



Geography Policy

(To be read in conjunction with policies on Off Site Visits and Health, Safety and Welfare.)

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 Following the National Curriculum for Geography, our objectives in the teaching of geography are to:
- develop contextual knowledge of the location of globally significant places – both terrestrial and marine – including their defining physical and human characteristics and how these provide geographical context for understanding the actions of processes.
 - 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.
 - are competent 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.
 - interpret a range of sources of geographical information, including maps, diagrams, globes, aerial photographs and Geographical Information Systems (GIS).
 - communicate geographical information in a variety of ways, including through maps and writing at length.

2 Teaching and learning

- 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, for example, 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;
- sometimes grouping children by ability, 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 International Primary Curriculum programmes of study as the basis for our curriculum planning in geography and we have adapted this to the local context of our school. For example, 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. We have regard to the national scheme of work for geography but much of our planning is based on the themes chosen by the school for each term.

3.2 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 term during each key stage. The subject leader devises this plan in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each mile post. 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.

3.3 Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The subject leader reviews these plans on a regular basis..

3.4 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 often discusses them with the geography subject leader on an informal basis.

3.5 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 Early Years 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 Early Years Foundation Stage, 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. 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.

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 PSHE 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. We allow them to organise campaigns on matters of concern to them, such as helping poor or homeless people. 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. 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.

6 Geography and ICT

6.1 Information and communication technology enhances our teaching of geography, wherever appropriate, in each key stage. This more than meets the statutory requirement for children to use ICT as part of their geography work in Key Stage 2. Children use ICT to enhance their skills in data handling (e.g. mountain, climate, population or river data) and in presenting written work. They research information through the Internet and libraries of digital images (e.g. aerial photographs in Google Earth). We offer children the opportunity to use the digital camera. Digital mapping allows children to create their own overlay maps of local features. Detective role-play software teaches them geographical facts incidentally.

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. (For further details, see separate policies on Special Educational Needs, Disability Discrimination, Gifted and Talented Children, English as an Additional Language (EAL).)
- 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, differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. Assessment against IPC Rubrics allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels. This helps to 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

- 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 work in Geography by making informal judgements as we observe the children during lessons. Once the children complete a piece of work, we mark and comment, as necessary. At the end of the year we make a summary judgement of the work of each pupil in relation to the IPC Rubrics. We record the attainment grades in the children's books and enter the data on the IPC tracking system, and to pass information on to the next teacher at the end of the 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.

9 Resources

- 9.1 We ensure that we have sufficient resources to be able to teach the geography programmes of study. 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 that 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 a range of educational software to support the children's individual research. We also borrow resources from the Durham Lending Library to support children's learning

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 During 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. During Key Stage 2 children do a study of the local area.
- 10.3 For health and safety issues regarding fieldwork, our school follows the guidance contained in its policies on Off-Site Visits and Health and Safety.

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;
 - provides the headteacher with an annual summary report in the strengths and weaknesses in geography are evaluated and the areas for further improvement indicated.
- 11.2 The quality of teaching and learning in geography is monitored and evaluated by the headteacher as part of the school's agreed cycle of monitoring and evaluation.
- 11.3 This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if necessary.

Signed:

Date: