

Verwood C of E First School & Nursery
Geography Policy
April 2023



This policy outlines the purpose and management of the geography taught and learned at Verwood C of E First School and Nursery. The school policy reflects the consensus of opinion of the teaching staff. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all the teaching staff.

The importance of and entitlement to Geography

The study of geography involves pupils in exploring the relationship and interactions between people and the environments in which they live and upon which they depend. Many of the pupils who now attend our school will live to see the next century and inhabit a world of 11 billion people. The many opportunities and challenges that will arise during their lifetime will be very much about geography – personal, local, national and global. From adapting and mitigating the impact of climate change to predicting natural hazards such as Tsunami and Earthquakes, to understanding the causes and effects of population migration around the world our pupils will need to know about geography and to think like geographers. Geography helps to prepare them for life in the 21st century with all of its currently unknown possibilities. In terms of what we teach in geography and how we encourage and support our pupils to learn the subject we seek to develop young geographers who are able to make links and connections between the natural world and human activity and to understand the kind of questions geographers ask such as *Why is this place like it is, how is it changing and what will be the costs and benefits of these changes when they happen?* In line with the statutory requirements of the school curriculum which must be balanced and broadly based, our school commits to ensuring that every pupil at every stage of learning has regular and appropriately challenging and engaging learning in Geography which is informed by the National Curriculum. In addition, we will ensure that what our pupils learn in Geography and how they learn it not only inspires and stretches them intellectually but also contributes to their spiritual, moral, cultural and physical development and helps to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in the 21st century. In accordance with the importance we attach to Geography our school aims to:

Aims and Objectives

- all children are taught the study of geography as specified in the National Curriculum programmes of study;
- stimulate pupils' interest in their surroundings and in the variety of human and physical conditions on the earth's surface;
- foster pupils' sense of wonder at the beauty of the world surrounding them;
- develop an awareness beyond their locality; to identify the location and explore the characteristics of a range of the world's most significant human and physical features;

- help pupils develop an informed concern about the quality of the environment and the future of the human habitat;
- enhance pupils' sense of responsibility for the care of the earth and its people and secure their commitment to promoting and living sustainable lifestyles;
- develop pupils' skills of critical enquiry and an ability to handle and interpret information, through asking and answering geographical questions and using computing to communicate with and explore a variety of people, places and environments across the world;
- help pupils explore values and attitudes about complex issues such as sustainability and sustainable development;
- enable pupils to study the above across a range of places, cultures and environments at a variety of scales, from local to global;

Inclusion, equality of opportunity and differentiation

Geography forms an integral and statutory element of a pupil's entitlement to learning and at our school we ensure that all pupils can engage with geographical learning and develop as young geographers irrespective of their race, cultural background, gender, religion, creed, level of intellectual ability or physical and emotional circumstances. Mutual respect and the fostering of empathy and community understanding at local, regional, national and global scales lies at the heart of the study of Geography and at our school we model this in terms of the inclusive nature of the learning and teaching we provide.

In our differentiation planning we take due regard to factors such as classroom organisation, learning materials and the learning environment. All children are given equal access to the programmes of study through differentiated support. Differentiation in terms of teaching methods and resources will be planned to meet the individual needs of the children. All children should have access to materials and opportunities suitable to their specific needs. Risk assessments are carried out before all fieldwork activities take place. Extra challenges are provided to deepen the learning of all children.

Ensuring continuity and progression in learning

Whilst knowing more is an integral part of continuity and progression it is nevertheless just one element of it and merely sequencing subject content will not ensure on its own that our pupils become better geographers. To ensure continuity and progression for all pupils the curriculum is carefully organised through a progression of skills EYFS – Year 4 to ensure that our pupil's skills, knowledge and understanding of geography develops in the following ways:

- In the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1 our subject expectations enable pupils to learn and consolidate the fundamental attributes of being a geographer. At this stage there is a particular focus therefore on ensuring that our pupils are able to recognise, identify, describe, observe reason and begin to offer explanations for geographical phenomena whilst using basic and increasingly appropriate subject vocabulary.

