



ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY C OF E JUNIOR SCHOOL
“Realising the potential of every child within a caring, Christian community”

Geography Policy

Introduction

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. It is important that the citizens of tomorrow understand the management of risk, appreciate diversity, are aware of environmental issues and promote sustainability and respect for the world they live in. 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.

The aims of the National Curriculum for Geography 2014 are for all pupils 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 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;
- are competent with key geographical skills work – 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).

Curriculum

In order for children to learn the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils of different abilities and levels of maturity are expected to have by the end of this key stage, all units taught are drawn from the Geography programmes of study for KS2 in the National Curriculum 2014. This will build upon the knowledge and skills acquired in KS1.

Our geography scheme aims that pupils should extend their knowledge and understanding beyond the local area to include the United Kingdom and Europe, India, North and South America. This will include the location and characteristics of a range of the world's most significant human and physical features. They should develop their use of geographical tools and skills to enhance their locational and place knowledge.

The subject is broken down into four key areas:

- Locational knowledge
- Place knowledge
- Human and physical geography
- Geographical skills and fieldwork

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The whole school curriculum guide gives details for the teaching of geography across the terms of the school year:

- In the Lower School the pupils study the themes of Location (including a study of India) and Contrasting a region in the UK to Andalucía in Southern Spain.
- In the Upper School the pupils will complete a South American Study on Brazil, a UK Study on Norfolk which includes geographical skills and fieldwork, and another unit of Environment and Physical Geography.

Assessment and accountability

Short-term assessments will be an informal part of every lesson to check understanding and give the teacher information. This will enable the teacher to adjust the weekly organisation of lessons. Ongoing medium-term assessment will take place throughout the course of the year and will include observation, questioning and marking of work. Weeks at the end of each unit are set aside to assess the children's skills progression against the key skills taught in a unit of work. Assessment will be in line with the whole school assessment policy. Evidence of coverage and standards will be retained by the Geography Curriculum Subject Leader. Curriculum coverage and individual attainment will be reported to parents, colleagues and schools in the next phase. Alongside teacher assessments, children should also take an active role in evaluating their own learning and progression.

Organisation

At St. Thomas' we operate a two year timetable within the Lower School (Years 3 and 4), and within the Upper School (Years 5 and 6). The equivalent of approximately 45 minutes per week is allocated to Geography, but this is blocked into units of 1½ hours per week each alternate term (the other term being a History topic).

A range of teaching and learning strategies will be used to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and enthusiasm. Progression is built into the scheme and many units build upon skills acquired in earlier work. As Years 3&4 and 5&6 are grouped together it is important that the level of skill should be higher in Years 4 & 6 so that progression is maintained. Pupils will be taught as a whole class and in small groups. In many lessons some individual intervention may also be used where appropriate (see Scheme of Work).

Special Educational Needs

Planning activities for the classroom will take into account differentiation and meeting the needs of individual children. Children with special educational needs work in mixed ability classes during geography lessons and will be grouped in lessons by the class teacher appropriately. This could involve the deployment of any teaching assistants that work with specific pupils and planned materials and activities that suit their specific learning styles and requirements. Further details can be found in the latest S.E.N policy.

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Most able children

“Gifted and talented children benefit from pacy, purposeful classrooms where teaching is personalised, inspirational and fun.” (Effective provision for gifted and talented children in Primary Education, DFES October 2006)

At St Thomas’ gifted and talented pupils are included on the school’s A, G & T register. The needs of these pupils are regularly reviewed by class teachers as they plan and teach geography units of work. Enrichment and extension work is provided by all teachers as part of the normal differentiated provision, providing activities requiring higher order cognitive skills.

These pupils will be encouraged to think and work independently through teaching which makes learning challenging and enjoyable.

Computing

Class PCs and school laptops can be used during geography lessons to support specific planned activities by teachers within units of work. This enables pupils to access the internet, digital maps and a variety of geographical tasks that extend the locational knowledge, place knowledge and research the key aspects of human and physical geography. Further use of the Computing Suite in weekly lessons can link geographical studies to specific planned activities that link to the computing scheme of work as required.

