



Geography School Plan

INTRODUCTION

We, at St. Nicholas' Monastery have written this Geography Whole School Plan in order to inform teachers, parents, B.O.M. and other relevant parties of the process and approaches adopted in this school with regard to the teaching and learning of Geography. It has been ratified by the B.O.M and will be reviewed annually by means of a staff meeting or dedicated Croke Park hour allocations. Any amendments will be made accordingly.

VISION STATEMENT

We see the learning of Geography as enabling children to make sense of their surroundings and the wider world by learning about the natural and human elements of local and wider environments. Through learning about their environments, children develop a range of geographical skills and concepts. Geography encourages children to appreciate the interdependence of individuals, groups and communities. It promotes an understanding of, and respect for different cultures and how different people live their lives.

AIMS

We endorse the aims of the Geography Curriculum as stated in the Curricular Documents:

- to enable the child to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes so as to develop an informed and critical understanding of social, environmental and scientific issues
- to reinforce and stimulate curiosity and imagination about local and wider environments
- to enable the child to play responsible roles as an individual, a family member and a member of local, regional, national, European and global communities
- to foster an understanding of, and concern for, the total interdependence of all humans, all living things and the Earth on which they live
- to foster a sense of responsibility for the long-term care of the environment and a commitment to promote the sustainable use of the

Earth's resources through his/her personal lifestyle and participation in collective environmental decision-making

- to cultivate humane and responsible attitudes and an appreciation of the world in accordance with beliefs and values.

CURRICULUM CONTENT

Skills, Concepts, Strands and Strand units

We have chosen in St. Nicholas' Monastery to plan using the strands and strand units. As we are a 9 mainstream teacher school we strive to ensure that there is a wide variety of topics are taught and that no class will repeat the same unit of study. Extension of a topic will be accepted providing the children are exposed to new information. The cuntas míosúil will reflect the topics which a class has learned in any one year.

Geography is for all children in the primary school from junior infants to sixth class. The curriculum is presented in two sections: a skills and concepts section and a content section.

Skills and concepts

The Geography Curriculum outlines the skills and concepts which children should develop including:

- ✚ ***A sense of place and space***
- ✚ ***Maps, globes and graphical skills***
- ✚ ***Geographical investigation skills.***

Content

The Geography Curriculum includes a number of strands:

- ✚ ***Human environments***
- ✚ ***Natural environments***
- ✚ ***Environmental awareness and care.***

These strands outline the content to be included in the Geography Curriculum at each of the four class levels. Each strand is subdivided into strand units. These units focus on particular themes within the strand.

Geography Curriculum: Class Summary

Junior/Senior Infants

<i>Skills and concepts development</i>	
A sense of place and space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sense of place • A sense of space

Maps, globes and graphical skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picturing places
Geographical investigation skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning • Observing • Predicting • Investigating and experimenting • Estimating and measuring • Analysing • Recording and communicating
<i>The geographical skills and concepts above will be developed as work is completed on the strands and strand units of the curriculum outlined below.</i>	
Strands	Strand units
Human environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in the local community • People and places in other areas
Natural environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local natural environment • Weather • Planet Earth in space
Environmental awareness and care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for my locality

First/Second Class

Skills and concepts development	
A sense of place and space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sense of place • A sense of space
Maps, globes and graphical skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using pictures, maps and globes
Geographical investigation skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning • Observing • Predicting • Investigating and experimenting • Estimating and measuring • Analysing • Recording and communicating
<i>The geographical skills and concepts above will be developed as work is completed on the strands and strand units of the curriculum outlined below.</i>	

<i>Strands</i>	<i>Strand units</i>
Human environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in the local community • People and places in other areas
Natural environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local natural environment • Weather • Planet Earth in space
Environmental awareness and care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for my locality

Third/Fourth Class

<i>Skills and concepts development</i>	
A sense of place and space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sense of place • A sense of space
Maps, globes and graphical skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using pictures, maps and globes
Geographical investigation skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning • Observing • Predicting • Investigating and experimenting • Estimating and measuring • Analysing • Recording and communicating
<i>The geographical skills and concepts above will be developed as work is completed on the strands and strand units of the curriculum outlined below.</i>	
<i>Strands</i>	<i>Strand units</i>
Human environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People living and working in the local area • People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland <p><i>Explored through a selection from the sub-units</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>People and communities</i> • <i>Natural environmental features and people</i> • <i>Settlement: homes and other buildings</i> • <i>People at work</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Transport and communications</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and other lands • <i>An environment in another European country</i> • <i>An environment in a non-European country</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County, regional and national centres
Natural environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local natural environment • Land, rivers and seas of my county • Rocks and soils • Weather, climate and atmosphere • Planet Earth in space
Environmental awareness and care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental awareness • Caring for the environment

Fifth/Sixth Class

<i>Skills and concepts development</i>	
A sense of place and space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sense of place • A sense of space
Maps, globes and graphical skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using pictures, maps and models • Maps and globes
Geographical investigation skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning • Observing • Predicting • Investigating and experimenting • Estimating and measuring • Analysing • Recording and communicating • Evaluating
<i>The geographical skills and concepts above will be developed as work is completed on the strands and strand units of the curriculum outlined below.</i>	
<i>Strands</i>	<i>Strand units</i>
Human environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People living and working in the local

