INTENT

How we designed our geography curriculum

The Trinity Primary School is located in the market town of Devizes, within the rural and farming communities of central Wiltshire, and close to urban communities of Swindon, Salisbury, Bath and Bristol. Geography is important for our pupils because it develops knowledge and understanding of the world around us, and our impact on our world. Barack Obama famously spoke about geography education, and we believe that our geography curriculum should include complexity, diversity, global awareness and knowledge,

'The study of geography is about more than just memorising places on a map. It's about understanding the complexity of our world, appreciating the diversity of cultures that exists across continents. And in the end, it's about using all that knowledge to help bridge divides and bring people together.'

The study of geography involves our pupils exploring the relationship and interactions between people and the environments in which they live, and upon which they and all life on Earth depends. Many pupils in our school today will live to see the next century and inhabit a world of 11 billion people. This will bring many opportunities and challenges, and their futures will be very much about geography at personal, national and global scales. What we intend pupils to learn in geography reflects this throughout the curriculum. We have established a school curriculum plan for geography as an entitlement for all pupils that is (3):

- **Aspirational** by instilling in our pupils a desire to achieve the highest levels of success, providing them with the opportunities to excel in their acquisition of long lasting knowledge, understanding, and mastery of core geographical skills. Such high aspirations are clearly identifiable in the progressive and increasingly challenging objectives of the schemes of work for each enquiry, which define what the pupils will know, understand and be able to do (4);
- **Logical**, **relevant**, **broad** and **balanced** in terms of the areas of subject content we have selected, which reflect the guidance and are commensurate with the demands of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum. For example, we have ensured that content includes an even proportion of physical and human investigations such as the effect of rivers on the landscape and the impact of the rise of megacities in the world. Due consideration has been given also to making certain that our geography curriculum maintains relevancy and topicality through including enquiries that engage pupils in studying issues such as climate change, flooding and trade;
- **Sequenced** to ensure that pupils can build on previous knowledge and understanding as they tackle more complex and demanding enquiries. For example at Key Stage 1, pupils observe and record the distinctive geographical features of the local area of the school and compare and contrast them with a similarly sized area around a school in Borneo. At Key Stage 2, this knowledge and understanding is both consolidated and extended as pupils investigate the nature of environmental change in their local area, and reach judgements as to the cost and benefits such change brings. Similarly, the understanding gained and concepts explored through an enquiry on the impact of earthquakes at Lower Key Stage 2, are revisited and extended when the pupils study the impact of living on a volcanic island in Iceland at Upper Key Stage 2;
- **Progressively more challenging** from Reception to Year 6, both in terms of the complexity of the subject knowledge we want our pupils to acquire and also the critical thinking skills we support them to utilise to ensure they understand the significance of that knowledge (4). These anticipated outcomes in knowledge, understanding, and skills acquisition are detailed in the objectives of the schemes of work for each enquiry. The geographical techniques we want our pupils to master as they progress through the school, have been informed by our identification of the coverage required at Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1, Lower Key Stage 2 and Upper Key Stage 2. These are integrated into our half termly enquiries to ensure adequate coverage through the curriculum;
- **Inclusive** by delivering the same curriculum to all of our pupils irrespective of specific learning needs or disabilities, and differentiating where necessary through, scaffolding, language, and learning environment.

Our pupils come from a largely non-diverse community in which many families live and work within a short distance of Devizes, pupils' life experiences and outlook reflects this. Although our pupils' lives are deeply rooted within the local community, they are developing independent thinking skills and becoming enormously curious about Devizes, Wiltshire, Britain and the wider world. Our geography curriculum strives to develop independent thinking and curiosity by supporting pupils to learn about equality and diversity through a range of contexts, to give them the powerful cultural capital they need to understand, live and work within the society in which they are growing up.

Our whole school curriculum includes at least one trip or visit for each class each year linked to a geography topic. These special days give the pupils the opportunity to explore a topic in greater depth and undertake geographical fieldwork studies. For example, during the Year 1 unit on the 'The Geography of Where I Live' pupils spend time exploring aerial photos and maps of the local area, using compass directions, and creating their own maps of our school site.

Our geography curriculum aims to expand children's vocabulary, with basic familiar word acquisition (city, town, street, river, lake, coast), high-frequency academic words used repeatedly across content domains (location, place, human-environment interaction, movement, region), and low-frequency content specific words that have distinct meanings and purposes (formation, biome, scale, spatial variation). We are developing children's spoken language skills through our geography curriculum, by offering children the opportunity to debate and reason, ask questions, develop well-structured descriptions and explanations, conclude, hypothesise, make informed judgements, present their research, and to predict and evaluate (5).

