

# St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

*'To Love and To Serve'*



## **Geography Policy**

**Review Date: April 2023**

# **Geography Policy**

## **Aims and Objectives**

Geography teaches an understanding of places and environments by providing a means of exploring, appreciating and understanding the world in which we live and how it has evolved.

Through their work in geography, children learn about their local area and compare their life in this area to children in other regions of the United Kingdom and in the rest of the world. They develop essential geographical skills by: learning how to draw and interpret maps; developing 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 stimulate children's interest in their surroundings and develop a knowledge and understanding of the physical and human processes;
- 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 is to be a positive citizen in a multi-cultural country;
- To allow children to learn graphic skills, including how to 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 findings and conclusions in the most appropriate way.

## **Teaching and Learning style**

We use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our geography lessons, so that the children experience a broad and balanced programme of study, which takes into account all abilities, and physical, emotional and intellectual development. 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 that stimulate their learning further. We offer them the opportunity to use a variety of data, such as maps, statistics, graphs, pictures and aerial photos, and we enable them to use IT in geography lessons where it 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. Whenever possible, we involve the children in 'real' geographical activities e.g

- research of a local environmental problem;
- use of the Internet to investigate a local issue;
- carrying out fieldwork when appropriate

We recognise the fact that there are children of widely different geographical abilities. In all lessons, 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**

Learning intentions for each lesson is informed by the National Curriculum (2013), as well as guiding 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 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, medium and short- term). Our long term plan maps the geography topics studied in each term during each key stage. The geography subject leader worked in collaboration with teachers in each year group, to identify the key knowledge that is being taught, as well as the skills that are being developed across each topic, and these are recorded on the 'Geography – Progression of Skills' Document. Cross-curricular links are often made in geography lessons, or geography skills can be found within the teaching of other subjects to provide a broader curriculum. At other times we arrange for the children to carry out a geographical study independently.

Our medium term plans are based around the National Curriculum and give details of each unit of work for each term. The geography subject leader reviews these plans on a regular basis.

Each class teacher is responsible for creating short term plans and plans for each lesson. These daily lesson plans list specific learning objectives. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and often discusses them with the geography subject leader on an informal basis.

The topics in geography are planned 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.

### **EYFS**

We teach geography in Early Years as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. We relate the geographical aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Years curriculum which underpin the 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.

This involves guiding the children to develop sense of their physical world, as well as their community, through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

## **KS1**

During Key Stage 1, pupils will develop knowledge about the area in which they live, comparing it to other areas of the United Kingdom or the world. They will also begin to learn subject-specific vocabulary relating to human and physical geography.

They will carry out inquiries in and out of the classroom; beginning to use geographical skills and resources, including maps and photographs.

## **KS2**

During Key Stage 2, pupils should extend their knowledge and understanding beyond the local area to include the location and characteristics of the United Kingdom and Europe, North and South America. They will develop their geographical knowledge and skills including using suitable vocabulary, fieldwork techniques and maps, plans and atlases.

## **The contribution of geography to teaching the 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. Reports, letters and recording information will all develop children's writing ability by asking them to record information and write reports and letters.

### **Mathematics**

Geography makes a significant contribution 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. Monitoring the weather gives the children opportunities to collect and record 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 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. We also offer children the opportunity to use digital cameras to record and use photographic images.

### **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 recycle material and how environments are changed for the better or for worse. Secondly, the nature of the subject means that children have the opportunity to take part in debates and discussions. 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 teaching 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 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 so that they 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 moral questions during the programme of study.

### **Inclusion**

At St Thomas of Canterbury, we are committed to providing a teaching environment which ensures all children are provided with the same learning opportunities regardless of social class, gender, culture, race, special educational need or disability. All pupils are entitled to access the geography curriculum at a level appropriate to their needs. Our teachers ensure that support for specific individuals and inclusion in geography lessons is well planned for. To ensure inclusion, teachers use a range of strategies in line with the school's inclusion policy. Teaching is adapted to ensure that all children are able to access the lessons, taking into account the needs of children with learning difficulties. This includes consulting children's IEP's and the effective deploying and use of additional adults, so children are able to access the curriculum and make progress according to their potential.

### **Assessment and Recording**

Assessment for learning is continuous throughout planning, teaching and learning. We assess the children's learning in geography by observing the children during lessons and asking questions to gather insight on their understanding. Once the children complete a piece of work, we mark and provide feedback as necessary, providing opportunities for self-assessment where appropriate. The use of the 'what I know already, what I want to know and what I have learnt' (KWL) strategy throughout a unit is also used, alongside specific and measurable Learning Objectives for each lesson.

### **Resources**

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all the geography units in line with the National Curriculum. We keep these resources in accessible places for all year groups. 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. We are continually reviewing resources in our school to be able to teach all the geography units in our planning.

### **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 as well as the opportunity of a residential to The Isle of Wight, where they study the area in depth and are able to use various geographical skills.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The geography subject leader is 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. The geography subject leader produces an annual action plan in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement.