

Bankfields Primary School Geography Policy



June 2015

Geography Policy

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of geography at Bankfields Primary School.

What is geography?

Geography is a foundation subject within The National Curriculum. The fundamental skills, knowledge and concepts of the subject are set out in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 of The National Curriculum where they are categorised into a single attainment target called geography.

In the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) basic geographical skills are covered within the area of learning; Knowledge and Understanding of the World.

Geography is a branch of science that is the exploration and understanding of the children's surroundings and the world in which we live.

The purpose of geography in the Primary Curriculum

A high-quality geography education inspires in pupils a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people that will remain with them for the rest of their lives. Geography teaching equips 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 helps 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 framework and approaches that explain how the Earth's features at different scales are shaped, interconnected and change over time.

The aims in teaching geography are:

- 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 a geographical context for understanding the actions of processes
- to be able to 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
- to be competent in the geographical skills needed to: 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)
- to communicate geographical information in a variety of ways, including through maps, numerical and quantitative skills and writing at length

Timetabling of geography lessons:

In KS1 and Years 3 and 4, geography is taught every other half term. The lessons take place once per week for a full afternoon. In years 5 and 6, geography is taught for a term per year. During the block of work, the lessons are weekly for an hour to an hour and a half.

Teaching and learning:

Foundation Stage:

We teach geography in the Foundation Stage through the Knowledge and Understanding of the World strand of the profile. The profile is used as guidance to ensure progression and continuity for children from 3 to 5 years. A two year rolling programme of topics in the Foundation Stage ensures that children are offered increasing challenge and motivation in geography as they progress through the school, providing a firm foundation for entry to the KS1 National Curriculum. Geography topics within the Foundation Stage are taught using a cross curricular approach.

KS1:

Pupils should develop knowledge about the world, the United Kingdom and their locality. They should understand basic subject-specific vocabulary relating to human and physical geography and begin to use geographical skills, including first-hand observation, to enhance their locational awareness.

Pupils should be taught to:

Locational knowledge

- name and locate the world's 7 continents and 5 oceans
- name, locate and identify characteristics of the 4 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 [for example, 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

KS2:

Pupils should extend their knowledge and understanding beyond the local area to include the United Kingdom and Europe, 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 knowledge, understanding and skills to enhance their locational and place knowledge.

Pupils should be taught to:

Locational 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 in 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 8 points of a compass, 4- and 6-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 record and present the human and physical features in the local area using a range of methods, including sketch maps, plans and graphs, and digital technologies

Geography Curriculum Planning

Planning of the geography curriculum takes place within teams. We use the 2014 National Curriculum document to inform our planning. Geography is taught through topics using a cross curricular approach whilst ensuring that children know that they are being taught geography. Planning is supported and reviewed by the geography coordinator on a regular basis. Due to the fact we have mixed age classes, we plan on a two year rotation cycle. This ensures that children have complete coverage of the National Curriculum without having to repeat topics. When planning, we ensure that the needs of all children are met through differentiation.

The contribution of geography in other curriculum areas

Geography provides an abundance of opportunities for cross curricular approaches although children should know that they are being taught geography. Where relevant and appropriate a thematic approach is adopted. In KS1 every other half term the topic is geography led.

Information and communication technology (ICT)

ICT plays an important role in the teaching of geographical skills and knowledge. The recent purchase of IPADS and green screen technology has enhanced the teaching and learning of geography throughout the school. Children are able to conduct research, present information, take photographs and use sites such as Google maps, Instant Google Street View and Google Earth using the new technology.

English

Geography makes a significant contribution to the teaching of English in our school because it actively promotes the skills of reading, writing and speaking and listening. When topics are geography led, the English texts we use are of a geographical nature. In the Foundation Stage and KS1 geography is approached through story. For example, we use the Katie Morag books by Mairi Hedderwick to develop children's knowledge and understanding when comparing a small part of the UK with a small non-European settlement. In KS1 and KS2, at least termly a piece of writing is produced in geography to support genres taught in English lessons.

Mathematics

In geography lessons opportunities to apply maths are specifically planned. We teach the children positional language, how to use maps, globes and plans at a range of scales. The children study space, scale and distance and they learn how to use four and six figure grid references. Graphs are also used to explore, analyse and illustrate a variety of data.

Assessment

We assess the children's work in geography by making informal judgments as we observe the children during lessons. Once the children complete a piece of work, we mark it in accordance with our marking policy. The marking focuses on subject knowledge rather than English skills. Children also have the opportunity to respond to marking in geography termly using 'polishing pens'. Feedback to pupils about their own progress in geography is usually done while a task is being carried out through discussion between child and teacher. These assessments inform planning and identify children's needs. At the end of the academic year, a formal assessment is carried out to assess progress and to report to parents. The record keeping system is in relation to the National Curriculum and shows progression of skills and standards throughout the school. This is completed by the class teacher and forwarded to the co-ordinator.

Inclusion

Bankfields Primary School values the individuality of all children. We are committed to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied life experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced geography curriculum and have high expectations of all our children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of

all our children matter. The inclusion policy helps to ensure that the school promotes the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background. We ensure that our SEND and gifted and talented children have the appropriate support and challenge.

Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the geography coordinator include:

- supporting staff with planning, excursions, visitors and resources (including ICT)
- leading working party meetings
- leading Inset training
- monitoring standards in geography teaching and learning across the school by carrying out lessons observations and book scrutiny
- taking the lead in policy development and the adaptation and integration of schemes of work
- monitor progress in geography
- keep up to date with developments in the geography curriculum and disseminate information to colleagues as appropriate

Parental and community involvement

At Bankfields, we strive to have an excellent relationship with parents and the wider community. For many years we have endeavored to be approachable and welcoming to our parents by holding a high number of parent's sessions some of which are geography related. We now have an extremely high intake at these events and have very supportive parents who are well equipped to support their children with their education. In addition, we formally report on geography to parents at the end of each school year and at regular parent consultations. Where appropriate, we would report to governors with regards to geography in the termly head teacher's report. We also make use of local resources and any appropriate visitors.