



St. Leonard's Primary School, Stafford

Geography Policy



INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the guidelines for the teaching of geography within this school. It has been produced to reflect the needs of our children both as they are expressed in the aims of the school, and in the latest National Curriculum for Geography. We teach the skills and knowledge required by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and in Key Stages 1 and 2 through topics, as suggested within the DfES National Curriculum for Geography. This policy provides opportunities to plan sequences of work, learning outcomes and teaching approaches that develop successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens through high quality geography education.

We are committed to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum, and have high expectations of all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter. This policy is intended to help ensure that this school promotes the individuality of all children, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, age, disability, gender or background.

1. Aims and Objectives

1.1 Geography teaches an understanding of places and environments. Through their work in geography, children learn about 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 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.

1.2 The objectives of teaching geography in our school are:

- to enable children to gain knowledge and understanding of places in the world and what they are like.
- to promote an understanding of the ways in which places are interdependent and how much humans and physical environments are interconnected.
- to enable children to gain a wide range of geographical vocabulary, knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes.
- to develop in children a variety of other skills, including those of asking geographical questions, problem-solving, ICT, analysing evidence, reasoning and drawing conclusions, investigation, and that of communicating their findings in the most appropriate way.
- to develop an enquiring mind, demonstrating originality, imagination and creativity to interpret and represent the subject matter.
- to participate in fieldwork to enhance geographical skills and techniques.
- to enable children to know and understand environmental problems at a local, regional and global level, so to encourage in children a commitment to sustainable development, and an appreciation of what "global citizenship" means

2. Teaching and Learning style

2.1 We understand that people learn in different ways and so we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our geography lessons. We believe that effective teaching and learning must take into account prior learning and experience. We encourage children to ask as well as answer geographical questions.

2.2 We offer children the opportunity to use a variety of resources and 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 discussions and debates, presenting their findings to the rest of the class. They engage in a variety of problem-solving activities. Wherever possible, we involve children in "real", purposeful geographical activities because having first-hand experience is a vital part of learning.

2.3 A variety of approaches will be used to teach geography including teacher/visitor led lessons, tasks for individuals and groups, enquiry based research and fieldwork (Planned in accordance with the school visits policy) There are cross-curricular links including opportunities to apply and develop I.C.T

3. The Foundation stage

3.1 We teach geography in the EYFS as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. Geographical concepts are introduced within Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals in the Knowledge of the World section. Geography makes a significant contribution to the development of each child through activities such as walking around school and the immediate local area, learning how children live in other countries, visitors from other countries e.g. talking about their lives in their home countries, keeping the classroom and school tidy, using globes, talking about journeys, discussing holidays and places visited, looking at photographs etc.

3.2 In particular, children will have the have an opportunity to:

- Comment and ask questions about aspects of their familiar world such as the place where they live or the natural world.
- Talk about some of the things they have observed such as plants, animals, natural and found objects.
- Talk about why things happen and how things work
- Develop an understanding of growth, decay and changes over time
- Show care and concern for living things and the environment.
- Know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things.
- Talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another.
- Make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur and talk about changes.

4. Geography curriculum planning

4.1 A thematic approach

There is evidence that teaching subject knowledge and skills as part of a wider topic-based curriculum allows pupils to make useful links between areas of learning, and consolidate skills. Children are also likely to be more engaged in their learning if it has a context and theme that runs through it.

St Leonard's Primary School has therefore developed a new thematic curriculum to deliver the National Curriculum 2014 and other aspects of the school curriculum, including Geography.

We have adapted the approach to the local circumstances of our school i.e. we make use of the local environment in our fieldwork and we also study a locality where the human activities and physical features provide a contrast to those that predominate in our own area.

4.2 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 half term during each key stage. 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.

4.3 Medium-term plans link to our thematic curriculum and are planned to ensure that there is a progression of key skills, knowledge and ideas, and promote understanding, personal development and positive attitudes to learning. We use Trevor Davis' key skills to demonstrate the skills taught during each half term and over a two-year rotation cycle. We ensure that all skills are covered at least once during the rolling programme and ensure a progression in these skills from Yr1 to Yr2.

4.4 Short-term plans have clear learning objectives, differentiation and opportunities for the use of ICT and assessment. They are based on the teacher's knowledge of the children's level of attainment and prior learning. Short-term planning remains flexible so that activities can be effectively matched to meet the children's learning needs. The format is at the discretion of each individual teacher.

