

Netherleigh and Rossefield School

Geography Policy

September 2016

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 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 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 teaches them to recognise the importance of sustainable development for the future of humanity.

1.2 Our main objectives in the teaching of Geography are:

- enable children to gain knowledge and understanding of places in the world;
- 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;
- allow children to learn graphic skills, including how to use, draw and interpret maps;
- enable children to know and understand environmental problems at a local, regional and global level;
- encourage in children a commitment and an appreciation of what "global citizenship" means;
- develop a variety of other skills, including those of enquiry, problem solving, ICT, investigation, and how to present their conclusions in the most appropriate way;
- develop the cross-curricular use of Geography in other subjects.

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. They have 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 is appropriate to enhance their learning. Children take part in group work and discussions and they engage in problem solving activities.

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 common tasks which are open-ended, and can have a variety of responses;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty (we do not expect all children to complete all tasks);
- grouping children by ability in the room, and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- providing resources of different complexity adapted to the ability of the child;
- using peer support – we partner pupils of disparate ability;

2.3 We assess the children's progress informally during lessons.

3 Geography Curriculum Planning

3.1 We use the national programmes of study for Geography as the basis for our curriculum planning 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.

3.2 Our curriculum planning is in three phases: long-, medium-, and short-term. Our long-term plan maps the Geography topics studied in each term during each Key Stage and Year group. The Geography subject leader works this out in conjunction with their teaching colleagues in each year group. In some cases, we combine the geographical study with work in other subject areas, especially at Key Stage 1. At other times, we arrange for the children to carry out a geographical study independently.

3.3 Our medium term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The geography subject leader reviews these plans as necessary. As we have mixed-age classes, we do the medium term planning on a two-year rolling programme. In this way, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the Primary Curriculum, but do not have to repeat topics.

3.4 Each class teacher writes the plans for each lesson and lists the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and can discuss 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.
- 3.6** Over the course of the 2016-17 academic year, we are developing a new Geography scheme of work within school, which is based on the objectives of the Primary National Curriculum. Aspects of this new scheme of work are being incorporated into lesson planning during the 2016-17 academic year. The new Geography scheme of work will be implemented in full for the beginning of the 2017-18 academic year.

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 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 ELG objectives of developing a child's knowledge 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 Literacy are geographical in nature. For example, in Key Stage 1, we have used the Katie Morag books to develop children's knowledge and understanding of life on a Scottish island. At Key Stage 2, we organise debates on environmental issues, because we believe that these develop speaking and listening skills. Reports, letters, and recording information will all develop children's writing ability.
- 5.2 Mathematics:** Geography in our school contributes to the teaching of mathematics 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 grid references. They also use graphs to explore, analyse, and illustrate a variety of data.
- 5.3 ICT:** We make provision for the children to use the computers as part of a Geography topic where appropriate. Children use ICT to enhance their skills in data handling and in presenting written work. They research information through the Internet. We also offer children the opportunity to use the digital camera to record and use photographs.
- 5.4 PSHEE & C:** Geography contributes significantly to the teaching of PSHEE & C. Firstly, the subject matter lends itself to raising matters of citizenship and social welfare. For example, children study the way people re-cycle materials and how environments are changed by natural or human causes. Secondly, the nature of the subject means that

children have the opportunity to take part in debates and discussions. Geography in our school promotes the concept of positive citizenship.

5.5 Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education: We offer children in our school 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 humanity 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 Teaching Geography to Children with Special Educational Needs

6.1 At our school, we teach Geography to all children, whatever their ability. 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 progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs.

6.2 We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning Geography. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a field trip, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

7 Assessment and Recording

7.1 Children demonstrate their ability in Geography in a variety of different ways. Younger children might dress up in costumes to represent different parts of the world, whilst older pupils might research different sources of energy, using the Internet and do a class presentation. We assess work in Geography by making informal judgements as we observe a piece of work during lessons. Once the children complete a piece of work, we mark and give written or verbal feedback, to help guide progress.

7.2 The class teacher keeps the children's Geography work in their topic folders or books.

8 Resources

8.1 We have sufficient resources to be able to teach Geography. We keep these resources in individual classrooms to teach each unit of work. The school has a set of atlases, kept in the Archive room, and the library has a supply of Geography text books.

9 Fieldwork

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9.1 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.

9.2 In the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1, 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 conduct a study of the local area.

10 Monitoring and Review

10.1 It is the responsibility of the Senior Management and/or staff as delegated to monitor the standards of children's work and the quality of planning and teaching in Geography. This may also involve supporting colleagues in their knowledge and understanding, keeping up to date with developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school, as well as reviewing strengths and weaknesses, and indicating areas for development.