



Marshbrook First School Geography Policy February 2015

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 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. 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 recognise the importance of sustainable development for the future of mankind.

1.2 The objectives of teaching geography in our school 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 in children a variety of other skills, including those of enquiry, problem-solving, ICT, investigation and that of presenting 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 ICT 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 discussion and 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 2013 national scheme of work 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.

3.2 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. The subject leader devises this plan in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each year group and with subject leaders in other local first schools. Our long term plan was constructed in collaboration with the subject leader at Middle School to ensure complete coverage of the National Curriculum across Key Stage 2 without repetition of topics.

3.3 We use the national scheme of work as the basis for our medium term plans. This gives details of each unit of work for each term. The subject leader reviews these plans on a regular basis. In this way we ensure that children have complete coverage of the National Curriculum, but do not have to repeat topics.

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 discusses them with the geography subject leader on an informal basis.

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.

3.6 Opportunities are planned throughout the year for children to investigate the geographical features of a range of places and cultures through discrete theme days.

4 The 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 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 postcard writing, packing a suitcase suitable for a hot or cold climate country, and how to improve our school 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 literacy 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 a wide variety of 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 four grid references. They also use graphs to explore, analyse and illustrate a variety of data.

5.3 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) 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. 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. 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 ICT

6.1 Information and communication technology enhances our teaching of geography, wherever appropriate, in each key stage. Children use ICT to enhance their skills in data handling (e.g. climate data) and in presenting written work. They research information through the Internet. We offer children the

opportunity to use digital cameras and i-pads to record and present their observations.

7 Geography and inclusion

- 7.1** At our 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 details see separate policies: Special Educational Needs; Disability Non-Discrimination and Access; 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, 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 can 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 an off site visit, 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 arguments for and against a new local development. Teachers 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. Once the children complete a piece of work, we mark and comment as necessary.

9 Resources

- 9.1** We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach geography. These are kept in a central store where there is a box of equipment for each

area of work. We also keep a collection of geography equipment which the children use to gather weather data. Sets of atlases are accessible to each class and the library contains a small supply of geography topic books.

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.
- 10.2** At Key Stage 1 children have the opportunity to observe and record information around the school grounds and the local area, including for example, a traffic survey. At Key Stage 2 the children conduct a study of the local area which includes considering noise pollution.

11 Monitoring and review

- 11.1** The subject leader is responsible for monitoring 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 gives the headteacher and governors a brief annual report which includes an evaluation of the subject and areas for further development.
- 11.2** This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.

Signed:

Date: