

St Mark's Primary School



A caring place to learn, play and grow

St. Mark's C.E. Primary School

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Geography Policy

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St Mark's CE Primary School

GEOGRAPHY POLICY STATEMENT

1. Introduction

At St. Mark's School we believe that the teaching of Geography helps to prepare children for life and the challenges they will meet. It helps to prepare pupils for adult life and employment.

2. Why we teach Geography.

Good Geography should be based on the "3 Rs" – **RELATE, REAL, RELEVANT**. It should be about the **real** world, learners should be able to **relate** to it and it should be **relevant** to the lives of learners. Bill Giles states that "Geography makes us aware that we must think globally." Bell adds that "Geography should have a leading role to play in preparing young people to face their responsibilities and develop a critical understanding of the rapidly changing world in which they live."

As pupils study Geography, they encounter different societies and cultures. It can inspire them to think about their own place in the world, their own values, and their rights and responsibilities to other people and the environment.

Good primary Geography is about:

- Place
- Active enquiry
- Real world
- Human and Physical
- Sustainability
- Thinking
- Pattern and Process / Location
- Maps
- Resources

We aim to:

- Stimulate children's interest in their surroundings.
- Develop a sense of place, a feeling for the character of a place and what it might be like to live there.
- Develop an awareness, appreciation and sensitivity to ethnic, cultural and economic diversity.
- Develop an understanding of some of the relationships between people and environments.
- Enhance their sense of responsibility for the care of the environment.
- Develop skills of observation, recording, analysis and communicating.

3. Teaching and learning

Children's education from the earliest age involves geographical experiences. The best work involves practical enquiries and first hand investigations. Fieldwork in the school building, school grounds, local streets and further afield is essential.

A geographical perspective offers children unique opportunities for learning, providing:

- Life skills [developing the ability to make sense of information] – eg map reading and way finding;
- World knowledge [developing an awareness of distant places and environments] – eg building an understanding of other people and cultures;
- Understanding people and places [developing spatial understanding and awareness at a range of scales] – eg fieldwork and active exploration of the locality.

Good primary Geography should be based on:

- Using maps and plans – children should be able to locate themselves in their surroundings and find their way from one place to another;
- Fieldwork and enquiry – practical enquiries and investigations are central to geography which is best learnt ‘through the soles of the feet’;
- Investigating issues – some of the best work in geography comes when children investigate issues and propose their own solutions;
- Communication skills – geographers use a variety of diagrams and other visual devices to communicate findings;
- ICT – modern information processing systems give us valuable new ways of studying the world;
- Knowing the locality – children need to develop an awareness of their surroundings for their educational and psychological well-being;
- International understanding – as the political, economic and ecological links between nations becomes ever more apparent, we need to promote international understanding and tolerance;
- Respecting diversity – geographical studies can tackle biased images and negative stereotypes in a neutral and unemotional way;
- Sustainability and the environment – sustainability and the care of the environment are key issues for the twenty first century;
- Global citizenship – we are all global citizens and we each have a responsibility both to the planet and to each other;
- Cycles, patterns and processes – geographical concepts such as cycles, patterns and processes provide a unique way of describing and analysing the world;
- Developing attitudes and opinions – Geography helps children to develop attitudes and opinions about some of the key issues of our time;
- Critical and creative thinking – the best geographical studies promote critical and creative thinking skills and enhance long term learning across the school curriculum.

Geography teaching at St Mark’s is organised as follows:

- Children are taught by their class teacher, as a whole class and in groups of mixed or similar ability.
- Geography can be taught by Class teachers as part of a cross-curricular topic where links are made to other subjects, or as a specific focus.
- Children learn through an enquiry- based approach, where geographical questions are investigated using a variety of skills and techniques.
- Children are given opportunities to learn through a range of tasks, including fieldwork in the locality and further away, using maps and plans at a variety of scales, using photographs and video, using ICT, listening to stories, making models, discussing ideas, interpreting written and numerical information, presenting information in a variety of ways.
- Opportunities are taken to use current events to develop awareness of places and issues.
- Each year we will have a themed Geography and MFL-based week in the Autumn term. During this week, each class will focus on a variety of aspects from different countries. Countries will be linked under various themes, eg Europe, Spanish speaking countries, French speaking countries. From 2004 to 2008, the theme was ‘Europe’. In 2009 it will be Spanish speaking countries and in 2010 it will be French speaking countries. The focus and format of each themed week will evolve from year to year. There will be opportunities to share outcomes with other children and with parents.

4. Curriculum Planning

Long term planning- KS1 and KS2

The long term plan was reviewed and revised by the History and Geography Coordinators in 2007/2008. The plan is currently under review by the Senior Management Team and will be revised as necessary based on the findings of the Rose Review of the Primary Curriculum and the introduction of the new Primary Curriculum in September 2011.

