

## **An evaluation of the Quality Mark for History for primary schools in the UK.**

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The aim of the research is to evaluate the impact on stakeholders participating within an assessment process focusing on the learning and teaching of history in primary schools. The assessment was devised by the Historical Association (UK) leading to the award of a Quality Mark. This award was introduced in September 2014 with the aim of rewarding schools where there is a culture of excellence in the learning and teaching of history, and to develop a set of aspirations for other schools to work towards.

The research employed mixed methodology including interviews and questionnaires. Findings support the significant impact on the school, and in particular the subject leader, of engaging in such a programme. This is the first phase of a four-year project, which will look at long-term impact and whether progress has been sustained.

**Key words:** primary teaching; history, Quality Mark, Historical Association, school improvement

### **Introduction**

The year 2014 heralded an exciting new development for the Historical Association UK (HA), with the introduction of its Quality Mark for History in schools. This award has been particularly warmly welcomed by the primary sector; 28 primary schools had gained the award by July 2017 at either gold or silver level. The development of the award took place in a time of immense change for the subject; significant changes to the National Curriculum for History in England were implemented (DfE 2014) and primary teachers looked for support to guide them through this turbulent time. There was a significant increase in Historical Association primary membership. It was also a time of change for Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills), since fewer history inspections were planned and the (HA)

realised that, ‘Following the scaling down of history subject inspections and the dawn of a new history curriculum in 2014 ... that there was a real developmental and validation gap...’ (HA 2015, 1). This article will examine the context in which the Quality Mark was developed. The nature and features of the Quality Mark will be explored. The rationale, aims and format of the subsequent research will be discussed. Findings are presented, and some conclusions reached. Recommended ways forward will be outlined.

### **History in England in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

Since 1988 history has been a compulsory subject in English state maintained schools, for pupils from the ages of 5 to 14. These schools are required to teach the National Curriculum, which has gone through a number of revisions over recent years culminating in the dramatic changes of 2014. These changes, which included an increased focus on the development of chronological understanding, resulted partly from the publication of the report, *History for All*. This influential report was published by Ofsted (Ofsted 2011), the independent inspection and regulatory organisation in England. It evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of history teaching in both primary and secondary schools in England, based on a series of inspections held in schools between 2007 and 2010. It found there was much to celebrate in primary schools, with achievement in history being good or outstanding in 63 of the 83 primary schools visited. The rest were found to be satisfactory. Yet the Report highlighted many issues that needed to be addressed. For example, inspectors found evidence of weak assessment practice, particularly at Key Stage 2. From this they concluded that, ‘At the heart of the problem was non-specialist teachers’ lack of confidence in teaching history.’ (Ofsted 2011, 27) The report concluded that there was not enough subject-specific expertise or professional development in most of the primary schools visited and recommended that action should be taken to remedy this deficit.

The 2014 National Curriculum for History resulted in teachers feeling even more challenged, as they were now required to teach unfamiliar areas, particularly prehistory and some elective world topics, for example The Shang Dynasty of Ancient China and the history of early Islamic civilization. Published materials from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) had accompanied previous versions of the National Curriculum. However it quickly became clear that this was not the intention in 2014. While content is set in the National Curriculum, the way it should be taught is much more flexible. The Purpose of Study and Aims provide a vision for how the subject should be taught, with an emphasis on an enquiry approach.

The English school system contains many different types of schools, funded in a variety of ways. One aspect they have in common is the need to meet required standards, set by Ofsted or by similar organisations within the independent sector. These inspections have had a strong focus on the core subjects of English and mathematics. These are also the only subjects formally assessed by the government and consequently this has driven the curriculum in primary schools. Alexander (2010) refers to this as the creation of the dual curriculum. This has led to the humanities being overlooked in terms of funding and time allocation and led to new and less experienced staff being deployed in these areas. Consequently this has impacted on attainment in history. Ofsted (2011) found that pupils were insufficiently challenged and consequently making insufficient progress.

