armies, kings, Athens' and a Norfolk year 6 boy citing 'Troy and the Trojan horse'.

This relatively small sample indicated either that these children did not place the Ancient Greeks in a clear geographical, military and political context; or did not regard such knowledge as 'interesting things learnt'. In contrast, what children clearly did associate with interesting learning were Ancient Greece's 'Myths and legends'. 'Gods and goddesses' were cited 22 times (though only twice in the equivalent but larger Roman Britain sample). 'Myths' and 'heroes' were frequently mentioned, alongside individual stories or characters (eg Medusa, Herakles, Zeus). 'Arts and architecture' also captured children's imaginations with 18 mentions of pots and pottery: 'pots to see how they lived' (London Y3 girl). 'Athens and Sparta' hardly

figured as names or places but children were interested in historical 'Everyday life'. Eight mentions were made of clothes and several of food, buildings, homes, trade, boats and soldiers.

Table 5: 'Three most interesting things learnt about The Romans In Britain' classified according to national curriculum categories (see DFE, 1995, Appendix 2)

Topic	%
The Roman conquest and its impact on Britain	44%
Everyday life	41%
The legacy of Roman rule	8%
Other	17%

Again, comparatively few children made explicit references to the legacy of Roman rule although more than for Ancient Greece: Roman roads, numerals, ruins, spas and Hadrian's Wall dominated. Yet the number or these and the nature of comments in other categories indicated that these children felt and saw 'The legacy of Roman rule' more keenly than for the Ancient Greek equivalent. The category 'The Roman conquest and its impact on Britain' was the most cited: Celts, armies, battles, weapons, forts, Boudica, Caesar and the conquest and leaving of Britain featured prominently. As an Essex year 3 girl expressed it 'how invaded Britain - Hadrian's Wall'. A Kirklees year 6 boy extended the theme: 'Took over Britain, scared by Scots, good fighters'. In contrast to the Ancient Greeks, the Romans were seen as geographically and locally located, fighting and building for military and economic purposes. Moral undertones were hinted at in a few comments: 'were selfish - wanted gold' (London Y5 boy). 'The Romans? They fight a lot' (Essex year 3 girl). 'Everyday life' was cited nearly as often, roughly equivalent in proportion and character to combining the Ancient Greece headings of Athens and Sparta and arts and architecture. 'Clothes' (15 mentions), 'food' (14 mentions) and 'buildings' (12 mentions) figured prominently.

Discussion

Although the small size of the sample necessitates cautious generalisations, some patterns merit comment.

With regard to both the Ancient Greeks and the Romans the issue of legacy in both areas seemed of little interest unless its examples were clear, physical and made local through museums, site visits, personal experience, television, stories etc (see also section 5). Possible explanations vary: legacy was not being taught, not being taught effectively or was not being recalled as 'interesting learning'. It did not follow, though, that children were uninterested in comparing modern and ancient life, as the frequently-cited 'buildings, food, clothes, pottery' evidenced. Ancient Greek 'Myths and legends' and 'The Roman conquest and its impact on Britain' can also both be viewed as ancient legacies to the modern world. These aspects of legacy were perhaps, though, more accessible and of greater intrinsic interest to teachers and

learners. A broader interest in cultural or political legacy may grow out of experiencing them but our research suggests that as currently constructed within the national curriculum, legacy was not a natural or straightforward learning outcome for the age range 7-11.

The same applies to **'**Relations with other peoples'. For Ancient Greece it was apparently planned and taught infrequently (section 2) and learnt hardly at all. Slavery and war featured little in children's learning about the Ancient Greeks, who also were rarely located in particular places or cities. Literary and cultural views dominated, with analysis of documentary or archaeological evidence only being obvious when children enquired into 'Everyday life'. Yet in a British setting conceptual themes underlying 'The Roman conquest' (eg power, invasion, empire) were clearly evident in children's memories. Roman Britain often seemed mentally located in actual territory that had been fought and built over, and Roman historical politics and militarism impacted in ways that the Ancient Greeks' equivalents did not.

Possible explanations include: greater confidence about and knowledge of Rome among teachers; more extant Romano-British remains; heightened local identification with the Roman empire; and a cultural currency of individuals and stories (eg Boudica, Caesar) rooted in popular memory. Similar aspects of historical interest in everyday life were evident for both cultures, but with few mentions for the Romans of the intellectual and spiritual importance of the sometimes identical gods, myths and stories that featured so prominently in children's learning about the Ancient Greeks' equivalents.

Gender appeared differentially significant only in children's views of what was 'interesting learning' about the Romans. Boys (50 per cent) drew noticeably more from the category 'The Roman conquest and its impact on Britain' than girls (37 per cent). Similarly girls found 'Everyday life' more interesting (47 per cent of examples cited) than boys (36 per cent). Boys also offered overall a higher ratio of 'things remembered' than girls, though whether this reflected our research process and questions or genuine gender differences in cognition could not be judged. For Ancient Greece, 'Myths and legends' were quoted by identical figures across gender bands. Generally speaking, the ratios of 'things learnt' declined with teachers' perceptions of the child's level of historical attainment.

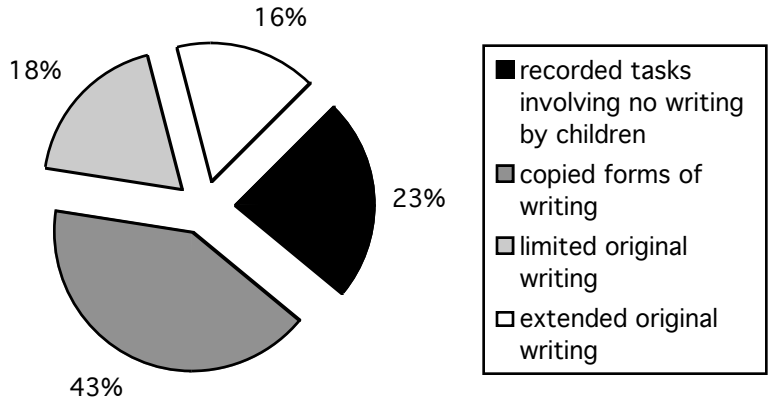
D. Pupils' written work in history

The section below analyses the written records from 40 children's history topic or exercise books. These were taken at random from a sample of 120 books photocopied from pupils across the 10 research schools. This sample maintained a balance between year group, gender, ability and experiences of learning about the two study units of the Romans and Ancient Greece.

Initial reviews of the data using Lewis and Wray's (1995) six genres of non-fiction writing, and the national literacy strategy's (DfEE, 1998) key stage 2 fiction and non-fiction text types did not work well, perhaps because both emphasise 'best practice' in ways that the research sample did not. Although there were faint echoes of their models in our sample's 526 records, the

overall lack of fit necessitated developing a different set of grounded categories. These form a four level continuum expressed in the pie-chart and description below. Since analysis surprisingly revealed little relationship between age, gender, perceived ability, the study unit in question and the types of writing and recording in pupils' books, the sample has been retained as a whole dataset. Its categories sketch an ascending range of expectations about children's written cognitive engagement with history, although the lowest expectations dominate the data.

