



**Primary Curriculum
Support Programme**
foghlaim agus forbairt



**School Development
Planning Support**

Scoil Íosagáin
Whole School Plan for
Geography



NCCA

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
An Ciontáire Náisiúnta Curricilim agus Aicniúcháil



AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS EOLAÍOCHTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Geography

Introductory Statement and Rationale

Introductory Statement

This plan was drawn up in consultation with all members of the staff of Scoil Íosagáin, Uppchurch, to ensure the successful implementation of the geography curriculum in our school.

Geography enables children to make sense of their surroundings and the wider world by learning about the natural and human elements of local and wider environments. Through learning about their environments, children develop a range of geographical skills and concepts. Geography encourages children to appreciate the interdependence of individuals, groups and communities. It promotes an understanding of, and respect for different cultures and how different people live their lives. The Geography Curriculum also fosters children's sense of individual and community responsibility for caring for the environment.

Rationale

We recognise that Geography is an integral part of the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) of our pupils. In our school, SESE provides opportunities for the child to explore investigate and develop an understanding of the natural, human, social and cultural environment in which he/she lives. The distinct role Geography plays in SESE is one of helping the child understand and appreciate the physical and human features of their immediate and wider environments. This plan will form the basis for teachers long and short term planning.

Vision and Aims

Vision

We envisage that in Geography each child will be given the opportunity to develop their geographical skills and competencies to their full potential, appropriate to their age and ability in an enjoyable and supportive environment. Learning Geography will contribute positively to a child's sense of personal and cultural identity and to their whole development. We seek to foster the children's natural curiosity by enabling them to take an active part in their own learning.

The geography programme aims to reflect the diversity of the subject, to encourage a balance between acquisition of skills and knowledge and to draw attention to the important values and attitudes with which geography is concerned

We believe Geography is pivotal to each child's rounded environmental education. We hope that the Geography curriculum will prepare pupils to contribute and play a role in their communities by encouraging them to appreciate the interdependence of people. Geography promotes an understanding of and respect for different cultures and ways of life. The Geography curriculum fosters children's responsibility for the environment.

Participating in An Taisce the Green School programme will foster a positive attitude and sense of responsibility amongst the natural environment and its relationship with the human environment.

Aims

We endorse the aims of the SESE Geography curriculum as outlined on page 14 of the NCCA's curriculum statement.

- To develop knowledge and understanding of local, regional and wider environments and their interrelationships
- To encourage an understanding and appreciation of the variety of natural and human conditions on the Earth

- To develop empathy with people from diverse environments and an understanding of human interdependence
 - To develop the ability to use a range of communicative methods, especially those concerned with the development of graphics (mapping and other non-verbal, non—numerical forms of data presentation)
 - To encourage the development of a sense of place and spatial awareness
 - To encourage the development of caring attitudes and responsible behaviour towards the environment, and involvement in the identification, discussion, resolution and avoidance of environmental problems
 - To develop an understanding of appropriate geographical concepts
 - To promote curiosity and enjoyment in geography and to develop a lasting interest in the subject.
 - To develop appropriate language associated with each of the strand areas.
-

We recognise that through the curriculum strand *Human Environments* children in third and fourth classes study:

- People living and working in **their local area**
- People living and working in a **contrasting part of Ireland**
- A European country
- A non-European environment

When choosing countries to study under the strand “*Human Environments*” we will consider:

- Children from other countries who have come to our school who might welcome a focus being placed on their country of origin.
- Places of interest to teachers
- Topics in the history curriculum with possibilities for integration.

- The local environment remains a rich resource at this level.
- Starting with children’s own ideas will remain important.
- We will endeavour to reach a balance between knowledge and skills.

Fifth and Sixth classes

We are aware that the content of the Geography Curriculum at this level is as follows:

Human Environments	Natural Environments	Environmental Awareness and Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People living and working in the local area • People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland <p><i>Explore these 2 strand units through a selection of subunits:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>People and communities</i> -<i>Natural Environmental features and people</i> -<i>Settlement: homes and other buildings</i> -<i>People at Work</i> -<i>Transport and communication</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and other lands <p><i>Choose an environment in another European country & an environment in a non-European country.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County, regional and national centres. • Trade and development issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local natural environment • Land, rivers and seas of my county • Rocks and soils • Weather, climate and atmosphere • Planet earth in space • Physical features of Europe and the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental awareness • Caring for the environment

Curriculum Planning

Details of the strands and strand units taught in all classes are outlined in Appendix 1.