### **The development of the Historical Association Quality Mark (HAQM)**

To help to improve the situation in schools the Historical Association committed itself to developing a quality mark for the subject. The HA is an independent national charity formed in 1906. It is one of a number of subject associations and has over 6,000 members; they include teachers, academics, local historians, members of the heritage community and history enthusiasts. The Council for Subject Associations (2017), defines an organisation as ‘...normally

membership organisations, often registered charities, whose mission is to further the teaching and learning of a specific subject in schools, colleges and universities'. They are independent of government and believe very strongly in supporting teachers in their subject specialism.

Discussions about developing an award which recognizes good practice had been taking place within the HA for many years. They watched with interest while other similar groups devised their own awards, including the Geographical Association, piloting their quality mark as early as 2005-6. The Science Association Annual Report (White et al. 2016) quotes comment from a primary teacher expressing the need for a history quality mark; 'The history and geography teachers now want to get awards...they say no-one cares about our subject like they care about science...They feel that the teachers care more about the subject when we are doing something like this, t process'. The success of the Geography, Science and other awards and the desire to improve the quality of teaching and learning resulted in an HA pilot study to assess history in a group of schools at the end of 2014.

The Historical Association was supported in devising the award by a range of experts in the field of history education in schools, including head teachers, inspectors, teacher trainers and examiners. Whilst being mindful not to replicate an inspection procedure they found it useful while developing the award to review the Ofsted (2013) subject specific grade descriptors for 'outstanding' history, that includes reference to knowledge skills, attitudes and values. The original aim was to devise a single set of criteria for both the early years/primary (ages 3-11) and secondary (ages 11-18). Early on in the discussions it was realised that while there are many commonalities between the sectors there are some key distinctions, particularly with regard to an emphasis on examinations and the role of specialists in secondary education. This resulted in common headings for criteria but the content of the descriptors differ between sectors. The group also wanted to ensure the criteria were accessible to all types of school including special provision, British Schools abroad, the private sector and those with a small number of pupils.

### **The aims of the Historical Association Quality Mark (HAQM) for primary schools**

This is more than just recognition of excellent history provision; it was developed to act both as an aspirational tool for schools looking to raise standards in history as well as to recognise and reward those schools who show, ‘through their passionate, innovative, inspiring and strategic planning and practice, that they have met the criteria to achieve this challenging and rigorously assessed, yet achievable award’. (HA 2015,1). Unlike many of the other subject quality marks the HAQM has no published set of aims. However, this quotation, taken from the HA publicity materials, produced to encourage schools to join the quality mark scheme, can be utilised to identify a set of aims.

While seeking to recognise those schools that have already achieved excellence prior to registering for assessment, it is believed that engagement in the process will raise standards further both for subject leaders and schools. Opportunities for teachers to develop their own practice and thus to raise their own and the schools standards have decreased in England in recent years. Temple (2010, 239) identifies the issues in this area. ‘There is an identified need for more training but this is difficult as head teachers are reluctant to release staff for training in a Foundation subject during school time. ...Several teachers commented on the lack of a specialist Advisor or Advanced Skills teacher with responsibility for history in the area. They felt unsure about how to develop the history curriculum and were concerned how they might be open to criticism from Ofsted if they made inappropriate changes.’

This issue is still evident in the findings in the Historical Association Primary Survey (HA 2016). In 2015 64% of the teachers and educators participating considered training to be a great concern. This gap may partly be due to less direct involvement in schools from local government authorities and the subsequent decline in the number of history specific local authority advisers. Teacher development, when it occurs at all, has become more school based and there are rarely

staff in school with the required expertise to deliver this effectively. In 2011 Ofsted highlighted the, ‘... pressing need for primary teachers to be better supported in their professional development in history...’ (Ofsted 2011, 4). The gap in training is even more serious when it is considered alongside changes in initial teacher training in England. The Teachers’ Standards (DfE 2011) require teachers to demonstrate certain attributes, including good subject knowledge and curriculum knowledge and this includes in all areas of the curriculum. Yet teacher-training providers could be seen to be failing in providing opportunities for trainees to develop both skills and knowledge in all subjects. The time allocated for all trainees to study history along with other non-core areas like geography and art is being reduced as the teacher training, with its increasing range of university and school providers increasingly mirroring the emphasis on English and mathematics in schools. This trend means that trainee teachers have often had little input into developing their knowledge of history since year 9 (13-14) or even younger. Adding to these issues universities have continued to move away from offering specialist routes for their trainees. This means there are fewer history specialists going into schools to support inexperienced teachers.

