

Whole School Development Plan Geography

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■ **Introductory Statement and Rationale**

(a) Introductory Statement

Geography enables 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. The Geography Curriculum also fosters children's sense of individual and community responsibility for caring for the environment.

(b) Rationale

The purpose of this plan is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other relevant persons on the provision of effective physical education in our school.

■ **Vision and Aims**

(a) Vision

We envisage that in Geography each child will be given the opportunity to develop their geographical skills and competencies to their full potential, appropriate to their age and ability in an enjoyable and supportive environment.

(b) Aims

We endorse the aims of the Primary School Geography Curriculum :

- 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 Planning

1. Strands and Strand Units

As a staff all teachers are familiar with the strands/strand units/content objectives for the relevant class level.

- Infant classes pp. 17-27
- First and Second classes pp. 29-43
- Third and Fourth classes pp. 45-61
- Fifth and Sixth classes pp. 63-84

Overview of the Geography Programme for Infants to Second

All strands and all strand units to be covered every year.

Human Environments

- Living in the local community
- People and Places in other areas

Natural Environments

- Local Natural Environment
- Weather
- Planet Earth in space

Environmental Awareness and Care

- Caring for my locality

Overview of Geography Programme for Third to Sixth

All strands and all strand units to be covered every year

Human Environments

- People living and working in local area
- People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland
- People and other lands
- County, Regional and National Centres
- Trade and Development Issues (5th and 6th only)

Natural Environment

- The local natural environment
- Land, rivers and seas of my county
- Rocks and soils
- Weather, climate and atmosphere
- Planet Earth in space
- Physical features of Europe and the World (5th + 6th)

- **Environmental Awareness and Care**

- Environmental Awareness
- Caring for the environment

It is recommended in the curriculum that children will have the opportunity to explore every year :

- A contrasting part of Ireland
- One European country
- One Non European country

2. Skills Development

We are aware that one of the key messages of the Geography Curriculum is that Knowledge and Skills have equal importance. To ensure that this occurs every effort will be made by the class teachers to incorporate the skills of working as a geographer into a unit of work.

The skills

- Developing a sense of place and space
- Mapping and graphicacy
- Geographical Investigation Skills will be developed as work is completed on the strand and strand units of the curriculum as a spiral approach from infants to sixth. Strategies for developing these skills will involve the active participation of each child

➤ **A sense of space**

- Record journeys in the immediate and wider environment
- Use of maps
- Use of cardinal points- measure distances
- Develop an awareness of major physical features of Europe and the World

➤ **A sense of place**

- Explore distinctive human and natural features of locality/county/Ireland
- Development of an awareness of people in other areas

➤ **Maps, globes and graphical skills**

- use simple drawing of areas- immediate and wider environment
- record routes and directions
- make model building
- develop and awareness of the globe
- explore plans and outlines
- develop aerial perspective
- use a wide variety of maps, globes, aerial photos and other images
- engage in practical use of maps

➤ **Geographical investigation skills**

- Observing
- Questioning
- Predicting
- Investigating and experimenting
- Estimating and measuring
- Analysing
- Recording and communicating

These strands are developed through the content of the strands and strand units. Strategies for development of these skills will involve the children being actively involved in fieldwork, trails and outdoor investigations as suggested in the curriculum.

- A sense of place and space will be developed through direct and indirect experiences first in relation to the child's own home and immediate surroundings but will later extend to include wider environments.
- The use of maps, globes and atlases will be used in age appropriate ways from Infants to sixth class and will encompass a wide range of graphical activities.
- The geographical investigation skills will be included in various indoor and outdoor investigation work. By following the content of this curriculum and by developing the geographical skills, the children in our school are given opportunities to work as geographers at every class level.

3. Children's ideas

We plan to use the children's ideas of places and spaces as a starting point for all geographical activity. We find out what the children already know by:

- Talk and Discussion
- Play and Experimenting
- Enquiry Process and Questioning
- Brainstorming
- Concept Maps

We do this to build on the children's previous knowledge or to challenge the existing ideas if they are not accurate.

4. Approaches and Methodologies

We will use a combination of the following approaches:

- Guided discovery approach
- Activity learning
- Collaborative learning i.e. pair work and group work
- Use of the environment

- Problem solving
- Talk and discussion
- Individual work
- Skills development through content

5. Linkage and Integration

Every attempt will be made to link the various strands of the Geography curriculum and to integrate the other subject areas with Geography, where appropriate:

e.g. Geography with History – volcanoes and the history of Pompeii
 Geography with English – Designing a tourist brochure
 Geography with Visual Arts – constructing volcanoes
 Geography with Maths – scale and mapping a distance
 Geography with Gaeilge – Weather and an Aimsir
 Geography with Science – volcanoes and mixing substances in science

6. Multi-Grade Teaching

The use of an integrated approach with the SESE and the broader curriculum will facilitate blocks of time to be utilised in an efficient way and will be particularly useful in our multi class situation. We will differentiate the work for the different ages by setting tasks for the older children that will demand more complexity in terms of content, process and outcome.

7. Assessment and Record Keeping

Assessment is used by teachers to inform their planning, selection and management of learning activities so that they can make the best possible provision for meeting the varied needs of the children.

Teachers report twice a year to children and parents/guardians through parent-teacher meetings and end of year school reports. Children may be asked to self-assess and peer assess where appropriate.

