



St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Murton

Geography Policy

Introduction

This policy outlines the teaching, organisation and management of Geography taught and learnt at St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School. Within our school we see Geography as an opportunity for pupils to:

- develop an understanding and appreciation of the variety of people, places and environments, both in the United Kingdom and in the wider world.
- introduce the pupils to what is involved in developing an understanding and appreciation of different people, places and environments.

We believe that this can be achieved by working on skills and enquiries which are familiar to the children. For Foundation Stage and key Stage 1 children this begins in the immediate surroundings of the school and its local area. These skills and enquiries can be extended as the children compare and contrast images of more distant places and their people, as the children progress through Key Stage 2. Geography will also give the opportunity to develop an environmental education and an awareness of citizenship.

Aims and objectives:

Geography teaches an understanding of places and environments. Through their work in geography, children learn about their local area and 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 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 life in other cultures. Geography teaching also motivates children to find out about the physical world and enables them to recognise the importance of sustainable development for the future of mankind.

The aims 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 of what it means to be a positive citizen in a multi-cultural country;

- to allow children to learn graphic skills, including how to use, draw and interpret 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 a variety of other skills, including those of enquiry, problem solving, ICT, investigation and how to present their conclusions in the most appropriate way.

Teaching and Learning Styles

We use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our geography lessons. We believe in whole-class teaching methods and we combine these with 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 IT 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 common 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 in the room and setting different tasks to each ability group;
- providing resources of different complexity according to the ability of the child;
- using teaching assistants to support the work of individual children or groups of children.

Differentiation

At St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we recognise the fact that in all classes there are children of widely different abilities. In geography we seek to 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 common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses
- Setting tasks of increasing difficulty. Not all children complete all tasks
- Sometimes grouping children by ability in the room and setting different tasks for each ability group
- Providing resources of different complexity depending on the ability of the child
- Using teaching assistants to support children individually or in groups

Geography Curriculum Planning

We teach Geography as a discrete subject. Each topic is planned we take our objectives from the New National Curriculum 2014 programmes of study. We ensure that, over the course of the academic year, there is a good coverage of the key skills, knowledge and understanding set out in the National Curriculum. There are opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each topic so that the children are increasingly challenged as they move up through the school. The class teacher breaks the medium term topic down into smaller sessions and writes this on a weekly planner.

Our long-term curriculum plan (see appendix 1) maps the geography content spread over the year. Some topics have a greater focus on geography than others.

Each class teacher creates a plan for each lesson. These daily lesson plans list specific learning objectives. The class teacher keeps these individual plans and uploads them to Share Point.

We plan the topics in geography so that they build upon prior learning. Children of all abilities have the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit. Progression Grids (see appendix 2) for each year group are accessible to each teacher and they can also access other year group's expectations to differentiate where necessary. We offer them an increasing challenge as they move up the school.

Foundation Stage

We teach geography in reception classes as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year and we aim to develop a child's own personal sense of time. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we

relate the Geography side of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. Geography makes a significant contribution to the ELG objectives of developing a child's knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live.

Teaching geography to children with special educational needs

At our school we teach geography to all children, whatever their ability. Geography forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our geography teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress. We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning geography. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a visit to a fieldwork site, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

Assessment and recording

We assess children's work in history by making informal judgements as we observe them during each Geography lesson. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher marks the work and comments as necessary. At the end of each History topic children are assessed as to whether they have met the expected level for History, fallen below or exceeded using the objectives for each year group and this is recorded on the Foundation Assessment Grids which are monitored by the History Subject Leader. Progression Grids for each year group are accessible to each teacher and they can also access other year group's expectations to differentiate where necessary.

Evidence of a Reception Child's achievement is collated and put in their own Foundation Stage Learning Journey.

The Geography subject leader keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio. These demonstrate what the expected level of achievement is in history for each age group in the school.

At the end of each academic year the Geography Subject Leader will compare results to the previous year's achievements in the subject.

Resources

There are a range of resources for teaching geography in school. The library contains a good supply of topic books and we have software to support children's individual research and learning. We also use the resource boxes provided by the Durham Learning Resources team.

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.

Trips to local areas of geographical interest can be arranged to link to our creative curriculum topics.

Monitoring and Review

Monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in Geography is the responsibility of the Geography subject leader and the head teacher.

Throughout the year the Geography Subject Leader will carry out classroom observations, learning walks as well as book and planning scrutiny.

The work of the Geography subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of geography, being informed about current developments in the subject.

Equal Opportunities

We understand that the children come to their learning in history with different backgrounds in terms of knowledge, experience, ability and capability. We therefore aim to ensure that Geography throughout the school is accessible by all pupils, regardless of ability, gender, race or belief. The teaching is made relevant to pupils' own experiences and abilities.

Reviewed by M. Hunter

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