

# **Brize Norton Primary School**

## **GEOGRAPHY POLICY**

### **Philosophy**

Geographical understanding gives children a sense of their own place in the world and helps them to understand the physical, environmental and cultural influences that affect and mould them. We believe that geography is a tool of learning and communication. It is an area of the curriculum which provides a means of exploring, appreciating and understanding the world. It stimulates curiosity and imagination and we aim to build upon the child's awareness by developing skills, knowledge and understanding through the study of places and themes. We encourage the children to learn by experience and we value fieldwork as an integral part of the Geography curriculum. As Jonathon Porritt, from Forum for the Future, points out:

'What is our knowledge worth if we know nothing about the world that sustains us, nothing about natural systems and climate, nothing about other countries and cultures?'

### **Aims and objectives**

Through the teaching of geography we aim:

- To help pupils to understand that geography is concerned with the study of places, the inter-relationships between the human and physical processes which shape them and the people who live in them.
- Through investigation and enquiry, to stimulate the pupils' interest in their surroundings and in the variety of physical and human conditions on the earth's surface
- To help pupils develop a sense of place and greater understanding about their home area, their own country and other parts of the world in the hope that they will show an increasing responsibility towards the earth, its resources and its peoples
- To enable pupils to recognise some geographical patterns and relationships revealed in different types of landscapes and activities
- To help pupils develop their own values/attitudes and their rights and responsibilities towards places and environments; to learn how they can begin to influence change and encourage sustainability.

To enable our children to achieve these aims we plan to develop the following skills:

- How to ask geographical questions and use geographical vocabulary
- How to observe and record data and use fieldwork skills and instruments, globes, maps and plans at a range of scales
- How to express views about people, places and environments
- How to use secondary sources of information
- How to make maps and plans
- How best to use ICT to help in geographical investigations
- How to make confident decisions.

We aim to create a positive attitude by encouraging our children to:

- Develop an enthusiastic and enquiring approach to geography
- Have confidence when discussing our own culture and the cultures of others and be able to put forward their comments and views
- Work cooperatively and independently.

### **Planning**

Teachers plan for geography using the Brize Norton School's skills progression and the National Curriculum, to ensure continuity and progression across the key stages.

Planning is done at three levels:

- whole school (long term)

- class (medium term)
- individual teacher's weekly planning (short term)

Teachers plan specific learning intentions and success criteria for their lessons based on developing children's skills, knowledge and understanding in each subject.

Where possible teachers make links between subjects to provide experiences that enrich learning and to consolidate and apply the skills that the children have learnt in a variety of contexts.

### **Teaching and Learning**

Geography is taught mainly through year group topics and activities are carried out in small groups, pairs and individually according to the task, age and ability of the pupils. Topics are taught following a two-year cycle and geographical enquiry and skills are taught within the context of these topics.

In the Foundation Stage Geography is taught in the context of the Early Learning Goals which promote knowledge and understanding of the world.

At Key Stage 1 children will investigate their local area and a contrasting area in the United Kingdom or abroad, finding out about the environment in both areas and the people who live there. They also begin to learn about the wider world. The children carry out geographical enquiry inside and outside the classroom. In doing this they ask geographical questions about people, places and environments, and use geographical skills and resources such as maps and photographs.

At Key Stage 2 the children investigate a variety of people, places and environments at different scales in the United Kingdom and abroad, and start to make links between different places in the world. They find out how people affect the environment and how they are affected by it. They carry out geographical enquiry inside and outside the classroom. In doing this they ask geographical questions, and use geographical skills and resources such as maps, atlases, aerial photographs and ICT.

Visits are encouraged by all classes and visitors are invited into the school to enrich learning. All visits must meet the requirements as set out in the Health and Safety policy and full risk assessments carried out prior to the visit.

Wherever possible, links are made with other areas of the curriculum, particularly English and the Arts. The use of ICT is incorporated into the teaching of Geography as a tool for finding and communicating information.

### **Resources**

A stock of resources to support the topics are stored centrally in topic boxes found in the hall cupboards.

The library holds a wide range of books and atlases for staff and children and includes both the physical and human aspects of geography. Classes have geographical books related to their current topics on their classroom bookshelves. In addition, the Internet is a valuable source of information.

### **Assessment**

Assessment of pupil work and progress is ongoing by the class teacher and informs future planning. Teachers record progress against key skills each term in all subjects (see Assessment Policy for further details).

### **Special Needs and Equal Opportunities**

All children have access to the National Curriculum at a level that is appropriate to their individual needs. Teachers plan differentiated learning experiences in all curriculum subjects. Some children are withdrawn from the class individually or in small groups for additional support to be given within different subject areas. (See Special Needs and Equal Opportunities policies).

## **More Able, Gifted and Talented**

Work in all lessons is differentiated to meet the needs within the class. Teachers plan using a 'top down' approach to ensure that the more able are challenged. Differentiation may be by outcome, support, resource or sometimes by the lesson input that is given to different groups by the teacher or a teaching assistant. All children also have individual or group targets that they are working towards. Children who have been identified as more able, gifted and talented are given opportunities to extend their learning through problem solving, investigation and open-ended activities. We create possibilities for them to work independently and with others to develop higher order thinking skills. In all subjects success criteria are set and questioning used to broaden children's knowledge and understanding whilst extending and challenging them, children are actively involved in this process. This ensures that each child is working to their full potential and being challenged at the right level. (See More Able, Gifted and Talented policy)

## **Homework**

All classes receive homework each week mainly related to work in English or Maths. There are times that children are asked to complete research or other home-based activities related to other curriculum areas, particularly in upper Key Stage Two when the topic-based homework may involve children doing research.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Role of the Headteacher:

The overall responsibility for each subject rests with the senior management of the school. The head, in consultation with the staff:

- determines a curriculum that is inclusive to all
- decides the provision and allocation of resources
- decides ways in which progress can be assessed, and records maintained
- ensures that each subject is used in a way to achieve the aims and objectives of the school
- ensures that there is a subject policy, and identifies a subject co-ordinator.

The Role of the Subject Co-ordinator:

- ensure the development of subject resources and the curriculum
- supports the staff in planning for and teaching their subject
- monitors the quality of teaching and learning through observations of lessons, reviews of teacher's plans and scrutiny of children's work
- analyse data trends, reviewing standards and setting future priorities for development
- promotes staff inset.

The Role of the Teacher:

Individual teachers are responsible for the implementation of each subject policy. It is their responsibility to plan appropriate experiences that teach key skills while developing children's knowledge and understanding. Teachers are responsible for assisting the co-ordinator in the monitoring and recording of pupil progress in each subject.

## **Review and Evaluation**

This policy was drawn up by the Geography coordinator (Helen Gerrard) in consultation with the staff.

September 2008.