

Geography Policy

*'Let it be known to all who enter here that
Christ is the reason for this school,
the unseen but ever present teacher in its classes,
the model for its children, the inspiration for its staff.'*

1 Aims and objectives

- 1.1 The aims of Geography teaching here at Sacred Heart School are rooted in our Mission Statement where “every person in the School is a unique creation” and we “encourage a curiosity and awe of God’s creation and foster a concern for its future and its heritage”.

Geography teaches an understanding of places and environments throughout God’s world. It provokes and answers questions about God’s natural and human worlds, using different scales of enquiry to view them from different perspectives. Through their work in Geography, children learn about their local area, and they 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.

As the children study human Geography, they encounter different societies and cultures, and learn how nations rely on each other. It can inspire them to think about their own place in the world, their values, and their rights and responsibilities to other people and the environment. Geography teaching motivates children to find out about the physical world, and enables them to recognise the importance of sustainable development for the future of mankind.

- 1.2 The objectives of teaching Geography in Sacred Heart School are in line with the New National Curriculum for Geography:

- To develop contextual knowledge of the location of globally significant places – both terrestrial and marine – including their defining physical and human characteristics and how these provide a geographical context for understanding the actions of processes
- To understand the processes that give rise to key physical and human geographical features of the world, how these are interdependent and how they bring about spatial variation and change over time
- Are competent in the geographical skills needed to:
 - collect, analyse and communicate with a range of data gathered through experiences of fieldwork that deepen their understanding of geographical processes
 - interpret a range of sources of geographical information, including maps, diagrams, globes, aerial photographs and Geographical Information Systems (GIS)

- communicate geographical information in a variety of ways, including through maps, numerical and quantitative skills and writing at length.

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 laptops and iPads 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, for example 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 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 objectives of the New National Curriculum for Geography as the basis for our curriculum planning. We have adapted the national scheme to the local circumstances of our school, i.e. we make use of the local environment in our fieldwork and we also choose a locality where the human activities and physical features provide a contrast to those that predominate in our own immediate area.

3.1.1 Objectives of the New National Curriculum

Pupils in Key Stage 1 should be taught:

Locational knowledge

- to name and locate the world's seven continents and five oceans
- name, locate and identify characteristics of the four countries and capital cities of the United Kingdom and its surrounding seas

Place knowledge

- understand geographical similarities and differences through studying the human and physical geography of a small area of the United Kingdom, and of a small area in a contrasting non-European country

Human and physical geography

- identify seasonal and daily weather patterns in the United Kingdom and the location of hot and cold areas of the world in relation to the Equator and the North and South Poles
 - use basic geographical vocabulary to refer to key physical and human features

Geographical skills and fieldwork

- use world maps, atlases and globes to identify the United Kingdom and its countries, as well as the countries, continents and oceans studied at this key stage
- use simple compass directions and locational and directional language to describe the location of features and routes on a map
- use aerial photographs and plan perspectives to recognise landmarks and basic human and physical features; devise a simple map; and use and construct basic symbols in a key
- use simple fieldwork and observational skills to study the geography of their school and its grounds and the key human and physical features of its surrounding environment.

Key Stage 2

Pupils should be taught to:

Locational knowledge

- locate the world's countries, using maps to focus on Europe (including the location of Russia) and North and South America, concentrating on their environmental regions, key physical and human characteristics, countries, and major cities
- name and locate counties and cities of the United Kingdom, geographical regions and their identifying human and physical characteristics, key topographical features and land-use patterns; and understand how some of these aspects have changed over time
- identify the position and significance of latitude, longitude, Equator, Northern Hemisphere, Southern Hemisphere, the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, Arctic and Antarctic Circle, the Prime/Greenwich Meridian and time zones

Place knowledge

- understand geographical similarities and differences through the study of human and physical geography of a region of the United Kingdom, a region in a European country and a region within North or South America

Human and physical geography

- describe and understand key aspects of:
 - physical geography, including: climate zones, biomes and vegetation belts, rivers, mountains, volcanoes and earthquakes, and the water cycle

- human geography, including: types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water

Geographical skills and fieldwork

- use maps, atlases, globes and digital/computer mapping to locate countries and describe features studied
- use the eight points of a compass, four and six-figure grid references, symbols and key (including the use of Ordnance Survey maps) to build their knowledge of the United Kingdom and the wider world
- use fieldwork to observe, measure, record and present the human and physical features in the local area using a range of methods, including sketch maps, plans and graphs, and digital technologies.

