Geography Curriculum Rationale for 2022-23

The geography curriculum at Our Lady and St Philomena’s is designed to instil a love for geography and to enable our pupils to set high aspirations for themselves in further education and in the world of work. We use the curriculum to embed a love of learning and for them to take an interest in a subject that can have an impact on their local, national and global community.

Curriculum Intent

Our geography curriculum is designed to promote research skills, working methodically and systematically, resilience, independence and collaborative skills. We want our pupils to develop the practical research skills that geographers demonstrate; develop communication and teamwork skills, as they work on group projects; develop research and analytical skills including computer, map and fieldwork and be able to collect and look for patterns in data; learn a mix of technical and social skills from studying geography; develop a knowledge of, a sense of pride in & respect for their local community, their nation and the world; build up a 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; and 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.

Curriculum Implementation

The geography curriculum is reviewed in the Summer term of each academic year in readiness for the following year. Learning opportunities are fine-tuned and the Subject Lead works with the Senior Leadership Team of school to identify progress milestones across the various strands of the subject. We introduce our pupils to Geographical concepts in Early Years most noticeably in the following areas of learning: Mathematics; and Understanding the World. The curriculum is sequenced so that pupils build on previous knowledge and learn to distinguish between local, national and global geography; and between human and physical geography. They begin with a familiar local geographical topic to gain a concept of what “geography” is with a topic that is within their grasp of understanding and move on to geographical concepts that distinguish between local, national, global and human & physical geography. The sequence introduces concepts such as comparisons between locations, interdependence and abstract concepts such as “weather”, “economics”, “sufficiency”, “ecology” and “disasters.” Teachers ensure progression through repetition of key skills, knowledge, vocabulary and continuous revisiting of concepts and knowledge to embed key learning and subject knowledge. The specific skills that our geography curriculum is aimed at encouraging, and that progress is measured against, are:

* An excellent knowledge of where places are and what they are like.
* An excellent understanding of the ways in which places are interdependent and interconnected and how much human and physical environments are interrelated.
* An extensive base of geographical knowledge and vocabulary.
* Fluency in complex, geographical enquiry and the ability to apply questioning skills and use effective analytical and presentational techniques.
* The ability to reach clear conclusions and develop a reasoned argument to explain findings.
* Significant levels of originality, imagination or creativity as shown in interpretations and representations of the subject matter.
* Highly developed and frequently utilised fieldwork and other geographical skills and techniques.
* A passion for and commitment to the subject, and a real sense of curiosity to find out about the world and the people who live there.
* The ability to express well-balanced opinions, rooted in very good knowledge and understanding about current and contemporary issues in society and the environment.

The skills and knowledge referred to above are revisited throughout the sequencing and teaching of the geography curriculum so that pupils develop, build up and revisit this knowledge over time. Use of subject-specific vocabulary relating to human and physical geography is encouraged. Geographical skills, including first-hand observation, to enhance their locational awareness are practised at every opportunity. At the start of each topic, teachers contextualise the topic of study with other topics already studied. We encourage an enquiry based curriculum that: promotes interest and curiosity; where children analyse sources and frame their own perceptive questions; where children are pushed to use critical thinking skills and frame arguments for debate (for example the Year 4 Summer term pupils can argue for or against at the end of the topic).

Curriculum Impact

Formative Assessment is carried out by a combination of “walking the class” during lessons to address misconceptions early, end of topic quizzes, knowledge organisers, (age appropriate) extended writing or any other way of capturing what a child has learnt and can remember from their curriculum. Assessment is undertaken to ascertain subject knowledge, skills, understanding of geographical concepts and recall of information to measure whether a pupils is ready to progress, needs support to progress or to identify barriers that are preventing students from making progress. Assessment doesn’t just test a pupil’s substantive knowledge, but gauges their disciplinary knowledge.

We want our pupils to set themselves very high aspirations and constantly remind them of the further education and career prospects that are open to them if they succeed in this subject.

People who have studied geography at further education often find a career in the following areas of employment:

* + town or transport planning;
  + surveying;
  + conservation;
  + sustainability;
  + waste and water management;
  + environmental planning;
  + tourism;
  + weather forecasting;
  + the armed services;
  + police;
  + government;
  + research organisations;
  + law;
  + business.