Types of recording and writing in children's history books



1 *Recorded tasks involving no writing by children (123 pieces) including:*

- pictures that were coloured in (eg of an Ancient Greek temple or Roman soldier)
- word searches (eg of the Ancient Greek gods)
- information sheets (eg about the Roman Empire)
- computer print outs (eg from an encyclopaedia on CD-ROM)
- drawings with no labels or written attachments (eg of a Roman town).

2 *Copied forms of writing (220 pieces) including:*

- closed map work exercises (eg colouring in and labelling a printed map of the Roman Empire)
- closed comprehension exercises (eg single word or sentence answers to tests)
- word processing (eg using a computer to copy information from a book about Ancient Greece)
- closed transfer of information (eg sticking labels onto a picture of a Roman soldier)
- drawing and information (eg a diagrammatic representation of a Roman road with labels)
- copying information (eg copying names of Greek mythology from a book or from the blackboard)

- cloze exercises (eg copying the story of the Minotaur from the blackboard and filling in blanks)
- worksheet activities (eg 'cutting and pasting' labels or text).

3 *Limited original writing (97 pieces) including:*

- open map work exercises (eg labelling and/or drawing a map of the Greek city states from research)
- open comprehension exercises (eg answering questions requiring an opinion about the reasons for the Roman invasion of Britain)
- open transfer of information (eg observing pictures of an Ancient Greek pot and recording their interpretations).

4 *Extended original writing (86 pieces) including:*

- ICT-led creative writing (eg writing their own advert for a Roman villa using the computer)
- creative drawing and writing (eg designing their own Ancient Greek god)
- creative written composition (eg writing their own Ancient Greek myth)
- comparative writing (eg comparing life in Ancient Greece compared to modern Britain)
- reporting on research work (eg using the index of a book about Rome to research Roman houses)
- structured writing mixing imagination and information (eg an imagined letter home from a Roman soldier).

Discussion

This data only represents written records made by children or stuck in to their books; much valuable history learning may be reflected only dimly by such means. For example experiences of discussion, drama, role play, theme days, art work, assemblies, observation, videos, visits etc may not be recorded in books, nor recorded at all. Nevertheless it was striking and perturbing that 65 per cent of what was visible in children's books involved no writing by them or copied writing only; and that the more original and generally cognitively demanding writing typified by the last two categories together accounted for only 35 per cent. The mundane nature of so many written activities had similarly been noted during inspection in one of the schools, for which the history section of the Ofsted report commented that:

> The least effective learning occurs when there is too heavy a reliance on worksheets or mundane tasks such as colouring in.

Figures for categories 1, 2 and 3 of the analysis similarly suggest a heavy dependence upon teacher-dominated types of recording and writing for the majority of children's written work, with open-ended, imaginative and extended authoring only being visible in 16.5 per cent of records. This suggests a wide gulf between much of the history writing in these classrooms and the expectations being made of teachers and children through *The National Literacy Framework* (DfEE 1998). This stipulates that children will for example: write instructions in year 3; explain events and use persuasive writing in year 4; argue a point of view in year 5 and

compare authors' points of view in year 6. Only a tiny proportion of the sample of children's writing reflected such aims although 'lesson observations' by the researcher did reveal teachers using history as a vehicle for teaching ICT and English:

> This … is not really a 'history' lesson, it is a 'cross-curricular' lesson as the teacher emphasises the way to use a computer … It is also an 'English' lesson as the teacher explains the use of sentences and capital letters.

The danger exists that as curriculum time is squeezed by national literacy and numeracy initiatives, children may be denied access to time-consuming 'investigative' aspects of history in favour of shallower activities. Such strategies may superficially appear to meet linguistic and cross-curricular as well as historical aims and therefore be claimed as an efficient use of time; but may in practice commonly emphasise the mundane aspects of learning typified by the writing in categories 1, 2 and 3 of our analysis. The teachers in this report for instance perceived that most of their planning for the Ancient Greeks and the Romans linked history and English (section 2). Yet the evidence of their children's writing suggests that such connections tended to operate in practice at the lower levels of expectation in national curriculum history and English. Data from Ofsted observations in two other research schools support this thesis:

> In some instances pupils are not always clear about the historical objective for the work and as a consequence the emphasis is sometimes more on the art or English skills involved.
>
> …too often there is an over emphasis on answering questions on [historical] source material which is something like a comprehension exercise rather than historical and investigative study.

It is tempting to conclude that unless primary teachers are equipped to think clearly and ambitiously about the language demands and possibilities of all subjects beyond the literacy hour, attempts to improve the quality of children's independent writing across the curriculum will falter.

E. History across the attainment range and special educational needs

Twenty eight teachers were asked during interviews 'Do your pupils with special educational needs respond any differently to history than to other areas of the curriculum?' None thought that these pupils responded negatively, 10 thought it made no difference and 18 identified positive benefits for pupils with special educational needs. For example:

> A lot of them [pupils with SEN] have trouble with their English work, but for some reason they don't seem to connect topic work with English work (London teacher).
>
> If it's a piece of written work they seem to approach it with a different frame of mind (Kirklees teacher).

These pupils also appreciated the opportunity to engage in activities other than just reading and writing:

> Pupils with a specific learning difficulty respond very well as the subject provides rich opportunities for discussion and is suited to approaches that don't rely heavily on literacy skills

> [eg drama, art etc]. Finding out about different ways of life captures the imagination for some (Norfolk teacher).
>
> They find it horrendous when it is based on filling out worksheets. The children often come into their own when they can inquire and they have the idea that they cannot get it wrong … They have nothing wrong with their thinking skills, it is often not being able to get those ideas down (South Gloucestershire teacher).

Classical historical subject-matter was also often inherently interesting:

> One special needs child has been so motivated by the myths that he has begun to read willingly and without pressure and also is now attempting to write his own 'myths'. His parents cannot believe the change in his attitude now towards work. In their words 'He has come to life' (London teacher).

Such interview data tied in with a limited amount of evidence derived from classroom observation of lessons. Ten history-led lessons from year 3, year 4 and year 5 were observed in seven schools, five lessons on the Greeks and five on the Romans. The aim was to track the historical learning experience, motivation and interactions with teachers of one pupil per class perceived by the teacher as achieving 'below average attainment for history'. Five boys and five girls were observed.

While it is not possible to generalise outwards from such a limited sample, analysis of the observation data revealed that with one extreme exception, most tracked pupils seemed engaged with the content and organisation of lessons for much of the time. Such engagement was not necessarily uniform or straightforward. For example during a 60 minute lesson with 32 other year 3 children on Ancient Greek gods and goddesses Becky (not her real name) seemed to the observer 'to spend a lot of her time colouring in the gods' symbols … Work done was largely transferring information once the answers had been verbally established and recorded on the blackboard. Becky did not finish and so did not get on to the creative writing.' Yet Becky 'continued working at 9.59am despite the rest of the class having gone out for break. She finishes the second god and leaves the classroom.' Overall the observer judged that 'Activities in the class were very supportive … including Becky with many recaps and supportive prompts … the class overall obviously enjoyed the topic.' Data from five other observations exhibited a similar mixture of children's positive engagement, patchy success, and teachers' awareness of both.

