

# Bill Quay Primary School



## Geography Policy

## **Purpose of this policy**

The purpose of this policy is to outline our practice in geography and the principles upon which it is based. It sets out a framework within teaching and non-teaching staff can work, and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment.

## **A rationale for teaching geography**

### **What is geography? Why teach it?**

‘Geography exposes children to the environment and helps reflect themselves within it and value their growing experiences’ (Barlow and Whitehouse 2019)

Geography offers pupils a uniquely different way of seeing the world. Through teaching geography, we aim to help our pupils understand how our planet Earth is changing at such a rapid rate. Since geography involves learning about places, our pupils can learn that even the most faraway places are affected by human influences. By learning about how places are changing, pupils will acquire the knowledge and understanding to know how to protect our planet and how they can contribute to building a better world.

Geography also contributes to the social, cultural, spiritual and moral life of our pupils as they acquire knowledge of a range of different cultures and traditions, learning tolerance of others and the environment. Pupils learn to reflect on how the environment is affected by decisions made by people. Through discussion, pupils learn to appreciate the moral dilemmas posed by introducing changes to the environment and the effects this can have on the surrounding area. Geography also provides opportunities for pupils to recognise the beauty and diversity of the world, and to learn about sites of wonder, or physical features that they might wish to visit in the future.

At Bill Quay Primary School, pupils will develop both locational knowledge and a sense of place through teaching both substantive and disciplinary knowledge. Substantive knowledge sets out the content of our curriculum that is to be learned. The teaching of disciplinary knowledge supports our pupils in choosing, building and linking knowledge, so that they ‘think like a geographer’. Progression is ensured by combining a range of experiences which allow for revisiting and consolidation throughout the key stages. Pupils will become more proficient in using and applying geographical skills, and by asking and answering questions about the world around them. Our aim is for our pupils, as outlined in the National Curriculum Geography Programme of Study, to develop ‘a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people...’ (DfE 2013)

## **Policy Aims**

- To develop an understanding of the key concepts of place, space and scale.
- To help children see meaning in their lives as they find out about themselves and their surroundings.
- To explore identity and how we relate to others.
- To understand how we can all contribute to building a better world.
- To develop pupils' knowledge of the United Kingdom and major geographical features in other parts of the world.
- To develop map skills and the skills of observation through fieldwork activities.
- To identify key human and physical features of the places studied.
- To formulate appropriate questions, develop research skills and evaluate material to inform opinions.

## **Curriculum**

### **What is taught? Why?**

Bill Quay Primary School is located on the banks of the River Tyne. It has a rich history linked to the river through ship building, coal transportation and many factories that were dependent on it. There is therefore a strong focus in our geography curriculum on the river, the impact of it on human life, the impact of humans on it and how it has changed over time. Pupils will also study contrasting environments, such as farms, the Lake District and coasts to ensure we broaden their experiences.

### **Early Years**

Geography is taught in Reception Class as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. Children learn about people, environments and the relationship between them. They develop a sense of belonging through exploring their place in these relationships. Children also have experience of creating and reading simple plans. There is an emphasis on learning the vocabulary necessary to explore these ideas, such as positional vocabulary of near, far, left, right, in front and behind.

## **Key Stages 1 and 2**

We follow the National Curriculum Programme of Study (2013), the content of which is organised into four headings:

### **Locational knowledge**

In developing pupils' locational knowledge, pupils not only learn how to locate and navigate the world but also an appreciation of place and scale, as well as the positioning systems such as latitude and longitude. Over time, we aim for our pupils to be able to learn and remember more locational knowledge, and become increasingly fluent in identifying specific locations.

### **Place knowledge**

Our curriculum builds pupils' knowledge of place by beginning with what they know. This starts with pupils learning about places they are familiar with: their home and where they live, before progressing to our school and locality, then to a more conceptual understanding at regional, national and global scales.

### **Human and physical geography**

Through careful sequencing of the curriculum, our pupils learn about their own and others' environments and are able to recognise similarities and differences between the world around them and contrasting environments. They also learn about human and natural phenomena and their impact on different locations and at different times.

### **Geographical skills and enquiry.**

#### **1. Enquiry**

In undertaking enquiry, our staff and pupils will ask geographical questions:

- Where is this place?
- Why is it here and not there?
- What is it like, and why?
- How and why is it changing?
- How does this place compare with other places?
- How and why are places connected?
- What could/should the world look like in the future?

During the enquiry process, pupils will also:

- Collect, record and present evidence
- Analyse data

- Draw conclusions and reflect on the enquiry question.