Infants & First/Second Classes

We are aware that the content of the Geography Curriculum at this level is:

Human Environments	Natural Environments	Environmental Awareness and Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in the local community; • People and places in other areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local natural environments • Weather • Planet Earth in Space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for my locality

Third and Fourth classes

We are aware that the curriculum for the third and fourth classes is as follows:

Human Environments	Natural Environments	Environmental Awareness and Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People living and working in the local area • People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland <p><i>Explore these 2 strand units through a selection of subunits:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -People and communities -Natural Environmental features and people -Settlement: homes and other buildings -People at Work -Transport and communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and other lands <p><i>Choose an environment in another European country & an environment in a non-European country.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County, regional and national centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local natural environment • Land, rivers and seas of my county • Rocks and soils • Weather, climate and atmosphere • Planet earth in space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental awareness • Caring for the environment

- Use of OS maps
 - Use of symbols, grid references, longitude and latitude and time zones
 - Mapping of travel
 - Drawing of basic plans and use of scale in the senior classes

By following the content of this curriculum and by developing the geographical skills, the children in our school are given opportunities to work as geographers at every class level.

Children's ideas

Teachers use the children's ideas of place and space as a starting point for all Geography lessons. We find out what the children already know by:

- Talk and discussion
- Questioning and problem solving
- Listening • Brainstorming
- KWL charts • Concept maps
- Annotated drawings (T.G. pg84)
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Play scenarios
- Problem solving tasks
- Free exploration of materials
- Use of the environment

We do this to build on the children's previous knowledge or to challenge the existing ideas if they are not accurate.

Approaches and Methodologies

We plan to use the key methodologies of the Primary Curriculum in the teaching of Geography lessons:

- Active learning
- Problem solving
- Developing skills through content
- Talk and discussion
- Co-operative learning
- Use of the environment
- Guided Discovery Approach

The following methodologies specific to the Geography Curriculum will be used by all teachers to actively involve children in Geography lessons:

- Photographs
- Story
- ICT
- Fieldwork
- Maps, Globes and Atlases
- Models and Simulations
- Interview
- Survey
- Artefacts
- Co-operative Games
- Use of Media

-Ever increasing wider global environments are introduced at this level while the local environment remains a vital resource.

-We recognise that in Fifth class and in Sixth class in the Strand: *Human Environments* children study:

- People living and working **in their local area**
- People living and working in a **contrasting part of Ireland**
- A European country
- A non-European environment

-When choosing countries to study under the strand “Human Environments” we will consider:

- Children from other countries who have come to our school who might welcome a focus being placed on their country of origin. If this is acceptable to them, we could use this opportunity to make them especially welcome to our school.
- Places of interest to teachers
- Topics in the history curriculum with possibilities for integration

-Children’s own ideas remain the starting point.

-We will continue to endeavour to reach a balance between knowledge and skills at this level.

Skills Development

We are aware that the development of geographical skills is of equal importance to strand content in this curriculum. Class teachers will ensure that, throughout their teaching, there is a balance between skills development and the acquisition of knowledge.

Strategies for the development of these skills will involve the children being actively involved in fieldwork, outdoor investigations as suggested in Teacher Guidelines starting on page 68. Details of important considerations for teachers planning field work are contained in appendix 2.

The skills of the Geography Curriculum include:

A sense of place and space

- A sense of place
- A sense of space

Maps, globes and graphical skills

- Picturing places
- Using pictures, maps, models and globes

Geographical investigation skills

- Questioning
- Observing
- Predicting
- Investigating and experimenting
- Estimating and measuring
- Analysing
- Recording and communicating
- Evaluating

Strategies used for developing the skills specified in the Geography Curriculum include:

- Use of the Globe across the school
- Use of maps of the local area
- Use of Google Earth and Google Maps throughout the school
- Use of formal maps

Teachers follow the recommended sequence for Geography lessons: local, regional, national, European and global and reflect it back to our own location. We believe the children's awareness of their local area is of paramount importance. Their understanding of the wider world is also extremely important.

