

Geography Policy

1 Aims and objectives

1.1 At St John Vianney R.C. Primary School we are committed to providing a high-quality Geography education that inspires in pupils a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people that will remain with them for the rest of their lives. Teaching should equip pupils with knowledge about diverse places, people, resources and natural and human environments, together with a deep understanding of the earth's key physical and human processes. As pupils progress, their growing knowledge about the world should help them to deepen their understanding of the interaction between physical and human processes, and of the formation and use of landscapes and environments. Geographical knowledge provides the tools and approaches that explain how the earth's features at different scales are shaped, interconnected and change over time. This policy sets out a framework within which teaching and non-teaching staff can work, and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. It has been developed through a process of consultation with school staff and governors.

1.2 The aims of geography are:

- To develop contextual knowledge of the location of places, seas and oceans, including their defining physical and human characteristics;
- To understand the processes that give rise to key physical and human geographical features of the world, how these are interdependent and how they bring about spatial variation and change over time;
- To develop competence in the geographical skills needed to: collect, analyse and communicate with a range of data gathered through experiences of fieldwork that deepen their understanding of geographical processes;
- To interpret a range of sources of geographical information, including maps, diagrams, globes, aerial photographs and Geographical Information Systems (GIS);
- To communicate geographical information in a variety of ways, including through maps and writing at length.

1.3 Objectives

- To stimulate children's interest in their surroundings and develop a knowledge and understanding of the physical and human processes which shape places.
- 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 provide learning opportunities that enthuse, engage, and motivate children to learn and foster a sense of curiosity and wonder at the beauty of the world around them.
- To encourage in children a commitment to sustainable development and an appreciation of what 'global citizenship' means.
- To make sense of their own surroundings through learning about their own locality and the interaction between people and the environment.

2 Teaching and learning style

- 2.1** 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 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.
- 2.2** 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 classroom assistants to support the work of individual children or groups of children.

3 Geography curriculum planning

- 3.1** At St John Vianney R.C. Primary School our geography curriculum is carefully planned to engage and excite all our learners. Our long-term and medium-term plans map out the skills and themes covered each term for each key stage. These plans define what we will teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term.
- 3.2** Geography is taught as a discrete subject and is taught through blocked units over 2-3-week time period.
- 3.3** 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 and, through planned progression built into the scheme of work, we offer them an increasing challenge as they move up the school.
- 3.4** We have had the opportunity to work alongside Sacred Heart High School and implement a new geography scheme in Key Stage Two.

4 Early Years Foundation Stage

- 4.1** As the Nursery and Reception classes are part of the Early Years Foundation Stage, we relate the geographical aspects of the children's work to the statements and range levels set out in the Birth to Five Matters guidance, which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. We teach Geography in Nursery and Reception classes as an integral part of the 'Understanding of the World' area of learning, covered during the year. Through 'People, Culture and Communities' and 'The Natural World' children are encouraged to think creatively, make predictions and begin to make links between their learning and what they already know. Geography makes a significant contribution to developing a child's understanding of the world through activities such as exploring their local area, drawing maps and listening to geography-based stories.

5 Key Stage One

- 5.1** During Key Stage One, pupils investigate their local area and a contrasting area in the United Kingdom or abroad, finding out about the environment in both areas and the people who live there. They also begin to learn about the wider world. They carry out geographical enquiry inside and outside the classroom. In doing this, they ask geographical questions about people, places and environments, and use geographical skills and resources, such as maps and photographs.

6 Key Stage Two

- 6.1** During Key Stage Two, pupils investigate a variety of people, places and environments in the United Kingdom and abroad, and start to make links between different places in the world. They find out how people affect the environment and how they are affected by it. Pupils carry out geographical enquiry inside and outside the classroom. In doing this, they ask geographical questions, and use geographical skills and resources, such as maps, atlases, aerial photographs and ICT.

Children will develop geographical enquiry skills, including asking geographical questions, collecting and recording information and identifying different views. They will acquire the appropriate practical skills associated with Geography, including using suitable vocabulary, fieldwork techniques and maps, plans and atlases. Pupils will use secondary sources of information with accuracy, including aerial photographs, satellite images, etc. As well as making its own distinctive contribution to the school curriculum, geography contributes to the wider aims of primary education. Teachers will ensure that links between subjects are maximised.

7 The contribution of geography to teaching in other curriculum areas

7.1 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. For example, in Upper Key Stage 2, we organise debates on environmental issues because we believe that these develop speaking and listening skills. Reports, letters and recording information will all develop

children's writing ability. 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.

7.2 Mathematics

Geography in our school contributes to the teaching of Mathematics in a variety of ways. We teach the children how to represent objects with maps. The children study space, scale and distance and they learn how to use four- and six-figure grid references. They also use graphs to explore, analyse and illustrate a variety of data.

7.3 Computing

We make provision for the children to use the laptops and Ipads in Geography lessons where appropriate. We incorporate computing in our Geography curriculum planning across all Key Stages. Children use computing in Geography to enhance their skills in data handling and in presenting written work. They research information through the internet and geographical resources. We also offer children the opportunity to use digital cameras and Ipads to record and use photographic images. Children will have the opportunity to use Digimaps in school.

7.4 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship

Geography contributes significantly to the teaching of Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) and Citizenship. Firstly, the subject matter lends itself to raising matters of citizenship and social welfare. For example, children study the way people re-cycle 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.

7.5 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 of economic development. Geography contributes to the children's appreciation of what is right and wrong by raising many moral questions during the programme of study. Children's geographical understanding in this area is supported and enhanced by the Nurturing Human Wholeness: Statements To Live By programme.

8 Teaching Geography to children with Special Educational Needs

- 8.1** At St John Vianney Catholic Primary School we teach Geography to all children, whatever their ability. Geography forms part of the school curriculum to provide 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 SEN Support Plans.

9 Assessment and recording

- 9.1** At St John Vianney R.C. Primary School assessment is an integral part of the teaching process. Assessment is used to inform planning and to facilitate differentiation. The assessment of children's work is on-going to ensure that understanding is being achieved and progress is being made. Feedback is given to the children as soon as possible, and marking work will be guided by the school's Marking and Feedback Policy. Year 3 - 6 will

10 Resources

- 10.1** We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach Geography; we have access to Digimaps for school and interactive boards to access the internet as a class. Visits are planned to enhance learning and provide practical experiences. People with an interest, or expertise, in a particular topic or area of geography could be invited into school to work with the children. These might be parents, grandparents, other family members, neighbours, or representatives of the local community. Any resourcing issues are highlighted during the year when monitoring takes place and replenished and added to, where appropriate.

11 Fieldwork

- 11.1** 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.
- 11.2** At Key Stage 1 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. At Key Stage 2 we offer the children the opportunity to take part in a residential in Year 5 and Year 6, where further map work and orienteering activities enhance their school-based learning.

12 Monitoring and review

- 12.1** The Geography subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standard of the children's work and the quality of teaching in Geography. The Geography subject leader is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of Geography, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The Geography subject leader gives the headteacher an annual audit in which she evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement. We allocate special time for the vital task of reviewing

samples of children's work, talking to the children about Geography and for visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject.

Review Date: April 2022