



Geography Curriculum Statement

At St. George & St. Martin Catholic Academy, 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.

Intent

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. George & St. Martin, 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. Stoke-on-Trent 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 across our Catholic Collegiate to share resources and knowledge. CPD is delivered in conjunction with the Geography department at St. Margaret Ward.

Teaching Style

Excellent teaching within St. George & St. Martin Catholic Academy 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. George & St. Martin 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.

Threads

At St. George & Martin, we aim to inspire young geographers to flourish and give them the skills, knowledge and learning experiences that promote an enthusiasm for, and enjoyment of, geography into the future. The 5 key threads which run throughout the curriculum are:

- Locational knowledge
- Place knowledge
- Physical geography (features and processes)
- Human geography (features and processes)
- Environmental education



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locational knowledge

Locational knowledge is the foundation upon which geographical understanding is built. It may be gleaned from the information in maps and globes. It is important for students to have locational knowledge so that they have a firm grounding in the basics of local, national and world geography. In EYFS, children begin to use positional language and understand features of their immediate environment. In KS1, children look closely at the world identifying the seven continents and five oceans. They look in depth at the four countries of the UK identifying these countries on a map. They later explore the Arctic Circle and the countries within. In LKS2, children learn to locate areas of rainforest and volcanoes on a world map concentrating on their key physical and human characteristics, whilst comparing them to contrasting environments. They name and locate countries of Europe and the surrounding seas and oceans, concentrating on their environmental regions and key human and physical features. They identify the position and significance of the Equator, Northern Hemisphere, Southern Hemisphere and the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. In UKS2, children learn to locate the world’s countries using maps to focus on Scandinavia, concentrating on the environmental regions and major cities. They explore their local area with an in-depth study of the different types of settlement.



place knowledge

Place is a physical area that can be located and that has a personal meaning, attachment or distinct identity. Place connects physical and human geography bringing meaning to a location and its processes. In EYFS, children develop a sense of place in their home, classroom and school. In KS1, children learn more about their local area, the environment and our place in it. They compare this to the environmental features of Sisimiut, Greenland. In LKS2, children identify and compare human and physical characteristics of Europe. They focus on a case study, comparing a volcanic (Honolulu) and non-volcanic region (London). In UKS2, children identify and compare human and physical characteristics of the UK and Scandinavia.



physical geography

Physical geographers observe, measure, and describe Earth’s surface. They study how landforms develop, how they change and how different landforms affect climate. In EYFS, children explore the natural world around including the environment and seasons. In KS1, children recognise the similarities and differences between the world around them and contrasting environments. They locate the hot and cold areas of the world, with a particular focus on the Arctic. In LKS2, children understand important processes and changes in the world around them, including those affecting the land, bodies of water and the air. In UKS2, this develops with a focus on biomes and exploring sustainability issues of natural resources.



human geography

Human geography focuses on where people live, what they do, and how they use the land. In EYFS, children talk about their homes and school and look at other cultures and communities. In KS1, children learn about different types of settlements and land use (including villages, towns, cities, farms, factories, houses, offices, ports, harbours and shops). They learn about the impact of weather and hot/cold areas on people. In KS2, children explore human geography, including types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water.



environmental education

As a Catholic school, fostering a deep love and respect for God’s creation is central to our curriculum. We recognise the importance of instilling a sense of responsibility in our students to care for the environment, as they will face challenges like global warming in the future. By integrating Catholic teachings within the study of geography, we aim to help our students understand the interconnection between the environment, social justice, and the dignity of all life. Our curriculum highlights opportunities for students to explore environmental issues through a faith-based lens, encouraging them to become stewards of God’s creation.



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.

Source Assessment

During each unit, pupils have a chance to show their substantive and disciplinary knowledge in a source assessment in which they are required to draw upon knowledge learned throughout the unit. This ensures that pupils are able to synthesise and elaborate on the knowledge that they have acquired throughout the unit, whilst also setting them up for success in secondary school. The assessment gives the children a chance to demonstrate their fieldwork skills as well as their ability to reason, argue, persuade and consider multiple perspectives are crucial but ultimately domain specific. Taking part in these assessment tasks strengthen the storage strength of the material learnt, whilst helping knowledge to move from inflexible status to being more flexible.



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 a skills based/fieldwork opportunity. 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.