St Enda's National School
Geography Policy

Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of Geography at St Enda's NS. It was developed during 2006 through a process of consultation with the teaching staff, post holders and BoM. The policy was reviewed by all the above in 2018. A review of our Geography policy takes place every three years.

Rationale

"Geography is the study of the Earth, its inhabitants and the inter-relationships between them in the context of place, space and environment. It seeks to describe and explain the natural and human features found in the numerous environments on the Earth, it celebrates the rich diversity of peoples living in these places and explores the social, economic and cultural activities in which they engage."(Teacher Guidelines pg2)

Geographical work in the school is based on:
(a) The interests, background and needs of the children.
(b) The opportunities provided by the local environment.
(c) The guidelines laid out by the National Curriculum
(d) The interests, strengths and abilities of the staff.
St Enda's Geography work incorporates the study of home, local, national, large scale and more distant environments over the course of the child's school life.

Vision and Aims

Vision: The children have some awareness of their environment, therefore our aim in Geography is to awaken and foster this awareness and as the children grow to broaden and develop it
 e.g. Local →National → Global studies

Aims: We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for Geography

- 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 graphicacy
- 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

Curriculum

Strands and Strand Units

Teachers will familiarise themselves with the strands and strand units relevant to the class they are teaching.

- Infant Classes pp.17-27
- First and second classes pp.29-43
- Third and Fourth classes pp.45-61
- Fifth and Sixth classes pp 63-84.

Overview of the Geography Programme for Infants to Second
All strands and all strand units to be covered every year.

   1. Human Environments
- Living in the local community
- People and Places in other areas Natural Environments

   2. Local Natural Environment
- Weather
- Planet Earth in space

   3. Environmental Awareness and Care
- Caring for my locality

Overview of Geography Programme for Third to Sixth
All strands and all strand units to be covered every year

   1. Human Environments
- People living and working in local area
- People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland
- People and other lands
- County, Regional and National Centres
- Trade and Development Issues (5th and 6th only)

2. Natural Environment
 • 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 (5th + 6th)

3. Environmental Awareness and Care
 • Environmental Awareness
 • Caring for the environment

It is recommended in the curriculum that children will have the opportunity to explore every year-
• A contrasting part of Ireland
• One European country
 • One Non- European country

See attached appendix A for Strands and Strand Units for each class level

Skills Development

In the delivery of the Geography curriculum teachers are aware of the need for a balance between skill development and knowledge acquisition. Skills and concepts are developed under three main headings:

A sense of place and space- A sense of place enables the child to recognise the unique identity of a place and to appreciate what it would be like to live there. The child's sense of place is first developed in the home and locality and is then extended as he/she explores a balanced range of human and natural environments in local, national and international contexts.

Maps, globes and graphical skills- This skill involves understanding and using maps and other representations and is dependent upon the child developing a sense of perspective, particularly an aerial perspective. Conventional and electronic media will both be used to help children use and understand a wide range of graphical forms of data representation.

Geographical investigation skills- This includes questioning, observing, predicting, investigating, estimating, measuring, analysing, evaluating and recording and communicating. Many of these skills are developed also in other curricular areas, particularly science.

Children's ideas

In St. Enda's we believe that pupils learning should be based on direct personal experience and knowledge. This is a key part of the Geography studied in our school.
We use the following strategies to find out these ideas
- Talk and Discussion
- Questioning,
- Listening
- Problem solving tasks,
- Drawings
- Photographs and pictures
- Teacher designed tasks
- KWL Charts
- Concept Mapping

Approaches and Methodologies

Teachers will endeavour to use a variety of methodologies as listed below.
- Active learning
- Problem solving
- Developing skills through content
- Talk and discussion
- Co-operative learning
- Use of the environment
- Photos and artefacts
- ICT
- Guided discovery
- Interviews and surveys
- Maps, globes and atlases
- Simulation and models
- Fieldwork

*Teachers will select these where appropriate.

