

Whybridge Junior School

GEOGRAPHY POLICY

Subject leader: Terri Pettican

Updated: December 2017

Review Date: October 2018

MISSION STATEMENT:

To engage children with the world around them and enable the initiation of geographical thought. To increase pupils understanding and enthusiasm for their local environment and the world that they live in.

INTRODUCTION:

Purpose of study: “A high-quality geography education should inspire in pupils a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people that will remain with them for the rest of their lives.”

This is a new approach to a national curriculum document:

- it is concise and sets out only the core knowledge that students should acquire
- it does not specify approaches to teaching, nor explain how to put the content into a teaching and learning sequence

There is renewed emphasis on:

- locational and place knowledge,
- human and physical processes
- some technical procedures, such as using grid references

There is a renewed commitment to fieldwork and the use of maps, as well as written communication.

The Level Descriptors which made up the Attainment Target have been removed. We are free to devise our own curriculum and assessment system.

NLNF requires all teachers to embed literacy and numeracy skills within their subject teaching with the aim of raising achievement throughout the country – as referred to in the school Literacy policy.

AIMS:

Geography teaches an understanding of places and environments. 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. 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 recognize the importance of sustainable development for the future of mankind.

The breadth of study for the new curriculum is as follows:

Locational knowledge

- locate the world's countries, using maps to focus on Europe (including the location of Russia) and North and South America, concentrating on their environmental regions, key physical and human characteristics, countries, and major cities
- name and locate counties and cities of the United Kingdom, geographical regions and their identifying human and physical characteristics, key topographical features (including hills, mountains, coasts and rivers), and land-use patterns; and understand how some of these aspects have changed over time

Place knowledge

- use maps, atlases, globes and digital/computer mapping to locate countries and describe features studied

- use the eight points of a compass, four and six-figure grid references, symbols and key (including the use of Ordnance Survey maps) to build their knowledge of the United Kingdom and the wider world
- use fieldwork to observe, measure, record and present the human and physical features in the local area using a range of methods, including sketch maps, plans and graphs, and digital technologies.

TEACHING & LEARNING:

We use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our geography lessons. We believe in whole-class teaching methods, and we often 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 Computing in geography lessons where this serves to enhance their learning. Children are given the opportunity to take part in role-play and discussions. 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 recognize 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.

ASSESSMENT:

Class teacher to assess pupils termly on SIMS as to whether they are emerging, developing, secure or mastering the expectations set for that topic.

TIME ALLOCATION:

Whybridge Junior School has created a timetable which allows teachers to teach Humanities for 2 hours every fortnight.

COMPUTING OPPORTUNITIES:

Information and communication technology enhances our teaching of geography, wherever appropriate. This more than meets the statutory requirement for children to use Computing as part of their geography work in Key Stage 2. Children use Computing to enhance their skills in data handling (mountain, climate, population or river data) and in presenting written work. They research information through the Internet and libraries of digital images (aerial photographs, for example). We offer children the opportunity to use the iPads. Detective role-play software teaches them geographical facts incidentally.

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.

PSHEE 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 organize 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.

CROSS CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES:

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. 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

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, analyze and illustrate a variety of data.

Science

Geography links closely to natural processes and aspects of science related to the environment such as habitats and rocks and soils. In addition geography promotes the long term observation of people and the environment which are skills that are vital to investigations in science.

INCLUSION AND SEND PUPILS:

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 Humanities 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 and 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.

Intervention through SEND may include as appropriate, specific targets relating to geography.

MONITORING:

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 head teacher an annual summary report in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in geography and indicates areas for further improvement;
- uses specially allocated regular management time to review evidence of the children's work, and to observe geography lessons across the school.

Signed: Terri Pettican

Date: December 2017