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. In some cases we combine the geographical study with work in other subject areas, especially at Key Stage 1. In other cases we arrange for the children to carry out an independent geographical study.

3.3 We use *Grammarsaurus* and a variety of resources including the internet and endeavour to incorporate learning objectives in our creative curriculum. The subject leader reviews these plans on a regular basis.

3.4 Each class teacher creates a plan for each lesson. These plans list specific learning objectives and expected outcomes for each lesson. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and often discusses them with the year group partner(s) to ensure continuity.

3.5 We plan the topics in geography so that they build on 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 The Foundation Stage

4.1 We teach geography in nursery and reception classes as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, 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 development of each child's knowledge and understanding of the world, through activities such as collecting postcards from different places, singing songs from around the world, or investigations, for example - what makes a 'good' playground.

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. We ensure that some of the texts that we use in teaching English are geographical in nature. At Key Stage 2 we organise debates on environmental issues, because we believe that these develop speaking and listening skills. Reports, letters and recording information 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

The teaching of geography in our school contributes to children's mathematical understanding in a variety of ways. We teach the children how to represent objects with maps. The children study space, scale and distance, and they learn how to use simple grid references. They also use graphs to explore, analyse and illustrate a variety of data.

5.3 Relationship, social and health education (RSHE) and citizenship

Geography contributes significantly to the teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship. Firstly, the subject matter lends itself to raising matters of citizenship and social welfare. For example, children study the way people recycle material, and how environments are changed for better or for worse. Secondly, the nature of the subject means that children have the opportunity to take part in debates and discussions. We allow them to organise 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.

5.4 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. For example, their work on the changing landscape and environmental issues leads children to ask questions about the evolution of the planet. We encourage the children to reflect on the impact of mankind on our world, and this gives the opportunity to 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 children to develop their knowledge and understanding of different cultures, so that they learn to avoid stereotyping other people, and acquire a positive attitude towards others. 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 Geography and Computing

- 6.1** Information and communication technology enhances our teaching of geography, wherever appropriate, in each key stage. This more than meets the statutory requirement for children to use Computing as part of their geography work in Key Stage 2. Children use Computing to enhance their skills in data handling (mountain, climate, population or river data) and in presenting written work. They research information through the Internet and libraries of digital images (aerial photographs, Google maps, for example). We also make it possible for the children to communicate with pupils in other schools and countries via e-mail, and we offer children the opportunity to use the digital camera.

7 Geography and inclusion

- 7.1** At Sacred Heart School we teach geography to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. Geography implements the school curriculum policy of providing a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our geography teaching we provide learning opportunities that match the needs of children with learning difficulties, and we take into account the targets set for individual children in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. For further detail see separate policies: Special Educational Needs; Gifted and Talented; English as an Additional Language (EAL).

- 7.2** 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, and differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels. This helps ensure that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

- 7.3** 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.

- 7.4** We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning geography. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, such as a visit to a river, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

8 Assessment for learning

- 8.1** Children demonstrate their ability in geography in a variety of different ways. Younger children might, for example, dress up in costumes from different parts of the world, whilst older pupils might produce a *PowerPoint* presentation. Teachers will assess children's work by making informal judgements during lessons. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher assesses the work and uses this information to plan future learning. Written or verbal feedback is given to the child to help guide his or her progress. Older children are encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own work.

8.2 We assess work in geography by making informal judgements as we observe the children during lessons based on the new milestones criteria laid out by Chris Quigley. Once the children complete a piece of work, we mark and comment as necessary. We use this information to plan future work with that pupil, to provide the basis for assessing the progress of the child, and to pass information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

8.3 The subject leader keeps samples of the children's work in a portfolio which shows the expected level of achievement in geography in each year of the school.

9 Resources

9.1 We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all the geography units. We keep these resources centrally in each year group where there is a box of resources for each unit of work. 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.

10 Fieldwork

10.1 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. Throughout the year fieldwork is taught in all year groups. In the summer term, the entire school participates in *Fieldwork Fortnight*.

10.2 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.

11 Monitoring and review

11.1 The subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standard of the children's work and the quality of teaching in geography. The subject leader is also responsible for supporting colleagues in their teaching, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for geography in the school. The subject leader should give the headteacher an annual report in which she evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and indicates areas for further improvement. Part of the co-ordinator's role is to review samples of children's work and be available for support when necessary.

11.2 This policy will be reviewed every year. *Next Review: September 2025*

Signed:

Date: