

Saint John Fisher Catholic Primary School



Geography Policy

“To live, love and learn and learn in our caring community.”

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Geography Policy

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 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 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 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.

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 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 if necessary, 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 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, i.e. we make use of the local environment in our fieldwork and we also choose a locality where the human activities and physical features provide a contrast to those that predominate in our own immediate area.
- 3.2 Our curriculum planning is in two phases (long-term and medium-term). Our long-term plan maps the geography topics studied in each term during each key stage.
- 3.3 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 can discuss them with the geography subject leader on an informal basis when necessary.
- 3.4 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.

4 The Foundation Stage

- 4.1 We teach geography in reception 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.

5 The contribution of geography to teaching in other curriculum areas

5.1 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. We ensure that some of the texts that we use in the literacy hour are geographical in nature. Reports, letters and recording information will all develop children's writing ability.

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. 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.

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. 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.

5.4 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. 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.

6 Geography and ICT

6.1 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 and in presenting written work. They can research information through the Internet. We also arrange for the children to communicate with pupils in other schools and we offer children the opportunity to use the digital camera.

7 Geography and inclusion

- 7.1 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 Individual Education Plans (IEPs). 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.

8 Assessment

- 8.1 Assessment will be based upon the programmes of study and QCA unit schemes of work and is on an on going process throughout the year. A number of methods will be used: observing pupils, talking with pupils, marking written work, self-assessment and peer assessment.

9 Resources

- 9.1 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, where there is a box of equipment for each unit of work. We also keep a collection of geography equipment, which the children use to gather weather data, and a set of atlases for both key stages. In the library, we have a good supply of geography topic books and access to the Internet to support the children's individual research.

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.
- 10.2 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, the children do a study of the local area. We also offer them the opportunity to take part in a residential visit to Plas Dol-y-Moch.

11 Monitoring and review

- 11.1 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 Principal an annual summary report in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in geography and indicates areas for further improvement on the following action plan;
- collect evidence of the children's work, planning and display work and to observe geography lessons across the school.

11.2 This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

Signed:

Mrs D Williams

Principal

Date: September 2017