Three observations witnessed more noticeable successes for the tracked children. For instance a year 4 group of 32 children contained John (not his real name), being taught in a 50 minute lesson about examining Ancient Greek artefacts. After opening discussion, a collection of artefacts and accompanying prompt sheet led to the following: 'John offers his answers to the group discussion, they are relevant and informative … John has done extra work on the Ancient Greeks and the teacher makes a real fuss of him … he describes what he has done to the rest of the class.' Some 15 minutes later 'John is still struggling with his written work, but his motivation is so high that he keeps going.' Although John was the focus here, the observer also

noted how other children had been engaged: ‘ I was approached by two pupils at the end of the lesson, one to show me the Ancient Greek information they had taken off the CD-ROM Encarta; the other to show me the artefact she had brought in for the teacher to use.’

Lessons in which pupils of lower attainment flourished also, it seemed, tended to stimulate the whole class. The observations also indicated that despite differences in lessons’ timing (40-90 minutes) and resources (information books being the most common resource) the teacher was commonly crucial to these children’s success. The oral tasks and talk demanded of them by teachers seemed of a higher order than those evidenced in the children’s writing analysed in the previous section, and noticeably stimulated reactions and involvement in the majority of lessons. Although this may have been a direct result of the observer’s presence, it does indicate that skilful and focused pedagogy can make history from the remote past accessible even to children perceived by teachers as being of well below average attainment in history.

SECTION 4
SUPPORTING PUPILS' LEARNING

A. Resources in school
B. History outside the classroom
C. Learning activities: what pupils valued

This section examines the resources available in the 10 research schools for enhancing pupils' learning about history. Since learning occurs beyond the classroom and the formal curriculum, information was also gathered on visits to museums and sites, and pupils' attitudes towards independent study. This section concludes with the activities and resources which helped them most in their study of history.

A. Resources in school

An item-by-item audit of all resources for the Ancient Greeks and the Romans was undertaken in all 10 research schools. The audits included books, resource packs, artefacts, CD-ROMs, audio tapes, and visual materials (videotapes, posters, photo packs, slides, filmstrips). The initial impression gained was that schools were well resourced for teaching the classical study units, in terms of the range and the quantity of resources available. A brief examination, however, of four different types of resource held in the schools raised a number of important issues concerning the distribution and quality of resources.

1 Books

Books were the most common resource found in the schools accounting for 75 per cent of all audited resources. The ratio of books to number on roll varied from 1.18 in the best stocked school to 0.1 in the school with the smallest stock. In eight of the 10 schools there was at least one class set of books (more than 10 copies); one school had eight such sets. Provision for the Ancient Greeks (49 per cent) and the Romans (51 per cent) was evenly balanced, but the Roman stock was significantly older. Only 27 per cent of books on the Romans had been published since 1991, when national curriculum history was officially introduced, as opposed to 46 per cent for the Ancient Greeks.

2 Artefacts

Artefacts made up a very small percentage of the resources (47 out of 1,513 items). Three schools had no artefacts and only one school had more than 10. Some teachers supplemented the school's artefacts with LEA loans or, in three cases, by bringing in their own artefacts from home. All the artefacts were reproductions.

3 CD-ROMs

The total number of relevant CD-ROMs across all the research schools was 25, of which 16 (64 per cent) were classics-specific titles. Eight were general encyclopaedias and four were collections of clip art. No schools had simulation programs. Two schools had only one CD-ROM and two schools had none.

4 Visual resources

By far the most common visual resource was posters (58 per cent of visual resources), although a large number of these pre-dated the national curriculum. The next most commonly found resource was videotapes (21 per cent), which were dominated by educational television productions (35 out of 38). Slide sets were found in only five schools and only one school (with five sets out of a total of 11) had a significant number. Film strips were found in only one school.

Discussion

1 Distribution of resources

There was a significant gap between the least and most generously resourced schools, and within individual schools there was uneven provision across the different types of resource. It was worrying, for instance, to find one school with no videotapes, and two schools with no CD-ROMs.

It would be unwise, however, to draw conclusions about resourcing from the raw figures alone. Firstly, many of the schools loaned resources from the LEA and/or Library Service but these resources could not be included in the audit because they were only to be found in schools teaching the Ancient Greeks or Romans at the time of the audit.

Secondly, quality of resources is as important as quantity of resources. The school with the lowest ratio of resources to number on roll compensated for its limited number of resources by having materials that appeared well chosen and up-to-date. This school had also invested heavily in ICT, with a newly equipped computer room with 16 new computers and internet access. Such investment in ICT should put the school in a stronger position than others to exploit the potential of the national grid for learning.

2 Appropriateness of resources

The research team had concerns about the appropriateness of both the books and the computer materials audited. The large number of pre-1991 Roman books was not itself a concern – many useful and attractive books came in this category – but a significant proportion were written for an older audience or appeared of little direct relevance to the Roman invasion of Britain (eg a book on Hannibal).

Of greater concern was the number of more recent textbooks that seemed to provide breadth at the expense of depth and detail. Schools working on a limited budget need to use books pitched at the middle of key stage 2 in terms of age and intellectual development, but these cannot meet the needs of children with learning difficulties at one end of the spectrum and those of the highest attaining children at the other.

The same problem was evident with CD-ROMs. In many schools the only source of information on the Ancient Greeks and the Romans available on computer was a general encyclopaedia, but even with classics-specific CD-ROMs presentation tended to take precedence over content, providing pupils with little opportunity for detailed research.

Another matter of concern, particularly given the value attached by parents to school visits and 'hands-on' learning (see below), was the relative paucity of artefacts in schools. This is despite the fact that reproductions of Roman artefacts are readily available from many museums and even original artefacts such as coins and oil lamps can be bought relatively inexpensively. The situation was partially alleviated by the loan of artefacts from LEAs and Library Services, although schools indicated that in many cases this provision had recently been cut back and was likely to contract further in the future.

3 *Access to information about resources*

There was one negative finding: a number of appropriate resources well known to the researchers were not found in any of the schools. In many cases the teachers were not even aware of the existence of these resources, partly perhaps because primary school teachers have fewer opportunities to share subject-specific expertise than secondary colleagues.

B. History outside the classroom

In this section two aspects of pupils' work outside the classroom are considered: school visits to museums and classical sites and pupils' independent study.

Visits to museums and classical sites

Information about educational visits to museums and classical sites was gathered from two sources:

1 factual information provided by the schools
2 data from the parental questionnaire which included three questions to ascertain attitudes to educational visits.

Information from schools

All but one of the schools organised at least one visit connected with the Romans, with visits fairly evenly distributed between archaeological sites (5) and museums (6). One school took pupils on a one week visit to York. On the other hand only one school had been on a visit connected with the Greeks, and that was a London school going to the British Museum.

These figures reflect the stark contrast between opportunities to study the Ancient Greeks and the Romans outside the classroom. As the Ancient Greeks never came to this country, there are self-evidently, no archaeological sites to visit, and unless schools are close to the British Museum or a provincial or university museum with an accessible classical collection, there is little chance of pupils directly accessing Ancient Greek art or artefacts. In contrast, the Romans provide a wide range of opportunities for school visits: archaeological sites range from world heritage sites (Bath and Hadrian's Wall), to palace complexes (Fishbourne), and single villas (eg Chedworth in Gloucestershire). In addition, there are a number of excellent regional museums with a strong Roman emphasis, and plenty of smaller museums with at least a few Roman objects on view. If the Ancient Greeks are to remain as a statutory element of national curriculum history, such an imbalance may need to be planned for through the provision of further resources to improve teacher knowledge, confidence and planning.

