

**THE GILES
NURSERY
AND
INFANTS' SCHOOL**



Geography Policy

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And
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Geography Policy

1 Aims and objectives

1.1 Geography is usually taught as part of the creative curriculum. It 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 doing so, 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, computing, 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 as well as group work, 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

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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 The school uses the National Curriculum as the basis for its creative curriculum planning in Geography. We have adapted the National Curriculum objectives 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 during the year. The class teachers plan these topics using the objectives set out in the National Curriculum. In some cases we combine the geographical study with work in other subject areas. In other cases we arrange for the children to carry out an independent geographical study.

3.3 The school uses the National Curriculum as the basis for its creative curriculum planning in Geography. The curriculum leader reviews the planning 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 geography curriculum 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** The geography curriculum leader has also collaboratively created a Curriculum Journey document that contains all of the geography taught across the school. It focuses on the geographical knowledge and skills that are taught and clearly shows the progression from Early Years to the end of Key Stage 1.

4 The Foundation Stage

- 4.1** We teach geography (known as 'Understanding the World') in the nursery and reception classes as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. We relate the geographical aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage which underpins 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. We use familiar environments to explore and compare to those far away. Geography is taught through the topics of 'Imaginative storytelling linked to The Three Little Pigs', 'Wolves and environments', 'Food Technology and Science Investigations linked to The Gingerbread Man', 'Safe Journeys', 'Life Cycles linked to The Little Red Hen' and 'Growing'.

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 English are geographical in nature. For example, in Key Stage 1 we use the Katie Morag books by Mairi Hedderwick to develop children's knowledge and understanding in the topic 'An Island Home'. We also use environmental issues as a way of developing the children's writing ability, by asking them to record information and write simple 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 begin to learn about space and distance, and they learn how to use four-figure grid references. They also use graphs to explore, analyse and illustrate a variety of data.

5.3 Personal, social and health education (PSHCE) 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 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 discussions that promote 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 and 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. 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** Computing enhances our teaching of geography, wherever appropriate. Children use computing to enhance their skills in data handling, by recording information in simple graphs and in presenting written work. They research information through the Internet by using iPads, laptops and computers by accessing *Encarta* and libraries of digital images (Living Library, for example). We also offer children the opportunity to use the digital camera and iPads to take photographs. Detective role-play software teaches them geographical facts incidentally.

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 Assess, Plan, Do, Reviews (ADPRs). We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those that are gifted and talented 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 and Disability; Equalities Scheme,

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Accessibility Plan, Able and More Able; 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. At present in Hertfordshire there are no levels of attainment for geography. At The Giles Nursery and Infants' School the staff assess work using a 'best fit' judgement using previous National Curriculum level descriptors. 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. Assessment is undertaken against the geography progression map each year. This is carried out on a whole class basis, with additional notes for specific learners. This progression map is then carried up with the class throughout their school career at the school.
- 7.3** 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, 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 simple presentations based on their investigations and findings. 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. Once the children complete a piece of work, we mark and comment as necessary. Once they complete a whole unit of work, we make a judgement of pupils' learning and understanding against the summary of expected learning outcomes set out in the National Curriculum. At present in Hertfordshire there are no levels of attainment for geography. At The Giles Nursery and Infants' School the staff assess work using a 'best fit' judgement using previous National Curriculum level descriptors. We pass information on to the next teacher at the end of the year using the progression map.

- 8.3** The subject leader keeps samples of the children's work in a portfolio which shows the expected level of achievement in geography for the end of Key Stage 1.

9 Resources

- 9.1** We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach a wide range of geography topics in the school. We keep these resources in a central store. In the main library and class libraries we have a good supply of geography topic books, including differentiated atlases. A range of educational software to support the children's individual research is stored centrally.

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** We let the children carry out an investigation into the local environment, the woodland area and we give them opportunities to observe and record information around the school site.

11 Monitoring and review

- 11.1** The curriculum 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 curriculum leader gives the Headteacher and link governor an annual report in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and indicates areas for further improvement. 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.
- 11.2** This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

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