# Policy Exchange warns British history lessons risk bias amid push for inclusivity



Children in British schools are increasingly exposed to what has been called a "woke" interpretation of history, a trend highlighted by a recent investigation from the think-tank, Policy Exchange. This report raises alarms over the narratives shaping the curriculum, especially regarding significant historical events and figures that are either misrepresented or omitted altogether. Key aspects of British history are reportedly disappearing from the classroom, with only a small fraction of pupils learning about pivotal battles like Waterloo and Trafalgar.

According to Policy Exchange's findings, following the protests spurred by George Floyd's death in 2020, schools quickly integrated materials that feature ethnic minorities to align their teachings with what is perceived as anti-racist education. This swift incorporation of new content, however, has led to criticisms that history lessons are increasingly dominated by ideological perspectives rather than factual recounting. Chris McGovern, a former history teacher and chairman of the Campaign for Real Education, has echoed concerns about history being "captured by the Left," implying that the narratives are skewed by political agendas rather than rooted in established historical scholarship.

One notable example cited in the report includes resources such as "Brilliant Black British History," which asserts that black individuals constructed the ancient monument of Stonehenge. This claim is challenged by many historians as lacking empirical support and veering into contested territory. Instead of fostering critical engagement with historical evidence, such narratives are often presented as established fact, leading to what the report describes as "radical and contested interpretations" that overshadow a genuine understanding of historical events.

Further complicating the educational landscape, the report points to resources from the Classical Association’s "Queering the Past" project. Among these, it is claimed that Roman Emperor Nero married a trans woman named Sporus, a narrative that glosses over the controversial and potentially coercive nature of their union. While the marriage did indeed occur—historically discussed as a public event that shocked Roman society—it is essential to note that Sporus was subjected to forced castration, contrasting starkly with contemporary notions of consensual gender transition. This historical context adds a layer of complexity that is often missing from modern interpretations.

The disquiet surrounding history education is underscored by broader concerns regarding the government's ongoing review of the curriculum to better "reflect the issues and diversities of our society." Critics argue that while diversification is essential, the current iteration of historical teaching may already do so inadequately, leading to an imbalance where critical events of British history are neglected in favour of newer narratives that may not hold the same scholarly weight.

In light of these findings, figures such as Lord Blunkett and Nadhim Zahawi have supported the call for a more impartial and comprehensive overview of British history in schools. The aim is not only to ensure that pupils receive a well-rounded education but also to preserve the integrity of historical discourse. With the Department for Education acknowledging the need for a broad and balanced curriculum, it is increasingly clear that discussions around the teaching of history must prioritise factual accuracy alongside inclusivity.

As the teaching of history continues to evolve, it remains crucial to engage with the past in a manner that respects both its complexities and the diverse perspectives derived from it. The task lies in striking a balance between updating educational narratives to include underrepresented voices and maintaining a rigorous historical framework that reflects established scholarship. Without this, the fear persists that history might become a vehicle for ideological positioning rather than an avenue for learning about the multifaceted nature of our collective past.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2
2. Paragraphs 3, 4
3. Paragraph 5
4. Paragraphs 5, 6
5. Paragraphs 5, 6
6. Paragraph 7
7. Paragraph 8

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14723303/woke-schools-Stonehenge-built-black-people-Waterloo-Trafalgar-untaught.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/sporus> - This article provides an overview of Sporus, a young freedman of Emperor Nero, who was castrated and married by Nero in a public ceremony. It details the historical context of their relationship and its reception in ancient Rome, highlighting the scandal and moral outrage it provoked among contemporaries.
3. <https://www.ancient.eu/Sporus/> - An in-depth exploration of Sporus's life, this article discusses his background, the circumstances leading to his castration and marriage to Nero, and the subsequent public and historical reactions. It also examines the broader implications of this event on Roman society and its moral standards.
4. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Sporus> - This entry from the Encyclopaedia Britannica offers a concise biography of Sporus, detailing his relationship with Nero, the nature of their marriage, and the historical accounts of their union. It also touches upon the cultural and societal reactions to this unconventional relationship in ancient Rome.
5. <https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/nero> - A comprehensive article on Emperor Nero, this piece provides context to his reign, including his notorious acts and the marriage to Sporus. It discusses Nero's rule, his personal life, and the impact of his actions on Roman history and society.
6. <https://www.ancient.eu/Nero/> - This article delves into Nero's life and reign, providing insights into his policies, personal relationships, and the infamous marriage to Sporus. It examines the historical sources that document these events and their significance in the context of Roman imperial history.
7. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nero> - An authoritative source on Emperor Nero, this entry covers his early life, rise to power, reign, and the controversial aspects of his rule, including the marriage to Sporus. It provides a balanced view of his contributions and the controversies surrounding his leadership.