Parental attitudes to educational visits

Questionnaires were sent to 635 parents to find out their views on various aspects of history in schools, and responses were received from 227 (36 per cent). Asked whether they valued history-based visits, 220 of the 227 respondents (97 per cent) said ‘yes’, and when asked further about the number of visits offered to their children, 112 respondents felt that there were too few. Twenty five respondents had personally helped out with history-based visits, underlining the strength of support for such activities.

Parents identified a number of main benefits for children going on museum and site visits. Asked what they felt children gained from such visits, 42 respondents made direct reference to the importance of *practical learning*. Typical comments included:

> [They gain] a practical and interesting background to supplement the information in books (Kirklees parent).
>
> Makes the history more interesting/real. Especially if there is an interactive element (ie dressing up/play acting/role play etc) (Bristol parent).

Explicit in the comments of 14 of these respondents - and implicit in many others - was the view that learning by practical experience was not merely different from but more effective than learning in the classroom from books:

> [They] see real history in a museum rather than just in a book or on paper (London parent).
>
> I feel that it gives them more insight to the subject rather than just reading books (Kirklees parent).
>
> The children are able to see and sometimes handle artefacts or reconstructions and gain more understanding than can be obtained from purely books or charts (Gloucestershire parent).

Another benefit of practical learning identified by parents was the fact that it made history more memorable:

> I think that it is fun for children to learn things outside of a school environment and I am sure that it helps them to remember facts (Essex parent).
>
> They remember more because of the experiences that they are able to participate in eg wearing Roman armour in Colchester Castle and because of the experience their understanding is greater (Essex parent).

Twenty seven respondents valued their children *seeing things for themselves*. As one parent noted:

> 'Seeing is believing.' It takes them away from pure academic textbook learning. It verifies that the text in a book is based on something tangible (Norfolk parent).

Linked with this was the notion, referred to by 27 respondents, that school visits brought history to life. One parent wrote:

> I think school trips make a big impact. It livens up any subject and increases enthusiasm. Visits to historical sites bring a reality to the subject (Essex parent).

Twenty two respondents also attached importance to the *affective* element of school visits. While some parents commented simply on the fun and pleasure of a 'nice day out', a number went further and linked enjoyment to learning:

> Because the children enjoy the trip, they learn more from it (Essex parent).
>
> Education through fun, learning by being there (Norfolk parent).

Independent study

To gather further data on learning beyond the classroom, the pupil questionnaire included two questions concerning independent study:

1. Do you ever choose to do work on your own about the Ancient Greeks and Romans in Britain?
2. If yes, what do you choose to do?

In answer to the first question, 33 pupils said 'no', while four pupils said that they would have done work on their own, if they had had the opportunity to do so. One pupil wrote:

> I would like to get on with unfinished Greek work at lunch time but am not allowed in (Y3 boy from Essex).

Eighty three pupils (69 per cent), on the other hand, answered 'yes'; and although this high proportion might seem surprising, the fact that they gave detailed responses to question 2 above suggests that responses to question 1 were genuine.

The 83 pupils who chose to do their own independent study were evenly distributed by gender (42 boys, 41 girls) and by attainment in history, as perceived by their teachers (28 higher, 28 average and 27 lower). Only two pupils said that they did extra work to complete unfinished class tasks: otherwise they spent their time either finding out more information or doing

imaginative work, such as the year 5 girl from South London who described making dolls that looked like Romans.

The children identified a wide range of extension activities undertaken, and some clearly did a substantial amount of work in their own time. This was shown by comments such as:

> [I do] my own research for the topic book using library books. If I have spare time I write about videos (Y6 girl from South Gloucestershire).
>
> [I] read books and write out my version of them. I get facts out of books and show these to the class (Y3 boy from South London).
>
> I take my drafting book home, stay in at play to finish off work and find out more, take my school library books home and use Topic box books at school (Y6 boy from Kirklees).

The most commonly specified activity was reading (mentioned by 64 pupils), followed by writing (15 pupils) and drawing (11 pupils). Writing activities took many forms. Activities in addition to the examples above included:

- building up an information file on the Romans
- taking notes from library books
- jotting down ideas
- writing in a 'special book' at home.

Many, as is illustrated by the quotations above, engaged in their own research, an activity which they variously described as 'getting facts out of books', 'looking up stuff', 'reading books and writing down my own version of them'. For their sources of information, 21 used computer CDs, six used encyclopaedias, 12 used books from their local library and 11 used books from their school library. Occasionally pupils went out of their way to gain access to information: a year 5 girl from South London asked her sister to get her books from the local library; a year 6 boy from Kirklees borrowed his cousin's copy of an electronic encyclopaedia. The fact that neither of these pupils was identified as being of higher attainment underlines the motivational power of history across the attainment range, and its ability to draw pupils into the world of text.

C. Learning activities: what pupils valued

What sort of learning activities, inside and outside the classroom, did pupils find useful in their study of history? During the interviews our sample of 120 pupils were given a list of types of learning activities commonly employed in history classes (reduced from a longer list used during the piloting of the project). They were asked to indicate for each activity whether they had experienced the activity or not, and, where they had, how helpful they found them. When necessary, pupils with reading or other communication difficulties were given additional explanation and amplification by the researcher to help them complete the task.

Table 6: Least commonly experienced activities, as perceived by pupils

Activity	No. of pupils responding 'never used'
Listening to tapes	26
Acting and drama	25
Telling a story	20
Watching people act	18
Looking at photographs	16

Two of the above activities ('Listening to tapes' and 'Looking at photographs') are dependent on resources not readily available, at least for the classical study units, in the research schools: four schools had no audiotapes on the Ancient Greeks or the Romans, and only three schools had more than two photo-packs. The research team would have hoped to find more use of such resources because of the access to information that they provide for pupils who lack confident reading skills.

The fact that a significant minority of pupils said that they had not experienced the other three activities, all of which involve story-telling and drama, was disappointing, given the emphasis placed by parents on the value of practical approaches to history, and given the claim by most teachers to be planning cross-curricular links between English and history.

As to the relative value of the different activities, the pupils' responses generated the following top six activities (with the ranking calculated according to the number of times activities were ranked first, second or third by pupils):

Table 7: Most valued activities, as perceived by pupils

Activity	No. of times ranked in top three	Ranking
Listening to teacher	58	1
Using the computer	43	2
Using library and other books	41	3
Going on a visit	35	4=
Looking at objects and artefacts	35	4=
Watching a programme	26	6

Discussion

Unsurprisingly, pupils saw the teacher as their single most important resource: 95 per cent of pupils found 'listening to teacher' helpful, with 48 per cent ranking it in their top three helpful activities.

