



Geography Policy

*Endeavour - We should endeavour to persevere,
be resilient and work hard to be the best we can be.*

Colossians 3:23

Intent

Geography is a highly valued part of the curriculum, providing a purposeful means for exploring, appreciating and understanding the world in which we live and how it has evolved. Geography explores the relationship between the Earth and its people through the study of place, space and environment. In geography, pupils learn the skills of understanding a locality and how and where people fit into its overall structure. Geography also encourages children to learn through experience, particularly through practical and fieldwork activities.

Review date: September 2026

School Vision and Motto

It is our belief that there is something extraordinary and wondrous in everybody as unique creations of God. We value all our children as children of God and celebrate difference and diversity all within a safe, encouraging Christian school environment in which all flourish. Therefore, all will aspire with God's strength to reach for the stars.

"I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Philippians 4:1

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1. Subject Statement

The National Curriculum for geography aims to ensure that all pupils by the end of each key stage can apply and understand the knowledge, skills and processes specified in the relevant programmes of study.

2. Implementation - Curriculum

At St Mary's CE Primary School, the children follow a concentric curriculum, designed to motivate, engage and inspire the children through a series of geography units. For 2025-2026 these units take place across EYFS, Key Stage 1 and 2 during the autumn and spring term. A local heritage unit is also taught during the summer term. Throughout the rest of the year, 'sticky starters' ensure that key knowledge and skills are regularly revisited.

As well as making its own distinctive contribution to the school curriculum, geography contributes to the wider aims of primary education. Teachers will ensure that links between subjects are maximized during each unit.

Our long-term plans map out the skills and knowledge covered for each year group. These plans define what we will teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each year, allowing opportunities for re-visiting and progression.

Early Years

We encourage the development of the geographical skills, knowledge and understanding that help our nursery and reception children make sense of their world and their place in it. In the foundation stage, geography makes a significant contribution in the following areas:

Understanding the World

ELG: People, Culture and Communities

Children at the expected level of development will:

Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps.

Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.

Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and when appropriate maps.

ELG: The Natural World Children

At the expected level of development will:

Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants.

Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.

Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

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 (including the location of Russia) 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.

3. Implementation - Teaching and Learning

The school uses a variety of teaching and learning styles in geography lessons. Our principal aim is to develop the children's knowledge, skills and understanding in geography and we use a variety of teaching and learning styles to achieve this. We believe in whole-class teaching methods and combine these with enquiry-based research activities. We believe children learn best when:

- ❖ They have access to and are able to handle artefacts.
- ❖ They go on visits to places of geographical interest in order to make and record their observations in the field.
- ❖ They have access to good quality books, photographs, maps, atlases and globes.
- ❖ Visitors talk about personal experiences of the living in the locality and beyond.
- ❖ They listen to and interact with stories from around the world.
- ❖ They undertake fieldwork by interviewing family, friends and members of the local community,
- ❖ They are shown, or use independently, resources from the internet, and videos.
- ❖ They are able to use non-fiction books for research.
- ❖ They are provided with opportunities to work independently or collaboratively, to ask as well as answer geographical questions.

Inclusion

We recognise the fact that we have children of differing ability in all our classes, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies which are differentiated by task, expected outcome and/or support from peers or adults. This is monitored at the end of each geography focussed unit by book monitoring and via lesson 'drop ins' during teaching by either the subject leader, a member of SLT or the school SENCO.

Effective Questioning using Bloom's Taxonomy

Effective questioning using Bloom's Taxonomy is promoted throughout the school and across the curriculum for the following reasons:

- ❖ Questions stimulate thinking, and often generate more questions to clarify understanding.
- ❖ Good questions generate informative responses often revealing not only misconceptions and misunderstanding, but understanding and experience beyond that expected.
- ❖ Good questions encourage learners to make links.
- ❖ Good questions push learners to the limit of their understanding.
- ❖ Good questions from pupils push teachers to the limits of their understanding too, and challenge them to find better ways of explaining.
- ❖ Good questions offer opportunities for learners to hear others' answers to question; it helps them to reflect on their own understanding.

4. Impact - Assessment and Recording

At St Mary's CE Primary School, assessment is an integral part of the teaching process. Assessment is used to inform planning and to facilitate differentiation. The assessment of children's work is on-going to ensure that understanding is being achieved and that progress is being made. Feedback is given to the children as soon as possible, and marking work will be guided by the school's marking policy.

At the beginning of each geography unit, the class teacher will informally assess the children's level of knowledge through an assessment sheet in order to suitably adjust their teaching of the unit taken from the long-term geography plan.

At the end of each unit, each class teacher submits an assessment on Insight, the school's data tracking system. Each child is assessed as working towards the intended outcomes, having achieved the intended outcomes or exceeding the intended outcomes. Each teacher's assessment is based on a combination of questioning during lessons, observations of independent and group work and evidence produced in books. After teaching, the children also go back to the original assessment sheet in books and complete or edit as necessary.

5. Resources

There is a range of age-appropriate resources to support the teaching and learning of geography across the school. Children's books are kept in the Geography section of the school library bus. An excellent range of geographical information texts are available from the library bus and can be taken out by both children and teachers. Many types of atlases and globes are readily available in the geography cupboard.

Visits are planned to enhance learning and provide hands-on experiences. People with an interest, or expertise, in a particular topic or area of geography should be invited into school to work with the children. These might be parents, grandparents, other family members, neighbours or representatives of the local community.

In September 2019, a large-scale map of the world, including labelled continents was added as a playground marking to the Key Stage 1 playground. On the Key Stage 2 playground a large map of the United Kingdom and its largest cities was added. The children are now able to begin their geography topics by visiting these maps and looking at how the locality or topic being studied fits into the 'bigger picture' of the world.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The work of the subject leader is to monitor and support colleagues in the teaching of geography, being informed about current developments and competitions in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.

The monitoring of geography teaching is carried out through 'drop ins' during lessons and book trawls/book monitoring which are carried out at the end of each unit. These will both focus on coverage of the curriculum and evidence of geographical skills, thus allowing the geography co-ordinator to gain an insight into geography teaching across the whole school and will help the school to identify areas of strength, which can then be shared. At the end of each unit a staff meeting is held to share and evaluate the teaching of geography. This enables communication across the school about the content which is being taught and is an opportunity to share best practise.

Policy Monitoring

The Geography co-ordinator is responsible for the monitoring of the implementation of this policy. The leader reports to the Headteacher on the effectiveness of the policy and to the governing body upon its review. This policy will be reviewed annually.