



ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

GEOGRAPHY POLICY

Mission Statement

"St. Mary's is a happy, Christian school where we all want to do our best."

The Importance of Geography

Geography raises and answers questions about the natural and human worlds. It develops knowledge of places and environments throughout the world, an understanding of maps and a range of investigative and problem solving skills to be applied both inside and outside the classroom.

Geography provides a focus within the curriculum for understanding and resolving the issues concerning the environment and sustainable development. Geography allows pupils to encounter different societies and cultures leading them to realise how nations rely on each other.

Geography can encourage pupils to think about their own place in the world, their values, and their rights and responsibilities to other people and the environment.

Key Aim of Geography

To develop children's spatial awareness through a growing range of enquiry skills, knowledge and understanding of places and of the natural and made environments.

Geographical Objectives

To extend children's awareness of and develop their interest in their surroundings, leading to the identification and exploration of features of the local environment.

To observe accurately and develop simple skills of enquiry. In so doing to be aware of the changes taking place in their own locality and in other areas studied. Through these studies, gaining an appreciation of the ways in which human decisions influence these changes.

To gain a perspective in which children can place local, national and international events.

To develop a wide range of skills and competencies that are required for geographical enquiry and which are also applicable to other situations.

To gain an understanding of the processes that have produced pattern and variety on the earth's surface and which can bring about change.

To become acquainted with a variety of maps, including large-scale maps of their own neighbourhood, and to be able to apply simple techniques of map reading and interpretation.

To gain familiarity with globes and atlas maps and be able to identify such features as the continents, oceans, countries, cities, highland and lowland, coasts and rivers.

To continue to develop language and mathematical skills through studies in geography.

To acquire skills in carrying out observations and in collecting, organising, recording and retrieving information as part of an enquiry.

To be able to use a variety of source materials to find information out about their own locality and distant places.

To be able to communicate their findings and ideas in a variety of modes: writing, pictures, models, diagrams and maps as well as through oral contribution.

To help pupils to act more effectively in the environment as individuals and as members of society.

Learning Across the National Curriculum

The National Curriculum can promote learning across the curriculum in a number of areas such as spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, key skills and thinking skills. The teaching of geography can contribute effectively to these areas of learning and links to these areas of learning area identified in the medium term planning sheets.

Delivering the Geography Curriculum

Foundation Stage

Geography is delivered to Nursery and Reception pupils within the Knowledge and Understanding of the World Area of Learning through a cross curricular topic based approach at various points throughout the academic year

Key Stages One and Two

Geography is taught as a discreet subject where each child will experience the equivalent of: 50 minutes of teaching each week at Key Stage 1, and 75 minutes at Key Stage 2.

The subject may be taught in block units throughout the year rather than following a weekly lesson format.

Teaching Approaches

A variety of teaching approaches are presented to children throughout their geography lessons. These include:

- (a) Teacher guided sessions, where information is provided.
- (b) Mixed ability group work where the children discuss problems in small groups.
- (c) Class discussion lessons where members are encouraged to join in with their personal opinions.
- (d) The use of differentiated tasks allowing children of different ability levels to work at their appropriate pace.
- (e) The use of role-play in studying contentious issues.
- (f) The use of audio visual aids in presenting material to the children.
- (g) The use of fieldwork where possible so that children gain first hand experience of local and contrasting environments.
- (h) The integrated use of ICT within geography lessons.
- (i) The use of outside speakers with relevant experience.

Classroom Organisation

The organisation of the classroom will vary according to the activity that is being carried out. The formal classroom layout will alter when mixed ability group work activities are taking place. The use of audio visual aids necessitates the movement of the chairs nearer to the viewing screen.

Role-play scenarios will require a reordering of the room to provide wider areas nearer the front of the class.

Although children in the teaching groups are in broad bands they nevertheless display a wide range of abilities with regard to this area of the curriculum. No attempt is made to group them according to ability within the classroom and the mix that exists encourages the slow learners to gain in confidence through sitting next to or near to colleagues with a deeper understanding of the subject.

Support Staff

Non-teaching assistants who support individual children within the class play an important role in the delivery of the subject and they are involved in the evaluation of lessons and the subsequent planning of further lessons and topics that are taught in geography. Half-termly discussions are held in advance of the proposed teaching programme so that preparation and review can take place.

List of Resources

Current resources are listed on a separate sheet with a parallel list indicating where geography items are stored within the school.

A separate list indicates resources that will be purchased when funding becomes available. This list forms part of the subject development plan, which feeds into the school development plan.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The subject approach to assessment, recording and reporting follows the whole school policy guidelines.

All pupils' work is regularly marked with key assessment pieces linked to the four main aspects of the geography curriculum being targeted in each topic covered throughout the scheme of work. Samples of assessed work are then forwarded to the subject co-ordinator for inclusion in a school subject portfolio.

Reports to parents are completed during the academic year when indications are made as to the individual's progress in this area of the curriculum. (Reporting of Geography at the Foundation Stage appears within the Knowledge and Understanding of the World Area of Learning). End of key stage teacher assessments are made for geography through the use of the levels highlighted in the attainment target for the subject from the QCA documents. For further information see the whole-school policy on Assessment, Recording and Reporting.

Inclusion and the Geographical Curriculum

In order to provide work that is appropriate to the learning experiences of the individual children it is necessary for the teacher to be aware of the statements/individual educational programmes that apply to children in the class that he/she is teaching.

Guidance has been provided on how to identify able and talented pupils within geography teaching groups.

Teachers take account of the three principles of inclusion that are set out in the National Curriculum. These principles are related to how teachers plan and teach the curriculum through:

- setting suitable learning challenges.
- responding to the diverse learning needs of pupils.
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

These principles are considered when selecting units to be taught throughout the Foundation Curriculum and Key Stages 1 and 2 and in developing the chosen units for use in the classroom (short term planning).

Staff Development

Staff development in this area of the curriculum is available through the county course programme and through meetings with colleagues from other educational establishments. Teachers who have attended geography courses report back to colleagues at the following staff meeting.

School INSET provides opportunities to compare developments in this area of the curriculum with other subject disciplines.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork is a vital ingredient of the geography curriculum. Where possible, children are provided with opportunities to study topics within the outside environment.

Planning for educational visits follows the current guidelines produced for schools by Lancashire County Council (2003).

Equal Opportunities

Children irrespective of ability, race or gender are given full access to the geography schemes of work. The use of differentiation by outcome allows children to respond to the work presented to them at the appropriate level. For more details see the schools Equal Opportunities policy.

Evaluation-Review-Modification

This policy document will be regularly reviewed (every 12 months) along with the resources stock, to assess its value as a working document.

Those areas which have not worked particularly well (i.e. sections of the schemes of work) will be modified according to the experiences that have taken place.