## 2. Fieldwork

‘Geography fieldwork balances core knowledge with a sense of place and gives it a special context.’ (Scoffman and Owens, 2017)

At Bill Quay Primary, we understand the importance of ‘getting outside’. First-hand experience gives pupils strong emotional as well as cognitive connections, creating lasting memories. Fieldwork allows pupils to see the real world outside the classroom, develop a sense of place and investigate the world around them. This may be as simple as getting outside into the school grounds, the locality or further afield. We recognise that best practise regularly engages pupils with the outside world and develops skills in meaningful contexts.

Fieldwork opportunities are sought throughout our curriculum:

- Reception pupils take part in ‘Welly Wednesday’ activities each week in our school wildlife garden, as well as visiting the local farm and West Bolden Lodge.
- Year 1 pupils continue to explore the school grounds, creating simple plans and drawing features of our school. They follow a simple picture map around school.
- Year 2 pupils carry out fieldwork in the locality, developing their observational and mapping skills, and also visit a nearby beach.
- Year 3 pupils compare land use of the local area and learn how it has changed over time.
- Year 4 pupils compare our locality with a contrasting one, visiting the Lake District to further develop their skills of observation and creating databases.
- Year 5 pupils visit the coast and the River Derwent where they collect data and annotate sketches to explain geographical processes.
- Year 6 pupils use a database to interrogate information about the weather and climate in their topic, ‘Extreme Planet’.

## 3. Map Skills

As well as a sense of place, our curriculum ensures that our pupils develop strong locational knowledge. Map skills help to balance these two aspects and are taught and built upon throughout each year group. In Key Stage 1, pupils follow and draw simple maps of familiar and imaginary places. They construct basic symbols in a key and begin to use simple compass directions. In Key Stage 2, pupils progress to locating places on a range of maps, including aerial, satellite and digital mapping. They draw sketch maps and plans of increasing complexity, progressing to reading topological and thematic mapping. They use 8 figure compass and 6 figure grid references accurately.

## **Teaching and Learning**

At Bill Quay Primary, we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our geography lessons. We believe in whole-class teaching methods and combine these with enquiry-based research activities, asking pupils to answer geographical questions. We offer them the opportunity to use a variety of data, such as maps, statistics, graphs, pictures, aerial photographs, geographical footage, and we enable them to use IT in geography lessons where this serves to enhance their learning. Pupils engage in a wide variety of problem-solving activities. Wherever possible, we involve the pupils in 'real' geographical activities, e.g. research of a local environmental problem, visiting relevant sites and carrying out fieldwork.

When introducing new knowledge, teachers make sure that pupils can relate this to what they already know and builds on pupils' prior learning so that they remember it in the long term. Pupils are given plenty of opportunity to practise what they have learned through recalling and repeated practice. Content is broken down into small steps, reducing cognitive load and improving fluency.

## **Progression in Geography**

Progression in geography is not linear, but happens in fits and starts with bursts of progression and periods of consolidation. The geography curriculum is therefore taught as a spiral approach, with pupils revisiting key skills and knowledge to build depth of understanding. Since the curriculum is the progression model, any judgement of progress is an evaluation of how much knowledge pupils have learned and remembered.

Class teachers use assessments therefore that are designed to check that the intended curriculum has been covered and identify how secure pupils' knowledge is. This might be done through quizzes, observation, discussion, drawings or writing. In this way, any areas that may need reteaching or any misconceptions can be identified.

Formative assessment practices such as peer and self-assessment and immediate feedback help pupils understand where they are in their learning, where they are going and how to get there.

At the end of the year, teachers will apply the statements of 'working towards', 'expected' and 'working at greater depth' in making judgements about each pupil's progress against the curriculum objectives taught.

## **Equality and Diversity**

It is the responsibility of all teachers at Bill Quay Primary School to ensure that all pupils irrespective of ability, race, gender, age, faith, sexual orientation, and disability are given full access to the geography curriculum and make the greatest possible progress in accordance with recent legislation.

### **Role of the Subject Co-ordinator**

The geography co-ordinator will monitor the implementation of this policy and review and amend it as necessary. Monitoring of standards in geography will be undertaken through:

- Observation of lessons
- Scrutiny of pupil jotters
- Discussion with pupils
- Moderation of pupil work

The geography co-ordinator will also be responsible for reporting to the Governing Body on standards and developments in geography on an annual basis. A subject improvement plan will detail steps needed to progress standards in geography. This will be updated termly and reviewed annually.

### **Health and Safety**

Visits and fieldwork are an essential part of the Geography curriculum helping to develop geographical enquiry and skills. Pupils learn best when the learning environment is ordered and they feel safe; any visit will be well organised and provide a stimulating and valuable experience. Please see the Policy for Educational Visits for detailed information.