Methodologies

<p>Local Environment</p>	<p>The following approaches and methodologies are used when learning about places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photographs, • Internet, • Environmental trails, • Interviews, • Video, DVD, • Story etc... • Fieldwork, • Exploratory trails, • Meeting local people
<p>Human Environments</p>	<p>The following approaches and methodologies are used to investigate human environments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fieldwork, • Surveys, • Photographs, • Artefacts, • Interviewing people who live or work in the area, • Map reading, • Plotting routes T.G pg 93, • Tasks requiring observation and deduction from visual evidence, sketching activities (viewfinders) and environmental appraisal, • The evaluation of the attractiveness (or otherwise) of various aspects of the areas etc.. • Drama and Aistear
<p>Natural Environments</p>	<p>The following approaches and methodologies are used to investigate natural environments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fieldwork, • Trails, • Photographs, • Models, • Sketching, • Conducting experiments and investigations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exemplar 6 Infants to Second pg 106 T.G - Exemplar 7 3rd to 6th pg 108 T.G - Exemplar 8 3rd to 6th pg 113 T.G
<p>Other Places</p>	<p>The following approaches and methodologies are used in learning about other places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artefacts, • Atlases,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globes, • Interviews, • Photographs, • Internet, • Photo packs, • Resource packs, • Role play and drama, • Theme work, • Video, • Story, visitors, friends and relatives, • News and topical affairs.
<p>Mapping</p>	<p>Mapping skills and mapping concepts are developed as part of the geography programme using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local maps, • Photographs, • Internet • Models <p>Mapping activities in the junior classes should enable children to come to appreciate the uses and possibilities of maps. Through drawing pictures of events and places they have encountered children should begin to appreciate that they can communicate information about their environment to others through medium of maps.</p> <p>The following approaches are used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picture maps, Stories, • Play mats, • Simple plans, • Signpost maps • Simple orienteering <p>A broader range of mapping concepts will be introduced in the middle and senior years. These will include symbols, use of key, indexes and simple grid references.</p> <p>Atlas should become a normal tool of reference for the primary school child. Children from 2nd class up should have their own Atlases. Junior classes will have an atlas in the class library for occasional reference.</p> <p>Globes are used at all class levels to develop awareness of globes as models of the Earth, identify land and sea areas, to develop awareness of other places, locate places on the globe, recognise key lines of latitude and longitude on the globe.</p>

Linkage and integration

We acknowledge that the curriculum recommends cross curricular linkage and integration. Teachers are advised to plan for integration and linkage when devising their long-term and shortterm plans.

Linkage:

When we are studying the local environment, we will study both the natural and human environments and the effect one has on the other. When we are studying distant places under the Human Environment strand, we also consider the natural environments of these places. The strand Environmental Awareness and Care is by its nature, linked strongly with the other two strands.

Integration of History and Geography:

When choosing a European and a non-European country in the Human Environments Strand, we shall consider our choices in History under the “Life, society, work and culture in the Past” strand (for example: If we choose Germany in Geography, we could choose to focus on WW2 in History; Italy – Renaissance under Eras of conflict and Change in History; Britain – Industrial Revolution).

Integration of Science and Geography:

We are aware of the similarities between the skills developed through the Geography Curriculum and the skills developed through the Science Curriculum. We are also aware that the strand Environmental Awareness and Care is common to both curricula.

Other examples of subject integration include:

Geography and Maths – use of survey, graphs, co-ordinates, grid referencing, angles and data.
Geography and English – through storytelling and the development of Oral Language
Geography and SPHE – lessons relating to local and wider communities and citizenship
Geography and Irish – logainmeacha
Geography and Aistear – in Infants rooms

Multi-grade teaching

The use of an integrated approach with the SESE and the broader curriculum will facilitate blocks of time to be utilised in an efficient way and will be particularly useful in our multi class situation. We will differentiate the work for the different ages by setting tasks for the older children that will demand more complexity in terms of content, process and outcome.

Assessment and record keeping

Assessment is used by teachers to inform their planning, selection and management of learning activities so that they can make the best possible provision for meeting the varied needs of the children. Teachers report twice a year to parents/guardians through parent-teacher meetings and end of year school reports. Children may be asked to self-assess and peer assess where appropriate.

Our assessment tools are:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher-designed tasks
- Work samples

The following are other assessment tools used by teachers:

- Teacher observation
- Worksheets and work in copies
- Project work
- Individual research
- Quizzes
- Ongoing teacher-designed tests. Children will bring the tests and the results of such tests home for signing. Test results are kept by the class.

A record of the content objectives taught in each class will be accurately recorded in teachers Cúntas Míosúla

Children with different needs

It is important that all children experience a rounded environmental education. Geography plays a pivotal role in this education and so we will endeavour to ensure that every child will have opportunities to engage in learning activities appropriate to their abilities.