IMPLEMENTATION

How we teach our geography curriculum

Our geography curriculum forms part of our wider school curriculum and follows the school aims and values, our curriculum drivers are **enquiry, community, communication and independence**. We cover all the skills and content of the National Curriculum for history (key stage one and two) and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), through an enquiry based curriculum with clear progression. As pupils move through the school, our curriculum ensures that knowledge is generative and learning is effective. Our pupils develop geographical knowledge and skills through disciplinary concepts within each learning enquiry: environment; location; distribution; scale; physical and human processes; change; interaction; interdependence; sustainability; and cultural understanding and diversity. Each learning enquiry links to, and develops one of the primary, substantive concepts in geography.

Disciplinary Concepts

Environment The surroundings of a place in which a person, animal or plant lives and interacts.	**Location** The precise site, position, or situation of a place.	**Distribution** The pattern or arrangement of the physical (mostly natural) and human features of a place across its surface.	**Scale** Scale is the size or extent of the area of the place e.g. local, regional, national, international, or global.	**Physical and Human Processes** The natural or human events and actions occurring in a place that maintain equilibrium or cause change.
Change The alteration or modification of places over time due to natural and/or human processes.	**Interaction** How the physical and human elements of a place affect or influence each other and other places. Interaction occurs both within and between the physical and human features of a place and other places.	**Interdependence** The degree to which what happens in one-place impacts positively or negatively on what happens in another.	**Sustainability** Sustainability is the practice of using natural resources responsibly, so they can support both present and future generations.	**Cultural Understanding and Diversity** Cultural understanding and diversity variety involve distinctiveness of the physical and cultural composition of the society of a place.

Substantive Concepts

Locational Knowledge Locational knowledge is the precise site, position, or situation of a place.	**Place Knowledge** Place knowledge is the understanding of geographical similarities and differences between different locations.	**Human & Physical Processes** Human and physical processes are the natural or human events and actions occurring in a place that maintain equilibrium or cause change.	**Fieldwork Skills** Field work is the process of observing and collecting data about people, cultures, and natural environments, using a range of geographical sources.

Further Substantive Concepts that will be studied through enquiries drawn from Collins Connected Geography (this is not a definitive list).

Weather	Climate	Biome	Ocean
City	River	Forest	Mountain
Coast	Natural	Physical features	Human features
Island	Continent	World	Earth
Environment	Nation	Country	Trade
Desert	Agriculture	Volcano	Rainforest
Locality	Route	Situation	Site
Planet	Season	Tundra	Tropical
Polar regions	Monsoon	Flood	Ecosystem

We have adopted an enquiry based approach to learning and teaching in geography which develops our pupils as young geographers (2). Through enquiry our pupils not only build subject knowledge and understanding but become increasingly skilled at critical thinking, specialised vocabulary and their grasp of subject concepts. We structure learning in geography through big question led enquiries about relevant geographical topics, places and themes. Our curriculum is therefore 'knowledge rich' rather than content heavy as we recognise that if we attempt to teach geographical topics, places, themes and issues in their entirety we restrict opportunities for pupils to master and apply critical thinking skills and achieve more challenging subject outcomes. We have adopted a policy of immersive learning in geography that provides sufficient time and space for our pupils not only to acquire new knowledge and subject vocabulary but also to develop subject concepts, and understand the significance of what they have learned.

Our learning and teaching in geography is interactive and practical allowing opportunities for pupils to work independently, in pairs and also in groups of various sizes both inside and outside of the classroom. Learning activities are varied, including learning outside the classroom, the use of aerial photos, maps at different scales, and Geographical Information Systems. Similarly, we provide varied ways for pupils to record the outcomes of their work including the use of PowerPoint, concept mapping, annotated diagrams, and the application of a writing. Only in this way will knowledge become embedded and 'sticky' and ensure that our pupils can build on what they know and understand from one year to the next.

The schemes of work for each geographical enquiry highlight both the objectives and anticipated outcomes of the investigation. They are also carefully structured through the use of ancillary questions, to enable pupils to build their knowledge and understanding in incremental steps of increasing complexity, until they reach the point where they are able to answer the question posed at the beginning of the investigation. Our learning and teaching in geography also recognises the importance of fieldwork, with a number of our investigations involving observation, recording, presentation, interpretation and the evaluation of geographical information gathered outside of the classroom.

Each enquiry begins with an elicitation task. Pupils reflect on prior learning and generate questions they would like to find the answer to over the course of study. Teachers address any misconceptions that arise and are able to plan from pupils' starting points. An understanding of geographical concepts develops by linking new knowledge with prior learning. The curriculum is taught in a child-centred way, building on what pupils already know and can do, learning is differentiated to provide access and challenge for all. In each unit of work, pupils will produce at least one piece of extended writing, this supports geographical learning and embeds key writing skills across the curriculum. At the beginning of each unit, children learn experientially, with interesting immersive activities on a 'buzz day'. At the end of each unit, assessment demonstrates generative learning, and teachers identify content that pupils were unsure of, adapting long-term and medium-term planning before pupils move on. Pupils create a piece of learning to share in their 'time to shine' and their learning is celebrated (7).