Our assessment tools are:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher-designed tasks
- Work samples

The following are other assessment tools used by teachers:

- Teacher observation
- Worksheets and work in copies
- Project work
- Individual research
- Quizzes
- Ongoing teacher-designed tests. Children will bring the tests and the results of

such tests home for signing. Test results are kept by the class teacher and passed on to the next teacher.

8. Children with Different Needs

We acknowledge that each individual child has particular needs and all are at different stages of their personal development. A thematic approach will be taken for the teaching of geography in the multigrade classrooms with a different level of work expected from the various classes within the multigrade setting.

At times, the children will work in similar class groupings or mixed class groupings to stretch the children to the upper level of their zone of proximal development.

Support will be given to children with special needs such as dyslexia during literacy driven geography tasks. Support will be given to children with special needs e.g. dyscalculia during geographical tasks with numeracy reasoning such as graphicacy, scale etc.

Teachers will incorporate a multicultural diverse approach to the teaching of Geography in a changed society.

9. Equality of Participation and Access

- Boys and girls will be have equal opportunities to participate in science lessons and activities.
- Equal opportunity will be given to boys and girls to experience all strands.
- Geography will be for all children regardless of gender, age or ability.

■ Organisational Planning

10. Timetable

The teaching of SESE is allocated as follows:

- Infant classrooms 2 hours 15 minutes per week
- 1st-6th 3 hours per week

This must be divided up among the three SESE subjects hence Geography will have :

- infant classes approx. 45 minutes a week
- 1st - 6th 1 hour a week
-

However, to facilitate the new time allocations for the numeracy and literacy strategy it is at the discretion of the teacher to use some of the time from SESE subjects on occasion.

Discretionary time is given to local field study/trips and outdoor activities such as traffic surveys, map work of the local here, interviewing people who work in the area etc.

11. Resources and ICT

Resources

The following resources are available to the children and staff for the teaching of

Geography:

- Text books
- Compasses
- Globe
- Atlas

The use of the outdoor environment is also emphasised and utilised throughout the year.

ICT

Information and communication technology may be integrated with Geography through the use of the Interactive whiteboard, digital camera, photo-copier, ipads, DVDs ,CDs and the internet.

Children are encouraged to conduct further research outside of school under the supervision of their parents where the internet is concerned.

Children can be asked to produce their own photostory, powerpoints etc.

The following is a list of geography websites, however this list is not exhaustive:

www.nationalgeographic.com

www.teacherplanet.com

www.bbc.co.uk

www.met.ie

www.barnabybear.co.uk

www.scoilnet.com

www.seomranga.com

12. Health and Safety

All health and safety precautions should be adhered to when taking the children on outside excursions/field trips. Children should always wash their hands when they return to the classroom after an outdoor lesson. The Green Committee must wear hi-vis jackets and gloves and use litter pickers when on duty and wash their hands upon return to their classroom. Should an accident occur in the Geography lesson we will follow the procedures outlined for accidents in our Health and Safety policy.

13. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

Individual teachers will design a Geography plan specifically for their own class while at the same time ensuring that their class plans coordinate with and feed into the overall school plan, set out in the policy. This should ensure clear progression as children move from class to class. Strands covered in Geography each month are recorded on the Cúntas Míósúil.

The Cúntas Míósúil will be very relevant in recording what has been covered and in reviewing and developing the school plan for the following years.

14. Staff Development

The school will access the PCSP Geography Cuiditheoir through the Regional Curriculum Support Service to support the staff in certain strands if necessary. Visiting teachers/guest speakers may be used to supplement and support the work of the class teacher. These are recognised as up-skilling opportunities for the teachers involved. Teachers will be notified of courses relating to Geography available in the area.

15. Parental Involvement

Parents have a responsibility to encourage their children to participate in all strands of the Geography curriculum. Parents may view the Geography policy in the school. Parents may be requested to attend some field trips/Geography excursions. Parents may be expected to supervise their children on the internet as they conduct further research for in school projects in the area of Geography.

16. Community Links

Local organisations are invited to provide information on the services that they provide. We are very much aware of the school's role in the community and we are also conscious of the fact that the expertise of people in the community is an invaluable resource to any school. Where expertise is available in the area, these people will be invited into the school. We also take part in the annual springtime clean-up with the local community.

■ Success Criteria

Means of assessing the outcomes of the plan may include;

- Teacher/parent/community feedback
- Children's feedback regarding activity levels, enjoyment and skill development
- Inspectors' suggestions/WSE recommendations

The criteria for evaluating the success of this policy will be :

- The level of enjoyment exhibited by the children
- The maximum participation by all children
- The development of skills and understanding
- The level of teacher satisfaction in teaching a broad, balanced curriculum.

■ Implementation and Review

(a) Roles and Responsibilities:

Each teacher and the staff as a group will evaluate the progress in Science by referring back to our set of stated objectives as outlined in this plan. A short session at staff meeting will be

allocated to this work.

(b) Timeframe:

The content of this policy will be reviewed at the end of the school year 2016/2017 and every two years thereafter.

■ Ratification and Communication

The Geography policy was drawn up by the teaching staff of Scoil Ghormáin Naofa in the 2015/2016 academic year and was ratified by the Board of Management on _____. Parents can view the policy in the school office.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____
Chairperson BOM Principal

Date: _____ Date: _____