	<p>area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland <p><i>Explored through a selection from the sub-units</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>People and communities</i> • <i>Natural environmental features and people</i> • <i>Settlement: homes and other buildings</i> • <i>People at work</i> • <i>Transport and communications</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and other lands • <i>An environment in another European country</i> • <i>An environment in a non-European country</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County, regional and national centres • Trade and development issues
Natural environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local natural environment • Land, rivers and seas of Ireland • Physical features of Europe and the world • Rocks and soils • Weather, climate and atmosphere • Planet Earth in space
Environmental awareness and care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental awareness • Caring for the environment

Methodologies and Approaches

The use of a variety of approaches and methodologies will be an essential component of a successful geography programme. The following teaching methodologies and approaches are recommended for teaching geography in our school:

- ✚ Use of ICT
- ✚ Maps, Globes and atlases
- ✚ Use of Interviews
- ✚ Simulations and models
- ✚ Use of surveys
- ✚ Use of photographs

- ✚ Use of story
- ✚ Use of artefacts
- ✚ Free exploration of materials
- ✚ Investigative approach
- ✚ Teacher directed approach

Assessment

In geography children will learn about the Earth, its inhabitants and environment and the interrelationships between them. They will explore and become familiar with the lives of people in various environments and the links these have with the natural and human features to be found in these places. They will also come to appreciate how natural and human processes have helped to create or change environments. Learning in geography involves the acquisition of knowledge about environments and at the same time the development of geographical skills and the cultivation of important attitudes and values. Valid assessment in geography therefore must attempt to measure the child's achievements and progress in all these aspects of learning.

The curriculum makes it clear that much of the work in the infants to second class curriculum may be delivered through integrated themes and topics, and assessment should be sufficiently flexible to accommodate this pedagogical approach. Assessment in geography will also be concerned with the values and attitudes which are developed in the child as he is engaged in the study of geographical topics

Assessment in geography must assess the child's knowledge and understanding of environmental matters, the acquisition of geographical skills and the development of attitudes. A range of assessment tools will be necessary, ranging from informal assessment techniques to more structured approaches. All the approaches used should arise naturally out of teaching and learning, and their effectiveness will be dependent on crucial teacher skills of observation, listening, interacting with the child and scrutinising the outcomes of learning tasks used in geography.

The following are among those which teachers will find most useful:

- ❖ Teacher Observation
- ❖ Teacher designed tasks
- ❖ Projects
- ❖ Pupil Portfolios
- ❖ Self Assessment
- ❖ Conferencing

Observations and assessment results will be kept on file to inform parents of their children's progress which will be discussed at Parent Teacher meeting and other opportunities throughout the year.

Children with differing needs

This Geography plan aims to meet the needs of all the children in the school. This will be achieved by teachers varying the pace, content and methodologies to insure learning for all pupils. This will be recorded in the teacher's yearly notes. The requirements of children with special needs will be taken into account when planning class lessons and related activities. The S.N.A. supports particular children and groups as directed by the class teacher.

Equality of participation and access

At no point will any child be denied or deprived of any teaching or learning because of gender, age, religion or ability. All children will have the same access to education as other children.

Timetable

All classes will have a minimum of one hour per week of Geography. This time allocation may be broken down at the discretion of the individual teacher. We recognise that in the junior classes, the time allotted will be of shorter duration on a more frequent basis, while senior classes may divide the hour into longer time spans, such as two thirty-minute sessions, or three twenty-minute sessions. Timetables will all record the time allocation for Geography. There are two hours of discretionary time available each week which teachers can occasionally use to support the Geography curriculum.

Linkage and Integration

We recognise the inter-related nature of the Geography curriculum, and acknowledge that while children are engaged in any one particular strand there will be overlapping with the other strands.

Geography provides many opportunities for integration, and teachers will plan for the integration as appropriate. We recognise that there will be many opportunities to integrate with Literacy, Science, Music, History, Drama, Language and Visual Arts.

Teachers can refer to suggested integrated themes for SESE on www.ppps.ie website.

Homework

The giving of Geography homework will be at the discretion of the class teacher. The objective of homework will be to consolidate all previous learning which will have taken place.

Resources

There are a certain amount of resources available to each teacher to cover each of the strands. These are stored in a press and must be returned to their place once the unit of work is finished. Individual teachers also have their own resources. It is intended to develop our resources for Geography. The use of ICT is important in the teaching of Geography. The use of the internet to research topics is valuable. Teachers have access to You Tube on their lap tops which they can, using an overhead projector, transmit to the whiteboard. The use of visualisers and digital cameras allow for a greater scope for ICT in Geography.

Individual Teacher Planning

Each class teacher is responsible for their Geography planning. All teachers will plan on a termly and fortnightly basis. All subject concepts, skills and content taught must be recorded in teacher planning. A Cuntas Míósúil must be completed at the end of each month where subject skills and objectives achieved are recorded. A copy of the Cuntas Míósúil must be submitted to the Principal.

Staff Development

All staff members have attended the Curriculum In-service Training days. In addition help can be sought by the staff from the PDST to assist in our development. Teachers also have access to the courses that are run by the local education centre.

Parental Involvement

Overall parental involvement is encouraged. We believe that children should share with their parents all the new information they have learned on a topic.

Success Criteria

The success of this plan will be measured using the following criteria:

- Implementation of the Geography curriculum will be evident in the teacher work
- Continuity of content and methodology will be evident in teachers preparation

Ongoing assessment will show that pupils are acquiring concepts thought and an ability to engage with others in a manner appropriate to their age and personality

Ratification

This plan has been ratified by the B.O.M.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

