



*At Ashfield Valley we care for and value every child in a nurturing, inclusive environment.*

*All members of our school community will work hard to ensure that every pupil achieves their full potential and has the opportunity to shine.*

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# **Geography Policy**

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Reviewed: June 2024

Date of next review: June 2025

## Rationale

This policy details the provision we make for the learning and teaching of Geography at our school and in particular:

- The importance the school attaches to first class teaching and learning opportunities in Geography as an entitlement to all its pupils.
- To provide support and reference to staff to ensure a consistency with both quality and approach.
  - To highlight how the curriculum has been designed to ensure breadth, balance, continuity and progression in the outcomes of all subjects.
  - The teaching and learning styles focused on to encourage our children to work geographically and develop enquiry led thinking.
  - How we have organised the Geography curriculum, developed its outcomes and how this is monitored and assessed.
- How summative and formative assessment is used to assess the children's progress in and across key stages against objectives defined for individual subject outcomes.
- To emphasise that high quality teaching and learning of Geography is the responsibility of all staff.

## Purpose

The purposes to this policy are to:

- Highlight the importance and value our school attaches to pupils learning Geography and to developing as young geographers.
- Recognise and establish an entitlement to learning and teaching in Geography for all our pupils as a statutory educational requirement.
- Make explicit our expectations in terms of subject outcomes and performance for pupils in Geography as they progress through the school.
- Ensure continuity and progression in terms of subject knowledge, skills application and the development of attitudes and values.
- Clarify how we will assess, record and communicate the performance of our pupils in Geography as they progress through the school.
- Outline the approach to learning Geography our school advocates through outcomes focused and key question led enquiries which are relevant and meaningful.

## The value of Geography within our curriculum

At Ashfield Valley, we believe that developing a love for learning in Geography is crucial and we do this, by inspiring curiosity and providing children with the essential skills and knowledge to build upon and prepare them for the next stage, this in turn:

- Stimulate pupils' interest in their surroundings and in the variety of human and physical conditions on the earth's surface.
- Foster pupils' sense of wonder at the beauty of the world surrounding them.

- Help pupils develop an informed concern about the quality of the environment and the future of the human habitat.
- Enhance pupils' sense of responsibility for the care of the earth and its people and secure their commitment to promoting and living sustainable lifestyles.
- Develop pupils' skills of critical enquiry and an ability to handle and interpret information, through asking and answering geographical questions and using computing to communicate with and explore a variety of people, places and environments across the world.
- Help pupils explore values and attitudes about complex issues such as sustainability and sustainable development.
- Enable pupils to study the above across a range of places, cultures and environments at a variety of scales, from local to global.
- Foster a sense of understanding about how we are interconnected and interdependent with other people and ecosystems around the world.

### Intent

The study of geography involves our pupils exploring the relationship and interactions between people and the environments in which they live and upon which they and all life on Earth depends. Many of the pupils who now attend our school will live to see the next century and inhabit a world of 11 billion people. The many opportunities and challenges that will arise during their lifetime will be very much about geography at personal, national and global scales. What we intend pupils to learn in geography reflects this throughout the curriculum. In particular we have established a school curriculum plan for geography as an entitlement for all pupils that is:

- Aspirational in terms of instilling in our pupils a desire to achieve the highest levels of success through providing them with the opportunities to excel in terms of their acquisition of long-lasting knowledge and understanding and mastery of core geographical skills.
- Logical, relevant, broad and balanced in terms of the areas of subject content we have selected which reflect the guidance of and are commensurate with the demands of the National Curriculum. Children will be taught technical vocabulary and encouraged to apply this when discussing geographical concepts and issues.
- Sequenced to ensure that pupils can build on previous knowledge and understanding as they tackle more complex and demanding enquiries.
- Progressively more challenging Years 1 through 6 both in terms of the complexity of the subject knowledge we want our pupils to acquire and also the critical thinking skills we support them to utilise to ensure they understand the significance of that knowledge.