In this regard:

- Teachers will use a mixture of whole-class teaching and group work. Group work will be used to set tasks of varying complexity to accommodate learners with different aptitudes and abilities;
- Teachers will develop their questioning techniques spanning from simple recall to more complex and analytical skills so that all pupils have opportunities for success;
- Map work will be graded for the less able and the more able students;
- Different ways of recording and communicating findings will be encouraged e.g. annotated drawings, ICT, written records, oral reports and models;
- All children will benefit from active involvement in the environment so all will be encouraged to participate in fieldwork;
- Exceptionally able children will be encouraged to undertake additional research and engage in independent learning activities.
- Children who were born abroad or who have lived in other countries will be invited to share their experiences with the other pupils.
- Children will be provided with opportunities to work co-operatively.
- Teachers cater for the range of learning abilities in our geography teaching e.g. children with general and specific learning disabilities, children with physical disabilities, children receiving learning-support. A special needs assistant has a wider role/responsibility during geography activities i.e. overseeing safety of individuals or groups and supporting the work of individuals or groups.

Equality of participation and access

We will endeavour to make the Geography Curriculum accessible to all.

Geography lessons are used as an opportunity to help children understand cultural diversity within our own school and community e.g. culture of the travelling community, culture of people from Eastern Europe. Our Geography Curriculum celebrates difference in addition to promoting cultural awareness.

Organisational Planning

Timetable

In keeping with the recommendations in the Primary School Curriculum a minimum of three hours will be allocated to SESE per week. Geography integrates effectively with literacy through the development of oral language, use of story for mapping and maths through the use of graphs, scales etc.

On occasion, time will be blocked as appropriate. This might occur when:

- Working on a (integrated) project;
- Exploring the local environment;
- Devising and undertaking a local trail;
- Working on environmental activities linked to An Taisce's Greenschool Programme

Resources and ICT

Each teacher will be responsible for managing her/his teaching resources.

Each teacher has her/his own laptop for downloading teaching resources. All staff and children are advised to be familiar with the school's Internet/Email Acceptable Use Policy.

Health and safety

Please refer to our school's Safety, Health and Welfare Statement available in the School Plan and the fieldwork guidelines included in appendix 2 of this document.

Individual teachers' planning and reporting

Teachers' Planning and Reporting Each teacher is responsible for preparing the following:

- Class timetable
- Long-term plans
- Short-term plans
- Cúntas Míosúil

Teachers follow the strands and strand units already planned on the whole school 2 year plan. See Appendix 1.

Staff development

Teachers have access to all resource materials and websites dealing with the geography curriculum. Each teacher is responsible for keeping these resources up to date at their own class level.

Teachers are made aware of geography courses available from our local Education Centre and encouraged to attend and share their knowledge with other staff members.

Teachers are free to avail of internal or external expertise in Geography should they wish.

Parent/Guardian involvement

Parents have an important role to play as custodians of local knowledge that can be shared with pupils and teacher as they explore the various aspects of the local environment. When the opportunity presents itself parents and grandparents may be invited to speak in classroom or accompany the school on outdoor pursuits.

Community links

All teachers are encouraged to engage with individuals and organisations in the local community to support the children's learning of Geography.

Strategies such as the following are encouraged:

- Use of the local Parish books;
- Outside speakers to support the implementation of the Geography Curriculum;

- People in the local community who have an interest and knowledge in the environment may be invited to speak to the children;
- Personnel from St Vincent de Paul/An Taisce/Coillte may be invited to speak with the pupils about trade and development issues.

Success criteria

It is our aim that the whole school plan for Geography will make a difference to the teaching and learning of Geography in our school. We will use the following criteria to assess the success of this plan:

- Teachers' preparation is based on this plan;
- Procedures outlined in this plan are consistently followed throughout the school;
- Children's feedback;
- Teachers' feedback;
- Inspectors' suggestions/feedback;
- Review our short term aims after a two year cycle in the plan.

We will also consider if the plan has promoted the following key facets of the Geography Curriculum:

- Geography is about developing a sense of space and place;
- Children's ideas of place and space are used as the starting point;
- Knowledge and skills are of equal importance;
- The primary resource for Geography is the environment - local, regional, national, European and global;
- Increased environmental awareness amongst the school population.

Implementation

(a) Roles and Responsibilities

All class teachers are responsible for the implementation of the Geography Curriculum in their classes.

(b) Timeframe

This plan will be reviewed after 3 years.

Ratification and Communication

This plan was ratified by the board of management and communicated to school staff on

Dec. 12th 2017

Date

Signed P. J. Harrington
Chairperson Board of Management

Signed Alma O'Leary
Principal

This plan will be made available as part of the whole school plan.