

Brockwell Junior School
Geography Policy
May 2021

“Geography is a subject which holds the key to our future.” Michael Palin

INTRODUCTION

The study of geography involves our pupils exploring the relationship and interactions between people and the environments in which they live and upon which they and all life on Earth depends. It can inspire in pupils a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people that will remain with them for the rest of their lives. Geography equips pupils with knowledge about diverse places, people, resources and natural and human environments, alongside gaining a deep understanding of the Earth's key physical and human processes. This allows them to understand how the Earth's features at different scales are shaped, interconnected and change over time. 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 at personal, national and global scales. What we intend pupils to learn in geography reflects this throughout our curriculum.

AIMS

In particular, we have established a school curriculum plan for geography as an entitlement for all pupils that is:

- Motivational and enjoyable so that our pupils look forward to their geography lessons and develop a life-long love of learning;
- Aspirational in terms of instilling in our pupils a desire to achieve the highest levels of success through providing them with the opportunities to excel in terms of their acquisition of long lasting knowledge and understanding and mastery of core geographical skills;
- Logical, relevant, broad and balanced in terms of the areas of subject content we have selected which reflect the guidance of and are commensurate with the demands of the National Curriculum. For example, we have ensured that content includes an even proportion of physical and human investigations, such as the effect of rivers on the landscape and the impact of the rise of megacities in the world. Due consideration has been given also to making certain that our geography curriculum maintains relevancy and topicality by including enquiries that engage pupils in studying issues such as climate change, flooding and trade;
- Sequenced to ensure that pupils can build on previous knowledge and understanding as they tackle more complex and demanding enquiries. For example, the understanding gained and concepts explored through an enquiry on the impact of earthquakes at Lower Key Stage 2 are revisited and extended when the pupils study the impact of living on a volcanic island in Iceland at Upper Key Stage 2;

- Progressively more challenging throughout the key stage, both in terms of the complexity of the subject knowledge we want our pupils to acquire and also the critical thinking skills we support them to utilise to ensure they understand the significance of that knowledge. These anticipated outcomes in knowledge and understanding and skills acquisition are detailed in the objectives of the schemes of work of each enquiry. In terms of the geographical techniques we want our pupils to master as they progress through the school, our curriculum planning has been informed by our identification of the coverage required at Lower Key Stage 2 and Upper Key Stage 2. These are integrated into our enquiries to ensure adequate coverage through the curriculum;
- Rich in subject language, which is built upon and extended throughout the curriculum to further enhance knowledge and understanding;
- Built upon and has continuity with the provision for geography established in Key Stage 1;
- Inclusive in terms of delivering the same curriculum to all of our pupils irrespective of specific learning needs or disabilities, and differentiating where necessary.

SUBJECT CONTENT

Our progression map shows how the required knowledge, understanding and key skills and fieldwork outlined in the National Curriculum are revisited and developed throughout the key stage in order to turn our pupils into young geographers. This occurs by undertaking the following learning challenges:

Y3: Why are jungles so wet and deserts so dry? Why do the biggest earthquakes not always cause the most damage? Beyond the Magic Kingdom: What is the Sunshine State really like?

Y4: How can we live more sustainably? How and why is my local environment changing? Why do so many people live in mega-cities? Why is Sheffield such a cool place to live in?

Y5: How do volcanoes affect the lives of people on Hiemaey? Why are mountains so important? Who are Britain's National Parks for?

Y6: What is a river? Why is fair trade fair? How is climate change affecting the world?

TEACHING AND LEARNING

We adopt an enquiry focused approach to learning and teaching in geography, which develops our pupils as young geographers. Through enquiry, our pupils not only build subject knowledge and understanding but become increasingly adept at critical thinking, specialised vocabulary and their grasp of subject concepts. We structure learning in geography through big question led enquiries about relevant geographical topics, places and themes. As said by Heather Small, "...to question is how we grow." Our curriculum is therefore 'knowledge rich' rather than content heavy as we recognise that if we attempt to teach geographical topics, places, themes and issues in their entirety, we restrict opportunities for pupils to master and apply critical thinking skills and

achieve more challenging subject outcomes. We adopt a policy of immersive learning in geography that provides sufficient time and space for our pupils not only to acquire new knowledge and subject vocabulary but also to develop subject concepts and understand the significance of what they have learned. Our learning and teaching in geography is interactive and practical, allowing opportunities for pupils to work independently, in pairs and also in groups of various sizes both inside and outside of the classroom. Learning activities are varied including the use of mysteries, maps at different scales, GIS, geographical puzzles, photographs and drama. Similarly, we provide varied and differentiated ways for pupils to record the outcomes of their work including the use of PowerPoint, concept mapping, 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 pupils can build on what they know and understand from one year to the next. The schemes of work for each geographical enquiry highlight both the objectives and anticipated outcomes of the investigation. They are also carefully structured through the use of ancillary questions, to enable pupils to build their knowledge and understanding in incremental steps of increasing complexity until they reach the point where they are able to answer the question posed at the beginning of the investigation. Our learning and teaching in geography also recognises the importance of fieldwork with a number of our investigations involving observation, recording, presentation, interpretation and the evaluation of geographical information gathered outside of the classroom. Knowledge organisers, which are produced at the beginning of each enquiry, help to focus and contextualise learning, as well as foster a positive home-school partnership. Similarly, children are encouraged to undertake learning challenges at home, which are linked to their current enquiry.

