

Scoil Mhuire U.R. 11894I

Geography / Tír Eolaíocht

Policy for the Teaching of Geography

The process of planning for a school is a work constantly in progress, comprising research, practice and evaluation at all times. The initial stage of drawing up or customising the curriculum to suit our own needs was perhaps the most valuable and while we have updated the programmes since then, we have not completely deleted all of our original work. Rather we have sought to develop each of our policies and subject programmes, to create a framework from which each teacher can draw, a rich source of topics and methodologies rather than a rigid programme from which no one can deviate. Our approach has been that we must first and foremost value and acknowledge what is already established good practice or content and not bring in change merely for the sake of change.

We hope in this way to remain responsive to the needs of each child, the dynamics of each class group, the talents of each teacher, the current events of each year and the rich tapestry of life as it affects Scoil Mhuire.

The Cuntas Miosuil remains the tool with which we plan for each year and avoid unnecessary overlap and repetition.

In this way we hope to keep adding to or altering our Plean Scoile through constant evaluation and enthusiastic teachers meetings, thereby maintaining an energy and freshness in everything we do.

Introduction:

The plan was formulated over three in-service days, a staff meeting (involving all staff)

Rationale

We teach Geography to aid children's understanding of place, space and environment, in particular to increase their awareness of their local place and environment and then progress to national and world wide environments. We also aim to develop children's geographical skills.

We decide to focus on this area for development

- To develop a plan for geography in line with the Primary School Curriculum
- To benefit teaching and learning in our school
- To conform to principles outlined in the primary curriculum
- To develop a core curriculum in our school

Vision and Aims:

Vision:

We aim to teach Geography curriculum in conjunction with the principles of our school ethos in our mission statement.

Aim:

- We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for geography

- To develop knowledge and understanding of local, regional and wider environments and their interrelationships
- To encourage an understanding and appreciation of the variety of natural and human conditions on the Earth
- To develop empathy with people from diverse environments and an understanding of human interdependence
- To develop the ability to use a range of communicative methods, especially those concerned with maps and map reading
- To encourage the development of a sense of place and spatial awareness
- To encourage the development of caring attitudes and responsible behaviour towards the environment, and involvement in the identification, discussion, resolution and avoidance of environmental problems
- To develop and understanding of appropriate geographical concepts
- To increase children's awareness of their immediate environment including materials, buildings, habitats, workers and workplaces

This Geography plan will be addressed under the following headings

Curriculum Planning:

1. Strands and strand units
2. Skills development
3. Children's ideas
4. Approaches and methodologies
5. Linkage and integration
6. Assessment and record keeping
7. Children with different needs
8. Equality of participation and access

Organisational Planning:

1. Timetable
2. Resources and ICT
3. Health and safety
4. Individual teachers' planning and reporting
5. Staff development
6. Parental involvement
7. Community Links

Stands and Strand Units

- Teachers are familiar with the strands/strand units/content objectives for the relevant class levels as well as being familiar with the core curriculum as included below
- Continuity and progression are ensured through each teacher following the core curriculum as well as having the freedom to include other areas which may be particularly suitable to their class, interests or other activities
- The curriculum is to be reviewed regularly that gaps and undue repetition between classes is avoided
- The locations agreed for the strand unit *People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland* are outlined in the core curriculum listed below.
- The locations for the strand unit *People and other lands* (including one location in Europe and one location in another part of the world) from 3rd to 6th classes are outlined in the core curriculum listed below

Skills and Concepts Development

- Teachers ensure that there is a balance between skills development and the acquisition of knowledge throughout the programme
- The strategies used by each class to develop the child's skills and concepts development under the three headings are as outlined in the geography primary school curriculum. (*See Curriculum pp. 22-23 Junior & Senior Infants; pp. 34-37 First & Second; pp. 50-53 Third & Fourth, pp. 68-71 Fifth & Sixth*)

Children's Ideas

- We find out what children know already through questioning of prior knowledge
- Some of the strategies used to find out these ideas, *e.g. talk and discussion; questioning; listening; problem-solving tasks; drawings; teacher designed tasks and tests.*