After that, four activities came in a cluster and together underlined the value of exposure to a rich variety of media and experiences. But there was a mismatch between what the pupils valued as a useful way in which to learn history, and what they experienced in their study of the Ancient Greeks and the Romans. Although 'Going on a visit' and 'Looking at objects and artefacts' were both rated highly as history activities, only one of the research schools undertook more than one classical visit and five schools had less than four Ancient Greek and/or Roman artefacts. The converse was the case with 'Watching a programme' where an activity for which schools were relatively well resourced was given an indifferent rating by pupils. This rating may reflect a perception among pupils that 'watching television' does not constitute a 'real' learning activity, and perhaps raises some doubts about the quality of learning associated with watching video programmes.

The high rating of 'Using the computer' is also interesting. Interviews, questionnaires and observations showed that in many of the research schools the formal teaching of the classical study units involved very little ICT. Nevertheless it was highly valued by pupils and of the 83 who chose to do independent work (see pages 26 and 27) 21 used a computer at home to aid their research. Teachers recognised the gap between current provision and the value of ICT. While it was encouraging to find children using computers at home for educational rather than purely recreational purposes, the findings highlighted the importance of providing all pupils with frequent access to computers at school, in order to minimise the disadvantages faced by pupils without access to a computer at home.

SECTION 5
THE WIDER PERSPECTIVE

A. The value of history - the parents' perspective
B. The relevance of learning about the Ancient Greeks and the Romans
C. Classics and the national curriculum
D. History in the school curriculum

A. THE VALUE OF HISTORY - THE PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE

In their questionnaire parents were asked, 'Do you see any gains or benefits that your child makes from learning history?'and 165 parents made some response. Because of the breadth of their responses, many of which could have been categorised in a number of ways, a broad summary only of the strands that emerged is given below.

One hundred and fifty five responses were broadly positive in nature, seven were equivocal, and three were negative. The most forceful negative response was from a South Gloucestershire parent who said that history was not beneficial for children because it 'will not help them get a job'. But this utilitarian approach to the question was rare. Among the positive responses a number of parents replied at considerable length – and with considerable passion – often listing a number of benefits to be gained from studying history. For example:

> History helps to illustrate the way in which our present beliefs and attitudes were shaped. It helps us to understand how our past has formed our society. This can give children a) Pride in their own nation b) A willingness to understand that other races/cultures are also products of *their* past - thus greater understanding/tolerance and less prejudice - the past is an essential component (Essex parent).

> 1) I feel it makes/helps them to appreciate the advantages of life today - especially things like medicine and sanitation. 2) It engenders a sense of responsibility for future generations eg 'Looking after the world for them'. 3) Hopefully (!) it will help them not to make the same mistakes as others have, eg wars etc if children understand events in the past (Norfolk parent).

Overall, a wide range of benefits was identified, with many respondents grouping together a number of reasons for their support for history. These could be loosely grouped under three headings; historical, social and broader educational gains.

Historical gains

As one might expect, the benefits of learning history most frequently identified by parents were subject-specific. These could be drawn together under two broad headings: the development of an understanding of the modern world by comparison with the past (mentioned in 49

responses); and improved understanding of the concept of progress and the process of change (mentioned in 33 responses).

Some saw these gains in global terms,

> We all need to know what has happened in the past that has shaped the way countries treat each other today. Why some countries are natural allies while others never will be (Kirklees parent).
>
> Hopefully the mistakes in the past can be avoided by studying the way wars/arguments occurred and started (London parent).

while others saw them in more personal terms,

> Instead of living only for the 'here and now' my child can see through learning history, what has influenced his own modern world. He makes comparisons, looks at changes (good and bad) and I think by visiting historical places etc… is able to understand that history isn't something remote but is about people just like him (Kirklees parent).

The response of the London parent above represented the view of a significant minority of parents (18 responses) that learning from the past should help avoid wars in the future. Only one respondent, a parent from Bristol, made the point that people seem to make the same mistakes over and over again, indicating a repeated failure to learn from the past.

Social gains

A number of parents looked beyond gains of a history-specific nature to suggest ways in which history could help children develop greater awareness of the society in which they lived and become, in a broad sense, better citizens.

Twenty three respondents felt that studying history gave children a better appreciation of the society in which they lived:

> I think it is important to see how others lived before and how technology has progressed and improved our lives (Norfolk parent).
>
> They need to know how other people lived and see how lucky they are today (South Gloucestershire parent).

Though one respondent suggested that the position was not quite so simple:

> I think it is important for us to know what our ancestors did and how they lived in comparison to how we live and to realise that life for our children whilst socially it is becoming more complicated, for living every day our lives are more easily catered for (South Gloucestershire parent).

Further social gains identified were that learning history fostered attitudes and values associated with democratic societies such as tolerance and respect for others (mentioned by 12 respondents), and helped children gained a sense of identity and pride in their country and its past (mentioned by 11 respondents). So for example:

> Knowing some history - eg the Second World War has shown my child the dangers of intolerance and racism (Essex parent).
>
> If children form a viewpoint based on historical evidence it gives them a sense of belonging in the scheme of things. They become well equipped to deal with situations in life with a full knowledge of their ancestors (Kirklees parent).

Broader educational gains

Another sizeable group of responses showed an appreciation of the contribution history can make to children's wider learning: 37 respondents pointed to educational gains to be made from studying history, including improved reading skills, the development of the imagination, intellectual curiosity, better motivation, the art of story-telling and even an understanding of practical engineering principles. An underlying theme of these responses, touched on by 21 respondents, was history's capacity to interest and excite children. Respondents noted that children were excited enough by what they learnt to want to share their knowledge at home:

> It widens their knowledge and helps them evaluate that things change and progress. My eldest child, who is 10, is very interested in history and has actually told me things that I never knew (London parent).
>
> They are very interested. They bring the knowledge home and they tell other people (Kirklees parent).

And the stimulation provided by the subject-matter encouraged children to become independent, enquiring learners:

> Learning about history has made my son more aware of his surroundings and has developed his mind to enquire not only 'Why ?' but 'When ?' and 'How?' and 'for what reason?' events in history came about eg Man's quest for flight and the development of transport (South Gloucestershire parent).

B. The relevance of learning about the Ancient Greeks and the Romans

In order to ascertain the level of support among parents specifically for the classical study units, we asked, 'Does learning about the Ancient Greeks and Romans in Britain have any relevance to children's lives today?' There were 172 responses, 78 per cent of which indicated 'significant relevance', 10 per cent 'little relevance' and 12 per cent 'no relevance'.

Included in the answers categorised as seeing 'little relevance' were four respondents who expressed support for the Romans in Britain but not the Greeks because, as they pointed out, there was still visible evidence of the Romans' stay in Britain. Generally, however, parents argued strongly for the relevance of the classical study units. Their main reasons, most of which concentrated on aspects of legacy, are summarised below:

Table 8: Most commonly given reasons supporting the relevance of studying the Ancient Greeks and the Romans

	No. of times mentioned
Cultural legacy (from myths and legends to democracy)	38
Practical legacy (eg roads, plumbing)	32
Influence to the English language	17
Contribution to mathematics	8

Typical comments were:

> Not only do these topics resonate within contemporary culture (books, films, TV etc) but they help to explain our cultural origins eg democracy, patriarchy, military strategy, language, architectural heritage (Norfolk parent).
>
> Many Roman sites and artefacts are still visible in Britain. The Romans were, in effect, the first real superpower. Their influence was a major factor in the spread of Christianity. The Europe of today is in large part a result of the Roman Empire rule (Bristol parent).