Our geography teaching is also embedded in the development of a creative curriculum. Whilst it is taught as a discrete lesson, opportunities for children to further develop geographical knowledge, understanding and progression of skills will be maximised through links with other subjects, eg. science and maths.

CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION

Geography is delivered by following a series of sequences throughout the key stage. We have identified the key knowledge, concepts and skills for each enquiry; each year group has clear learning goals, and consideration has been given to ensure continuity and progression across enquiries throughout each year group across the school. Our geography progression map shows how our pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed each year, and highlights the range and depth of work covered.

DIFFERENTIATION

We recognise the fact that we have children of differing ability in all our 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 through a range of strategies:

- setting tasks that are open-ended and can have a variety of responses
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty, where not all children complete all tasks
- grouping children by ability and setting different tasks for each group
- providing a range of challenges with different resources

- having adults or peers support the work of individual children or small groups.
- providing a suitable learning environment

ASSESSMENT

Each enquiry which forms our programme of learning and teaching in geography sets clear objectives and outcomes for the pupils in terms of knowledge and understanding and skills acquisition. The schemes of work also suggest a range of ways in which the teacher can assess whether a pupil has achieved these outcomes. We ensure that when assessing our pupils evidence is drawn from a wide range of sources to inform the process including interaction with pupils during discussions and related questioning, day to day observations, practical activities such as model making and role play drama, the gathering, presentation and communication of fieldwork data and writing in different genres. The outcomes of each enquiry serve to inform the teacher's developing picture of the knowledge and understanding of each pupil and to plan future learning accordingly. We do not make summative judgements about individual pieces of pupil work but rather use the outcomes to build an emerging picture of what the pupil knows, understands and can do.

At the end of each year we make a summative judgement about the achievement of each pupil against the subject learning goals for geography in that year. At this point we decide upon a 'best fit' judgement as to whether the pupil has achieved and embedded the expected learning goals, exceeded expectations or is still working towards the goals. This decision draws upon the professional knowledge and judgement that teachers possess about the progress of each pupil, developed over the previous three terms which allows an informed and holistic judgement of attainment to be made. Achievement against the learning goals for geography at the end of the year is used as the basis of reporting progress to parents.

CELEBRATION AND DISPLAY

Children's work and resources related to enquiries are displayed within classrooms and throughout the school. Teachers often set creative homework tasks or research based on an enquiry, and the children's work may be displayed either in their classroom or within school and on the school website, (inc. Twitter where appropriate). Geography work may also be celebrated in year group assemblies.

RESOURCES

Resources are centrally located as well as in individual class areas. The range includes non-fiction books, atlases, maps, globes, posters, pictures, photographs, DVDs, fieldwork equipment and ICT software. The school library also has appropriate and recently-updated resources for children to use. Our learning and teaching in geography also recognises the importance of the local area, with a number of our investigations involving observation, recording, presentation, interpretation and the evaluation of geographical information outside of the classroom, e.g. Holmebrook Valley Park and Kelham Island. Themed days provide further enrichment.

MONITORING

Monitoring by the humanities coordinator includes the reviewing of termly plans, regular discussions with pupils and colleagues, observations of teaching and learning, and book and display scrutiny. This is to ensure that our intent and the appropriate continuity and progression are being implemented and maintained. Judgements are made regarding impact in the subject, and feedback will be given to the Headteacher, the SLT and the Governors of the school. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in their teaching, being informed about current developments in geography and providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject in the school.

END POINTS

Our vision is to provide a coherent, progressive and rigorous learning experience for our pupils in order to reach the following end points:

- to equip our pupils with the geographical skills and knowledge that will enable them to ready for the curriculum at Key Stage 3.
- to develop their cultural capital in order to inspire them and prepare them for life as an adult in the wider world.
- to ensure that our pupils have been engaged and motivated by their learning in geography, therefore encouraging them to see the world through the eyes of young geographers ~ exploring and understanding the relationship and interactions between people and the environments in which they live and upon which they and all life on earth depends, and using this awareness to contribute to building a more informed and sustainable world in the future.

In a nutshell, our mantra is 'learn, love, look after' ~ we will only love something if we learn about it, and if we love it, we will look after it.

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POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

Hayley Brown
Humanities Coordinator
May 2021

To be reviewed by May 2023

“Education is the most powerful weapon with which you can use to change the world.”
Nelson Mandela