Geographical enquiries are supplemented by:

- Special events such as Earth Day (22 April 2023), and World Ocean Day (8 June 2023)
- School trips, visits or workshops
- Homework projects

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning

Personal development
- Growth mindset and metacognition
- Building self-esteem (including spoken language development)

Social development
- Links to charitable work (e.g., helping to raise awareness about the plight of the world's oceans through World Ocean Day, Fair Trade Fortnight)

Spiritual development
- Studying the similarities and differences of people and places of different religions and cultures

Moral development
- Schools' behaviour framework (behaviour for learning)
- Spoken language curriculum (e.g., debating)

Cultural development
- Access to local and national museum collections or wildlife centres
- Access to the cultures of other communities via trips and visits (e.g., Bristol or London)
- Promotion of racial equality and community cohesion through the schools' ethos (e.g., Red Cross Appeal Week 4 May 2023)

Metacognition

Metacognition is what we know about our knowledge and our learning processes and includes: planning; monitoring; evaluation; and regulation. The following ideas are adapted from https://www.globalmetacognition.com/post/metacognitive-strategies-for-the-history-classroom.

Five Metacognitive Strategies for the Geography Classroom

1. Pre and post assessment tasks to elicit knowledge and generation of questions appropriate to the geography topic.
2. Using the metacognitive cycle to develop a plan (a strategy or method for carrying out an investigation or answering a question), maintaining and monitoring the plan, and finally evaluating the plan.
3. Using mind-mapping skills to help children organise and consolidate ideas, take notes, review knowledge, and explore connections.
4. Guided or independent self-regulation by teaching pupils to evaluate the best strategies to review knowledge.
5. Encourage regular reflection and discussion of effective learning strategies enabling pupils to think about how they can learn effectively.

Resources

- Globes, maps, Geographical Information Systems, aerial photographs, compasses
- Knowledge organisers
- Visits, trips, workshops
- Wiltshire Learning Resource Hub www.wslr.co.uk
- Links: https://www.geography.org.uk Geographical Association; www.bbc.co.uk/teach/primary/zd7p47h BBC Teach; www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/primary BBC Bitesize; www.bbc.co.uk/teach/live-lessons BBC Live Lessons (see the Science section); https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/2wdZcjylVlclxZd7lTDHfsJ/geography BBC School Radio - Geography; https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-teachers/ The RSPB; https://www.wiltshirewildlife.org Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.

IMPACT

How we assess the progress our pupils make in geography

Each enquiry which forms our programme of learning and teaching in geography sets clear objectives and outcomes for pupils through knowledge and understanding and skills acquisition. The schemes of work also suggest a range of ways in which the teacher can assess whether a pupil has achieved the outcomes (6). The outcomes of each enquiry serve to inform the teacher's developing picture of the knowledge and understanding of each pupil and to plan future learning accordingly. We do not make summative judgements about individual pieces of pupil work but rather use the outcomes to build an emerging picture of what the pupil knows, understands and can do.

At the end of each year we make a summative judgement about the achievement of each pupil against the subject learning goals for geography in that year (6). At this point we decide upon a 'best fit' judgement as to whether the pupil has achieved and embedded the expected learning goals, exceeded expectations or is still working towards the goals. This decision draws upon the professional knowledge and judgement that teachers possess about the progress of each pupil, developed over the previous three terms which allows an informed and holistic judgement of attainment to be made. Achievement against the learning goals for geography at the end of the year is used as the basis of reporting progress to parents.

Through our monitoring and evaluation of the geography curriculum teaching and learning, we are looking for pupils who can enquire and articulate their thinking, express their knowledge in a variety of ways, be concerned and aware of the community (and world) they live in and their impact on the community (and world), and be independent and resilient (8).

Pupil Voice

Pupils are engaged and inspired to learn in geography lessons.
Pupils speak enthusiastically and knowledgeably about learning in geography.
Pupils offer ideas on geographical enquiries they would like to do.
Pupils learn and use key technical and topic based vocabulary during their lessons.
Pupils make links between discrete geography lessons and other areas of learning.
Pupils communicate their learning in geography in a variety of ways:

- Providing oral explanations or descriptions

Outcomes

Pupils retain key geographical knowledge, during the year, and from year to year.
Pupils communicate their learning in geography in a variety of ways:

- Drawing and labelling
- Using an app such as powerpoint
- Through practical research
- By making a model
- In writing
- In home learning tasks

Readiness

End of unit / year / key stage outcomes are secure, and children with SEND achieve the best possible outcomes. Crucially, children can access the full curriculum and are therefore ready for future learning.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

2. Working as Geographers and Historians
3. Geography Curriculum Map
4. Geography Progression in Knowledge & Skills
5. Geography Progression in Vocabulary
6. Geography Assessment
7. Geography - Agreed Consistencies
8. Geography - Subject Leader Action Plan