SHOBNALL PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

POLICY FOR GEOGRAPHY

"Geography explains the past, illuminates the present, and prepares us for the future. What could be more important than that?"

Michael Palin, 2007

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INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines the teaching, organisation and management of geography taught and learnt at Shobnall Primary & Nursery School.

The policy has been drawn up as a result of staff discussion and its implementation is the responsibility of all teaching staff. The responsibility for monitoring and review rests with the geography subject leader.

The main purposes of this policy are:

- To establish an entitlement for all pupils.
- To establish expectations for teachers of this subject.
- To promote continuity and coherence across the school.

VISION

"At Shobnall Primary School, our vision is to enable children to have an excellent knowledge of where places are and what they are like, highly developed and frequently utilised fieldwork as well as other geographical skills and techniques. Our children display a passion for and commitment to the subject, and a real sense of curiosity to find out about the world and the people who live there"

PRINCIPLES

ACQUIRE	We ensure our pupils have an extensive base of geographical knowledge and vocabulary. They will have fluency in complex, geographical enquiry and the ability to apply questioning skills and use effective analytical and presentational techniques.
ARRANGE	We provide our children with an excellent knowledge of where places are and what they are like and an excellent understanding of the ways in which places are interdependent and interconnected and how much human and physical environments are interrelated. Pupils have highly developed and frequently utilised fieldwork and other geographical skills and techniques.
APPLY	We believe our pupils should have the ability to reach clear conclusions and develop a reasoned argument to explain findings. They will have significant levels of originality, creativity or imagination as shown in interpretations and representations of the subject matter. They display the ability to express well-balanced opinions, rooted in very good knowledge and understanding about current and contemporary issues in society and the environment.

THEORY UNDERPINNING OUR PRACTICE AND PRINCIPLES

In schools, the teaching of geography gives pupils an understanding of the world around them, its environments, places near and far, and the processes that create and affect them (Willy & Catling, 2018).

Children start on their geography education journey in the early years foundation stage (EYFS). The EYFS framework (Department for Education, 2021). contains many references

to geographical learning, for example, the 'people, culture and communities' and 'natural world' strands set out much clearer, identifiable geographical knowledge that children are to learn. In other strands, there are opportunities for children to draw on geographical content. For example, they may develop their fine-motor skills when drawing plans and sketch maps. Crucially, in the early years, children begin to acquire some of the geographical vocabulary that they will build on through the rest of their schooling.

Research emphasises the significant role geography plays in primary schools, helping pupils to understand their world, their role in it and the responsibilities that come with it (Miller, 2020). The primary national curriculum sets out, at a high level, what geography pupils are to learn by the ages of 7 and 11.

The geography curriculum in schools identifies the knowledge and skills that pupils are to learn. Like many subjects, knowledge in geography can be organised into 2 forms:

- Substantive knowledge sets out the content that is to be learned. The national curriculum and other geography education literature presents this through 4 interrelated forms:
    - locational knowledge
    - place knowledge
    - human and physical processes (the geography community also includes 'environmental' as part of this)
    - geographical skills.
- Disciplinary knowledge considers how geographical knowledge originates and is revised. It is through disciplinary knowledge that pupils learn the practices of geographers.

Locational Knowledge

'Knowing where's where' is one of the mainstays of geographical education. In building pupils' locational knowledge, teachers recognise that this not only helps pupils to identify specific features but also to:

- build their own identity and develop their sense of place
- develop an appreciation of distance and scale
- learn about the orientation of the world, including references such as the continents and oceans that they can navigate from.

Curriculum plans can develop pupils' locational knowledge and thus their capacity to locate and navigate ('spatial thinking'). Research shows that pupils need a secure understanding of directional and locational information so that they can locate features and navigate their way (Golledge et al, 2008). Typically, children in the early years grasp positionality (where one feature is in relation to another). This is fundamental in appreciating relative positioning, one of the main ways by which people identify location (Catling, 2020). This includes the concepts of near and far, left and right, and behind and in front (Pickering, 2019) It is important that children secure the concepts and language by the end of the Reception Year. Without these, they struggle with future learning. With these basic positional notions and the language to describe them secured, children are able to move on to learn about and use more technical terms such as north, south, east and west in key stage 1 and then the 8 points of the compass in key stage 2.

Pupils also need to be taught about the absolute positioning (reference) systems used in geography, particularly latitude and longitude. Location influences so many of the earth's systems that without a grasp of it early in their education, pupils do not have one of the critical geographical frameworks that allow them to make sense of many natural and human phenomena. For example, the effect of proximity to the equator.

A review of research throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries concluded that at the age of 5 pupils start to gain knowledge of their own country and its features (Barrett et al, 2006). At around 8 years of age, there is a significant increase in pupils' knowledge about other countries. One of the major contributors to this increasing knowledge is pupils' personal experiences, particularly visits or holidays to other countries.

Place Knowledge

The second of the 4 forms of knowledge is place. It is considered by many to be the most important term used in geography (Cresswell, 2014). Place allows a pupil 'to locate or orient oneself with respect to the larger global space and to other places' (Larsen & Harrington, 2017). Principally, place is a physical area that can be located (found on a map) and that has a personal meaning, attachment or distinct identity (Cresswell, n.d.).

It is place that connects the physical topography and physical or human geography processes with personal experience and how geographical conceptualisation brings meaning to undifferentiated 'space'. This then gives meaning to a location (Tuan, 1977). As a result, pupils' understanding of place gives them a connection that brings together many aspects of geography and makes it very real. This also supports pupils' memory.

Environmental, physical and human geography

The third form of knowledge includes phenomena, human and natural, that are central to the interest of a geographer. Knowing why a phenomenon occurs and the impacts that it has are at the core of the discipline (Commission on Geographical Education, 2016). Through the curriculum, there should be a balance between the 2 aspects.

From the early years on, the curriculum should set out how pupils gain knowledge of environmental, human and physical processes so that pupils can:

- describe their own and others' environments
- recognise the similarities and differences between the world around them and contrasting environments
- understand important processes and changes in the world around them, including those affecting the land, bodies of water and the air, people, and wildlife.

Geographical Skills and Fieldwork

The final form of knowledge to explore is the procedural knowledge, generally called 'geographical skills', including the knowledge necessary to carry out fieldwork. Geographical skills allow pupils to collect, represent and interpret spatial information and their acquisition is an important dimension of the geography curriculum.

The case for fieldwork and its importance has been long made (Cook, 2011). Through fieldwork, pupils encounter geographical concepts first-hand and connect their learning in classrooms with the complexity of the real world. Through observing, collecting data for themselves, analysing it and describing their findings, pupils learn how to observe and record the environment around them. In effect, they have been immersed in relevant thinking and so key geographical knowledge sticks in their memory. The ability to explain what is observed draws on pupils' knowledge of human and physical processes as well as locational knowledge (National Research Council, 1997). These experiences give pupils 'a critical insight into the nature of geographical knowledge, by helping students appreciate that both the 'theoretical' world of the textbook and their own investigative research is partial and limited' (Teaching Geography, 2018).

Within geographical skills, pupils learn to interpret spatial representations, particularly maps, globes and atlases, and construct their own plans and maps. Pupils also draw on these skills to support their knowledge of environmental, physical and human systems and also to gain a sense of place. This aspect of geography is widening as governments and commerce recognise the value of it and technology advances (Geospatial Commission, 2020). Pupils need to learn how to interpret resources such as aerial photography, satellite imagery and digital mapping. As well as thinking about the technical, or procedural, knowledge that pupils need, teachers and leaders also need to ensure that pupils can apply that knowledge. Consequently, the integration of this aspect with other aspects of geography is important. For example, pupils need to apply technical knowledge when using maps to identify settlement patterns.

As a school we scrutinised the best research available and we have determined that our **definition of learning** is a **change to the long-term memory**. This means that the way we implement our curriculum maps involves repetitive teaching of the key concepts or the 'big' ideas. Each unit has built in practise, retrieval and reinforcement of the key concepts to ensure knowledge sticks in the long-term memory. For learning to stick in the **long-term memory** we teach historical knowledge in meaningful contexts and in a connected way.

Long-term memory involves three main areas:

1. Procedural memory where procedures such as placing events in order and other skills are stored. Procedures, once fluent, become automatic and are referred to as non-declarative.
2. Semantic memory where facts and their meaning is stored.
3. Episodic memory where the activities to learn the processes and facts are remembered and act as memory cues.

Both semantic and episodic memory involve conscious thought and are therefore referred to as declarative.

We have used the research around **cognitive load** and how children learn most effectively, to determine our approach to implementing the curriculum. Research has shown that If you teach children too many new concepts at once their short-term memory becomes overloaded and none of the knowledge will stick and move into the long term. We take an approach of **spacing** out new knowledge combined with interleaving and plenty of retrieval practise to ensure learning sticks. With **repetition, interleaving and retrieval**, research we use suggests

that the more often children have to remember knowledge the more likely it just to be cemented into the long-term memory.

In order for pupils to progress effectively, the geography curriculum must map out the knowledge that pupils learn to gain geographical expertise. The nature of the discipline must inform content and activity choices to ensure that pupils learn and can consider their own answers to geographical questions (Catling & Willy, 2018).

INTENT

Curriculum drivers shape our curriculum breadth. They are derived from an exploration of the backgrounds of our pupils, our beliefs about high-quality education and our values. They are used to ensure we give our pupils appropriate and ambitious curriculum opportunities:

- Diversity – We believe in developing pupils' understanding of British values and celebrating our unique and diverse community.
- Dreams – We promote ambition, high aspirations and foster pupils' capacity to see the possibilities within the world today.
- Decisions – We encourage our pupils to make the right choices in order to stay safe, healthy and happy.

Cultural capital gives our pupils the vital background knowledge required to be informed and thoughtful members of our community who understand and believe in British values.

Curriculum breadth is shaped by our curriculum drivers, cultural capital, subject topics and our ambition for pupils to study the best of what has been thought and said by many generations of academics and scholars.

Our curriculum distinguishes between subject topics and threshold concepts. Subject topics are the specific aspects of subjects that are studied. Threshold concepts tie together the subject topics into meaningful schema. The same concepts are explored in a wide breadth of topics. Through this 'forwards-and-backwards engineering' of the curriculum, pupils return to the same concepts over and over, and gradually build understanding of them.

For each of the threshold concepts, three milestones (each of which includes the procedural and semantic knowledge pupils need to understand the threshold concepts) provide a progression model.

Knowledge categories in each subject give pupils a way of expressing their understanding of the threshold concepts.

Knowledge webs help pupils to relate each topic to previously studied topics and to form strong, meaningful schema. Cognitive science tells us that working memory is limited and that cognitive load is too high if pupils are rushed through content. This limits the acquisition of long-term memory. Cognitive science also tells us that in order for pupils to become creative thinkers, or have a greater depth of understanding, they must first master the basics, which takes time.

Within each milestone, pupils gradually progress in their procedural fluency and semantic strength through three cognitive domains: basic, advancing and deep. The goal for pupils is to display sustained mastery at the advancing stage of understanding by the end of each milestone and for the most able to have a greater depth of understanding at the deep stage. The timescale for sustained mastery or greater depth is, therefore, two years of study.

As part of our progression model we use a different pedagogical style in each of the cognitive domains of basic, advancing and deep. This is based on the research of Sweller, Kirschner and Rosenshine who argue for direct instruction in the early stages of learning and discovery-based approaches later. We use direct instruction in the basic domain and problem-based discovery in the deep domain. This is called the reversal effect.

Also as part of our progression model we use POP tasks (Proof of Progress) which show our curriculum expectations in each cognitive domain.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our curriculum design is based on evidence from cognitive science; three main principles underpin it:

- Learning is most effective with spaced repetition.
- Interleaving helps pupils to discriminate between topics and aids long-term retention.
- Retrieval of previously learned content is frequent and regular, which increases both storage and retrieval strength.

In addition to the three principles, we also understand that learning is invisible in the short term and that sustained mastery takes time.

Our content is subject specific. We make intra-curricular links to strengthen schema. Continuous provision, in the form of daily routines, replaces the teaching of some aspects of the curriculum and, in other cases, provides retrieval practice for previously learned content.

Pupils study geography for between 1 and 2 hours per fortnight. This time is organised into ‘blocks’ where pupils will study geography for a number of sessions before studying another subject.

Cross curricular outcomes in geography are specifically planned for, with strong links between the geography curriculum and maths lessons enabling further learning. The local area is also fully utilised to achieve the desired outcomes, with extensive opportunities for learning outside the classroom embedded in practice. Planning is informed by and aligned with the national curriculum. In addition, staff have access to the Curriculum Companions and accompanying resources, however, teachers lesson design is not limited by this and is informed by national agencies, including the Royal Geographical Society.

IMPACT

Because learning is a change to long-term memory, it is impossible to see impact in the short term. We do, however, use probabilistic assessment based on deliberate practice. This means that we look at the practices taking place to determine whether they are appropriate, related to our goals and likely to produce results in the long run.

We use comparative judgement in two ways: in the tasks we set (POP tasks) and in comparing a student's work over time.

We use lesson observations to see if the pedagogical style matches our depth expectations.