The new curriculum is likely to be based on six 'areas of learning', of which 'Historical, Geographical and Social Understanding' is one. The benefits of cross-curricular learning and a thematic approach are also highlighted by the Rose Review. The Review recommends that, "far from abolishing subjects such as Geography and History, subject disciplines remain vital in their own right and cross-curricular studies strengthen learning of subjects which make up its content. Making links between subjects enriches and enlivens them, especially Geography and History".

The fundamental skills, knowledge and concepts of the subject are set out in the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, where they are categorised into 4 main areas:

- Geographical enquiry and skills [this underpins the following 3 strands. Increased understanding of ENQUIRY is at the centre of geographical learning];
- Knowledge and understanding of places;
- Knowledge and understanding of patterns and processes;
- Knowledge and understanding of environmental change and sustainable development.

This underlies the organisation of the St. Mark's Scheme of Work for Geography as follows:

- Key Skills, based on the Programme of Study for Geography, have been identified for each Year group in Reception, KS1 and KS2.
- The Long Term Plan for Geography will indicate the Place and Theme for each class and each term, excluding Reception [where planning is based on fortnightly topics]. Throughout Reception and KS1 children investigate their local area and the links we have with the wider world. In Year 2 they contrast their locality with a place or places in the UK. During KS2 children study a range of places, from the UK and Europe to the world. They also study at a range of scales - local, regional and national. **By the end of Key Stage 2,** pupils will have been taught knowledge, skills and understanding through **2 localities** and **3 themes**.

Medium term planning

- Teachers develop their Medium term planning using the **place or theme** indicated in the long-term plan to teach the **Key Skills** identified for each Year Group.
- Mixed age classes should be planned for by referring to the key skills for each year group and using these to differentiate teaching and activities.
- Teachers may adapt suggested QCA Units to develop their medium term planning. The most suitable units are shown on tables entitled 'Possible support material for teaching Key Skills'. There is one for each Key Stage.
- The LCP files can be used as supplementary material. They are based on the QCA units, so can be used provided activities are matched to Key Skills.
- Each Class teacher has a Geography file containing the relevant planning documents. The Co-ordinator has a Master file.

Long term planning – Foundation stage

The Foundation Stage is pre-school and Reception Year. The 'Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage' document outlines six areas for development, one of which is developing children's Knowledge and Understanding of the World. One aspect of this is developing a Sense of Place.

Children in the Foundation Stage work towards Goals which the majority should achieve by the end of Reception Year. The Stepping Stones towards these Goals are used by Nursery and Reception teachers to structure their planning.

5. Timetabling Geography

- Geography may be taught as part of a cross-curricular topic, or as a separate focus.
- It may be taught weekly or as a block of lessons.
- There should be a Unit of geography taught each term.
- Some Units will require longer teaching time than others.
- Each class should undertake at least one geography-based fieldwork trip per year, expanding in location year on year to ensure progression [eg from school grounds, local area and Stockport to a contrasting locality and residential].
- Geography should be taught for approximately 4% of teaching time, 30 hours per year KS1, 34 hours per year KS2

6. Cross-curricular links

Geography provides an excellent vehicle to enrich the wider curriculum by giving children a real context for their learning. It provides a natural context for active citizenship and for developing and applying ICT skills. The national curriculum headings – places, patterns, processes, change, sustainable development – help make links to other subjects.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Opportunities for promoting SMSC are identified by teachers on medium term planning. Through their work in Geography children can:

- Gain experiences that help them make connections between themselves, their communities and the wider world;
- Develop awareness and understanding of a range of peoples and cultures, and a respect for many different attitudes, beliefs and values;
- Recognise the need for a just and equitable society, and their own role in making this possible;
- Explore issues of environmental change and sustainable development, and develop the skills necessary for active involvement of citizens.

(For further guidance please refer to the Spiritual and Moral Development Policy.)

Global Dimension

A 21st century curriculum needs to prepare learners to live and work in this fast-moving, interdependent global society. It should enable young people to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens and should contribute to the achievement of the five outcomes for children identified in 'Every Child Matters'.

All subjects provide rich opportunities for global learning, especially Geography. However, subjects by themselves cannot provide the complete range of experiences and practical opportunities learners need. This is where the cross-curriculum dimensions have a contribution to make.

OFSTED has recognised how the global dimension can be used to enrich Geography teaching in school.

Cross-curricular dimensions are **non-statutory**, but can provide the unifying themes that give education relevance and authenticity, and help young people make sense of the world. They include the **global dimension and sustainable development**.

