St. Michael's Catholic Primary & Nursery School

Geography Policy

St Michael's – Geography Policy

Introduction

This policy outlines the teaching, organisation and management of Geography taught and learnt at St Michael's Catholic Primary School.
The policy has been drawn up as a result of staff discussion and has the agreement of the Governing Body. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all teaching staff. The responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the content within this subject area is to be reviewed by the Geography subject leader Mrs Hillier.

Aims and objectives

The aim of Geography teaching, here at St Michael's Catholic Primary School is to stimulate the children's interest and 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 recognise the importance of sustainable development for the future of mankind.

Taking into account the requirements of the National Curriculum (2014), we will ensure all pupils:

- 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

- 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

We will also ensure pupils are competent in the geographical skills needed to:

- To enable children to gain knowledge & understanding of places in the world and of how places can change;
- 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.

St Michael's Catholic Primary School aims to:

- Provide pupils with a secure, caring and stimulating learning environment Promote self-discipline, moral values and self-esteem
- Set challenging yet realistic goals in order to allow each child and member of staff to reach his or her full potential
- Encourage an enthusiastic attitude to teaching and learning through a well-balanced and varied curriculum
- Work in partnership with parents to provide the best for each child in order to get the best from each child
- Learn from each other, learn with each other and learn on behalf of each other as part of a networked learning community
- Offer colleagues an enjoyable, positive and welcoming environment in which to work, fostering both team commitment and the well-being of everyone within our school community

Intent

A high-quality geography education should inspire in pupils, a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people that will remain with them for the rest of their lives. Teaching should equip pupils with knowledge about diverse places, people, resources and natural and human environments, together with a deep understanding of the Earth's key physical and human processes. As pupils progress, their growing knowledge about the world should help them to deepen their understanding of the interaction between physical and human processes, and of the formation and use of landscapes and environments. Geographical knowledge, understanding and skills provide the frameworks and approaches that explain how the Earth's features at different scales are shaped, interconnected and change over time.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

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 development of each child's knowledge and understanding of the world, through different activities.

Key Stage 1

Pupils should be taught about:

Location knowledge

- 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 features, including beach, cliff, coast, forest, hill, mountain, sea, ocean, river, soil, valley, vegetation, season and weather
- Key human features, including city, town, village, factory, farm, house, office, port, harbour and shop

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 (North, South, East and West) and locational and directional language (e.g. near and far; left and right) 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 about:

Location knowledge

- Locate the world's countries, using maps to focus on Europe 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 (including hills, mountains, coasts and rivers), 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 (including day and night)

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 and record the human and physical features in the local area using a range of methods, including sketch maps, plans and graphs, and digital technologies.

Planning

Our curriculum planning is split into three mileposts, six half term topics (see long term plans) and links to our personalised curriculum.

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 topics, we offer them an increasing challenge as they move up the school.

We begin in the Autumn term by providing children with opportunities to investigate and make enquiries about their local area, starting with geography related to our school in Autumn 1 and then moving to our town of Widnes and our Borough of Halton so that the children can develop of real sense of who they are, their heritage and what makes our local area unique and special, in Autumn 2.

In the Spring term, our Geography Curriculum moves to studying the North West and regions in the United Kingdom in order to develop locational, place and human and physical geographical knowledge of our country. In summer, Geography knowledge and understanding is taught through looking from an international perspective, for children to be able to link local, national and international Geography and create a sense of place.

We ensure that there are opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge and we build progression into the schemes of work so that the children are increasingly challenged as they move up through the school, deepening their learning and understanding. Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The subject leader keeps and reviews these plans on a regular basis.

Assessment

Assessment in Geography is used to monitor and demonstrate pupils' understanding and knowledge of the key geographical concepts, vocabulary and content taught within each half termly topic. At the end of each unit of work, pupils complete an assessment of the key knowledge identified for that topic. This may take the form of a written or verbal assessment, depending on the age, needs and stage of the pupils. Teachers use the assessment to identify pupils' strengths and any areas where further teaching or consolidation may be required. The outcomes of these assessments are recorded on our school's tracking system, enabling teachers to monitor individual progress and inform future planning and teaching.

Monitoring and review

The coordination and planning of the geography curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader, who also:

- Supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in geography and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- Provides the head teacher with an annual summary report in the strengths and weaknesses in geography are evaluated and the areas for further improvement indicated.
- Uses specially allocated regular management time to review evidence of the children's work and to monitor and evaluate the progress made by children in history across the school.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years and signed by The Chair of Governors on behalf of the Governing body.

Signed by Mike Volynchook September 2026. Copy available from the school office