While the HAQM is awarded to the school, not the individual school leader, it is clear that some of these issues related to opportunities to develop expertise in this area can be remedied through participation in the scheme. Success in gaining the HAQM for a school could also be seen to support teachers in giving them a form of accreditation to support aspirations towards school leadership.

### **The Historical Association Quality Mark framework for primary schools**

The criteria for assessment covers 5 key areas:

- learning and teaching
- leadership

- curriculum
- achievement
- enrichment

There is also a further section to enable schools to present any evidence which they feel supports the award but is not included within any of the specified areas. Each section contains a number of different areas. The descriptors for each focus area relate to 2 levels: silver and gold. For example the section of the Leadership criterion which refers to organization and management is awarded at the silver level if, 'There are clear structures or organising and administering history in the school which are understood and committed to by most involved in the subject'. At the gold level it recognizes that, 'There are reliable and consistent systems of organisation and management of the subject and those involved display a shared understanding and commitment'.

Schools decide at which level they wish to be assessed and have a year from signing up to completing the assessment process. During this time the subject leader, supported by other staff, will compile a portfolio of evidence in support of the award, which is then presented to the assessor electronically. The unique feature of this quality mark is that the assessor, to collect further evidence, visits all schools ready for assessment. Further rigour is added to this already robust process through an additional member of the assessment team verifying the first assessor's decision. The assessor is also supported in reaching their decision by a member of the HA staff. An award lasts for 3 years after which time a school can reapply at the same or at a higher level.

In response to the findings from the pilot period, revisions were made to the criteria and process. Sensitive to external forces impacting on teachers and schools and in response to feedback from participants the HA continues to make the system more streamlined and manageable.

### **Evaluation of the Quality Mark process**

As the HAQM moved into its 4<sup>th</sup> year it was felt that previous participants could now look back on their experiences of undertaking the quality mark experience and consider the impact of the process and award on them and their school. While anecdotal evidence suggested that the benefits to schools and leaders had been numerous, particularly in terms of career progression for subject leaders, more rigorous data collection was now required. Previous research into the impact of quality mark awards was mainly confined to science. Until 2011 science had the status of a core subject, alongside English and Mathematics, in English schools. While it has now lost this status it is still a subject that benefits from a great deal of sponsorship from public and private organisations to support research in the field. While both researchers who undertook this research are employed as Primary Quality Mark assessors, the research has been undertaken independently by the Historical Association. However it is hoped that the research findings could be utilised by the Historical Association to guide them in considering any further revisions.

### **Evaluation of Research investigating the impact of a quality mark award in science and in geography.**

When comparing the outcomes of research on the impact of quality marks awarded by the various subject associations, it is pertinent to keep in mind the differences in the nature of the various schemes. The Primary Science Quality Mark (PSQM) was established in 2008 and while it has some similarities to the HAQM there are a number of significant differences. One is how the subject leaders' development towards the PSQM is actively supported through face-to-face workshops and online learning. Within the HAQM advice may be sought from the association, but this level of support is an optional extra. The HAQM assessment culminates in a visit from the assessor in addition to the scrutiny of the portfolio. In contrast the PSQM and Primary Geography Quality Mark are awarded via the evidence presented in the portfolio. The differing degrees of input and experience could be considered to have a marked effect on impact. The



differing status of the subjects within the curriculum and in school could also have an influence on outcomes.

The PSQM is administered by the University of Hertfordshire and benefits from funding via such organisations as the Royal Society of Chemistry. As such they have been supported in undertaking a number of research studies into the impact of the PSQM. Recently Mackintosh et al. (2017) focused their research on the impact on subject leaders in the primary school. This study utilised Fairman and McKenzie's (2012) conceptual framework of teacher leadership to support the gathering of evidence on impact. The research provides evidence of the PSQM meeting its aims (2017) which includes developing leadership, developing teaching and learning and raising the profile of the subject in school. They concluded that through participation in the PSQM the leaders became more confident in leading the subject and moved from the narrow vision of considering science learning and practice in isolated classrooms to a much broader whole school vision. The impact went beyond the subject leaders with class teachers feeling more confident and better equipped for their own teaching. This confidence related not just to subject knowledge, but also to science pedagogy. The increased confidence also led to greater levels of enjoyment when teaching the subject. As one teacher reported: 'I have enjoyed teaching science more since working towards the PSQM as I am thinking more about my teaching.' (Mackintosh et al. 2017, 67) Pupils' motivation and enthusiasm for the subject was also raised. The research suggests that involvement in the award and the consequent raised profile of the subject across the school supported the development of the subject leader's career and also the potential for them to have influence in the school and beyond. 'Typically, the profile of the science leader was enhanced, giving them the recognition necessary to lead change.' (University of Hertfordshire School of Education 2016, 1). Researchers found the sustained impact of the award was very dependent on the commitment to the subject of the science leader and also the long-term commitment of the school. Yet there was evidence of gains made in career development and of

how this development often took on a broader dimension with participants utilising skills gained and moving beyond primary science into other areas. This suggests that the success of the subject leader may result in an unintended negative impact on the subject or even the school. Researchers raised the issue of sustaining impact following the loss of the subject leader, 'where science leaders move on some of the rich experience and learning goes with them into a new setting.' (University of Hertfordshire, 2016, 4) While this may be beneficial in spreading good practice in the subject and good for the school system as a whole, it may result in issues regarding the sustainability of the PSQM within the original school. Schools committed to sustaining high standards in science generally demonstrate that suitable transition arrangements have been made.

Turner and Naylor (2015) researching into the PSQM, commented on the perceived impact of the mark moving from the initial instrumental viewpoint, whereby participation would enable the leader getting support to develop science teaching and learning in school and a recognised award at the end of the process. Following participation they found that this view moved, in many cases, to a reflective one whereby, 'the PSQM ...was seen as a catalyst for professional growth which is valuable and worthwhile in itself...' (2015 2) This point co-relates to the long-term gains highlighted in White's report (2016) and an examination of the timescales for this changed attitude to come into force would be valuable extension to research in this area.

Turner and Naylor (2015) also highlight a potential added bonus of participation in the award, as it may lead to recognition by Ofsted of success in the subject. They make reference to comments by Ofsted (2013) whereby they value schools taking part in such a process and thus mitigating the risks of a decline in the profile of the subject. 'The process of gaining the award brings benefits beyond the certificate, because it requires school leaders to evaluate their provision and justify their science curriculum as being fit for promoting good learning.' (21) A worthwhile extension to facilitate further evidence of this observation would be a scrutiny of individual school Ofsted inspection reports.

While the impact on schools and more specifically on subject leaders is well documented there is less information about other stakeholders. However the 2016 PSQM Summary Report (2016) contains some evidence of impact on the awarding organisation itself with them benefiting from, ‘...up-to-date awareness of developments in the field, marketing opportunities, building membership, and providing a rich, interwoven network to enhance science teaching and learning through primary science leaders’ (2016, 7).

Owens (2013) reflection on the impact of the Primary Geography Quality Mark highlights another potential group to benefit from the assessment process, the assessors themselves. She makes reference to the value of the moderation process for the team as it is regarded as CPD, ‘...as it requires careful analysis of information, fine tuned judgments and collaborative appraisal.’ (2013, 387). She goes on to discuss how the process helps to create opportunities, ‘...for professional conversations about the health of the subject...(and) facilitate the growth of learning communities.’ (2013, 396).

