

Geography Curriculum Statement

2020 – 2021

Intent

Geography is an exciting and dynamic subject and we aim to develop the children's curiosity, fascination and knowledge about different people, places and environments and the connections between them.

Following our return to school in September 2020, we have needed to respond to the enforced absence due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Initial assessments have identified priority pupils and we have timetabled additional Basic Skills sessions to allow us to focus on our identified priorities, as well as increasing the focus on "gaps" during lessons. We are focusing particularly on key skills in Reading, Writing and Maths as well as a whole-school priority of children's mental health and wellbeing.

Implementation

At Alverton, we have developed our own exciting schemes of work, based around umbrella topics such as Water, Disaster and Other Cultures so that, every year, at least one term's project is Geography-based. Through these, we want the children to understand the earth's key human and physical processes and know how the earth's features are shaped, interconnected and changed over time, progressively building their skills in mapwork, fieldwork and enquiry-based learning. The children will become increasingly aware of the geography of the local environment and of significant human and physical features in the wider world as well as current geographical issues and dilemmas.

However, Geography is more than this. Geography helps us to understand how and why places are changing and enables us to think about the future. We encourage the children to develop responsible attitudes and values and to think about how they themselves can influence change and become environmentally-aware, active citizens. Our children are inspired by the news and, in particular, issues affecting the environment. Following Greta Thunberg's appeal about climate change, Key Stage 2 pupils held their own Climate Change Day where they worked together on our school site, planting trees and insect-friendly plants, making insect houses and green roofs and helping to maintain our amazing site. Key Stage 1 have created a beautiful wildlife garden on our field and have also worked with local environmental charities, for example taking part in a series of beach cleans.

In the EYFS, children explore their environment through their immediate surroundings. Woods, fields, beaches and town are all within walking distance. Children are encouraged to ask questions about their environment, make comments and offer their own suggestions when considering similarities and differences and the impact they themselves can have on their environment for better or worse.

Following Covid-19, we have added Basic Skills sessions to our timetables. This has necessitated a small reduction in the time spent on foundation subjects but we have ensured that all children will still access a broad curriculum and have used opportunities to incorporate Geography in, for example, reading sessions and writing opportunities.

Impact

Some examples of our Geography-based projects are:

Water

Years 5 and 6 focused on the problems many developing countries have with water. They found out about the impact having insufficient, clean water has on people's lives, the solutions being offered and ways that we can help. The children took part in a water walk to experience the daily grind of collecting water, learned about how a lack of water affects the whole economy, using lots of resources from Water Aid and Oxfam (and linking their learning with RE) and, finally, held a fundraising event to twin their school toilets with toilet blocks in Malawi and Uganda.

Are we Polluters or Protectors?

The children's REAL Projects often centre around a real-world issue. This particular LKS2 project culminated in an exhibition in conjunction with Plastic Free Penzance where the children showcased their term's work and worked with local organisations to spread the message about single-use plastic with the community. Our work on this project was recognised locally at the Plastic Free Penzance award ceremony.

How can we protect endangered animals?

In this Key Stage 1 project, the children learned all about endangered animals and what they can do to protect them. As part of this, they held a fundraising event in aid of the World Wildlife Fund, raising over £600, winning them a WWF award and earning them an invitation to the Royal Cornwall Show as WWF ambassadors to meet Prince Charles.