- During Lower Key Stage 2 our expectations increase proportionately as we challenge our pupils not only to know more but to reach explanations through the synthesis of evidence from a wider range of sources, to reach conclusions and make judgements about geographical issues and to evaluate and critique evidence. At the same time, we expect greater subject vocabulary alacrity from our pupils and we plan accordingly for the use of more specialised subject vocabulary.
- There is increasing breadth and scale of study through the curriculum moving progressively from personal experiences to local, regional, national and global perspectives informed by the guidance of the National Curriculum;
- The curriculum becomes progressively more complex developing from discrete facts and bodies of information to conceptual awareness and generalised knowledge about more abstract ideas;
- The mastery and application of geographical tools and skills occurs in more precise and complex contexts;
- The focus of what pupils learn becomes gradually more issues based enabling them to explain links, patterns and processes and be more informed and mature in their thinking and self-reflection in terms of recognising the importance of attitudes and values about contested matters.

Approach to learning and teaching

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) follows the 'Development Matters in the EYFS' guidance which aims for all children in reception to begin to gain a wider experience of the world around them. This has been broken down into key knowledge objectives. Children will learn through first-hand experiences to explore, observe, problem solve, predict, think critically, make decisions and talk about the creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environments.

Topics are informed by the national curriculum and are sensitive to children's interests, as well as the context of the local area. The geography curriculum at Verwood C of E First is carefully planned and structured to ensure that current learning is linked to previous learning and that the school's approaches are informed by current pedagogy.

Teachers have identified the key knowledge and skills of each geography topic and these are mapped across the school, ensuring that knowledge builds progressively and that children develop skills systematically. Existing knowledge is checked at the beginning of each topic, as part of an immersion session. This ensures that teaching is informed by the children's starting points and incorporates children's interests and questions. Tasks are designed to provide appropriate challenge to all learners, in line with the school's commitment to inclusion. At key points throughout the topic, key knowledge is reviewed by the children and rigorously checked by the teacher and consolidated as necessary. Consistent learning walls in every classroom provide constant scaffolding for children. Tier three subject specific vocabulary is displayed on the learning wall along with questions. Curriculum quizzes/exit questions are regularly used to review learning and check that children know more and remember more. Where appropriate, we make cross-curricular links so that learning is repeated in several contexts and children are given opportunities to recall knowledge and skills, strengthening their long-term memory.

Children gain an appreciation of life in other cultures through their study of the characteristics of human geography and gain an awareness of the impact that the physical world has on the future of an environment. 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. The local area is fully utilised to achieve the desired outcomes, with extensive opportunities for learning outside the classroom embedded in practice. Children are provided with opportunities to use the school grounds and the local area for fieldwork. We are passionate about developing knowledge, understanding and skills through children being outside and enjoying the Geography around them. Educational visits are also encouraged to enable children to gain real-life experiences and apply skills practically.

Learning and teaching in geography is interactive and practical, allowing opportunities for children to work independently, in pairs and in groups of various sizes both inside and outside of the classroom. Learning activities are varied including the use of maps at different scales, geographical puzzles, photographs and drama. We provide varied and differentiated ways for children to record the outcomes of their learning including the use of PowerPoint, annotated diagrams, improvised drama and the application of a wide range of writing genres. Only in this way, will knowledge become embedded and 'sticky' and ensure that our children can build on what they know and understand from one year to the next. Teachers cater for the varying needs of all learners, differentiating activities where necessary and as appropriate, and ensuring an appropriate level of challenge. Outcomes of work are regularly monitored to ensure that they reflect a sound understanding of the key identified knowledge.

Whilst knowing more subject information as the pupils progress through the school is important we are careful in our planning to ensure that there is always a balance between new content and the development of important subject skills and the ability of children to think critically about what they are learning and why. We are very careful to be selective about the subject content we use to ensure that a balance is achieved between knowing more content and the development of key subject skills. //We recognise that simply knowing more information in itself will not enable our pupils to progress as young geographers capable of making links, seeing things more conceptually and recognising the significance of attitudes and values in shaping the world in which they live. To this end we identify important topics, issues, places and themes informed by the guidance of the National Curriculum.

