

Geography Policy

"Geography grew as one of the earliest disciplines, from human experiences of exploring the world, in making sense of the location and distribution of places, in understanding the similarities and differences between places, in observing the patterns places create in the world around us, in discerning the processes, influences and effects that interrelate to produce places and patterns as they are and as they change, and in considering what actions are needed to create places that better fulfil human needs and interests."

(Geographical Work for Primary and Middle Schools)

Introduction

This policy reflects Wheatlands Primary School's values and philosophy to the teaching and learning of Geography. Geography teaching in the primary school is about developing an understanding of our world, through experience, investigation and learning from secondary sources. Geography helps children to gain a greater understanding of the ways of life and cultures of people in other places. This will help to enable children to take responsibility for their role in society and to develop a caring attitude towards other people, animals and plants in our environment. Geography is concerned with the study of places, the human and physical processes which shape them and the people who live in them. Children study their local area and contrasting places in the United Kingdom and other parts of the world. The study of the local area forms an important part of the geography taught at our school and activities are planned to build upon the children's knowledge and understanding of the local area, as well as further afield.

Aims

Through our teaching of geography we aim to:

- develop children's geographical understanding and competence in specific geographical skills;
- help children acquire and develop the skills and confidence to undertake investigation, problem solving and decision making;
- stimulate the children's interest in and curiosity about their surroundings;
- create and foster a sense of wonder about the world;
- inspire a sense of responsibility for the environment and people of the world we live in;
- increase the children's knowledge and awareness of our changing world, so that they will want to look after the Earth and its resources and think about how it can be improved and sustained;
- begin to develop respect for, and an interest in, people throughout the world regardless of culture, race and religion;
- develop a sense of identity by learning about the United Kingdom and its relationship with other countries.

We also hope to:

- improve pupils skills across the curriculum, especially in Reading, Writing, Mathematics and ICT;
- develop thinking skills;
- develop pupils as active citizens;
- promote awareness and understanding of spiritual and moral issues.

The principles of inclusion, equality and diversity are fundamental to our teaching of geography and issues of safeguarding and risk assessment should inform all planning.

The National Curriculum for Geography

“A high –quality geography education should inspire in pupils a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people that will remain with them for the rest of their lives. Teaching should equip pupils with knowledge about diverse places, people, resources and natural and human environments, together with a deep understanding of the Earth’s key physical and human processes. As pupils progress, their growing knowledge about the world should help them to deepen their understanding of the interaction between physical and human processes and the formation and use of landscapes and environments. Geographical knowledge, understanding and skills provide the framework and approaches that explain how the Earth’s features at different scales are shaped, interconnected and change over time.”

(National Curriculum for England, 2013).

The national curriculum for geography aims to ensure that all pupils:

- develop contextual knowledge of the location of places, seas and oceans, including their defining physical and human characteristics;
- 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.

Entitlement

Geography is a foundation subject in the National Curriculum. The fundamental knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject are set out in the National Curriculum programmes of study. All pupils are entitled to access the geography curriculum at a level appropriate to their needs arising from race, gender, ability or disability. Fieldwork may have to be adapted to individual requirements.

Expectations

During the Foundation Stage, children in Nursery and Reception will work towards the geographical aspects of the Early Learning goals for Knowledge and Understanding of the world.

By the end of Key Stage 1, most children will be expected to:

- describe the main features of localities and recognise their similarities and differences;
- recognise where things are and why they are as they are;
- recognise changes in the environment of localities and how people affect the environment;
- find out and express views about people, places and environments by asking and answering questions and by using their own observations and other geographical skills and resources.

By the end of Key Stage 2, most children will be expected to:

- explain the physical and human characteristics of places and their similarities and differences, and know the location of significant places and environments in the UK, Europe and the World;
- explain patterns of physical and human features, and recognise how selected physical and human processes cause changes in the character of places and environments;
- describe how people can damage and improve the environment and recognise how and why people may seek to manage environments sustainably;
- undertake geographical enquiry by asking and responding to questions, identifying and explaining different views and using a range of geographical skills, resources and their own observations.

