



# Geography Curriculum Statement

## How is Geography a Sacred Subject?

*Geography enables all learners to experience the beauty, awe and wonder of God's world and to develop an awareness of their place in it. All places and spaces have a history behind them shaped by humans, location, climate, and politics. Geography gives us a spatial awareness of the globe and serves to form respectful attitudes that serve to remind students that we are stewards and not masters of creation.*

*Theological influences help to shape the cosmological understandings of the world as we recognise that we are a global community with a global interdependence, accountability, and responsibility for the common good of all people. Our stewardship must reflect our understanding that the planet is our irreplaceable home.*

### Intent

At St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, we promote the use of a knowledge-rich curriculum to serve key principles of cognitive science. Scientific research has shown that knowledge is essential to the development of reading comprehension and critical thinking. Research has also shown that those who are rich in knowledge gain new knowledge quicker and more effectively. We therefore place the acquisition of knowledge at the heart of the learning process.

Our Geography curriculum is split into two distinct strands: Locational Knowledge and Human and Physical Geography. Through the accumulation of essential knowledge, pupils are provided with the frameworks and approaches that explain how the Earth's features at different scales are shaped, interconnected and change over time, enabling them to become true global citizens.

At St. Mary's, we consistently promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helping them to have a greater understanding of their place in the world and their responsibilities to the environment. Newcastle-under-Lyme has its own rich history and the children need to understand it in the context of the global community of which they are present. When done well, cross-curricular learning offers great potential for children to reach across subjects, connecting learning within and across domains of knowledge. We plan for coherence through planned progression – mapping out the way propositional and procedural knowledge will develop.

### Implementation

Our Geography curriculum aims to ensure that all children:

- Develop contextual knowledge of the location of globally significant places including their defining physical and human characteristics and how these provide a geographical context for understanding the actions of processes.
- 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.
- Are competent in the geographical skills needed to: collect, analyse and communicate with a range of data gathered through experiences of fieldwork; interpret a range of sources of geographical information; and communicate geographical information in a variety of ways.

Within this subject we introduce, build upon and review the disciplinary skills which require the children to think like a geographer as outlined on the wheel below:



### EYFS

The teaching of Geography is practical, playful and inclusive with support and challenge from adults in class sessions, small groups and through working with individuals. There is a combination of adult-led, teacher taught sessions as well as a wealth of stimulating continuous provision opportunities when adults scaffold learning through skillful interactions and questioning.

### Career Professional Development

We develop strong subject knowledge amongst all staff which is achieved through: comprehensive middle leadership development, a focus on developing all teachers' subject knowledge, geographical pedagogy and the provision of high-quality planning and resources. Links are made with Christ the King Catholic Collegiate to share resources and knowledge. CPD is delivered in conjunction with the Geography department at Saint John Fisher.

### Teaching Style

Excellent teaching within St. Mary's Catholic Primary School is based upon two key principles: research on the classroom practices of master teachers and research on cognitive supports to help pupils learn complex tasks. The child is encouraged to engage head, heart and hand. The 3 domains to learning are the emotional, the social and the cognitive. In addition to this, staff use an enquiry based approach with the use of a 'hook'



to draw children into the lesson. We consider these enquiries/questions and allow the children to discuss them in depth. This allows them to challenge their own ideology and build greater recognition. Through such discussions, St. Mary's enhances the children's thinking and communication skills, boosts their self-esteem, and improves their academic attainment; focusing on the enquiries with lenses of critical, caring, collaborative and creative thinking. The children are comfortable with epistemic uncertainty because they understand that the dilemma is more important than being right.

Lessons are designed so that they start with a recap on previous learning. During the lesson the children also have an opportunity to retrieve information for the input that will deepen their metacognition.

### **Quizzing**

The benefit of retrieval practice is one of the most robust findings in cognitive psychology (Roediger & Karpicke, 2006; Storm, Bjork & Storm, 2010). Low-stakes multiple choice quizzes are efficient, effective and motivating for pupils, whilst providing teachers with vital information about what pupils have misunderstood and/or what they are struggling to remember. These questions can be easily recycled, utilising the spacing effect to ensure content is retained for the long term instead of being forgotten soon after the lesson or unit has ended. We believe that regular low stakes testing/quizzing helps and it is better if that testing is spaced or looped. We know that interleaving information - interrupting it with unrelated information but then coming back to its original focus of study – seems to be effective. It is more effective when it is interleaved with material that is in some way conceptually or thematically connected.

### **Lesson Plans**

Each unit consists of six or seven, carefully sequenced 'knowledge lessons', which can be contrasted with popular but ultimately less effective 'discovery-based' lessons described by Kirschner, Sweller and Clark (2006) as 'minimally guided instruction'. The lessons are based on the Plan Bee scheme of work and have been tailored to the needs of our children. In line with findings from cognitive load theory (Baddeley & Hitch, 1974; Baddeley 1986; Rosenshine 2012; Sweller, 1988) lessons are chunked into small sessions of explicit teaching followed by regular opportunities for all children to think, apply and practice key skills and knowledge. Planning to situate children within stories in which they work through dilemma can be an extremely effective way of interleaving information. We can use the narrative to interrupt and reinforce the learning as well as deploy questions both in and out of role to practice retrieval. Opportunities for movement, like narrative, is also a way of children retaining information; most powerful when it is usefully combined with knowledge to aid conceptual understanding.

### **Flipcharts**

Each lesson includes a slide show to support the teacher in delivering the content of the lessons clearly and precisely. The slides aid pupil memory by making effect of 'dual coding' (Paivio 1986; Mayer & Moreno, 2003). Dual coding can improve the absorption of new knowledge without increasing pupils' cognitive load, with the benefits of receiving explanations through both visual and auditory channels being well established in research literature.



### **Cross Curricular**

Wherever possible, the Geography curriculum is enhanced by interweaving content through other subjects. To understand Britain today, pupils will have a secure understanding of how geographical processes have created the world and societies that we know today. Children will also participate in our Fieldwork Festival annually as encouraged by the Geographical Association.

### **Oracy within Geography**

In our Geography curriculum we ensure that all children:

- Use vocabulary to name places, features, human and physical processes.
- Formulate and refine questions and lines of enquiry.
- Explain and justify methods of investigation and analysis.
- Engage in small group discussion.
- Relate new learning to relevant real-world contexts.
- Are supported to ask questions in geography.

### **Impact**

By the end of the curriculum, all pupils will have a coherent geographical knowledge and understanding as well as a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people that will remain with them for the rest of their lives. This will be assessed through a multi-faceted approach including; half termly quizzes pre and post units of study, skillful questioning lesson by lesson, weekly retrieval practices and summative tasks such as engagement in fieldwork activities. These will be moderated across year groups within the school as a form of summative assessment and means of ensuring progression throughout the curriculum. Leaders will monitor the quality and impact of the Geography Curriculum through regular pupil voice and assess the extent to which pupils know more and remember more.