

Rationale

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.

Aims and objectives

The aims 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 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 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.

Geography curriculum planning

We have developed the national 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 two phases (long-term and medium-term). Our long-term plan maps the Geography topics studied in each term during each key stage. This is mapped out by SLT. In many cases we combine the geographical study with work in other subject areas, to support children in making links in learning. At other times we arrange for the children to carry out a geographical study independently.

Our medium-term plans follow the national scheme of work and give details of each unit of work for each term. The Geography subject leader reviews these plans on a regular basis. We ensure that children have complete coverage of the National Curriculum but do not have to repeat topics. We liaise with colleagues in the Middle Schools to try and minimise any duplication in learning of skills or knowledge within KS2.

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 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 ELG objectives of developing a 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 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 the literacy hour are geographical in nature. 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. 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 how to use four- and six-figure grid references. They also use graphs to explore, analyse and illustrate a variety of data.

Computing

We make provision for the children to use the computer in Geography lessons where appropriate. We incorporate Computing in our Geography curriculum planning at Key Stage 2, and we use it at Key Stage 1 when appropriate. Children use ICT in Geography to enhance their skills in data handling and in presenting written work. They research information through the Internet and other sources. We also offer children the opportunity to use the digital camera to record and use photographic images, some of which are shared with schools' in other countries.

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 people re-cycle 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 organize campaigns on matters of concern to them, such as helping the poor or homeless. Thus Geography in our school promotes the concept of positive citizenship.

British Values are reinforced throughout our teaching of Geography to ensure that children understand the importance of Democracy, The Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect and Tolerance of those of Different Faiths and Beliefs and how this may be different in different parts of the world.

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.

Equal Opportunities

St Nicholas First School is committed to equality of opportunity. All children will be provided with a progressive, stimulating science curriculum irrespective of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background or special educational needs as in line with the school's equal opportunities policy.

Send and Dyslexia Friendly Schools' Policy Statement

At St. Nicholas First School, all pupils are valued equally. Teachers plan lessons which enable all pupils to participate, achieve and excel, whatever their level of ability. Lessons provide opportunities for pupils to recognise and develop their own learning style, (auditory, visual or kinaesthetic), through varied and flexible provision across a broad and balanced curriculum.

In order to meet the needs of all our pupils, we hold the Schools' Dyslexia Friendly, Level 1 Award and are actively working towards Dyslexia Friendly Schools' Full Status.

As a school, we believe that a Dyslexia Friendly environment and teaching styles will benefit the learning of all pupils and not just those with dyslexic tendencies. Strategies that are good for the dyslexic learner are good for everyone.

Teaching Geography to children with special educational needs

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. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels.

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. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

As a school we endeavour to adopt Dyslexia Friendly practices to ensure access of the curriculum and inclusion for all.

Intervention will lead to the creation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children with special educational needs. The IEP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to Geography. 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.

Gifted & talented

In Geography staff will develop differentiated weekly plans to ensure pupils who are identified as gifted in Geography and achieving exceptionally high levels of achievement are catered for. For these pupils accelerated learning experiences where programmes of study from the next school phase or Key stage are accessed by the pupils through investigative work, or enrichment activities are planned for giving these pupils open ended investigations to complete that link to the Geography programmes of studies being covered. Support from the school Gifted & Talented co-ordinator/ Geography co-ordinator can be sought to support this process.

Assessment and recording

We assess the children's work in Geography by making informal judgements as we observe the children during lessons. Once the children complete a piece of work, we mark and comment as necessary. Once they complete a unit of work, we make a summary judgement of the work of each pupil in relation to the National Curriculum. We record attainment on teacher plans and we use these to plan future work with that pupil, to provide the basis for assessing the progress of the child, and to pass information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

Resources

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach Geography well. We keep these resources in a central store. 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 a range of educational software to support the children's individual research.

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.

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 an overnight residential visit.

Monitoring and review

The Geography subject leader and SLT are responsible for monitoring the standard of the children's work and the quality of teaching in Geography. The Geography subject leader is 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. We allocate special time for the vital task of reviewing samples of children's work and for visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by staff and governors