The programmes of study for both Key Stage 1 and 2 are based on:

- Locational knowledge;
- Place knowledge;
- Human and Physical geography;
- Geographical skills and fieldwork.

Teaching should ensure that geographical enquiry skills are used when developing knowledge and understanding of places, patterns and processes and environmental change and sustainable development.

Teaching Methods

A variety of methods are to be employed in the teaching of Geography, which will afford pupils access to a range of resources and ensure that they are encouraged to develop their potential to the full. Teachers are expected to utilise many differing techniques and approaches to ensure that the geography curriculum is constantly made interesting, interactive and alive.

These may include:

- Knowledge given by the teacher;
- Use of the local environments for fieldwork;
- Creative activities linked to art and D&T;
- Individual and group enquiry;
- Use of video and films;
- Using outside speakers;
- Visits to places of relevance to the topic;
- Use of ICT;
- Use of relevant books, pamphlets, leaflets, maps, postcards, atlases etc;
- Role play and drama;
- Photographs and satellite images.

Fieldwork

It is always advisable to base learning on first-hand experience and teachers are encouraged to focus attention on the opportunities available in the local area. This will necessitate the exploration of the world beyond the classroom. All teachers are encouraged to organise visits that will enable pupils to extend their knowledge of the world around them e.g. the seaside and local walkways and woods.

Differentiation

It is recognised that all pupils must be given opportunities to show what they know and can do. Recognising the different abilities within a class means that teachers must plan at a class, group and individual level. Children are taught in their normal class group for geography and classroom organisation will depend on the needs and abilities of the pupils and also on the aims of the lesson. In planning geographical work teachers are mindful of the ways in which pupils learn. The teaching of geography reflects different teaching and learning styles to ensure full inclusion such as whole-class lessons, group, paired and individual work and we combine these with enquiry-based research activities. We encourage children to ask as well as answer geographical questions.

Planning

In our school we plan geography as part of our curriculum and the aims and objectives are covered through topics in our long term plan, as well as themed activities which the whole school takes part in. Medium term planning takes place co-operatively within year groups to ensure consistency and across teams to ensure progression. Learning activities are therefore sequenced to ensure progression and continuity throughout the school. Children are taught to use the appropriate language and vocabulary relating to geography and encouraged to question and discuss. Teachers planning should show due regard to health and safety issues.

Planning shows due regard to National Curriculum programmes of study and breadth of study requirements for geography. In the Foundation Stage, elements of Geography are taught under the heading “Understanding the World”. The objectives are taken from the Guidance for the Foundation Stage Development Matters statement.

Assessment

Children demonstrate their ability in geography in a variety of different ways. During planning, key learning objectives are identified and these will be referred back to during assessment. The learning objective should form the title of the piece of work. Teachers will assess children's work through a combination of formal and informal tasks, for example:

- observation of children's work;
- questioning pupils;
- discussion;
- oral presentations;
- monitoring pupils' written and pictorial work.

On completion of a task, the teacher assesses the work by marking and commenting as necessary and using the school's 'traffic light' stickers to apply judgement as to the child's achievement of the learning objectives. Assessment should be used to inform future planning.

Resources

Resources form an important part of curriculum delivery. Access to resources is sometimes a determining factor in classroom organisation. As part of their geographical work, all pupils have opportunities to use ICT and a variety of data where this serves to enhance their learning. They also have opportunities to use the following resources: globes, maps, atlases, pictures, photographs, measuring equipment, books and games. Most of these items are kept in the geography cupboard in the Year 2 area.

The Role of the Subject Leader

- Monitoring the teaching and learning of geography and using this to inform the development of the subject across the school;
- Taking a lead role in policy development and review;
- Reviewing planning and schemes of work;
- Auditing staff needs and providing INSET as required;
- To liaise with outside agencies and attend subject-specific courses;
- To report to the Head Teacher and Governing Body on geography- related issues;
- To plan and organise the allocation and purchasing of resources in accordance with available budget;
- To take a lead role in Education Outside the Classroom across the school and to assist in identifying and attending suitable fieldwork opportunities in the local area and beyond;
- To assist in preparing risk assessments related to fieldwork as and when required;
- To manage and oversee the resources and ensure they are available and in a good condition in the geography cupboard.

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