Discussion

What emerges from the parental questionnaire is very strong support for the place of history in the school curriculum. Parents, seeing beyond a narrow utilitarian approach to the subject, seemed to use wider social and educational criteria to judge the value and relevance of history.

Their awareness that history can help children develop attitudes and values asociated with democratic societies should be encouraging for those who would like to see a strong link between citizenship and history (see recommendation 2.6 in the final report of the Advisory Group for Citizenship).

But of more importance perhaps to historians is the recognition by parents that history excites and motivates children. This is a recurring theme in the research findings, evident both in teachers' attitudes to history (see section 2, pages 5 to 7) and in pupils' questionnaire responses (see section 4, pages 26 and 27): history makes children want to learn and thereby promotes independent learning, a key element in developing lifelong learners.

C. Classics and the national curriculum

The fact that 78 per cent of parents said that the Ancient Greeks and the Romans were of significant relevance to children today (see above) provides clear support for the continued presence of the Ancient Greeks and the Romans in national curriculum history post-2000. Given the extremely precarious position of classical subjects in secondary schools this presence at key stage 2 is all the more important: it may soon be the only occasion on which state school pupils have the opportunity to learn about the classical world.

It is therefore ironic that many classicists, while reluctantly accepting that classics would not be a named foundation subject in the national curriculum, opposed its inclusion under history, and argued instead for it to be considered as a foreign language. When this proved unsuccessful the curricular message was clear:

> In the national curriculum promulgated in England and Wales in 1988, no reference was made to classics. Nothing shows more clearly just how marginalized a subject has become which once lay at the heart of English high culture (Stray 1998).

While it is true that no reference was made to classics specifically, the national curriculum did create for the first time an entitlement for all pupils in England and Wales to learn about the classical world and its history as part of their compulsory schooling. This was still considered a defeat by many classicists because classical studies, as packaged in national curriculum history, did not constitute the sort of academic subject that they associated with 'proper' classics, ie the rigorous study of the classical *languages*.

The curricular position of classics has been debated throughout this century. In 1903 Francis Cornford wrote:

> ... an organised assault will soon be made upon what is called classical education ... The assailants ... in the universities and the public schools ... will challenge ... its right to bare existence ... The impending attack will be most wisely met, not by an obstinate and blind defence of our system as it at present exists, but by a frank avowal of its defects ... To valid criticism, the proper answer is reform.

But it was only in 1960 when the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge removed the classical language matriculation requirement imposed on applicants *whatever their subject,* that the educational status of classics began to be seriously challenged. The extent to which numbers taking Latin and Greek had been kept artificially high by the matriculation requirement soon became apparent. The introduction of comprehensive schools in the middle of the 1960s, which threatened the existence of the grammar schools where classics had flourished, further fuelled the crisis and forced classicists to address the defects referred to by Cornford at the start of the century.

The main defect was that too much emphasis was placed, over too long a period, on the acquisition of language skills at the expense of the study of literature and culture. The second defect was that classical subjects were offered only to the most able pupils; further, that there was little, if any, surrender value for those pupils who did not continue their studies through to A level. In the words of the Spens Report of 1938 (quoted by Forrest, 1996 page 4) 'in no other subject has the end been placed at so great a distance and the realisation of its value emerged so late'.

Steps were taken to address these defects in the 1970s, resulting in new and innovative classical courses. For pupils aged 11 to 16 there were foundation courses in classical studies requiring no knowledge of the classical languages, and a new story-based Latin course where Roman

history and culture was taught alongside the language. At sixth form level, ancient history A level was reformed and a syllabus introduced placing emphasis on primary evidence for the first time; also an entirely new A level, classical studies, was introduced.

These reforms helped ensure the continued presence of classical subjects in the school curriculum, although the popularity of classical history and culture and the diminishing appeal of the classical languages are reflected in the examination entry statistics. At A level, entries in Latin dropped from 5,120 candidates in 1970 to 1,910 candidates in 1990, while in classical civilisation, which was only examined for the first time in 1974, entries had reached 3,353 by 1990.

Examination entry statistics also underline the damaging consequences of the national curriculum for classical subjects at key stage 4. While more pupils between the age of seven and 11 are learning about the ancient world than ever before, the numbers in state schools taking classical subjects at GCSE level are in steep decline. Between 1990 and 1997 GCSE Latin entries from state schools dropped by 33 per cent, and GCSE Greek entries by 40 per cent. The fact that the equivalent drop in independent school entries was 5 per cent and 1 per cent respectively during the same period highlights the extent to which classics in state schools suffered through recent educational reforms. It also explains why some classicists hold it responsible for the precarious position of their subject today.

As noted earlier, the survival of the classical elements of key stage 2 national curriculum history is of critical wider importance given this crisis in classics at secondary level. If national curriculum history were to disappear from primary schools or the classical elements were to become optional, the great majority of English schoolchildren would no longer have any formal educational experience of the cultures at the root of European civilisation.

D. History in the school curriculum

Indications of extremely strong parental support for history (see above) contrast with history's parlous curricular condition in the 1980s, when it was feared that history 'would cease to be a mainstream subject in British education at all' (Gardiner, 1990, page 2). National inspections by the DES in 1989 revealed the subject was poorly represented in primary school topic work and stunted by curriculum planning too inconsistent to support continuity and progression in learning. Following the 1988 Education Reform Act, government working parties controversially attempted to solve such problems by creating a history curriculum that would be 'national' in three senses. Firstly, by raising national awareness and expectations of history through stimulating a 'public debate about the teaching of history in schools'. Secondly, by using history explicitly to promote British identity:

> While it would be optimistic to expect that a basically *English* oriented approach to British history … should be replaced at a stroke by a truly *British* history syllabus, the national curriculum will provide a clear opportunity to take the first steps in that direction (DES, 1990, pages 16 and 17).

Thirdly, by nationalising previously local curricula to provide all pupils aged five to 16 with a clear and comprehensive guarantee of entitlement: '*All* pupils should receive the best possible teaching in history and much less needs to be left to chance than has recently too often been the case' (DES, 1990, page 2).

Since the high point of 1990, the scope and content of national curriculum history has diminished. Despite subtle preliminary slimming the first national curriculum history proved unsustainably ambitious for primary schools. By autumn 1993 the whole curriculum edifice was crumbling and 'urgent action was needed to reduce the statutorily required content of the national curriculum' (Dearing in SCAA, 1994). This resulted by 1995 in a new national curriculum history order, in turn suspended by the Secretary of State's 13 January 1998 decision to offer primary schools 'greater flexibility and reduced prescription' across the curriculum.

How then does primary history's future in 1999 compare to the rather grand ideals with which the first national curriculum history was launched? Firstly, standards of literacy and numeracy are now a readier focus of national educational awareness than history. Secondly, although issues of cultural identity are still a concern it has become clear that a national curriculum in history is more than a simple propagating tool for English, British or European identities. Thirdly, the 1990 vision of a national but compulsorily comprehensive 5-16 history curriculum proved unwieldy and over-ambitious in rapidly changing times.