- Built upon and has continuity with the provision for geography established in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in particular that which addresses the knowledge and skills expectations of the People, Culture and Communities Early Learning Goal.
- Inclusive in terms of delivering the same curriculum to all of our pupils irrespective of specific learning needs or disabilities and differentiating where necessary through, for example, in class support, providing different learning environments, alternative learning activities and assessment outcomes.
- A subject where children are able to learn beyond the classroom. Children will participate in fieldwork and have access to outdoor learning opportunities.

### **Implementation**

At Ashfield Valley, we adopt an enquiry focused approach to learning and teaching in geography which develops our pupils as young geographers. Through enquiry our pupils not only build subject knowledge and understanding but become increasingly adept at critical thinking, specialised vocabulary and their grasp of subject concepts. We structure learning in geography through big question led enquiries about relevant geographical topics, places and themes. Our curriculum is therefore 'knowledge rich' rather than content heavy as we recognise that if we attempt to teach geographical topics, places, themes and issues in their entirety we restrict opportunities for pupils to master and apply critical thinking skills and achieve more challenging subject outcomes.

We adopt a policy of immersive learning in geography that provides sufficient time and space for our pupils not only to acquire new knowledge and subject vocabulary but also to develop subject concepts and understand the significance of what they have learned.

Our learning and teaching in geography is interactive and practical allowing opportunities for pupils to work independently, in pairs and also in groups of various sizes both inside and outside of the classroom. Learning activities are varied including the use of, maps at different scales, Google Earth, different geographical resources, photographs and writing for a purpose.

Only in this way will knowledge become embedded and ensure that our pupils can build on what they know and understand from one year to the next. The schemes of work for each geographical enquiry highlight both the objectives and anticipated outcomes of the investigation. They are also carefully structured through the use of ancillary questions, to enable pupils to build their knowledge and understanding in incremental steps of increasing complexity until they reach the point where they are able to answer the question posed at the beginning of the investigation. Our learning and teaching in geography also recognises the importance of fieldwork with a number of our investigations involving observation, recording, presentation, interpretation and the evaluation of geographical information gathered outside

of the classroom.

## EYFS

Within the EYFS, Geography is integral to the Early Learning Goal of *Understanding the World* where our children begin to gain a wider experience of the world around them. Children learn through first-hand experiences to explore, observe, problem solve, predict, think critically, make decisions and talk about the creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environments. At this stage there is a particular focus on ensuring that our pupils are able to recognise, identify, describe, observe, reason and begin to offer explanations for geographical phenomena whilst using basic and increasingly appropriate subject vocabulary. Within EYFS children begin to know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people; find out about their environment, and talk about those features they like and dislike.

## KS1

Whilst we recognise that our expectations of pupil outcomes must never be confined by their stage of learning we nevertheless ensure that in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1 our core subject expectations enable pupils to learn and consolidate the fundamental attributes of a being a geographer.

During Key Stage 1 we challenge and support our children to undertake geographical investigations which enable them to use and apply basic and appropriate subject vocabulary, subject tools (including maps, aerial photographs and graphical data and fieldwork skills) to recognise, identify, describe, observe, reason and begin to explain the interaction of people with their environments through pursuing the following enquiries:

- What is it like where we live?
- Where in the world do these people live?
- Where do our favourite animals live?
- What are Seasons?
- Where does our food come from?
- What are the wonders of our world?

## KS2

Through Years 3 and 4 in Geography learning and teaching builds on the knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudes outcomes at Key Stage 1 and the pupils make progress through being provided with opportunities to reach consolidated explanations (which means that their understanding is based on the clear use of evidence e.g. from data they have collected and presented in a graph) and reach conclusions about topics, places and issues they have studied through enquiry.

