

Geography Policy

Aims and Objectives

Geography teaches an understanding of places and environments. Through their work in geography, children learn to be Geographers – they explore their local area, and they compare their life in this area with that in other regions in the United Kingdom and in the rest of the world. They learn how to draw and interpret simple maps, and they develop the skills of research, investigation, analysis and problem-solving. Through their growing knowledge and understanding of human geography, children gain an appreciation of daily life in their own country. Geography teaching also motivates children to find out about the physical world.

Our objectives in the teaching of geography are:

- to enable children to gain knowledge and understanding of places in the world;
- to increase children's knowledge of other cultures and, in so doing, teach a respect and understanding;
- to allow children to learn graphic skills, including how to use, draw and interpret simple maps;
- to enable children to know and understand environmental problems at a local, regional and global level;
- to encourage in children a commitment to sustainable development, and an appreciation of what 'global citizenship' means;
- to develop in children a variety of other skills, including those of enquiry, problem-solving, ICT, investigation, and that of presenting their conclusions in the most appropriate way;
- to develop the cross-curricular use of geography in all subjects.

Teaching and Learning Style

We use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our geography lessons to support our Destinations Curriculum. We combine whole-class and groups teaching methods, and with practical and enquiry-based research activities. We encourage children to ask as well as answer geographical questions. We offer them the opportunity to use a variety of data, such as maps, statistics, graphs, pictures and aerial photographs, and we enable them to use ICT in geography lessons where this serves to enhance their learning. Children take part in role-play and discussions, and they present reports to the rest of the class. They engage in a wide variety of problem-solving activities. Wherever possible, we involve the children in 'real' geographical activities, e.g. research of a local environmental problem, or use of the Internet to investigate a current issue.

We recognise the fact that there are children of widely different geographical abilities in all classes, and we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this by:

- setting tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty, some children not completing all tasks;
- grouping children by ability where appropriate and setting different tasks to each ability group;
- providing resources of different complexity, according to the ability of the child;
- using classroom assistants to support the work of individual children or groups of children.

Geography Curriculum Planning

Geography is a foundation subject in the National Curriculum. We use the national scheme of work for geography as the basis for our curriculum planning. We have adapted the national scheme to the local circumstances of our school through our Destinations Curriculum, i.e. we make use of the local environment and also choose a locality where the human activities and physical features provide a contrast to those that predominate in our own immediate area.

Our curriculum planning is in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). Our long-term plan maps the geography topics studied in each term during each Key Stage. The subject leader devises this plan in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each year group. In some cases, we combine the geographical study with work in other subject areas.

We use the national scheme of work as the basis for our medium-term plans. This gives details of each unit of work for each term. The subject leader reviews these plans on a regular basis.

Each class teacher creates a plan for each lesson. These plans list specific learning objectives and expected outcomes for each lesson. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and often discusses them with the geography subject leader on an informal basis.

We plan the topics in geography so that they build on prior learning. Children of all abilities have the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit and, through planned progression built into the scheme of work, we offer them an increasing challenge as they move up the school.

The Foundation Stage

We teach geography in Early Years classes as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the geographical aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. Geography makes a significant contribution to the development of each child's knowledge and understanding of the world, through activities such as collecting postcards from different places, singing songs from around the world, or investigating what makes a 'good' playground.

The Contribution of Geography to Teaching in Other Curriculum Areas **English**

Geography makes a significant contribution to the teaching of English in our school because it actively promotes the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. We ensure that some of the texts that we use in the literacy hour are geographical in nature. For example, in Key Stage 1, we use the Katie Morag books by Mairi Hedderwick to develop children's knowledge and understanding in the QCA unit, 'An Island Home'. We also use environmental issues as a way of developing the children's writing ability, by asking them to record information and write reports and letters.

Mathematics

The teaching of geography in our school contributes to children's mathematical understanding in a variety of ways. We teach the children how to represent objects with maps. The children study space, scale and distance. They also use graphs to explore, analyse and illustrate a variety of data e.g. the traffic outside our school.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship

Geography contributes significantly to the teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship. Firstly, the subject matter lends itself to raising matters of citizenship and social welfare. For example, children study the way in which people recycle material, and

how environments are changed for better or for worse. Secondly, the nature of the subject means that children have the opportunity to take part in debates and discussions. Thus, geography in our school promotes the concept of positive citizenship.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development

We offer children in our school many opportunities to examine the fundamental questions in life through the medium of geography. For example, their work on the changing landscape and environmental issues leads children to ask questions about the evolution of the planet. We encourage the children to reflect on the impact of mankind on our world, and we introduce the concept of 'stewardship' in relation to sustainable development. Through teaching about contrasting localities, we enable the children to learn about inequality and injustice in the world. We help children to develop their knowledge and understanding of different cultures, so that they learn to avoid stereotyping other people, and acquire a positive attitude towards others. We help contribute to the children's social development by teaching them about how society works to resolve difficult issues. Geography contributes to the children's appreciation of what is right and wrong by raising many moral questions.

Geography and ICT

Information and communication technology enhances our teaching of geography, wherever appropriate, in both Key Stages. Children use ICT to enhance their skills in data handling and in presenting written work. They research information through the Internet, and libraries of digital images (aerial photographs, for example). We offer children the opportunity to use the digital camera.

Geography and Inclusion

At our school, we teach geography to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. Geography implements the school curriculum policy of providing a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our geography teaching, we provide learning opportunities that match the needs of children with learning difficulties, and we take into account the targets set for individual children in their provision maps. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details, see separate policies: Special Educational Needs; Disability Discrimination; Gifted and Talented Children; English as an Additional Language (EAL).

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels. This helps to ensure that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

Intervention through School Action and School Action Plus will lead to the creation of an IEP for children with special educational needs. The provision map may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to geography.

We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning geography. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, such as a visit to a river, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

Assessment for Learning

Children demonstrate their ability in geography in a variety of different ways. Pupils might, for example, dress up in costumes from different parts of the world. Teachers assess children's work by making informal judgements during lessons. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher assesses the work and uses this information to plan future learning. Written or verbal feedback is given to the child to help guide his or her progress.

We assess work in geography by making informal judgements as we observe the children during lessons. Once the children complete a piece of work, we mark and comment, as necessary. Once they complete a whole unit of work, we make a summary judgement of the work of each pupil in relation to the National Curriculum levels of attainment. We record the attainment grades, and use these to plan future work with that pupil, to provide the basis for assessing the progress of the child, and to pass information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

The subject leader keeps samples of the children's work in a portfolio which shows the expected level of achievement in geography in each year of the school.

Resources

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all the geography units in the QCA Scheme of Work. We keep these resources in a central store. We also keep a collection of geography equipment and a set of atlases. In the library, we have a supply of geography topic books and a range of educational software to support the children's individual research.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork is integral to good geography teaching, and we include as many opportunities as we can to involve children in practical geographical research and enquiry.

We let all the children carry out an investigation into the local environment, and we give them opportunities to observe and record information around the school site.

For health and safety issues regarding fieldwork, our school follows the guidance contained in its policies on Off-Site Visits and on Health and Safety.

Monitoring and review

The coordination and planning of the geography curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader, who also:

- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in geography and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- gives the Head teacher an Action Plan in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in geography and indicates areas for further improvement;
- reviews evidence of the children's work, and observes geography lessons across the school.

The quality of teaching and learning in geography is monitored and evaluated by the Head teacher as part of the school's agreed cycle of lesson observations.