Linkage and Integration

At all class levels there are opportunities to link activities across different areas of the Geography curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to take a thematic approach where appropriate to S.E.S.E planning, to allow integration between Geography, History and Science. There are also opportunities to integrate the teaching of Geography with other curriculum areas such as, History, Art, English, Maths, SPHE and Religion.

An emphasis is placed on the explicit teaching of new geographic vocabulary needed by the children for geography related activities. A conscious effort is made to develop children's language, competence and confidence by providing opportunities to prepare and deliver geographic presentations.

Assessment and Record Keeping

The teachers will assess the following -

- Progress in children's knowledge of content
- Ability to use geographical skills
- Development of attitudes

Using the following methods -

- Teacher observation
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests
- Work samples, portfolios and projects
- Curriculum profiles
- Questioning
- Concept mapping
- Self- assessment

We will use any information from the assessments to inform class and school planning. Information regarding the children's progress will be shared with parents/guardians through parent/ teacher meetings and written reports.

Children with Different Needs

We will use a number of techniques to provide a range of learning activities appropriate to the individual needs of pupils.

Forms of differentiation include:
- Learning objectives
- Pace
- Teaching style
- Support
- Resource
- Task
- Outcome
- Grouping

Equality of Participation and Access

Geography is a unique medium for fostering positive values and attitudes towards the immediate family, acquaintances, local community and people in general as well as the environment.

Our Geography Policy is an all- inclusive policy which gives equal opportunities to all children to participate and integrate fully.

Through our strand unit choices the children will learn about cultural and ethnic diversity and the need to respect this.

In delivering the curriculum teachers are conscious of their obligations under the equal status act to ensure students are not discriminated against in their work. With regard to pupils with a disability which impairs their full participation, or pupils from a different ethnic background, every effort will be made following consultation with parents, to ensure inclusion and optimum participation.

Organisational Planning

Timetable

At infant level two hours and fifteen minutes per week are allocated for SESE. From first class up to sixth class, the allocation is three hours per week. Depending on the topic and at the teacher's discretion, time can be blocked or extended. Geography may also be integrated into Aistear in the junior classes.

Resources and ICT

Internet access is available in all classrooms and an ICT timetable is in operation to allow each class access to our current supply of tablets and laptops each week.

We also have a selection of the following in the school which are available for class use by all teachers.

Globes

Maps – various world, European and Irish maps.

Interactive white board resources

Internet

Photo packs – Trocaire

Posters – Planets

Weather recording equipment

Library books on various topics

Health and Safety

The health and safety of all children is paramount as outlined in the school's Health and Safety policy. Health and safety issues with regard to geographical field trips are the responsibility of class teachers.

Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

This policy will inform individual teacher's long and short term planning. Teachers will plan using the strands and strand units and a thematic approach where appropriate. These can be found in the attached appendix for each class level. The Cúntas Míosúil will be used to record what has been taught, will inform review and assessment of/for learning. This will contribute to the next overall review of this Geography policy.

Staff Development

Staff are encouraged to attend relevant courses where possible and to share knowledge, resources and updated information with colleagues at staff meetings.

Parental Involvement

Parents play a vital role in their children's learning and can enhance geographical learning by

- Viewing and monitoring their work.
- Encourage their children to keep a journal of their trips away and to collect pictures, photographs and local mementoes to share with the class.

Community Links

We will encourage any local people to support the Geography programme by visiting the school. All guest speakers must be Garda vetted prior to their visit.

Success Criteria

We can monitor progress and success through the Cúntas Míosúil and through each teacher's individual assessment.

Implementation

Roles and Responsibilities
This policy was reviewed, revised and updated in 2018.
Mary Kirwan Doyle will insure that all teachers have a copy of the updated Geography Policy
Geography resources currently available in the school will be stored in the main storage room in the East Wing where all staff members have access.

Review

Roles and Responsibilities
The Geography Policy as a whole will be reviewed in 2021 by teachers, post-holders and BOM.

Ratification and Communication
This updated policy will be ratified by the BOM at its June meeting.