The global dimension underpins **place** within Geography, making the curriculum more relevant and adding value. Eight key concepts make up the global dimension:

- Global citizenship
- Conflict resolution
- Social justice
- Values and perceptions
- Sustainable development
- Interdependence
- Human rights
- Diversity

The global dimension will help learners to:

- Eg explore and make sense of the big issues in the world.

To achieve such outcomes, learners need opportunities to:

- Eg explore global dimension concepts including conflict, diversity, human rights, interdependence, social justice and sustainable development.

The global dimension can be taught through:

- Eg collaborative curriculum projects with partner schools in other countries.

As a school, St Mark's will need to review how the global dimension can be built into the curriculum, focussing on:

- What we are trying to achieve;
- How learning will be organised;
- How well we are achieving our aims.

The Geography and MFL Coordinator will seek to build international links and partnerships for St Mark's as a school and for individual classes and projects, eg "Spanish Week".

Thinking skills

Geography provides opportunities for children to develop skills in processing information, reasoning, hypothesising, planning, predicting, researching, evaluating and justifying.

ICT

KS1: at KS1, we provide opportunities such as:

- Using data handling programs to present results of surveys as pictograms and block graphs;
- Using the Roamer to develop understanding of direction and journeys.

KS2: children should use ICT to help in geographical investigations. We provide opportunities such as:

- Research using the Internet;
- Using the Worldwise atlas;
- Using word processing program to produce a report;

- Using digital camera to record.

Application of number

Geography provides a context for application of number skills. eg

- Comparing distances;
- Using a scale on a map;
- Interpreting bar charts and graphs;
- Measuring, eg rainfall.

Communication

Geography provides opportunities for children to develop skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Children will be taught to:

- Listen and respond to the ideas of others;
- Use the correct geographical vocabulary to name things and concepts;
- Use patterns of language to express geographical ideas, eg language to express causality and comparison;
- Ask questions and develop arguments;
- Read accurately and with understanding;
- Communicate clearly using a variety of written formats eg letters, reports.

7. Equal opportunities

All children have an entitlement to a broad and balanced education, meeting, wherever possible, the requirements of the National Curriculum.

Children with SEN may need to work towards different Key Skills to their peers in order to achieve success. Differentiation may also be achieved by modifying tasks or by providing adult support. Please refer to the Equal Opportunities Policy.

8. Continuity and progression

The Key Skills provide for continuity and progression in acquiring geographical skills.

Assessment and recording

Assessment for Learning, with children being involved in their own learning, is at the heart of effective Geography teaching and learning.

Effective assessment makes a difference to learning when:

- Assessment is planned for;
- Learners are actively involved;
- Assessment is an integral part of learning.

Geography assessment at St Mark's is as follows:

- The class teacher makes formative assessments of children's progress in acquiring key skills in the evaluation column of the medium term planning sheet.

- Summative assessment of pupil progress in all Foundation Subjects is currently being reviewed by the Senior Management Team. Appropriate methods and means for recording progress in Geography will be developed by the Geography Coordinator as and when required.
- **For Reception children, Summative Assessment is recorded through the Foundation Stage Profile.**
- In accordance with the Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy, a levelled piece of work will be added to each child's portfolio according to the rolling programme. The latest piece is to be added by July 2009.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

- Teaching and learning in Geography will be monitored by the Co-ordinator.
- This may take the form of lesson observation, talking to children about their work, looking at children's work and looking at planning.
- The focus for monitoring will be identified in the Co-ordinator's Action Plan.
- The Learning Policy lists features of effective planning, of a good learning environment and of quality teaching and learning. These will be used to inform monitoring.
- The outcomes of monitoring will be shared with all teachers during staff meetings, or individually as appropriate. A written report will be given out and a copy kept in the Coordinator file.

9. Resources

- Resources are stored centrally.
- Large maps are stored in the drawers outside the Hall.
- Atlases and general resources are stored in the teachers' resource room.
- Resources which are being developed for specific Units of work will be kept in boxes in the hall storage cupboard (shower room).
- Resources for Geography / MFL Week will be kept in the Drama Cupboard.
- There is a list of general resources in each Class Geography file.
- There is also a list of resources specific to each unit of work.
- In addition, a set of maps for each class indicates the significant places and features which children should be able to locate in the UK, Europe and the World.

10. Safety

Off-site visits are necessary to develop fieldwork skills, but do pose risks to children's safety. All visits should be planned with reference to the Visits Policy.

11. Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the policy is being implemented, and that it is updated as necessary.

12. Role of the Co-ordinator

- To provide leadership in the subject.
- To prepare the school's Geography Policy.
- To be involved in long-term planning for the whole school.

- To work with staff to co-ordinate preparation and assimilation of medium term planning (scheme of work) throughout the school.
- To provide guidance to all members of staff.
- Maintain and update resources.
- Monitor and evaluate Geography.
- Promote good practice in Geography throughout school.

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