

St Mary and St Benedict Catholic Primary School 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.

1.2 The objectives of teaching geography in our school 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, computing, investigation, and that of presenting their conclusions in the most appropriate way.

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 computing 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 applied geographical activities, for example research of a local environmental problem, or use of the internet to investigate a current issue.

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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 working towards a mastery of the curriculum;
- Providing resources of different complexity, according to the ability of the child;
- Using learning support assistants to support the work of individual children or groups of children.

3 Geography curriculum planning

3.1 The school uses the National Curriculum as the basis of its curriculum planning. The long term plan has been written to the local circumstances of the school in that, where possible, 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 three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). Our long-term planning maps the geography units studied in each term during each key stage. In some cases we combine the geographical study with work in other subject areas, especially at Key Stage 1. In other cases we arrange for the children to carry out an independent geographical study. Where possible, cross curricular links are made between subjects, for instance use of statistics and opportunities for extended writing. Some topics make combine historical content with geographical content.

3.3 Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. Planning is completed in phase teams so that links can be made between subjects. These plans list the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes of each lesson. Key vocabulary and core knowledge is detailed on planning and displayed in classrooms. The subject leader reviews these plans. In this way we ensure that children have complete coverage of the National Curriculum.

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. The schools makes use of progression document to inform planning and ensure that the planning is cumulative and sequential.

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 English are geographical in nature. This is because we believe that these activities develop the children's speaking and listening skills; reading skills and writing abilities.

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 and citizenship (PSHCE)- 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 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. We allow them to organise campaigns on matters of concern to them such as 'Active Travel' events and recycling crisps packets and used pens. 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, framed by the Catholic Ethos of our school. A key driver in our curriculum is social justice and the concept of stewardship. 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 possible inequalities and injustices 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.

5.5 Cross-curricular teaching of geography. Geography may be taught in a cross-curricular approach across a range of subjects in order to enhance the knowledge and understanding of the world nature of the subject. The teaching of scientific skills or knowledge may not always be through a 'geography' lesson.

6 Geography and computing

6.1 Computing enhances the teaching of geography in our school significantly, because there are some tasks for which computing is particularly useful. It also offers ways of impacting on learning which are not possible with conventional methods. Software is used to animate and model geographical concepts, and to allow children to investigate processes which it would be impracticable to do directly in the classroom. Children use computing to record, present and interpret data, to review, modify and evaluate their work, and to improve its presentation. Children learn how to find, select, and analyse information on the Internet and on other media. Children will also have opportunities to mapping applications in order to develop their map skills.

7 Geography and inclusion

7.1 At our school we teach geography to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. 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 good progress. 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 individual whole-school policies: Special Educational Needs; Disability Non-Discrimination; Gifted and Talented; English as an Additional Language (EAL). We also recognise the diverse community that our school serves and the awareness of place and life experiences of our children that enrich our school community and add to their geographical understanding.

7.2 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. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels. This helps ensure that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

7.3 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.

8 Assessment for learning

8.1 Children demonstrate their ability in geography in a variety of different ways. Younger children might, for example, dress up in costumes from different parts of the world, whilst older pupils might produce a PowerPoint presentation based on their investigations of different sources of energy. Teachers will 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. Older children are encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own work.

8.2 We assess the children's work in Geography while observing them working during lessons. Geography is assessed in accordance with the school's assessment policy. This enables the teacher to make an annual assessment of progress for each child, as part of the child's annual report to parents. We pass this information on to the next teacher at the end of each year.

8.3 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. These are kept against the G/A benchmarking materials in order that they reflect the high expectations of the national body for Geography

9 Resources

9.1 We have sufficient resources for all geography teaching units in the school. We also keep a set of atlases for both key stages.

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 All of the children will carry out investigations into the local environment, and we give them opportunities to observe and record information around the school site. We also offer a residential visit to Plas Dol-y-Moch where children are able to apply their geographical skills to a new locality that contrasts with our inner city locality.

11 Monitoring and review

11.1 The monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in Geography is the responsibility of the subject leader. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in their teaching, being informed about current developments in Geography and providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject in the school. The subject leader reviews and evaluates the action plan, budget and planning annually.

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