It is against this background that the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) have been reviewing the curriculum (QCA, 1998a, pages 5 to 16), using six themes now briefly discussed:

***1** Breadth, balance and other key curriculum principles*

How can *excellence for all* in literacy, numeracy and basic skills be reconciled with *access for all* to a broad and balanced curriculum? A strong tradition in primary schooling has favoured 'Curriculum I - the basics of numeracy and literacy - over the Curriculum II' (Alexander, 1995, page 14) of the rest. Evidence from this study indicates that whilst primary teachers and parents place some premium on English, maths and science, they view the curriculum less hierarchically than Alexander's stark 'Curriculum I and II' suggested. This finding is in line with a recent conclusion that key stage 2 schools strongly supported a broad and balanced curriculum alongside the development of children's skills in literacy and numeracy (QCA, 1998a, page 12).

***2** Literacy, numeracy and key skills*

Some parents and most teachers in our research perceived current key stage 2 classical history as 'always' or 'sometimes' helping to develop children's literacy, and that it often contributed to numeracy, geography, religious education, ICT and art. For better or worse, a strong tradition still exists in primary schools of supporting literacy, numeracy, key skills and subjects through inter-disciplinary planning in history-led 'topics'. QCA's recent advice to the Secretary of State

(QCA, 1998a, page 20) recognised this tradition leading to a new developmental question: if such cross-curricular practice cannot be changed, how can it best be built upon?

3 *Citizenship; Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE); Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education (SMSC).*

Although the research did not specifically pursue issues in these areas, they were often touched upon, for example in the parents' responses to the value of children learning history (see page 29). Further illustration of history's contribution to an area such as citizenship is provided by a brief examination of the views of teachers at one research school, a multicultural urban junior school in Kirklees. Over a third of pupils qualified for free school meals and/or were registered at various stages of the process of special educational needs identification. Over half spoke English as an additional language.

The four teachers interviewed had mixed views on the value of history in teaching citizenship. One commented that, 'The concepts of democracy and oligarchy are hard to comprehend at this age', warning against any simplistic identification of Ancient Greek history with political education and citizenship. A year 6 teacher (not the history co-ordinator) commented:

> … they're always interested in it, piecing things together, organising, looking at things, finding things out for themselves, making sense of the past, seeing how the past influences the present, seeing how things have progressed … it promotes respect as well for other civilisations, other cultures. And knowing where you have come from…

Although such views fit well with the main defined benefit of citizenship education as empowering pupils 'to participate in society effectively as active, informed, critical and responsible citizens' (QCA, 1998b, page 6), it seems that such benefits would derive more from learning about the processes of history rather than any particular content. As the school's humanities adviser expressed it: 'Particularly in terms of future competencies for future citizens, history develops critical analysis'.

4 *Access and participation*

Although it did not focus upon the educational experiences of cultural or ethnic minorities, this study found little empirical evidence to support a recent claim that the 1995 English national curriculum hindered educational access and participation by promoting 'a *common culture* that is both bigoted and elitist' (Gillborn, 1997, page 354). Other practitioners have argued that Romano-British history presented children with:

> … evidence of immigration and multiculturalism dating from the very early history of Britain … All this is an important part of learning the skills which they will use to evaluate other periods, including contemporary history (Claire, 1996, page 101).

Because the past can be unpredictably unclear to young children, in practical terms the skills of individual teachers may shape curriculum access and participation more than centralised curriculum structures or decisions (eg section 3). As the research suggests, teachers' mediating

capacities should more consciously be planned for and acknowledged in the national curriculum design process.

5 *Standards and assessment key stage 1 - key stage 3*

Ofsted (1998) recently offered the national judgement that 'progress made by pupils in history is satisfactory in the large majority of schools' and 'good in a quarter of schools in key stage 1 and nearly one-third in key stage 2.' We encountered no evidence at school level that the current 'eight level assessment scale' contributed on an everyday basis to clarifying such standards. Parental and teachers' views about the contribution of history to children's learning were also so rich and varied that they raised difficult questions about what realistically could be assessed and reported of children's progress towards them. Indeed it may be desirable to construct simpler assessment systems to measure what children *actually* do and think about history (see section 3) rather than to rely upon these deriving from adult preconceptions of what they *should* be doing.

6 *Flexibility and prescription*

Can a national curriculum remain sufficiently common to improve teaching and learning, but sufficiently open to allow teachers professional autonomy and creativity? Prophetic words from the 1990 curriculum debate may still apply: 'In an open society, the details of a centralised history curriculum should not be the concern of any particular political administration' (Roberts, 1990, page 74). Design processes leading to the first national curriculum history contradicted this model and tended to design primary curricula by extrapolating backwards, from knowledge of adolescents' historical learning. The results were sometimes inappropriate for primary teachers and seen as 'arbitrary impositions' (eg Bage, 1993 page 280) contributing to the curricular retreats of 1994 and 1998. Such accumulated experience suggests that forthcoming primary history curricula need to be slim and practical: 'future changes to the national curriculum must…be based on reliable information and evaluation' involving 'trialling and evaluation of proposed changes' (QCA, 1998a, pages 24 and 25).

Teachers stubbornly remain strikingly diverse: standardised curricula do not automatically lead to standardised teachers. This report therefore argues in favour of creating curricula that can support the diversity of teachers as they are: and within national guidelines, allowing communities to individualise history in their schools. In the Kirklees school referred to above, the year 6 teacher (responsible for improving SATs results in core subjects) advised 'leave it [history] alone because I love it'. In more favoured South Gloucestershire, similar views prevailed. Most parents argued to retain classical history: 'as long as children find it interesting and fun I am in favour'. Their teachers were even clearer: 'Keep them in' (Y3 teacher and history co-ordinator). 'Free up time in the national curriculum and make things not compulsory' (another Y3 teacher). Finally the year 4 teacher argued:

Keep the options of teaching everything in detail … of the areas like transport, life … but allow teachers to choose one and study it in-depth. To provide schools with support and things for the more practical side, like being an historian. And it's the skills that are important.

APPENDIX 1
THE RESEARCH PLAN

The research schools

Links with the 10 research schools were established with help from LEA advisors for history and other local contacts. The schools, and their main characteristics, were as follows:

LEA	Type of school	Location	No. on roll	% of pupils on the SEN register	% of pupils on free school meals
Bristol	Voluntary Aided (RC) Primary School	city	158	20%	13%
Essex	Grant Maintained Primary School	town	676	17%	32%
Essex	County Junior School	town	511	7%	7%
Kirklees	County Middle School	village	317	11%	6%
Kirklees	Voluntary Controlled (C of E) Junior School	town	323	36%	33%
London Borough of Newham	County Primary School	inner city	439	14%	74%
London Borough of Southwark	County Junior School	inner city	264	26%	67%
Norfolk	County Middle School	city	252	30%	24%
Norfolk	Voluntary Controlled Primary School	village	89	13%	14%
South Gloucestershire	County Junior School	town	231	18%	7%

The programme of visits

Visits to the research visits lasted three or four days, during which a common research programme was implemented in each school, involving the following:

Interviews. These were conducted with:

- teachers: at least two from each school (semi-structured, taped)
- pupils: twelve pupils from each school individually (six pupils from two separate year groups, with a balance of gender and perceived attainment in history).