The review of the literature would therefore suggest the quality mark has an impact in a number of key areas. Greater confidence and enjoyment in teaching the subject is evident, not just for the subject leader, but also in the whole staff. The profile of the subject is enhanced, by engaging in the process as well as in achieving the award in a number of ways. The quality of teaching and learning in the subject improves. The assessment process also benefits the assessors. Both the process and the award have a positive impact on the career of the subject leader. Assessors benefit through engaging in the process. Learning from the insights from the evaluations of Science and Geography quality marks, the development of the evaluation processes developed in history are

## **Research investigating the impact of the Quality Mark for history**

### ***Methodology***

It was decided to initially interview a member of the Historical Association staff, who had been involved in the development of the award, and now supported the administration of the process. From the interview findings, further questions were then developed which were appropriate for Subject Leaders. The focus of the research on Primary Schools meant there were twenty-seven Subject Leaders who were potential respondents, so a questionnaire seemed the most suitable data collection tool. However, despite several promptings, only five Subject Leaders responded to the request for completion of the questionnaire. Turner and Naylor (2015) also faced this issue with their research into the PSQM,

“The small scale of the teacher case studies meant the amount of data potentially was limited. For this reason the decision was made to extend the number of data sources and data collection mechanisms. This would enable a greater degree of triangulation and greater certainty in the validity and potential generalization of the data” (Taylor and Naylor 2015).

It was therefore decided to ask the primary assessors to complete the questionnaire as collectively they had been involved in the vast majority of the award assessments. There were potentially nine assessors. However as the researchers were two of these primary assessors this reduced the potential to seven. Six questionnaires were collected from this group. It must be recognized that the assessors come to this from a range of differing backgrounds; teacher educators, head teachers and advisors are all represented in the group. Their particular perspective will be influenced by their ‘day job’. Although this is still a small-scale research project, it was felt the data collected represented a reasonable sample. All the data collected was qualitative.

The impact of the award may be felt beyond those schools who actually apply for the award. The framework is available to all HA members so there may be schools who have chosen not to apply for the award but who have benefitted from the development of the framework. Only one school which applied was not awarded a quality mark and this took place during the pilot period. No questionnaire was received from this school so all the data collected refers to successful schools.

The results must therefore be treated with some caution.

## **Discussion of the findings**

Once all the data had been analysed it became clear there were 5 main themes; School Improvement, Subject Coordinator, Improved Teaching and Learning, and the Benefits to assessors. Negative issues are also considered.

### ***School Improvement***

The framework provided by the HA was felt to be extremely useful in supporting the Subject Leaders and Senior Management Team in planning and developing improvements across the school. The Subject Coordinators were able to audit the on-going work and produce an action plan. Many schools used this as a tool for improvement over the year leading up to the assessment. Both Subject Leaders and Assessors commented on how useful this could be. One subject leader commented on the 'very clear picture of our strengths and areas for development as a result of the process'. Another commented on 'building the team spirit in the school through working on this project – it gave us a common language for improvement'. Subject leaders also commented on how valuable the time and opportunity to evaluate can be, 'an opportunity to fully assess the quality of history teaching and learning in our school was incredibly useful' and 'examine how each year group adapts the curriculum'. These teachers saw the time and space to examine in detail what is actually going on in the teaching of history, a framework against which to assess it, and the opportunity to reflect and then develop as some of the main benefits of the whole process.

The framework gave guidance and support for positive changes but for many it went beyond that. Almost all of the subject leaders commented that the HAQM became a catalyst for improvement in other Foundation subjects, for example, the 'process has set a standard for subject leadership' ... 'a 'model' for other subject areas' and history has 'raised its stakes as a lead subject – good

practice can be used to develop non-core, and sometimes core subjects'. Many of the schools also used this as an impetus to introduce assessment for history, and consequently other subjects.