Pupils attainment and progress in geography is measured against the objectives set in the national curriculum and recorded by teachers using Classroom Monitor to inform parents and future teaching and learning activities.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN GEOGRAPHY

Effective teaching ensures that pupils retain knowledge they have learned in the long term. This is supported by opportunities to revisit and practise with prior knowledge. Pupils are more likely to retain knowledge when they have engaged analytically with the content they study. Teachers can support learning through clear exposition, which takes into account what pupils already know and understand. Wider educational research offers a strong basis for a range of effective teaching approaches in geography. These are often reflected in our lessons and will include:

- **Teaching for memory** - evidence suggests that teachers can support pupils' long-term learning by drawing attention to particularly important terms and expressions, precise phenomena and broader frameworks in their teaching.
- **Locational knowledge** – providing pupils with opportunities to gain a secure knowledge of distance, orientation, scale and positioning systems, which begins in the early years. This gives them the framework they need to understand locational knowledge.
- **Place knowledge** – place knowledge is prioritised in the curriculum. It brings meaning to locations and processes studied. The curriculum and planning builds pupils' knowledge of place by linking to places pupils already know or are familiar with. Their understanding of place helps them to connect different aspects of geography. It also gives them different perspectives through which to consider the content studied.
- **Environmental, physical and human geography** – increasingly detailed knowledge of human and physical processes allow pupils to describe and explain different environments. Through this, pupils develop an appreciation of interconnectedness.
- **Geographical skills and fieldwork** – pupils' procedural knowledge (geographical skills) allows them to gather, analyse, present and interpret spatial information. In doing so, they are adept at identifying patterns and trends. Pupils have the specific skills they need to represent and interpret geographical data. These skills are integrated into the curriculum so that pupils understand their application. Repeated practice of geographical skills improves pupils' fluency and accuracy. Fieldwork includes data collection, analysis and presentation. The experience of fieldwork draws together pupils' locational knowledge and that of human and physical processes.
- **'Think like a geographer': choosing, building and linking knowledge** – Teachers ensure pupils can relate to what they already know, so that they build a strong schema and so remember more. Teachers emphasise this interconnectedness between forms of knowledge to help pupils do this.
- **Thematic or topic-based approaches** – over time, curricular goals are increasingly challenging. Teachers revisit content taught previously in order to introduce new, more complex knowledge to deepen pupils' understanding.
- **Disciplinary knowledge** – disciplinary knowledge ensures that pupils appreciate the context in which substantive knowledge was generated. This helps pupils to appreciate context and the perspective from which knowledge was created, different standpoints and how views have changed as time has moved on.
- **Misconceptions** – Teachers correct pupils' misconceptions through secure subject knowledge and effective teaching approaches. They also ensure that their own teaching is accurate and clear. This means that pupils learn the individual building blocks before moving on to broader composite (or conceptual) knowledge.

SUPPORTING PUPILS IN GEOGRAPHY, INCLUDING PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND/OR DISABILITIES (SEND)

We recognise that in all classes children have a wide range of ability in geography, and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. There is a lack of specific research on pupils with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) and geography education. However, findings into

what makes an effective geography curriculum provides some suggestions regarding effective support for pupils with SEND.

All pupils are entitled to a broad geography curriculum. Any adaptations made to support pupils' learning in geography usually should not be to the overall curriculum content but rather to how the content is taught. In the case of pupils with the most complex learning needs, there may be occasions when it is appropriate to modify the curriculum. However, this will be the exception.

Ensuring that all pupils otherwise encounter the same content is particularly important given the role that hinterland information has in facilitating learning in geography. This suggests that significantly reducing content or complexity for some pupils might in fact limit their access to content or limit their ability to learn. It is likely that pupils will benefit most from support that combines extra attention to securing the most generative knowledge, while ensuring that all pupils are able to learn about events and periods in a rich context and through meaningful examples. This can be achieved by:

- setting tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty, some children not completing all tasks;
- grouping children by ability in the room, and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- providing resources of different complexity, depending on the ability of the child;
- using teaching assistants to support children individually or in groups.

PROMOTING KEY SKILLS IN GEOGRAPHY

Through our teaching of geography, we provide opportunities for pupils to develop the key skills of:

- **Communication***,* through reading and responding to a range of sources of information, when planning and carrying out geographical fieldtrips, through taking part in discussions, and presenting findings in a variety of ways.
- **Co-operation**, through planning and carrying out fieldwork activities that take place whilst observing the local area.
- **Improving their own learning and performance***,* through reviewing their work at regular intervals, setting targets for improvement and assessing their achievement.
- **Problem-solving***,* through finding out about the world around them by investigating a specific question or issue, deciding what information they need to know, identifying relevant sources of information and discussing their conclusions.
- **Application of number***,* when completing data collection activities and during map work.

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

KEY STAGE 1

Pupils develop knowledge about the world, the United Kingdom and their locality. They understand basic subject-specific vocabulary relating to human and physical geography and begin to use geographical skills, including first-hand observation, to enhance their locational awareness. Locational knowledge, place knowledge, human and physical geography as well as geographical skills and fieldwork are taught.

KEY STAGE 2

Pupils extend their knowledge and understanding beyond the local area to include the United Kingdom and Europe, North and South America. This will include the location and characteristics of a range of the world's most significant human and physical features. They develop their use of geographical knowledge, understanding and skills to enhance their locational and place knowledge.

PLANNING AND RESOURCES

We use the National Curriculum scheme of work as the basis for our planning in geography. We ensure that there are opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we plan progression into the scheme of work, so that the children are increasingly challenged as they move through the school. We carry out curriculum planning in geography in three phases (long term, medium term and short term). The long-term plan maps the geography topics studied in each term during each key stage. We teach the knowledge, skills and understanding set out in the National Curriculum through the corresponding programme of study. The class teacher writes the lesson plans for each geography lesson (short-term plans), often in the form of a flipchart of presentation. These plans list the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes for each lesson. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, although he or she and the subject leader often discuss them on an informal basis. Plans are stored on the staff shared drive for monitoring purposes and ease of access for the teachers and geography subject leader.

There are sufficient resources for teaching all geography units in the school. They are located in the shared resource area. The library contains a good supply of topic books and software and iPads are available to support children's individual research.

CROSS-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

Staff are encouraged to develop cross-curricular links with geography and other subjects to provide a relevant and meaningful curriculum for pupils.

English
Geography contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Children develop oracy through discussing geographical questions, or presenting their findings to the rest of the class. They develop their writing ability by composing reports and letters, and through using writing frames.

Mathematics
The teaching of geography contributes to children's mathematical understanding in a variety of ways. Children learn to use numbers when completing data collection and analysis activities. Throughout map work, children are required to use compass skills, grid references and a range of symbols.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)
In our teaching of geography, we also contribute to the development of the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding by looking at the establishment of multicultural Britain and the moral implications of the actions of historical figures. Children are therefore provided with many opportunities to discuss moral questions.

Computing
Wherever appropriate we use computing to enhance our teaching of geography. The children use ICT in a variety of ways, such as word-processing, finding information on the Internet and presenting information through PowerPoint.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment for learning is continuous throughout the planning, teaching and learning cycle. Key historical knowledge is taught to enable and promote the development of children's geographical enquiry skills. Assessment is supported by use of the following strategies:

- Observing children at work, individually, in pairs, in a group and in class during whole class teaching.
- Using differentiated, open-ended questions that require children to explain and unpick their understanding.
- Providing effective feedback, including interactive marking through green pen questions where appropriate, to engage children with their learning and to provide opportunities for self-assessment, consolidation, depth and target setting.
- Book moderation and monitoring of outcomes of work, to evaluate the range and balance of work and to ensure that tasks meet the needs of different learners, with the acquisition of the pre-identified key knowledge of each topic being evidenced through the outcomes.
- Use of Proof of Progress (POP) tasks.
- Use of KWL grids ('what I know already, what I want to know and what I have learnt') throughout a unit, alongside specific and measureable learning objectives for each lesson.

Pupils attainment and progress in geography is recorded by teachers using Classroom Monitor to inform parents and future teaching and learning activities.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning geography. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, teachers should be aware of health and safety issues. Risk assessments are undertaken prior to activities, to ensure that they are safe and appropriate for all pupils. Before undertaking a field trip, teachers are encouraged to visit the proposed area of study and fill in a risk assessment form. Further information can be found in the Health and Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Educational Visits Policy.

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

We seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- valuing them, listening to them and respecting them;
- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers;
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made;
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers;
- sharing information about concerns, with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately;
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

See Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for further information.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the geography subject leader:

- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in geography and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- to develop, implement and review an action plan for geography;
- to monitor geography throughout the school;
- to encourage staff to provide effective learning opportunities for all pupils;
- to develop valid activities, appropriate for children at different stages of development, which enable pupils to progress in the subject.

Monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in geography is the responsibility of the geography subject leader. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in their teaching, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.