Approaches and Methodologies

- The key methodologies of the primary Curriculum as follows are used as part of the geography programme
 1. Active Learning
 2. Problem Solving
 3. Development skills through content
 4. Talk and discussion
 5. Co-operative learning
 6. Use of the environment
- Teachers will follow the recommended sequence for geography – local. Regional, national, European and global and then reflect it back to their own location
- Examples of approaches and methodologies used in learning about the environment are *fieldwork, exploratory trails, photographs and the use of ICT etc.*
- Examples of approaches and methodologies used in learning about places are *photographs, internet, e-mail etc*
- Fieldwork is incorporated into the geography programme in all classes e.g. local walks
- Examples of approaches and methodologies used to investigate human environments are *fieldwork, surveys, photographs, artefacts, interviews, environmental audit etc*
- Examples of approaches and methodologies used to investigate natural environments are *fieldwork, trails, photographs etc*
- Examples of approaches and methodologies used in learning about other places are *artefacts, atlases, globes, interviews, photographs, internet*
- Examples of mapping skills and mapping concepts developed as part of the geography programme are *local maps, plans, photographs, internet, models*
- There are a number of maps, globes, atlases throughout the school and map work and mapping skills are taught as an integral of the school curriculum

Linkage and Integration

Linkage :

There are opportunities to link one strand with another strand, using a thematic approach or otherwise, in the geography programme and teachers will record this in their planning

Integration:

Activities which integrate geography with other SESE subjects – history and science and other subjects will be recorded in teacher's planning

Theme based activities will be used to support integration and will be recorded in the individual teachers' planning.

Assessment and record keeping

Teachers will assess children's knowledge and understanding of environmental matters as well as the acquisition of geographical skills and the development of attitudes

Tools of assessment used to gather information about child's progress are :

1. Teacher observation
2. Teacher – designed tasks and tests
3. Work samples, portfolios and projects

Information gained from the assessments will influence teachers on how they plan for future lessons

- Records are kept by the class teacher for the year
- Results are given to children and shared with parents during parents-teacher meetings and report cards

Children with different needs

Teaching is differentiated for all the children in the class by the teacher. Classes and activities are organised and adapted for all children

Equality of Participation and Access

Equal opportunities given to participate in classes/activities as all pupils are included in all aspects of the subject

Interculturalism

Geography class is used as an opportunity to integrate the culture of all pupils

Organisational Planning

Timetable:

- Time is allocated at each class level for geography according to the primary school curriculum
- Teachers have the opportunity to block time blocked for SESE (using a cross curriculum approach, using three hours for history one week, three hours for geography the following week and three hours for science the week after) and to use discretionary curriculum time occasionally for SESE

Resources

Resources are purchased centrally and include photographs, maps, atlases, globes, wall charts, posters etc can do so by contacting the principal.

ICT

ICT is used in the geography programme e.g. use of digital camera, Internet, CD-ROMs, DVDs/videos, programmes for word processing or data handling.

Increased ICT has meant geography can be much more interesting and instant as children work with

- interactive whiteboards
- iPads
- PC's
- Chrome Books

Health and Safety

Teachers are aware of health and safety issues when participating in connection with the geography programme e.g. fieldtrips, handling equipment. The same health and safety policy applies both in school and out of school and teachers always do their utmost to ensure the safety of the children in their care.

Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

- Individual teachers will refer to the core curriculum to guide their long and short – term planning
- Teachers will plan using the strands and strand units and also use a thematic approach if applicable
- A record of class work will be recorded by the teacher in their Cuntas Míósúil

Staff Development

- Teachers have access to reference books, resource materials, and websites dealing with geography which is listed at the end of the core curriculum
- If there are appropriate geography courses available teachers are encouraged to attend
- Teachers are encouraged to share the expertise acquired at these courses during staff meetings
- Time is allocated at staff meetings to discuss aspects of the primary school curriculum including geography
- Teachers avail of internal and/or external expertise to inform and up skill the school community in these areas where appropriate

Parental Involvement

Parents can be involved in supporting the geography plan through supporting children with homework, assisting with field trips etc and speaking to classes on a geographical area where they may have expertise. [Mr. David Tilly comes to the classes and teaches them about the strand area and will take them on a field trip to fully experience the local amenity.]

Community Links

Members of organisations/individuals in the community who support the school's geography programme include: workers in the community, fire brigade, ambulance.

Success Criteria

- We will know that the plan has been implemented if
 - o Teachers' preparation is based on this plan
 - o Procedures outlined in this plan are consistently followed

- Indicators that the plan has achieved its aims
 - o Teacher/parents feedback
 - o Children's feedback
 - o Inspectors' suggestions/reports
 - o Second level feedback

Implementation

1. Roles and Responsibilities

The plan will be supported, developed and implemented by

- o Whole staff
- o Children
- o Parents
- o Board of Management
- o Community input

The plan will be monitored and evaluated at staff meetings

This plan was ratified in September 2008, 2011, and 2017

Review

1. Roles and Responsibilities

Those involved in the review are:

- o Teachers
- o Pupils
- o Parents
- o BOM/DES

Ratified by the BOM in October 2017

Signed _____
Mr. B. Fitzpatrick