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Chairperson BOM   Principal

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Date

Appendix A – Strands and Strand Units for each class level

Strands and Strand Units	Junior Infants	Senior Infants
Human Environments		
Living in the Local Community	- People at play - School - Homes - My Family and Community - People at work - In my school - In my community - A Chef	- School - People at play - Homes - My Family and Community - People at work - The Doctor
People and Places in Other Areas	Families in other places	Homes in cold places
Natural Environments		
The Local Natural Environment	- Colours - Natural Materials - The Garden - River Habitat	- The school habitat - Hedgerow
Weather	- Seasons - Types of Weather	- Seasons - Weather
Planet Earth in Space	Sun, Moon and Stars	Day and Night
Environmental Awareness and Care		

Caring for my Locality	• Our Nature Walk	• Local plants • Our Field Trip

Strands and Strand Units	1st Class	2nd Class
Human Environments		

Living in the Local Community	• My Family and Community
	• People at Work
	  - The Vet
	  - Firefighters
	  - The Farmer
	  - At Sea
	• Homes
	• School
	• Transport
	  - Journeys
		• Homes
		• People at Work
		  - The Factory
		  - The Dentist
		  - In the community
		• People at Play
		• Transport
		  - Journeys

People and Places in Other Areas	• Name Day (Polish Traditions) • The North Pole • Christmas in other places • National costumes around the world • Greece	• Traditions in Other Places • Africa
Natural Environments		
The Local Natural Environment	• Local flowers • The Beach	• Water in our Environment • Natural Materials • Soil

Weather	• Seasonal changes • Wind • Weather Forecasts	• Trees and Seasons • Weather and Rainbows • Migration
Planet Earth in Space	• Stars	• The Earth, Moon and Sun
Environmental Awareness and Care		
Caring for my Locality	• My Area • Spring • Recycling	• Recycling – Plastic Pollution

Strands and Strand Units	3rd Class	4th Class
Human Environments		
People living and working in the local area	• Buildings – Homes in the community • Living Together – Communities	• Types of Transport • People at work
People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland	• Blanchardstown • Communications	• Arranmore Island
People and other Lands	• Britain • Egypt	• Italy • Japan
County, Regional and National Centres	• Ireland - Urban and Rural • Provinces	• Provinces • Counties of Leinster
Natural Environments		
The Local Natural Environment	• Mountains	• Nature is powerful • Rivers and seas
Land, Rivers and Seas of my County	• Physical geography of County Wexford	• Physical geography of Ireland
Rocks and Soils	• Soils	• Rocks
Weather, Climate and Atmosphere	• Types of weather	• Weather and climate
Planet Earth in Space	• The Solar System	• The Sun

Environmental Awareness and Care		
Environmental Awareness	• Rainforests	• Pollution
Caring for the Environment	• Reusing waste materials	• Renewable energy

Strands and Strand Units	5th Class	6th Class
Human Environments		
People living and working in the local area	• Buildings and settlements • People and communities	• People at work • Transport
People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland	• Killarney (Tourism)	• Tipperary • Sligo
People and other Lands	• France • Mexico	• Greece • China
County, Regional and National Centres	• Counties of Ireland	• Counties and Towns of Ireland
Trade and Development Issues	• Famine	• Trade
Natural Environments		
The Local Natural Environment	• The Burren	• Bogland
Land, Rivers and Seas of Ireland	• Irish mountains, lakes and rivers	• The Irish coast
Physical Features of Europe and the World	• Physical features of Europe and the world	• Africa, Australia and Europe
Rocks and Soils	• Investigating soils	• Structure of the Earth

Weather, Climate and Atmosphere	• Cloud formation, temperature and climate	• Measuring and recording weather
Planet Earth in Space	• Outer Space	• The Moon
Environmental Awareness and Care		
Environmental Awareness	• Pollution	• People and the natural environment
Caring for the Environment	• Deserts	• Caring for the environment

*Teachers working in our East Wing classes will use the above strands and strand units at the appropriate level for the individual children in their classes.