

St Albans CE Academy



In Association with:

Manor Multi-Academy Trust

Geography Policy

St Albans CE Academy Geography Policy

Rationale

Geography teaches an understanding of places, environments and people. Through their work in geography; children learn about their local area, compare their life in this area with that in other regions in the United Kingdom, Europe and in the wider world and how these can change over time. 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 and inspires children to be curious and fascinated about the physical world and enables them to recognise the importance of diverse places, people, landscapes and resources of natural and human environments, deepening their understanding of physical and human processes.

Aims and objectives

The aims of geography are:

- to enable children to gain knowledge and understanding of places in the wider world, the UK and their locality;
- to develop subject specific vocabulary relating to human and physical geography and characteristics of our world;
- to develop locational and place knowledge, learning graphic skills; including how to use, read, draw and interpret maps and atlases;
- to develop children's geographical skills and fieldwork through observations, first hand experiences of environments and landscapes to build knowledge of the UK, Europe and wider world;
- to increase children's knowledge and understanding of other cultures and traditions and, in so doing, teach a respect and understanding of how places can be both similar and different to where we live, what it means to be a positive global citizen living in a multi-cultural country and how places can change and develop over time;
- 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, analysing, communicating data, interpreting a range of sources, communicating geographical information in a variety of ways.

Teaching and learning style

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 computing 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, e.g. research of a local environmental problem or use of the Internet to investigate a current issue.

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 common 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.

Geography curriculum planning

We have developed the 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 choose a locality where the human activities and physical features provide a contrast to those that predominate in our own immediate area.

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 geography subject leader works this out in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each year group. In some cases, we combine the geographical study with work in other subject areas, especially at Key Stage 1. At other times, we arrange for the children to carry out a geographical study independently.

Our medium-term plans follow the national scheme of work and give details of each unit of work for each term. The geography subject leader reviews these plans on a regular basis.

Each class teacher creates a plan for each lesson. These daily lesson plans list specific learning objectives. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and often discusses them with the geography subject leader on an informal basis.

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 scheme of work, we offer them an increasing challenge as they move up the school.

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 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 ELG objectives of developing a child's knowledge and understanding of the world through activities such as collecting postcards from different places, singing songs from around the world, or investigating what makes a 'good' playground. The contribution of geography to teaching in other curriculum areas.

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 English are geographical in nature. In 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.

Mathematics

Geography in our school contributes to the teaching of mathematics 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- and six-figure grid references. They also use graphs to explore, analyse and illustrate a variety of data.

Computing

We make provision for the children to use computing skills in geography lessons where appropriate. We incorporate computing in our geography curriculum planning in Key Stage 2, and we use it at Key Stage 1 when appropriate. Children use computing in geography to enhance their skills in data handling and in presenting written work. They research information through the Internet and CD-ROMS. We also offer children the opportunity to use the digital camera to record and use photographic images.

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 re-cycle material and how environments have 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 organize 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.

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 man kind on our world and we 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.

Teaching geography to children with special educational needs

At our school, we teach geography to all children, whatever their ability. Geography forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our geography teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels.

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 organization, teaching materials, teaching style, differentiation- so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

Intervention through School Action and School Action Plus 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.

We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning geography. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a field trip, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

Gifted & talented

In Geography, staff will develop differentiated weekly plans to ensure pupils who are identified as gifted in geography and achieving exceptionally high levels of achievement are catered for. For these pupils accelerated learning experiences where the pupils through investigative work, or enrichment activities access programmes of study from the next school phase or Key stage are planned for giving these pupils open-ended investigations to complete that link to the geography programmes of studies being covered. Support from the school Gifted & Talented co-ordinator/geography co-ordinator can be sought to support this process.

Assessment and recording

We assess the children's 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. Once they complete a unit of work, we make a summary judgement of the work of each pupil in relation to the National Curriculum levels of attainment. We record the attainment grades in our mark books and we use these 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.

Resources

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all the geography units in the Scheme of Work. We keep these resources in a central store. 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.

Fieldwork

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.

In 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. In Key Stage 2, the children do a study of the local area. We also offer them the opportunity to take part in a residential visit.

Monitoring and review

The geography subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standard of the children's work and the quality of teaching in geography. The geography subject leader is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of geography, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. We allocate special time for the vital task of reviewing samples of children's work and for visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by staff and governors