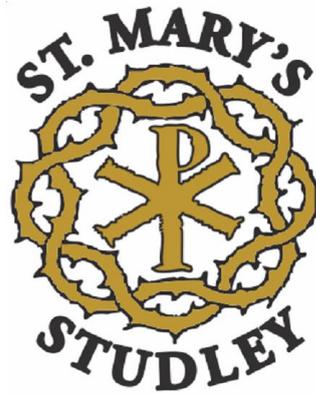


**ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL,
STUDLEY**



Geography Policy

Headteacher

O. Finnegan

Chair of Governors

S. Coyne



Policy on Geography

1 Aims and objectives

1.1 Geography teaches an understanding of places and environments. Through their work in geography, 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. They learn how to draw and interpret maps and they develop 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 recognize the importance of sustainable development for the future of mankind.

1.2 The aims of geography are:

- 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 means to be a positive citizen in a multi-cultural country;
- to allow children to learn graphic skills, including how to use, 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 conclusions in the most appropriate way.

2 Teaching and learning style

2.1 We use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our geography lessons. 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. We offer them the opportunity to use a variety of data, such as maps, statistics, graphs, pictures, and aerial photographs, and we enable them to use IT in geography lessons where this 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. Wherever possible, we involve the children in 'real' geographical activities, e.g. research of a local environmental problem or use of the Internet to investigate a current issue.

2.2 We recognise the fact that there are children of widely different geographical abilities in all 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 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.

3 Geography curriculum planning

- 3.1** We use the national curriculum 2014 for geography as the basis and starting point for our curriculum planning.
- 3.2** Our curriculum planning is in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). Our long-term plan maps the geography topics studied in each term during each key stage.
- 3.3** Our medium-term plans are drawn from Prospectus units which give details of each unit of work for each term. The geography subject leader reviews these plans on a regular basis.
- 3.4** Each class teacher creates their own plans. 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.
- 3.5** We plan the topics in geography 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.

4 Foundation Stage

- 4.1** We teach geography in reception classes as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage, we relate the geographical aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) which underpin the curriculum 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. Children learn about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their environment and how these differ in other parts of the world.

5 The contribution of geography to teaching in other curriculum areas

5.1 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 regarding Geographical issues will all develop children's writing ability. We also use environmental issues as a way of developing the children's writing ability by asking them to record information and write reports and letters.

5.2 Mathematics

Geography in our school contributes to the teaching of mathematics in a variety of ways. We teach the children how to represent objects with maps. They learn to use up to eight points of a compass, four and six figure grid references, symbols and keys, in order to improve their knowledge of the UK and the wider world. They also use graphs to explore, analyse and illustrate a variety of data.

5.3 Information and communication technology (ICT)

We make provision for the children to use computers and ipads in geography lessons. We incorporate IT in our geography curriculum planning in both key stages. Children use IT in geography to enhance their skills in data handling and in presenting written work. They research information through the Internet and/or ipad making use of programmes such as Google Maps. We arrange for the children to communicate with other pupils in other schools and countries by using e-mail and Skype.

5.4 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship

Geography contributes significantly to the teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship. The subject matter lends itself to raising matters of citizenship and social welfare. For example, children study the way people re-cycle material and how environments are changed for better or for worse. We allow them to organize campaigns on matters of concern to them, such as helping the poor or homeless. Thus geography in our school promotes the concept of positive citizenship.

We are actively involved with the Fairtrade campaign which enhances the children's awareness and learning of other cultures around the world.

Also school is working with six other schools in a pan European learning project which allows teachers to visit and research European learning techniques as well as enhancing teaching and learning experiences for children both here and abroad.

5.5 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

We offer children in our school many opportunities to examine the fundamental questions in life through the medium of geography. We encourage the 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 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 many moral questions during the programme of study.

6 Teaching geography to children with special educational needs

- 6.1** At our school we teach geography to all children, whatever their ability. Geography forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our geography teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs.
- 6.2** When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

Intervention will lead to the creation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children with special educational needs. The IEP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to geography.

We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning geography. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a field trip, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

Dyslexic children are given the opportunity to work according to guidelines of a 'Dyslexia Friendly Environment' (see separate document).

7 Assessment and recording

- 7.1** We assess the children's work in geography by making informal judgements as we observe the children during lessons. Once the children complete a piece of work, we mark and comment as necessary. Once they have completed a topic of work, we make a summary judgement of the work of each pupil in relation to the National Curriculum.

8 Resources

- 8.1** We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach a variety of geographical topics. 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 and a range of educational software to support the children's individual research.

9 Fieldwork

- 9.1** 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.

9.2 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. We also offer them the opportunity to take part in a residential visit to Alton Castle and PGL.

10 Social Cohesion Weeks

St Mary's runs three themed weeks which we call Social Cohesion weeks, all of which are very much geographically themed.

In the summer term each class focuses on a country from one of the continents.

Rec	Western Europe
Yr 1	Southern and Eastern Europe
Yr 2	Africa
Yr 3	North America and the Caribbean
Yr 4	Asia
Yr 5	South America
Yr 6	Oceania/South East Asia

Two weeks of lessons are planned which develop the children's understanding of: culture, climate, economy, religion, language, foods, sport and dance in their chosen nation. All this is pulled together in a final display assembly when learning is shared with the rest of the school.

In the Spring term our social cohesion week is locally themed focusing on life in Britain and British values.

Finally in the Autumn term, children study one of the great world religions.

Rec	Christianity other than Catholicism
Yr 2	Hinduism
Yr 3	Judaism
Yr 4	Sikhism
Yr 5	Islam
Yr 6	Buddhism

Using these themed weeks allows our children to develop a more rounded view of the world we live in and as they progress through the school their geographical knowledge and understanding is built upon.

11 Monitoring and review

11.1 Monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in Geography is the responsibility of the Geography Subject Leader. The work of the Geography Subject Leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of Geography, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The Geography Subject Leader

gives the headteacher an annual report in which she evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement.