



GEOGRAPHY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This plan scoile for Geography was reviewed by the staff of St. David's N.S. in May 2020. It is to be ratified by the Board of Management at their next meeting.

VISION

We seek to assist the children in our school in achieving an understanding of their school environment and the wider world. The children will learn about people and places and the relationships between them. In doing so, the children will acquire the necessary skills to continue learning about these things as they grow.

Aims

We endorse the Aims of the Geography Curriculum on page 14-15 of the Curriculum Statement:

- To develop knowledge and understanding of local, regional and wider environments and their interrelationships;
- To encourage an understanding and appreciation of the variety of natural and human conditions on the Earth;
- To develop empathy with people from diverse environments and an understanding of human interdependence;
- To develop the ability to use a range of communicative methods, especially those concerned with the development of graphicy;
- To encourage the development of a sense of place and spatial awareness;
- To encourage the development of caring attitudes and responsible behaviour towards the environment, and involvement in the identification, discussion, resolution and avoidance of environmental problems;

- To develop an understanding of appropriate geographical concepts.

This Geography Plan will be addressed under the following headings:-

Curriculum Planning:

1. Strands and strand units
2. Skills development
3. Children's ideas
4. Approaches and methodologies
5. Linkage and integration
6. Multi-grade teaching
7. Assessment and record keeping
8. Children with different needs
9. Equality of participation and access

Organisational Planning:

10. Timetable
11. Resources and ICT
12. Health and safety
13. Individual teachers' planning and reporting
14. Staff development
15. Parental involvement
16. Community links

CURRICULUM PLANNING

1. Strands and strand units

- Teachers are familiar with the strands/strand units/content objectives for the relevant class level(s)? *Note: all strands and strand units must be covered each year but not all content objectives need to be addressed within a strand unit.*

Refer to Curriculum

- Infant classes pp. 17-27
- First and Second classes pp. 29-43
- Third and Fourth classes pp. 45-61

- Fifth and Sixth classes pp. 63-84
- There is continuity and progression in the geography programme from class to class. Infants - 2nd Class a thematic approach is used.
- Checks are made to avoid gaps and undue repetition between classes.
- In the strand unit *People and other lands*, one location in Europe and one location in another part of the world agreed per year from 3rd to 6th class See Appendix.

2. Skills and concepts development

- A holistic approach is taken towards the teaching of geography so that there is a balance between skills development and the acquisition of knowledge throughout the programme.
- Strategies are used by each class to develop the child's geographical skills -The skills of working as a Geographer are:
 - A sense of place and space
 - Maps, globes and graphical skills
 - Geographical investigation skills – Questioning, Observing, Predicting, Investigating and Experimenting, Estimating and Measuring, Analysing, Recording and Communicating, Evaluating.

These skills are developed through the content of the strands and strand units.

Strategies for development of these skills involve the children being actively involved in fieldwork, trails and outdoor investigations as suggested in the curriculum.

- **A sense of place and space** is developed through the direct and indirect experiences first in relation to the child's own home and immediate surroundings but will later extend to include wider environments.
- **The use of maps, globes and atlases** are used in age appropriate ways from infants to sixth class and will encompass a wide range of graphical activities.
- **The geographical investigation skills** are included in various indoor and outdoor investigation work. By following the content of this curriculum and by developing

the geographical skills, the children in our school are given opportunities to work as geographers at every class level.

3. Children's ideas

We use the children's ideas of places and spaces as a starting point for all geographical activity. We find out what the children already know by:

- Talk and Discussion
- Play and Experimenting
- Enquiry Process and Questioning
- Brainstorming
- Concept Maps We do this to build on the children's previous knowledge or to challenge the existing ideas if they are not accurate.

4. Approaches and methodologies

- Key methodologies of the Primary Curriculum used as part of the geography programme are:
 - Active learning
 - Problem solving
 - Developing skills through content
 - Talk and discussion
 - Co-operative learning
 - Use of the environment
- Teachers follow the recommended sequence for geography – local, regional, national, European and global and then reflect it back to their own location;
- Approaches and methodologies used in learning about places are *photographs, internet, e mail*, (See pp. 64-67 Teacher Guidelines);
- Approaches and methodologies used in learning about the environment are *fieldwork, exploratory trails, photographs* (See pp. 68-73 Teacher Guidelines);
- Fieldwork is incorporated into the geography programme(See pp. 74-80 Teacher Guidelines);

- Approaches and methodologies used to investigate human environments are *fieldwork, surveys, photograph packs, artefacts, interviews*, (See pp. 81-96 *Teacher Guidelines*);
- Approaches and methodologies used to investigate natural environments are *fieldwork, trails, photograph packs* (See pp. 97-115 *Teacher Guidelines*);
- Approaches and methodologies used in learning about other places are *artefacts, atlases, globes, interviews, photograph packs, internet*, (See pp. 116-126 *Teacher Guidelines*);
- Mapping skills and mapping concepts are developed as part of the geography programme : *local maps, plans, photographs, internet, models* (See pp. 127-144 *Teacher Guidelines*);
- Maps, globes, atlases are selected and used in the school. (See pp. 145-154 *Teacher Guidelines*).

5. Linkage and integration

- Linkage: (*Refer to pp. 44-46 Teacher Guidelines*)
 - There are many opportunities to link one strand with another strand in the geography programme.
e.g. Human/ Natural environment.
 - Strands are linked using a thematic approach.
- Integration: (*Opportunities for integration are referred to in the Curriculum at the end of each strand unit*)
 - Activities which integrate geography with the other SESE subjects –include fieldtrips, photograph packs, construction of apparatus, use of investigative tools, maps;
 - Activities which integrate geography with other subjects include map-making, measuring, graphs, data compilation, predicting, number, Gaelige (place names), visual arts, music, Religion, ICT;

- Theme based activities are used to support integration, and will be recorded as part of the school plan.

6. Multi-grade teaching

- Specific issues that need to be considered in multi-grade situations are
 - *Using a thematic approach*
 - *Integration with other subjects: SESE – history and science; SPHE; Maths; Language programme; Visual Arts; PE (Teacher Guidelines pp. 45-46)*
 - *Selection of text books*
 - *Classroom organisation and planning*
 - *Professional Dialogue.*

7. Assessment and record keeping

- As in all subject areas assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning of Geography. We as a staff have a common understanding of its purpose and the ways in which progress of children in geography will be assessed, documented and reported. Assessment in geography in our school will fulfil the following roles:
 - A diagnostic role – to identify areas of difficulty in order to respond to the needs of the child.
 - A summative role – to establish the outcomes of learning after completing a unit of work.
 - An evaluative role – to assist teachers in assessing their own practices, methodologies, approaches and resources.

We recognise that assessment techniques used in geography must seek to assess progress in:

- a) Children's knowledge of the environment and of the world
- b) Children's ability to use geographical skills
- c) Children's development of attitudes

The assessment tools we will use in Geography will include:

1. Teacher Observation
2. Teacher designed tasks and tests
3. Work samples

4. Pupil projects

- This information forms part of class and school planning.
- Teachers share information with children/parents, through school reports, parent-teacher meetings, and informal meetings with parents. Praise, encouragement of and discussion with children, giving valuable feedback.

8. Children with different needs

It is important that all children experience a rounded environmental education. Geography plays a pivotal role in this education and so we will do our best to ensure that every child will have opportunities to engage in learning activities appropriate to their abilities:-

- Teachers support and ensure the participation of children with special needs , through tailoring the activities and expectations to the child's ability level insofar as is possible;
- Teachers will use a mixture of whole-class teaching and group work, with different groups set tasks of various complexities;
- Teachers use a variety of questioning techniques spanning from simple recall to more complex and analytical techniques so that all pupils have opportunities for success;
- Map work is graded for the less able and the more able students;
- Different ways of recording and communicating findings is encouraged: drawing, ICT, written records and oral reports;
- All children benefit from active involvement in the environment so all are encouraged to participate in fieldwork;
- Content, methods of recording and desired learning outcomes will be differentiated for children with general learning difficulties;

- Children with exceptional ability/interest in geography are encouraged and supported, by being afforded opportunities for extended project work etc.;
- Children who were born or have lived in other countries are encouraged to contribute to the geography programme, by sharing their knowledge and experiences.

9. Equality of participation and access

(Refer to school's Equality Policy)

- Equal opportunity will be given to boys and girls to access the geography curriculum;
- Provision for children with physical difficulties will be made so that they can access the geography curriculum;
- Children whose first language is not English will be supported in accessing the geography curriculum;
- The geography curriculum in our school allows children to learn of and come to value the diversity of peoples, cultures and societies in Ireland and throughout the wider world and so promote cultural awareness.

ORGANISATIONAL PLANNING

10. Timetable

Time is allocated at each class level for geography as per *Primary School Curriculum Guidelines*.

11. Resources and ICT

- Geography resources are stored in store room;
- In addition teachers store Geography resources suited to their particular class in their classroom. Additional resources or materials needed are available. (See pp.

164-171 Teacher Guidelines), aerial photographs, local photographs, globes, posters. ICT (Refer to pp. 155-156 Teacher Guidelines);

- We recognise the many benefits of incorporating ICT into the Geography classroom;
- Interactive whiteboards and screens are in every classroom and are ideal for the whole-class study of maps/ images, including route plotting, discovering change in areas over time and accessing new & dynamic materials;
- Pupils can also make use of laptops and ipads for research and project type activities;
- Specific websites recommended for studying Geography include: Google Maps/ Earth, Scoilnet.ie (which includes a free subscription to World Book Online Encyclopaedia), Askaboutireland.ie, YouTube

12. Health and Safety

During fieldwork, teachers should be aware of the safety implications of any work being undertaken and children should be encouraged to observe safety procedures during all tasks. The following is a summary of safety issues in the different strands of the curriculum:

- Outdoor work should be based in areas that are accessible and safe. A preliminary visit by teachers should be used to identify any possible hazards;
- When working with plants and animals, pupils should wear gloves to protect from allergic reactions;
- Children should wash their hands after handling animals, plants or soil;
- Cuts, grazes and skin infections should be covered;
- Prior to engaging in any outdoor work the children and teacher should discuss how they will care for the animals and plants they may collect;

- Children should draw up their own conservation code before working in the outdoor environment.

13. Individual teachers' planning and reporting

- The whole school plan and the curriculum documents for geography will provide information and guidance to individual teachers for their long and short-term planning;
- Teachers will plan using the strands and strand units;
- The Cuntas Míósúil serves in reviewing and developing the whole school plan/individual preparation for following years, by being made available openly to all teachers, in order to monitor progression.

14. Staff development

- Teachers have access to reference books and the Internet;
- School personnel can research new approaches and methodologies. They can arrange for opportunities to try out resources on a pilot basis and assess whether or not they should be purchased;
- There are limited appropriate geography courses available. Teachers are encouraged to attend;
- Teachers are encouraged to share the expertise acquired at these courses, informally;
- Time is allocated where possible, at staff meetings to discuss aspects of the geography curriculum;
- Teachers can avail of internal and/or external expertise to inform and upskill the school community in these areas.

15. Parental involvement

Where appropriate, parents will be invited to become involved in supporting the geography plan. e.g.

- *accompanying classes on field trip;*
- *helping with gardening*
- *giving talks on their experiences in other countries. etc.*

16. Community links

- Groups/individuals in the community may be invited in to share their expertise about the location and environment;
- KCC is involved in the Green Schools Initiative.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

The criteria which will indicate success are:

- Teachers' preparation based on this plan
- Procedures outlined in this plan consistently followed

IMPLEMENTATION

(a) Roles and Responsibilities

The plan is being supported, developed and implemented by all of the teachers in the school.

REVIEW

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the geography curriculum.

(a) Roles and Responsibilities

Those involved in the review will be:

- *Teachers*
- *Pupils*
- *Post-Holders.*

(b) Timeframe

This plan will be reviewed as needed

RATIFICATION

Ratified by Board of Management on: _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson

Principal

Appendix Plan for 3rd to 6th Class

3rd and 4th Year 1 Even Years Small World 4th Class
 3rd and 4th Year 2 Odd Years Small World 3rd Class
 5th and 6th Year 1 Even Years Small World 6th Class
 5th and 6th Year 2 Odd Years Small World 5th Class

	Country Study	Human Environments	Natural Environments	Environmental Awareness and Care
3 rd and 4 th Year 1	Italy Japan	Transport People at Work Visit to Arranmore (contrasting part of Ireland)	Local natural Environment (rivers, lakes, forests, quarries place names) Weather Climate and Atmosphere (Weather lore, Climate types) Maps Counties, county towns and major cities of Ireland The Water Cycle, Story of a River The River Shannon The Sun	Energy , Renewable, Non Renewable Resources

3 rd and 4 th Year 2	Britain Egypt	Homes and other Buildings Communities (County Councils and Voluntary organisations) Life in Blanchardstown (Contrasting part of Ireland) Provinces and Counties of Ireland	Mountains Planet Earth in Space (The Solar System) Weather Climate and Atmosphere (what makes up weather) Soils	Rainforests
5 th and 6 th Year 1	Greece China	Life in Rural Tipperary(contrasting part of Ireland) People at Work (agriculture IT Services) Sligo (contrasting part of Ireland, Images, maps) People and the Natural Environment Transport Trade	The Irish Coast (bays, headlands, islands) Physical Geography Africa, Australia and Europe The Moon Weather and Climate (weather measurements, factors affecting climate) Rocks	Study of a Bogland Area
5 th and 6 th Year 2	France Mexico	Buildings and settlements People and Communities Communications Famine	Irish Mountains, lakes and Rivers Physical features of Europe and the world The Burren Soils	Environmental Awareness and Care

			Weather Climate and Atmosphere (cloud formation, recording temperature, weather lore, differences between weather and climate) Outer Space	
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