

# Geography Policy



## Aims and objectives

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 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.

The aims of geography are to:

- 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 to sustainable development 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.

## Teaching and learning style

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 IT 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, e.g. research of a local environmental problem or use of the internet to investigate a current issue.

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, some children not completing all tasks;
- grouping children by ability in the room and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- providing resources of different complexity depending on the ability of the child;
- using classroom assistants to support the work of individual children or groups of children.

## Geography curriculum planning

We use the national curriculum programmes of study scheme of work for geography as the basis for our curriculum planning. 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.

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. In some cases we combine the geographical study with work in other subject areas.

Our medium term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. 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.

Each class teacher creates a plan for each lesson. These daily lessons plans list specific learning objectives.

We plan the topics in geography so that they build upon 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.

## Foundation Stage

We teach geography in reception class 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 Early Years Foundation Stage which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged 3 to 5.

Geography makes a significant contribution to the development of each child's Knowledge and Understanding of the World under the heading 'Time'. We provide activities such as collecting postcards from different places, singing songs from around the world, or investigating what makes a 'good' playground.

## **The contribution of geography to teaching in other curriculum areas**

### **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. 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.

### **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 grid references. They also use graphs to explore, analyse and illustrate a variety of data.

### **Information and communication technology (ICT)**

We make provision for the children to use the computer in geography lessons where appropriate. We incorporate ICT in our geography curriculum planning. Children use ICT in geography 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 photographic images.

### **Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship**

Geography contributes significantly to the teaching of personal, social, citizenship and health education. The subject matter lends itself to raising matters of citizenship and social welfare. For example, children study the way people re-cycle material and how environments are changed for better or for worse. Thus geography in our school promotes the concept of positive citizenship.

### **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 more questions during the programme of study.

### **Teaching geography to children with special needs**

At Baynards School we teach geography to all children, whatever their ability. Geography forms part of the school's 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).

### **Assessment and recording**

We assess children's work in geography by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. Once the children complete a piece of work, we assess the work and use this information to plan for future learning. Reporting to

parents occurs annually with a written report and through parent evenings. The subject leader keeps a sample of work in the geography subject folder

## **Resources**

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach. We also keep a collection of geography equipment which 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 educational software to support children's individual research.

## **Monitoring and review**

The Headteacher and the subject co-ordinator are responsible for monitoring the standard of the children's work and the quality of teaching in geography. They are also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of geography, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.