Participants commented on the 'need to impose an assessment procedure on a foundation subject has led to a discussion and investigation about the importance of having formal assessments of all subjects' and 'we have introduced a more rigorous tracking system which is more inclusive and does not rely on children's literacy skills for the assessment in other subject areas'. However, literacy has not been left out of the process, after all it is impossible to teach history without using literacy. One Subject Leader commented 'many of our half-termly independent writing tasks are now history based', so the impact is sometimes felt beyond the history curriculum.

A large proportion of the respondents mentioned cross curricular work; for example, a 'wider range of subjects used to support and develop good history (drama, art, maths, science as well as literacy)' Although history experts are not always in favour of cross-curricular links in schools where the subject leader is confident and knowledgeable this could be seen as a positive move.

### ***Subject Leader***

The effect of this process on the Subject Leader can be profound. The major benefits were seen as an increase in confidence – mentioned by all the subject leaders and several assessors, a renewal of their enthusiasm for the subject and recognition for their efforts. The HA representative described the process as 'a professional development journey'. For one subject leader, the process has led to him/her to apply for the NPQH and for another it has led to them enrolling on a PhD to pursue their own research in history.

Increasing confidence levels is mentioned by all the subject leaders, 'the confidence to share good practice with other subject leaders within the school' ... 'Greater confidence about what good history looks like' and 'confidence and enthusiasm to strive for the Gold Award on our reassessment' were typical comments. The subject leaders also mentioned 'renewed enthusiasm

for the subject' and it has 'reinvigorated my personal historical research'. The CPD (Continuing Professional Development) which this process provides was also mentioned; 'encouraged me to attend CPD at HA Conference' and the CPD for Subject Leaders provided by the HA up and down the country was also mentioned by participants. Signing up for this process had encouraged subject leaders to feel confident enough to ask for support to attend these opportunities, and also for Head Teachers to agree to this. A further distinct advantage of the process was 'subject leaders are now given more time to develop their subject' or simply 'time' was mentioned several times. One participant also mentioned 'reduced isolation' and an assessor mentioned the 'opportunity for discussions with history experts'. One participant also mentioned how the process had 'enabled and encouraged me to develop the process of scrutiny'. This is clearly a useful skill for a subject leader to have. Several assessors noted that the process allows subject leaders and schools to be recognized for their dedication and work; 'celebration of the work undertaken' ... 'recognition externally' and 'their hard work over a period of years is validated and celebrated'.

As the coordinator of the Foundation subject, albeit one with a reasonable status in many primary schools, subject leaders can often feel the lack of CPD opportunities and can lead to feelings of isolation and a lack of confidence in their own abilities. To some extent social media such as Facebook can help this but the chance to have face to face discussions with peers and experts should not be underestimated. Several assessors also mentioned that successfully leading this process had led to 'personal career advancement' for several subject leaders they were aware of. This could be one reason why so few subject leaders completed the questionnaire but this is difficult to verify.

### ***Improved Teaching and Learning***

As the status of history in the schools improved, so too did the teaching and learning. Pupils'

achievements were recorded as improving too. The status of history as a subject was often mentioned by subject leaders and assessors alike; 'History has a much larger presence around the school' ... 'raised the profile of the subject' and 'a sense of the importance... that the school attaches to history'. Respondents reported that lessons observed improved, teachers had an improved understanding of what makes good history and links with external partners were developed. Subject Leaders reported that 'teachers now teaching skills based enquiry lessons to a high quality and understand the importance of this' ... 'a greater understanding of chronology due to timelines displayed around the school' and 'standards in historical skills have improved dramatically.' The latter two comments do not specify whether this relates to teachers or children but it could be argued that children's skills could not improve without the teachers' skills first improving. Another participant stated, 'pupils are more confident' and have a 'clearer understanding of the skills required'. Both Assessors and Subject Leaders drew attention to 'extended history provision', both within and outside school. These schools are making an effort to engage the children in a wider range of experiences, some record spending significant sums on resources and others on creative enrichment activities and trips, History days or History Weeks and developing the homework requests. This has led to improved achievement of the children. For example, one participant describes the children's 'knowledge of historical fact and interpretation is above the expected level for children of their age'. This demonstrates that the process is having positive outcomes for the pupils, as well as the teachers.

