



## **Verwood C of E First School & Nursery**

### **Geography Policy**

**4<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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;

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- 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 of 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 challenge is 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**

In the foundation stage, geography is an integral part of 'understanding the world'. The children are taught through a topic based approach, developing activities that help children develop a sense of people and place. Geography is taught through the school's 6 'umbrella topics' that each year group will experience at the same point during the year, enabling a clear pathway for pupils during their time with us.

In Geography the pedagogy which underpins learning is a key question led enquiry approach, which encourages our pupils to take increasing responsibility for their learning, think independently and achieve challenging outcomes. At our school therefore we seek to encourage pupils to learn their geography through big question led enquiries about topics, places and themes which focuses on real people, places and geographical issues and allows them sufficient scope and time to really engage in high order subject skills such as developing explanations (even though there are very often no 'right' answers to questions in geography), reaching conclusions, making judgements, evaluating and applying information learned in one context to another. 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 to ask important questions about and then plan enquiries which are carefully structured.

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;
- ensure that objectives for lessons are presented in the form of "key questions" that need to be answered; sometimes these are raised by the teacher, sometimes with pupils and sometimes independently;
- 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 schools 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.