Another important aspect of geography at lower Key Stage 2 is that our pupils begin to be able to see the world through the perspective of different stakeholders. For example, people and things that have an interest in or who are connected to an issue or place. To this end, during Lower Key Stage 2 we challenge and support our children to undertake geographical investigations which enable them to use and apply appropriate and increasingly specialised subject vocabulary, subject tools (such as satellite imagery and GIS) and fieldwork skills to recognise, identify, describe, observe, reason, explain and reach conclusions about the interaction of people with their environments through the study of the following topics, places, themes and issues:

- Why is climate important?
- Where on the earth are we?
- Do we like to be beside the sea?
- Can you come on a great American road trip?
- How does water travel in a cycle?
- How does the earth shake, rattle and roll

Upper Key Stage 2 Geography focuses on topics and big questions which extend the children's subject skills so that they are able to make judgements about things they learn both from their own personal perspective and through empathising with the position of others. In addition, opportunities are provided for the children to evaluate what they have learned and how they have learned it and to come up with their own questions to investigate. Higher outcomes in geography also involve children being able to apply what they have learned in one context to another and to understand concepts as well more discrete areas of knowledge which they learned and understood.

To achieve during Upper Key Stage 2, we challenge and support our pupils to undertake geographical investigations which enable them to use and apply specialised subject vocabulary, subject tools (such as GIS) and fieldwork skills to recognise, identify, describe, observe, reason, explain, reach conclusions and make judgements, evaluate, apply and hypothesise about the interaction of people with their environments through the study of the following topics, places, themes and issues:

- How is the UK changing?
- Where should we go on holiday?
- Where does everything we buy come from?
- What is life like in the Amazon?
- Are we damaging our world?
- How will our world look in the future?

## SMSC-

At Ashfield Valley the teaching and development of SMSC is not a separate subject that is taught explicitly but an aspect of learning that should be present throughout the school in both its lessons and the behaviour from everyone in and around school. The fact that Geography is the study of real people in real places means that it constantly links and develops students spiritually.

The study of climate change and sustainability also allows students to reflect on their own beliefs and others, and the impacts a global world has on these. Throughout, topics like this enable students to reflect and share their own experiences and the diverse nature of our classes really enhances discussion and debate in this area. Geography is a subject that lends itself to investigations, debates and a consideration of different viewpoints and most geographical topics have a moral element to them. For example, when considering physical topics such as rivers and flooding, consideration is given to how these issues arise.

Geography allows students to see and explore consequences of mismanagement, and also to look at the situations from different points of view. Debates allocate students different roles in decision making processes which help develop empathy and appreciate the opinions of others. Through its study of real people in real places, geography makes a major contribution to cultural development. Pupils learn about the characteristics of their local area, and why it is like that, and contrast where they live with more distant localities, in this country and abroad. A sense of place requires a knowledge and understanding of the cultural traditions of the people who live there. For example, at KS2 pupils might explore different attitudes towards the environment. Geography is a natural vehicle for exploring our own multicultural society.

### Inclusion, equality of opportunity and differentiation

Geography forms an integral and statutory element of a pupil's entitlement to learning and at our school we ensure that all pupils can engage with geographical learning and develop as young geographers irrespective of their race, cultural background, gender, religion, creed, level of intellectual ability or physical and emotional circumstances. Mutual respect and the fostering of empathy and community understanding at local, regional, national and global scales lies at the heart of the study of Geography and at our school we model this in terms of the inclusive nature of the learning and teaching we provide.

Ensuring differentiation is a fundamental and core element of inclusion. As such we plan and resource our learning, in line with our whole school policies. This enables all pupils to make good and sustained progress in Geography including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities; those identified as Gifted and Talented; and those with English as an additional language.

In our differentiated planning, we take due regard of factors such as classroom organisation, learning materials and the learning environment. Differentiating by learning environment is as crucial as differentiating by task, outcome; learning style or aptitude helps to ensure inclusion. This is recognised through the inclusion of regular fieldwork opportunities in our geographical enquiries.

#### Connecting Geography to other areas of the Curriculum

In our planning we have made meaningful links with other subject areas of the National Curriculum and to Spiritual, Moral Social and Cultural Development (SMSC) where incorporating content and perspectives adds value to and extends the geographical understanding of our pupils.

Making links is important because it highlights to pupils the interconnectedness and interdependence of the real world. However, when making such connections we must maintain rigour within this subject and appropriate expectations in Geography for each stage of learning. For example, the primary objective of applying key literacy and numeracy conventions to Geography is to enable our pupils to achieve more and better in Geography – i.e. to develop as young geographers. To this end, we must ensure that high standards of literacy and numeracy when applied to Geography result in equally and appropriately high standards of geographical subject attainment. In each of our geographical enquiries, links made to other subject areas are clearly documented, and as a consequence, many are able to deliver substantial elements of the content of other disciplines in a cross-curricular manner.