Regular and high-quality outdoor learning is central to a young person's statutory entitlement in Geography. It provides opportunities to develop and consolidate skills and concepts introduced in the classroom and allows pupils to extend their understanding of the 'real' world. Fieldwork and learning outdoors involving the testing and investigation of ideas and theories through practical exercises including observation, data collection, recording, presentation, interpretation and evaluation is therefore fundamental to the study of Geography and the development of young geographers at our school. Consequently, fieldwork is a core element of geographical learning in every year group in line with the National Curriculum and this entitlement, along with the appropriate guidance on completing a risk

assessment and ensuring awareness of school emergency procedures, is identified in the planned enquiries.

In Geography, teachers:

- Design activities which help pupils answer the geographical questions such as: Where is it? What is it like? How has it changed? Why has it changed? How will it change next? What will happen if? How might it be better? What can be done about? How do I feel?
- share with pupils what they are expected to learn and how they are expected to learn it;
- provide a variety of learning activities that are used regularly, including observation, enquiry, investigation, games, mysteries, puzzles and problem-solving;
- encourage pupils to describe, explain, predict and evaluate places, geographical patterns and processes and environmental changes;
- plan for pupils to make and use maps, atlases, satellite and GIS imagery and globes regularly in order to locate places being studied and make/use models to explore geographical patterns and processes;
- provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to work as individuals, in pairs and in groups;
- encourage discussion so that pupils clarify their thinking;
- Follow the school's Geography progression of skills to ensure that learning is sufficiently challenging;
- provide pupils with regular feedback about their learning and about what they need to do next in order to improve;
- should determine the pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding, before, during and after units of learning;
- expect pupils to record their learning in a variety of ways, including diagrams, illustrations, pictures, letters, posters, annotated drawings and maps, reports, PowerPoints and accounts;
- When possible, topic related visits are undertaken and outside agencies used to enrich pupils' geographical understanding.

Summative Assessment

Geography comes under the 'Understanding the World' area of learning with focus on understanding people and community and people in the wider world. Children are assessed against the Early Years Foundation Stage profile.

Opportunities are facilitated whereby children begin to make sense of their physical world and their community by exploring, observing and asking questions about people, places and the environment. At the end of the academic year, practitioners

indicate whether children are meeting, exceeding or not yet reaching the expected level within this area of learning. The result of children's EYFS profile is shared with parents at the end of the year.

We will also make and report to parents a summative judgement about a pupil's knowledge and understanding of geography on four occasions during the primary phase:

Summer term of Year 1

Summer term of Year 2

Summer term of Year 3

Summer term of Year 4

By the end of key stage one and two, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the programme of study and each year group will assess the children according to the school's yearly breakdown of this. At the end the year a summative assessment is made of the children's attainment and this is then shared with parents in their child's annual report.

At the end of each of the three learning stages, the teacher will be able to use their knowledge and understanding of each pupil gained through extensive formative assessment. At this point they need to take into account the relative strengths and weaknesses of each pupil and reach a 'best fit' summative judgement taking into account the whole of the attainment target rather than specific parts of it. Most critically this decision is based on the professional knowledge and judgement that the teacher possesses of the pupil, built up over an extended period of time, which is then used to make a rounded and holistic judgement of their attainment in geography.

Responsibilities of Subject Lead

The geography subject lead has the responsibility to take a lead in developing geography further across the school; monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning; and the use of resources. The geography subject leader is responsible for the monitoring of the geography curriculum; monitoring may be through a range of methods including:

- assessment of pupils' learning
- scrutiny of pupils' learning and teachers planning across the school for progression and to identify strengths and areas for development
- discussion amongst staff and staff feedback
- formal observations
- Interviews with pupils

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in line with the school's policy review programme.