Links beyond the immediate school are also reported as developing well. These include formal links with Heritage School area hubs, local museums and Universities as well as informal links with parents and the local communities. The HA representative elaborated how the QM process "helped them to get parents involved to a greater extent, to develop local networks, to collaborate with other schools and with community providers...to really put history on the map in the school".



### ***Benefits for Assessors***

The PSQM also acknowledged the assessors also benefit from this experience. This was also the case for the history assessors. The opportunity to observe a wider variety of good history, reflection, self-evaluation and ‘the experience of focusing on good history as opposed to supporting schools in need of support’ is a pleasant change for those assessors who are advisors. For the Initial Teacher Education staff and head teachers ‘building a personal repertoire of good examples, case studies and ideas to share’ is invaluable. In addition, the experience of assessing and feeding back to Subject Leaders and Head Teachers both strengths and areas for improvement is a useful personal skill to develop. The opportunity to be involved in high level discussions about what constitutes good history and to be recognized as an ‘expert’ in the field is very affirming. The HA representative describes one of the benefits of being involved, ‘for us the twice yearly meetings to chew the fat and to develop...it’s never finished...a real team effort of development and constantly evolving’.

### ***Issues arising***

Most Subject Leaders did not identify any issues or negatives to the process. However, the assessors were more likely to mention increased workload for the subject leader and the amount of preparation, for example collecting evidence. The only subject leader who did mention this said, ‘a lot of preparation – worth the effort though’. This is understandable as Subject Leaders may not be inclined to criticise the process – partly because they perhaps see the whole experience as beneficial but also as the two researchers are themselves Assessors and so Subject Leaders might be more reticent in their comments to them. The HA representative acknowledges some of the disadvantages ‘Time factor is one...very valuable because of the rigor and the professional development aspect but it’s not just a tick box easy exercise....it is onerous and it is

something that you are going to have to dedicate some hours to.’

## Conclusions

The data collected clearly demonstrates that the benefits outweigh the issues quite considerably.

A great deal of work and commitment is expected from the Subject Leaders but this is recognised and rewarded when the award is made. The status of history improves both within the school and in the immediate community and there is often a long-term ripple effect. Case study materials are slowly developing with several articles in the *Primary History* journal and further resources published on the Historical Association web site. The Quality Mark process also addresses many of the criticisms of Ofsted when they focused on primary schools; namely non-specialist teachers’ lack of confidence and knowledge of pedagogy, poor assessment and tracking systems, insufficient challenge and poor pupil outcomes. The data seem to reflect the experiences of completing the PSQM quite significantly. Many of the same positive effects were mentioned by the respondents. Turner and Naylor (2015) used Guskey (2000) to evaluate the PSQM in terms of Continuing Professional Development. This is a useful framework to apply and much of Turner and Naylor’s outcomes are mirrored by the HAQM.

Primary History Quality Mark	
participant’s reactions	subject leaders, and other teachers are positive about the process of applying for the HAQM.
participants learning	teachers’ understanding of the pedagogy of history, and the status of History are acknowledged to improve
support and change in the organisation	improvements beyond the teaching and learning in History observed

participants' use of new knowledge and skills	the teaching of history is seen to improve
student learning outcomes	the children's achievement and enjoyment levels improved

Caption: Table 1 Five levels of Professional Development Evaluation (Guskey 2000) which mirror many of the findings of the evaluations of the impact of science and the history Quality Mark.

It is suggested that this evaluation is repeated and extended when at least one full 3-year cycle has been completed to ensure schools that are applying to renew their awards can be questioned further and the long-term sustainability and impact may be clearer. Subject Leader questionnaires could be included as part of the process to enable a greater of validity to be achieved. Scrutiny of the reports produced by the assessors for each school could also be examined, and where this is a reapplication the original report could be compared.

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