

Policy on Geography

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Aims and objectives

- 1.1 Geography teaches an understanding of places and environments. It provokes and answers questions about the natural and human worlds, using different scales of enquiry to view them from different perspectives. 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 both in and outside the classroom. 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 Our objectives in the teaching of geography 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, ICT, investigation, and that of presenting their conclusions in the most appropriate way
 - to develop the cross-curricular use of geography in all subjects.

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 ICT resources. Children take part in role-play and discussions, and they present reports to the rest of the class and whole school. They engage in a wide variety of problem-solving activities. Wherever possible, we involve the children in 'real' geographical activities, e.g. 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;
 - grouping children by ability in the room, 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 At Wood Lane we follow a thematic approach to teaching and we use the national scheme of work for geography as the basis for our curriculum planning. Each term our curriculum is taught through a topic based theme. These topics cover all aspects of our curriculum. We have adapted the national scheme to the local circumstances of our school, i.e. 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 plan maps the geography topics studied in each term during each key stage. We combine the geographical study with work in other subject areas. In other cases, we arrange for the children to carry out an independent geographical study independently.
- 3.3 We use the national scheme of work as the basis for our medium-term plans. This gives details of each unit of work for each term. The subject leader reviews these plans on a regular basis. Because we have some mixed-age classes, we do the medium-term planning on a two-year rotation cycle. In this way, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the National Curriculum, but do not have to repeat topics.
- 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 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. The children in the foundation stage are also involved in collaborative projects with our international link schools.

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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 as it actively promotes the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. We link literary and geography in a variety of ways. These include;

- ensuring that some of the texts that we use in literacy are geographical in nature
- organising debates on environmental issues and other aspects that effect us as global citizens
- using environmental issues and our international links with other schools 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. Through our thematic approach children are also involved in creating artefacts from other countries for example South American masks in Key Stage 1, demonstrating their knowledge of both shape and symmetry.

5.3 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship

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 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 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 and in presenting written work. They research information through the Internet and are also able to share work with our link schools in Europe and Latin America. We offer children the opportunity to use the digital camera to record and use photographic images.

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 our school curriculum policy to provide 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 we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. As a dyslexia friendly school we provide equal opportunities for this type of learner. # Our classrooms aim to be dyslexia friendly, as guided by the LA. For further details, see separate policies: Special Educational Needs; Disability Discrimination; Gifted and Talented Children.

- 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 the National Curriculum 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 Intervention through School Action and School Action Plus will lead to the creation of an IEP for children with special educational needs. The IEP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to geography.
- 7.4 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 At the beginning of each new topic the class teacher records their expectations of children's achievement for the end of the unit these are based on the national curriculum levels of attainment. They record what most children will achieve, what children who will not have made so much progress will achieve and what those children who are high achievers will achieve. A copy of this document is given to the subject leader to review. The children are asked to complete their own mind map or a KWL sheet depending on the age and ability of the child on their new topic, this also includes the child's general thoughts on what they believe Geography is. These are then completed again at the end of the topic so that children can record what they have learnt. Children can record their learning through both drawing and writing. Those children with specific needs are also given the opportunity to verbalise their learning whilst an adult scribes. This helps inform a teacher about the learning that has taken place and contributes to future planning. The subject leader then selects a range of children with varying abilities and discusses their completed mind map/ KWL sheets with them to ensure that the recorded learning has indeed taken place and that they have achieved/learnt what the class teacher intended. This is then fed back to the class teacher.
- 8.3 The subject leader keeps samples of the children's work in a portfolio which shows levels of achievement in geography in each year of the school.

9 Resources

- 9.1 We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach our topics.

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 At 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.

At Key Stage 2, the children do a study of the local area. We also offer them the opportunity to take part in a residential visit to Standon Bowers.

- 10.3 For health and safety issues regarding fieldwork, our school follows the guidance contained in its policies on Off-Site Visits and on 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;
 - gives the headteacher an annual summary report in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in geography and indicates areas for further improvement;
 - uses specially allocated management time to review evidence of the children's work, and to observe geography lessons across the school.
- 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 lesson observations.
- 11.3 This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

Signed:

Date: