



'Growing, loving and learning in the arms of Mary'

Geography Policy

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This policy outlines the learning, teaching, organisation and management of geography at St Mary's. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all teaching staff. The responsibility for monitoring and review rests with the geography co-ordinator.

Geography Intent

'Geography is ... not just about knowing about places themselves, but understanding the interdependence and connectivity of places. It is about empowering tomorrow's adults to develop real global understanding and global citizenship so that they have the intellectual understanding to participate individually and collectively in shaping the world around them.'

- Bell, D (2005)

At St Mary's we have worked hard to design our own geography curriculum to inspire in pupils a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people that will remain with them for the rest of their lives. Through an enquiry led approach, the geography curriculum equips pupils with a thorough knowledge of places, people and the environment and the interactions between them. The concepts, skills and knowledge set out in the National Curriculum are developed progressively as pupils advance through school, deepening their local knowledge and building their geographical understanding of the UK, Europe and beyond. The geography curriculum has been designed to incorporate fieldwork activities into each year group. The school grounds, including our Forest School and the local area is utilised to ensure our pupils can experience and gain a thorough knowledge of their own locality which then challenges and better enables them to make comparisons between their local surroundings and that of contrasting settlements within the wider world.

Through our geography curriculum we also aim to develop pupils' understanding of sustainable development, global citizenship, diversity and human rights in order to inspire the children to consider the difference they can make to the world around them.

Our geography curriculum aims to ensure the pupils:-

- develop contextual knowledge of the location of places, seas and oceans including their physical and human characteristics.
- understand geographical similarities and differences through the study of physical and human geography.

- 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 overtime.
- explore the relationship between people and their environment.
- develop an informed concern for the quality of the environment both locally and globally.
- develop a sense of responsibility for the care of the earth and its people.
- develop an understanding of issues such as global citizenship, diversity, human rights and sustainable development.
- develop a competence in the geographical skills needed to:
 - i. collect, analyse and communicate data gathered through fieldwork activities.
 - ii. interpret a range of sources of geographical information including maps, diagrams, globes, aerial photographs and Geographical Information Systems (GIS).
 - iii. communicate geographical information in a variety of ways including through maps and writing at length.

Through Geography we can also:

- Improve pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy, communication and ICT.
- Engage children in rich geographical learning experiences in the school grounds and local area.
- Develop pupils' critical thinking skills.
- Promote pupils' positive attitudes towards diversity and difference.
- Develop pupils as active citizens.
- Develop a rights-respecting ethos in school by strengthening pupils' understanding of how children's rights are met or denied locally and globally and how access to rights may be improved.

In order to achieve our Curriculum Aims, we have identified four "Curriculum Drivers" that are interwoven throughout our geography curriculum. These are:

- *Belief
- *Rights
- *Environment
- *Wellbeing

Implementation

Early Years Foundation stage –See Appendix 1

Curriculum organisation in KS1& KS2

At St Mary's, we have designed our own geography curriculum which follows the National Curriculum and teaching staff follow the long term and medium term planning which is clearly set out in our curriculum documentation. Three geography topics are taught in years 1-5, one topic per term. Two geography topics are taught in year 6. The topics are carefully planned to build on pupils' prior learning. Children of all abilities have the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit and, through planned progression built into planning, we offer them an increasing challenge as they move up the school.

We have also developed two additional skills progressions documents which teaching staff refer to in order to ensure that the children develop their knowledge of specific places and locations in the UK and the wider world. This factual knowledge is revisited regularly throughout the year and built upon as the children progress through school, in order to ensure that the children retain this knowledge.

Teaching and learning styles

The individual teacher should determine how the curriculum should be delivered in the classroom. 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 begin each of our geography topics with an enquiry question. We encourage children to ask as well as answer geographical questions.

Teaching and learning styles will differ from lesson to lesson and should address the needs and wants of the children and the skills being taught. The range of teaching methods to meet the different abilities of pupils will include:

- Knowledge/instructions given by the teacher
- Questions and answers
- Enquiry based activities where children are required to carry out independent research, collect and analyse data, present findings and draw conclusions.
- Field work and data collection
- Critical thinking activities
- Creative activities e.g. model making, role-play and discussions
- Use of books, maps, atlases, aerial photographs, ICT, GIS, videos and audiotapes.

Inclusion

All children are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum. Geography forms part of that broad and balanced curriculum. We teach geography to all children whatever their ability. When teaching geography we provide learning opportunities that enable all children to make progress. We provide learning opportunities and resources matched to the needs of children with learning and behavioural difficulties and we take into account targets set for individual children in their IEP's. Fieldwork is adapted to take into account individual requirements. See Curriculum access document.

Assessment

By the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the skills made explicit for each year group in our curriculum. Formative assessment will be used to assess children's progress. Teachers will use their professional judgement to determine whether each child is working at, above or towards the expected level. Gathering evidence of pupils' attainment allows teachers to identify what has been learnt and identify ways of overcoming difficulties and establish a basis for further planning.

Learning objectives and success criteria should be shared with children in each lesson. Teachers and pupils can then assess their learning against this success criteria. Pupils are given regular feedback during lessons.

At the beginning of a new topic the children are presented with an enquiry question. The children are then asked to record what they already know to answer that question. After each lesson children are then asked to record their new knowledge on the same knowledge sheet. This enables teaching staff to have a clear understanding of how well the children have understood and retained the new ideas taught in that lesson.