Recording and expectations

Pupils will record their work using topic books or folders providing space for written work, separate map work, field study notes, individual projects, homework tasks and other tasks etc. Objectives at the start of each lesson are SMART, skills-based and child-friendly. They all begin in the form of a ‘Can I?’ statement. Pupils will be encouraged to take responsibility for the way that their work is presented in their topic books with clear expectations being set out at the beginning of the year.

Marking

Marking should always reflect the objective from the beginning of the lesson. They should be positive and include next steps for progress. Detailed marking should be carried out regularly (see current marking policy). This will include a *, denoting how the child has met the learning objective. There could also be a N.S. (next step), showing specifically what the child needs to do in order to progress further. On other occasions, work will be marked to the learning objective (double tick for fully achieved, single tick for partially achieved dot for not achieved).

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Geography across the Curriculum

We recognise the importance of geographical skills and techniques being applied to other curriculum subjects. We value the chances for pupils to make connections between subjects and to put into practice in one subject the skills base they are learning in another subject.

In addition, the teaching of geography can promote learning across the curriculum in a number of other ways:

- Citizenship – pupils are able to reflect upon and discuss topical, social, environmental, economic and political issues
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development – pupils are able to reflect on their own experiences, the impact of their own and others’ actions and recognise similarities and differences between cultures
- Key skills – pupils are able to develop key skills of communication, computing, collaboration, problem solving and thinking skills etc.

Display

Display is an important means of achieving quality in work. Geography work and resources should be displayed to inform pupils and celebrate their achievements. Displays within classrooms and around the school will reflect the current topics being taught in Upper and Lower School including maps, photographs, geographical studies of human and physical geography, diagrams, the results of field study and work outside the classroom. Incorporated within these displays will be key vocabulary, learning objectives and key questions.

Role of the Curriculum Subject Leader

The Subject Leader co-ordinates the monitoring of the teaching and learning of geography within the school. Evidence used to inform such evaluations includes:

- teachers’ plans and input at regular planning meetings in the Upper/Lower School;
- lesson observations – informal observations of the subject in Upper and Lower School;
- climate walk around the school to include classroom displays and learning environments;
- sampling of work across the whole school;
- pupil perception surveys;
- interviews of children and staff;
- teacher assessments;
- discussion with individual staff (with assistance as needed).

The Subject Leader will conduct discussions with staff at regular intervals in connection with the geography topics to be taught in the current year in both Upper and Lower School. Issues that occur as a whole-school issue will be targeted for development through professional development meetings and INSET days. These will take place in a negotiated programme alongside other curriculum priorities.

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The Subject Leader controls the budget for resourcing geography. The amount allocated is decided on a yearly basis and is dependent on the priorities in the School Development Plan (SDP).

Forward planning will ensure that resources are regularly reviewed, monitored and updated by the Subject Leader as finances allow.

Disability Equality Scheme

At St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School we recognise our duties and responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act as outlined in our Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan. (December 2007). It is our aim that through specific and accurate planning, resource allocation, differentiated teaching and use of adult intervention and support (where necessary), that every child irrespective of disability, will have full access to the curriculum and feel and be enabled to participate actively in developing to their full potential their skills, knowledge and understanding. We will ensure that all ‘reasonable adjustments’ are made to help both children and adults with identified special needs and disabilities to participate in all geographical activities, especially fieldwork tasks and visits that take place out of class.

Role of the Governing Body

Every Governor takes a special interest in at least one curriculum area or focus in the school. At present there is a named governor for Geography who supports the Subject Leader and keeps up to date with policies, strategies, procedures etc. through regular visits. These visits are used to become familiar with and monitor geography teaching, observe lessons first hand and to promote levels of accountability, challenge and support. Following a governor visit, a written report is submitted to the Geography Subject Leader/Headteacher.

Review

The policy will be reviewed at least every 4 years, or as new guidance becomes available to schools from Department of Education (DfE)

*Policy reviewed: **November 2014***

*Policy agreed: **17th March 2015***

*Next policy review date: **November 2018***