#### Impact-Expectations of outcomes

At our school, we want pupils to become better geographers and we achieve this by recognising and planning for what becoming better at Geography entails. Consequently, we challenge and support our pupils to develop as young geographers as they progress through the school. To enable this to happen, we have established an outcomes driven curriculum which recognises the crucial importance of identifying not just what we want our pupils to know and do in Geography, but more crucially, the intellectual outcomes we intend them to achieve by and through their learning. As pupils progress as geographers, we recognise that whatever the content of their learning and the subject skills they are using our expectations of them must be focused on the following progression in subject outcomes:

- Recognise, identify, respond and express basic subject vocabulary.
- Describe, observe, reason, select and speculate appropriate subject vocabulary.
- Classify, categorise, sequence, compare and contrast views and opinions.
- Show understanding through informed explanations and synthesis.
- Show specialist subject vocabulary, highlight and explain links, patterns, processes and



interrelationships.

- Apply learning, reach conclusions and make judgements.
- Evaluate, critique, predict, reflect and hypothesise.

#### Assessment and reporting

Each enquiry forms our programme of learning and teaching in geography. We set clear objectives and outcomes for the pupils in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills acquisition. The schemes of work also suggests a range of ways in which the teacher can assess whether a pupil has achieved these outcomes. We ensure that when assessing our pupils, evidence is drawn from a wide range of sources to inform the process including interaction with pupils during discussions and related questioning, day to day observations, practical activities, the gathering, presentation and communication of fieldwork data and writing in different genres. The outcomes of each enquiry serve to inform the teacher's developing picture of the knowledge and understanding of each pupil and to plan future learning accordingly. We do not make summative judgements about individual pieces of pupil work, but rather use the outcomes to build an emerging picture of what the pupil knows, understands and can do.

A summative assessment about the pupil's knowledge and understanding of Geography is carried out at the end of each topic. These assessments are used to inform teachers whether pupils are working below, at or above the age-related expectations for their year group. Each assessment is shared with the Headteacher and the Geography Subject Leader and an overall judgement is shared with parents in the form of an end of year report.

#### Monitoring and Evaluation and the role of the subject leader-

All teachers at our school are responsible for monitoring standards in Geography, but the Geography subject leader under the direction of the Headteacher, takes a lead in this. Monitoring activities are planned across the year and form part of the Geography co-ordinators leadership schedule. In summary, these are: analysing samples of pupils' Geography work to moderate standards (attainment and progress against outcomes and end of stage performance descriptors) to ensure consistency;

- The moderation of teachers' planning once per term to monitor coverage and delivery of planned objectives.
- Lesson observations and learning walks to ensure that learning and teaching is appropriately engaging and challenging and that the anticipated subject progress is being made by the pupils.
- The sampling of pupils' work twice per year to ensure that expectations in terms of subject outcomes are being maintained through the curriculum.
- Speaking to pupils about their geography lessons and what they know and remember about the subject.
- Throughout the year the subject leader provides feedback to staff about the quality of

Geography being taught and leads a discussion on standards being achieved within the subject.

- In collaboration with the Headteacher, Governors and teaching colleagues the subject leader drafts and finalises a Geography Action Plan which is informed by the School Development Plan.

The Geography leader has the responsibility to take a lead in developing Geography further across the school within the school's development plan; monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning; and the use of resources. Teachers and educational support staff can expect support from the Geography leader arising from targets identified in the school improvement plan.

To develop staff confidence and competence in teaching Geography the leader will:

- Attend subject professional development opportunities as they arise and in the context of the priorities of the whole school development plan together with the Geography Action Plan.
- Identify and source staff training needs arising.
- Arrange for relevant advice and information from professional development programmes, including courses, to be disseminated.
- Where necessary lead (or arrange) school-based professional development meetings for colleagues.