Questionnaires. These were given to:

- teachers: at least two from each school
- parents and guardians: in each school questionnaires were sent to all parents and guardians of children in two classes who had studied the Ancient Greeks or the Romans.

Lesson observations. At least one lesson per school was observed, with specific focus on the performance of a child perceived by teachers to be of below average attainment for history.

Analysis of key documents. This included:

- ofsted reports
- schemes of work
- lesson plans.

Resources audit. A record was made of all the resources in the schools connected with the Ancient Greeks and Romans.

The details of the data collected are as follows:

School	Pupils interviewed	Lessons observed	No. of teachers interviewed	No. of parental questionnaires returned	Return rate of parental questionnaires
1	Y3 and Y4	Y4	3	15 out of 60	25%
2	Y3 and Y4	Y3 and Y4	2	33 out of 64	52%
3	Y3 and Y4	Y3 and Y4	3	29 out of 58	50%
4	Y5 and Y6	Y5	3	35 out of 63	56%
5	Y6 (2 classes)	*	4	20 out of 92	22%
6	Y3 and Y5	Y3 and Y5	3	11 out of 50	22%
7	Y3 and Y5	*	3	6 out of 75	8%
8	Y4 and Y7	Y4	3	30 out of 57	53%
9	Y4/5 and Y6	*	1	18 out of 55	33%
10	Y4 and Y6	Year 4	3	30 out of 61	46%
	120 pupils interviewed	**10 lessons observed**	**28 teachers interviewed**	**227 out of 635**	**Average = 36%**

* At the time of the researcher's visit, these schools were not covering either the *Ancient Greece* or the *Romans in Britain* study unit

Points to consider

The planning, conduct and analysis of the research raised a number of methodological questions:

1 The 'representativeness' of this research

All these schools volunteered to take part in the project. Although this had considerable advantages, this and the small size of the sample also posed a problem: were these schools and their pupils, teachers and parents more widely representative of primary schools in the English 'state sector'? In several important ways they were designed to be so. The diversity of the schools' urban/rural contexts, geographic locations and catchment areas ensured a broad spread of social and cultural backgrounds in the research group. Ofsted inspection reports showed that

these schools were not particularly favoured, either in broad terms or for history education. A larger number of schools would have allowed even greater diversity and perhaps, more statistically significant claims: but would have prevented the in depth pursuit of issues linking curriculum planning, teaching, learning and resources across teachers', pupils' and parental views.

***2** Comparisons of pupils across research schools*

Schools differed in the terms of support offered to the research team and in the amount of data yielded. In each school 12 pupils were interviewed: two boys and two girls perceived by their class teacher as being of 'above average, average and below average' attainment for history within that class. Comparing pupils individually from different schools and classes is not therefore reliable: some schools 'setted' pupils, others did not, and teachers' perceptions of 'attainment' would not be valid for generalising purposes. Due to timetable and curriculum restraints it was also possible to observe lessons only in seven of the 10 research schools. These focused upon how children of perceived lower attainment in history responded during observations but were based only on one or two lessons in a school: they provide illustrative snapshots of classrooms viewed through the observer's experience and interpretations.

***3** Pupils' written and other outcomes*

Although extensively sampled, children's written work may in a few cases have been incomplete, despite careful preparation and monitoring. Sometimes our research occurred at the beginning of children's studies and therefore there was little to copy. Learning outcomes expressed through media such as art, drama, speaking and listening were also difficult to monitor, and lesson observations and interviews may not have captured their full richness.

***4** Evidence analysis*

The analysis stage of the research was led by the three individuals responsible for writing this report, although it was also opened out to a wider group in two ways. Firstly, a 24 hour conference was held to discuss some of the project's draft findings. Representatives from schools, museums and other interested bodies were invited, with teachers being offered supply cover to make attendance possible. This gave valuable opportunities for sustained discussion about the research data and questions. Secondly, this report was circulated to some interested parties in draft form, so that errors or controversial interpretations could be opened to dispute. These attempts to open up the analytical and reporting stages of the research process may have helped ensure a more widely-based and therefore accurate reflection of views and findings; any errors within it nevertheless remain the responsibility of the writers.

APPENDIX 2
THE PROGRAMME OF STUDY FOR THE CLASSICAL STUDY UNITS

STUDY UNIT 1: ROMANS, ANGLO-SAXONS, AND VIKINGS IN BRITAIN

Pupils should be taught about the history of the British Isles from 55 BC to the early eleventh century, and the ways in which British society was shaped by different peoples. They should be given opportunities to study, in greater depth, ONE of, the Romans, the Anglo-Saxons, or the Vikings.

1 Pupils should be taught in outline about the following:
- **a** the Roman conquest and occupation of Britain;
- **b** the arrival and settlement of the Anglo-Saxons;
- **c** Viking raids and settlements.

2 They should be taught in greater depth about ONE of the following:

a Romans
- the Roman conquest and its impact on Britain, eg *Boudica and resistance to Roman rule, the extent to which life in Celtic Britain was influenced by Roman rule and settlement, the end of imperial rule*;
- everyday life, eg *houses and home life, work, religion*;
- the legacy of Roman rule, eg *place names and settlement patterns, Roman remains, including artefacts, roads and buildings*.

---------- OR ----------

b Anglo-Saxons
- the arrival and settlement of the Anglo-Saxons and their impact on England, eg *early settlement, the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity, King Alfred and Anglo-Saxon resistance to the Vikings*;
- everyday life, eg *houses and home life, work, religion*;
- the legacy of settlement, eg *place names and settlement patterns, myths and legends, Anglo-Saxon remains, including artefacts and buildings*.

---------- OR ----------

c Vikings
- Viking raids and settlement and their impact on the British Isles, eg *their settlement in different parts of the British Isles, King Alfred and Anglo-Saxon resistance to the Vikings*;
- everyday life, eg *houses and home life, work, religion*;
- the legacy of settlement, eg *place names and settlement patterns, myths and legends, Viking remains, including artefacts and buildings*.

STUDY UNIT 4: ANCIENT GREECE

Pupils should be taught about the way of life, beliefs and achievements of the Ancient Greeks and the legacy of Ancient Greek civilisation to the modern world:

The Ancient Greeks

a Athens and Sparta, eg *everyday life, citizens and slaves*;

b arts and architecture, eg *pottery, sculpture, theatres, temples, public buildings, and how these help us to find out about the Ancient Greeks*;

c myths and legends of Greek gods and goddesses, heroes and heroines;

d relations with other peoples, eg *Persians, such as the stories of Marathon, Thermopylae and Salamis, the Greeks in southern Italy, the campaigns of Alexander the Great, the influence of the Greeks on other civilisations, such as Egypt or Rom*e;

The legacy of the Ancient Greeks

e influence on the modern world, eg *politics, language, sports, architecture, science.*

Key elements

The key elements are closely related and should be developed through the study units, as appropriate. Not all the key elements need to be developed in each study unit. The key elements are:

1 chronology;
2 range and depth of historical knowledge and understanding;
3 interpretations of history;
4 historical enquiry;
5 organisation and communication (see DFE, 1995, page 5 for more details).

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