5. The contribution of geography to teaching in other curriculum areas

5.1 Literacy

Geography makes a significant contribution to the teaching of Literacy in our school because it actively promotes the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. We ensure that some of the texts we use in literacy are geographical in nature, which help bring various topics alive. In the EYFS and Key Stage 1 children undertake a variety of activities linked to literacy, such as writing postcards, labelling maps and diagrams and following

instructions. At Key Stage 2 we organise debates on environmental and other issues, such as land use, and how to reduce our carbon footprint, because we believe that these help develop speaking and listening skills. Reports, letters and recording information – for example, relating to environmental issues- will all help develop children's writing ability. Children will also have the opportunity to develop their research skills, undertake debates, write reports and develop their presentational skills.

5.2 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. They 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, as well as collecting their own data about important issues such as water use and conservation.

5.3 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. Pupils are encouraged to save resources by switching off taps and lights, and to care for their environment by picking up litter and putting paper into the recycle bin in each classroom. They study the way people recycle material, and how environments are changed for better or worse. Secondly, the nature of the subject means that children have the opportunity to take part in debates and discussions. We allow them to organise campaigns on matters of concern to them, such as raising money for charities. Thus geography in our school promotes the concept of positive citizenship.

5.4 Geography and History.

Links are frequently made between geography and history as a means to provide children with a contextual understanding. History topics such as Ancient Greece, Rome and Egypt, the Tudors offer an opportunity for children to explore different cultural traditions as well as developing an awareness of how the political map of the world has changed over time.

5.5 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. 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 children to learn about the 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 moral questions.

6. Geography and ICT

Information and communication technology enhances our teaching of geography, wherever appropriate in each key stage. Children use ICT to enhance their skills in data handling, word processing and multi-media presentations. They research information through a variety of sources, including the Internet, Espresso, videos, DVDs etc. All children will experience using laptops and iPads at some point.

7. Geography and Inclusion

7.1 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. All children have an entitlement to access the Programmes of study at an appropriate level. 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. All children are given tasks appropriate to their individual needs.

7.2 Assessment allows us to consider children's attainment and progress against expected levels. 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 reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details see separate policies: Inclusion, Gifted and Talented, Equal Opportunities, Disability Non-Discrimination and Access.

7.3 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, and differentiation - so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs. No one teaching strategy will be sufficient in itself but teachers may use any of the following approaches:

- children can be given resources of differing complexity, according to the ability of the child.
- differing levels of support by classroom assistants, where available, to support the work of individual children or groups of children.
- children can be given open-ended tasks which allow for a range of different outcomes.

7.4 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 reservoir, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

8. Assessment for learning

8.1 Through our creative skills based curriculum, children demonstrate their ability and understanding in geography in a variety of ways, for example: through the use of mind maps, ICT, written evidence, art, speaking and listening activities, role play, learning logs etc. Assessment is in accordance to the school's assessment policy. It is ongoing and matched to the Blooms assessment questions and key skills from Trevor Davis. Written and verbal feedback is given to the child to help guide his/her progress throughout lessons.

8.2 We assess work in geography by making informal judgements as we observe the children during lessons, and also from recorded and photographic evidence. Once the children complete a piece of work, we mark and assess the work linked to the learning objective. Our assessments are used to inform future planning. Pupils' achievements in geography are reported to parents in an annual report.

8.3 The subject co-ordinator keeps samples of children's achievements in geography in each year group in a portfolio.

9. Resources

9.1 Resources are kept in labelled topic boxes in a central store area, together with relevant big books, cds, dvds, maps and atlases for both Key

stages. We stock a good selection of geography topic books in our own library. Staff also collate their own resources using the Internet. Children have access to ipads on a regular basis and also to laptops to enable them to carry out their own research.

Visiting speakers are also a valuable resource, increasing understanding of contrasting localities.

10. Fieldwork

10.1 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. Children carry out investigations into the local environment and are given opportunities to observe and record information around the school site. The Conservation Area is a valuable resource for all ages to explore. At Key Stage 2 pupils carry out a study of the local area. Children in year 6 take part in a residential visit, where they carry out river studies, and participate in orienteering and map reading.

11. Monitoring and Review

11.1 The subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standard of children's learning and the quality of teaching in geography. The subject leader is also responsible for supporting colleagues in their teaching, for being informed about current developments in the subject, for passing on relevant information, and for providing a strategic lead for geography in the school. The subject leader gives the Governors an annual report in which s/he celebrates good practice, evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and indicates areas for further improvement. S/he also collects and takes photographic evidence of children's learning and displays. Time is allocated for talking to staff and children and reviewing samples of children's learning in geography.

12. Health and Safety

12.1 Teachers are responsible for the safety of their children and they ensure at all times that the children are working and behaving in a manner that will not cause harm to themselves, other children or staff. A Risk Assessment is carried out prior to any fieldwork activity.

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