At the end of each topic children are asked to write a paragraph to answer the original enquiry lesson. This also supports teachers as they make judgements on each child's understanding of the overall topic.

Other methods of assessment are also used by staff which vary as appropriate to the learning. Formative assessment is made from a range of additional sources:

- Questioning
- Quizzes
- Written work
- Spoken activities e.g. debates, discussions and presentations
- Maps, plans and sketches
- Group activities
- Fieldwork
- Audio and video recording
- Models
- Photographs

Marking should follow the school's Marking and Feedback Policy.

Resources

Geography resources are allocated according to what topics are taught in each age group. Children have the opportunity to use the following resources: globes, atlases, visual media (including aerial photographs), information books, maps, graphs, compasses and measuring equipment.

The children have access to iPads in geography lessons.

Fieldwork

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. The geography curriculum at St Mary's has been designed to incorporate fieldwork activities in each year group. The school grounds including our Forest School and the local area is utilised to ensure our pupils can experience and gain a thorough knowledge of their own locality which then challenges and better enables them to make comparisons between their local surroundings and that of contrasting settlements within the wider world. We also offer the children in year 6 the chance to visit 'Derwent Hill', an Outdoor Education and Training Centre in The Lake District. This helps to strengthen children's knowledge as they study mountains by providing them with the opportunity to experience and carry out fieldwork in a mountainous area in England.

Health and Safety

This policy needs to be read alongside our Health and Safety Policy. Consideration needs to be given to conducting appropriate risk assessments and ensuring the safeguarding of children and staff when planning and carrying out field work activities and visits.

Monitoring and evaluating

Geography will be monitored throughout the year by the geography co-ordinator. Books and planning will be monitored throughout the year to ensure that the curriculum is being taught effectively and the needs and abilities of the children are being catered for. Lessons may be monitored to help promote the quality of learning and standard of achievement in geography. Pupil voice is extremely valued at St Mary's, therefore interviews/questionnaires will also be carried out each academic year with pupils as well as staff. Data and feedback is then analysed to identify strengths and areas for further development.

The role of the geography co-ordinator

- Support colleagues in teaching the subject content and developing their skills in planning, teaching and assessing geography
- Renew, update and oversee the audit of resources needed to deliver the curriculum
- Monitor and evaluate the learning and teaching of geography by looking at children's books, displays, lessons and planning and finding out the children's views on the subject
- Develop assessment and record keeping ensuring progression and continuity
- Keep abreast of developments in the teaching and learning of geography and feeding back to the rest of the teaching staff.

Appendix 1-Early Years Foundation Stage

As the Nursery and Reception classes are 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 Years Foundation Stage Profile. Geography makes a significant contribution to the EYFS objectives of developing a child's knowledge and understanding of the world. Geography based activities are set up in continuous provision and are linked to the Topics for each half term. Children in the foundation stage have regular opportunities throughout the week to visit the school grounds including the Forest School in order to strengthen their first hand experiences of the natural world around them.

Implementation-Early Years

As part of the EYFS curriculum the children experience the following:

- opportunities to learn in the natural environment and to develop a sensitivity for the natural environment;
- a developing understanding of the important processes and changes in the natural world including seasons and states of matter;
- an awareness of the similarities and differences between the natural world around them and other contrasting environments;
- a growing understanding of other people's customs and traditions which may be different from their own;

Our curriculum provides for all these learning opportunities and enhances them further via the following activities:

Nursery

- Play experiences using small world equipment on large scale play mats and in sand etc;
- The children are encouraged to record their findings, perhaps through drawing, writing, and modelling.
- Play experiences on playground maps;

- Walks around the school environment;
- The children are shown photographs of the local area to help them identify features, for example a library, railway, church or mosque.
- Maps of both real and imaginary places available within the setting for exploration and discussion;
- Regular discussions on the weather and weather changes
- Storytelling which involves stories from and about various places around the world;
- Discussions led from children's own life experiences such as holidays and visits to family who live in other parts of the UK or world;
- The use of remote-control devices gives the children experience of using positional language.
- Visitors to school talk to the children about the jobs they have in the local community during 'Careers Week' and visitors talk to the children about other faiths.

Reception

- Play experiences using small world equipment on large scale play mats and in sand etc;
- Play experiences on playground maps;
- Walks around the school environment;
- Maps of both real and imaginary places available within the setting for exploration and discussion;
- Children look at aerial view photographs and maps of the local environment on 'Digimap for Schools';
- Regular discussions on the weather and changes in the weather highlighting comparisons with different times of the year and different places;
- All children take part in Forest School activities throughout the week. This supports their understanding of weather, seasons, nature and their local environment;
- The use of stories, non-fiction texts, rhymes and poetry to help the children to foster an understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world and world to help them to begin to understand some of the similarities and differences between Sunderland and contrasting localities;
- Discussion from children's own experiences of holidays and visits to family who live elsewhere provide opportunities to develop all the children's awareness of our world and all it has to offer;
- A seasonal walk each term provides further understanding of the seasons and provides valuable opportunities to discuss road safety;
- A visit to the park provides learning in the locality and key features e.g. library, church, footpath, car park etc

The personal experiences of geography which children have in the foundation stage are then built upon and expanded as children move on to study geography in year 1. The children in the foundation stage develop their knowledge of geographical vocabulary which is also built upon in KS1.