

Whitby Heath Primary School



Geography Policy

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Next Review	February 2026
Head teacher	Mr S Wright 
Chair of Governors	Mr N Lacey

Geographical intent

In our Geography curriculum, we want to instill a love of learning of Geography into our children. Furthermore, we want our children to develop key geographical skills and develop their vocabulary, where they are able to apply this learning into a variety of contexts, allowing children to make a positive contribution into society.

At Whitby Heath, teachers use Quality First Teaching to allow children to gain Geography knowledge, develop their geographical skills and their vocabulary. We aim for children to develop their substantive knowledge (relating to locational knowledge, place knowledge, human and physical geography and geographical skills including fieldwork¹) and disciplinary knowledge (how geographers interact with these ideas). Furthermore, our curriculum fulfils the 'big ideas of geography', to ensure that children are developing their knowledge and skills over time. This allows children to gain an understanding of the past, present and future of geography of the natural/physical world. This allows them to see themselves as part of a bigger geography picture in the world, in particular challenges that face the environment and challenges in society.

Implementation

At Whitby Heath, we follow the scheme 'Rising Stars' progressive Geography scheme, to help deliver lessons to the children. These lessons have been adapted, as well as resources created, by class teachers to ensure that all children are able to access the curriculum, to all, including those with SEND.

Our curriculum is designed alongside DfE guidance which states that "A high-quality geography education should inspire in pupils a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people that will remain with them for the rest of their lives." Our curriculum follows a dialogic approach and teaches pupils through enquiry and using carefully selected materials and resources at the heart of all lessons. From this, lessons are designed in small steps, to ensure children's working memory is engaged. Class teachers adapt the plans based on the needs of the children in their class, to create engaging and stimulating lessons which will inspire them in their geography learning. In this, each key strand of geography, locational knowledge, place knowledge, human and physical geography and geographical skills and fieldwork² (including map skills), is explored every unit, to ensure that all children have a breadth of geographical understanding. We recognise that new knowledge can be fragile, therefore we used spaced retrieval practices to aid retention of the knowledge into the long-term memory, as well as making cross-curricular links across the subject, to ensuring that children have detailed schemata.

In Key Stage 1 and 2, geography is taught termly in weekly, hourly lessons. This allows for time to be spent developing children's geographical skills, one important way being, through fieldwork.

1. Knowledge

Our curriculum aids children with their development of substantive and disciplinary knowledge, which helps children learn and remember more. This also draws from the

¹ Department for Education- Geography Programme of Study; Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

² Department for Education- Geography Programme of Study; Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

children's prior knowledge, whilst teaching new knowledge to help children develop their schemata. Our whole school approach of spaced retrieval, further aids with this, by allowing children to draw on their knowledge over spaced periods of time. This is through morning SODA activities, end of the week low stakes POP quizzes and monthly quizzes.

Prior knowledge is highlighted on the unit overviews to teachers, so they can make high quality questions drawing from this to understand any potential gaps in their learning and adjust their planning to accommodate this.

When knowledge is secure and successful links have been made from their prior learning to their current knowledge, children are given the opportunity to apply this knowledge into different situations. This aids the development of children's critical thinking skills.

2. Skills

Although we see the importance of children gaining knowledge, fieldwork is a fundamental key to geography to allow them to experience geography and see this in real life. This does not have to just be trip based, as fieldwork occurs when children observe, measure, record and present geographical information³. Our curriculum is planned where children have exposure with practising and experiencing the geographical skills: relating to locational knowledge, place knowledge, human and physical geography and geographical skills including fieldwork⁴. This allows children to gain mastery of these, throughout their learning journey and form solid foundations of this for when this is taken to an even deeper level in Key Stage 3.

Whitby Heath has a progressive set of geographical skills that children will develop during their time at Whitby Heath. For example, the key skill of becoming familiar with maps, is introduced in the EYFS provision and embedded more in Year 1, where they look at hand drawn maps of their local area. This becomes progressive throughout the years, where maps become more detailed and intricate, developing children's map skill knowledge where they can interpret many maps, through different sources like atlases, online and on signs, for example.

Fieldwork and geographical enquiry is vital for children to make links in their geography learning. We acknowledge this, and as a result, it is an integral part of our curriculum where children are experiencing this in most geography lessons because fieldwork allows children to draw together all forms of their knowledge together⁵.

3. Attitudes and values

At Whitby Heath, we praise children on the effort and determination that they show linking to our Whole School Values, encouraging them to try their best and never give up, even though the task could be tricky. This approach to learning helps develop the children's growth mindset and provides them with a 'can do' attitude

³ Ofsted- Getting our bearings: geography subject report

⁴ Department for Education- Geography Programme of Study; Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

⁵ Ofsted- Getting our bearings: geography subject report

towards Geography. Despite trying to develop the children's growth mindset, we are conscious that tasks have to be achievable, although challenging the children to complete it. Therefore, class teachers adapt the tasks to ensure that children have appropriate challenge, but that children can still achieve it.

At Whitby Heath, we want children to have the resilience and self-esteem to take risks in their geography learning and challenge themselves further. Whether this is through fieldwork, or by completing a challenge provided for them, extending them further in their geography learning.

4. Developing a love of Geography

At Whitby Heath, we want our mini-geographers to develop a love of Geography, which will encourage them to pursue this further in their life. We want our children to be curious and gain fascination about the wonderful world that we live in. Equally, we want them to be aware of factors that could affect the world and give them an understanding of what they can do to help.

As part of developing children's Cultural Capital, we encourage teachers to plan for children to learn outside of the classroom, to enrich children's geographical understanding. Therefore, teachers have a suggested enrichment plan that they can use where they can plan appropriate educational experiences for children at different locations, to enrich their geographical understanding.

5. Assessment

Formative assessment is integral to our teaching and learning at Whitby Heath, whereby this approach is used in geography learning too. We utilise live marking and feedback, so children's misconceptions are addressed immediately. We have an ethos of celebration, where we celebrate children's achievements and learn from our mistakes together, using the visualiser. Feedback can be given to children on a whole class basis, individual verbal feedback or further feedback, if there are still misunderstandings or misconceptions, that need to be further addressed on a whole class, group or individual basis.

Children are assessed at the end of a unit of study according to specific, progressive assessment statements which are broken down into key areas of study- Locational Knowledge, Place Knowledge, Human and Physical Geography and Geographical Skills and Field Work (example below) assessment statements are specific and are set out for each unit of study according to National Curriculum expectations; and that of teacher judgement in order to make an overall judgement. From this children are then identified as Working Towards (WTS) Expected (EXS) or Greater Depth (GDS).

Further assessment opportunities may be presented to support teacher judgements throughout the unit of study including, SODA activities Quizzes and retrieval tasks.

Year 3 Unit 2: Our World

Locational Knowledge

Place Knowledge

Human and Physical Geography

Geographical Skills and Field Work

Features of the work of children meeting expectations Progression Framework statement:

- Can indicate tropical, temperate and polar climate zones on a globe or map.
- Know about the continents and countries of the world and the 'countries' and 'continents' on the world map they have made.
- Can talk about the poles, equator and lines of latitude and longitude, and mark them appropriately on their own map and can distinguish between them.
- Can identify on a globe or map the position of the Prime/Greenwich Meridian.
- Can describe and understand the significance of latitude and longitude.
- Can identify the position of the Prime/Greenwich Meridian and understands the significance of latitude and longitude (e.g. describe how climate varies with latitude and in relation to equator, tropics and poles).
- Can talk about time zones and day and night.
- Can indicate tropical, temperate and polar climate zones on a globe or map and describe the characteristics of these zones using appropriate vocabulary (e.g. UK in temperate zone).
- Can use simple geographical vocabulary to describe significant physical features and talk about how they change.
- Can use the zoom function of a digital map to locate places and gather information (e.g. uses Google Earth to locate places within different climate zones, to zoom in on the poles, equator and tropics)
- Can talk about the 'globe' they started with and how they made it into a map, the challenges they faced and how they overcame them.
- Can use most of the vocabulary introduced in the unit when talking about their map.
- Can use an atlas to locate the UK and locate some major urban areas, can locate where they live/have visited in the UK (e.g. seaside/coastal places they have visited).
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- Can use directional language and grid references when talking about locations.

SEND and inclusion

At Whitby Heath, it is known that we have high expectations of our children in themselves and their learning. However, we acknowledge that some children need additional support, to help them retain and access the learning. Therefore, tasks are suitably adapted and scaffolded to help them overcome any barriers to learning, to still make progress. Teachers use their knowledge of their children, to make these adaptations, that are catered to the child's specific needs. Equally, we want all children to be independent geography learners, so changes are made so children can thrive and enjoy their geography learning, so the sky is the limit for them.

As cited in our SEND policy, we use a wave process when supporting children's needs. Quality First Teaching is the key to inclusive teaching to ensure all children are able to access the curriculum. Examples of this can be:

- Breaking learning up into more manageable chunks
- Planning for error and any misconceptions
- Using manipulatives or images
- Modelling, such as using the I do, We do, You do model
- Scaffolding

During Wave 2, extra measures are put in place to ensure that children can access the curriculum. This can include:

- In class support for groups of pupils from Additional Teacher or Teaching Assistant

- Planned, purposeful periods of withdrawal to work with a TA using a support programme
- Additional in class activities/ resources as required
- Increased use of technology (computer programmes)
- Peer support/buddy systems
- Differentiated homework and support advice for parents/carers

Some children have strategies that are individual to them, that have been discussed with the class teacher, parents, SENCo and other professionals, to further help them access the curriculum and ensure that knowledge is transferred into their long term memory.

Higher Attainers

Opportunities to extend higher attainers in their geography learning has been planned for in the curriculum, as well as by class teachers. Due to having high expectations of all learners in our school, teachers always plan additional challenges for children to complete. This usually is an extra push for children, which can often be a question, designed to encourage children to think deeply and apply what has been learnt.

CPD for staff

CPD is planned for staff throughout the year and opportunities for this, in regards to geography, is mapped out by the SLT team, in line with the whole school development plan. The subject lead also sources credible, evidence informed CPD. The strategic subject lead also lends their experience to aid the subject lead with making decisions impacting the subject, as well as the monitoring of the subject. Furthermore, CPD through the means of staff meetings allows for teachers to join to share what is working well, as well as introducing new pedagogy backed with evidence that has been proven to improve pupil outcomes and therefore learning. Staff are encouraged to complete their own research to well equip themselves with the subject matter, to ensure that high quality lessons are delivered. The subject lead will help teachers if they require any further support in terms of Pedagogical Content Knowledge as well as Pedagogy in geography.

Monitoring of Geography

The monitoring cycle for subjects is mapped out by the SLT team. This can be in the form of book looks, lesson walk-ins, learning walks (including looking at the use of working walls), pupil voice and staff surveys. All monitoring undertaken is purposeful, with the aim of improving and developing the geography curriculum across the school. This is undertaken with the Strategic Subject lead, with a clear focus that will be explored.

Transition to KS3

At Whitby Heath, we work closely with feeder secondary schools in the local area, to ease the children into their transition into secondary school. In the Summer term, the

Year 6 children are prepared for high school in their geography learning, by revisiting the local area, as well as considering plans for their future based on this.

Impact

At Whitby Heath, we aim high to ensure that we create a supportive and collaborative environment for geography learning through our curriculum being investigative and enquiry-based. This means that activities completed are more engaging to the children because they can link it to what they have explored and experienced. This emphasis placed on investigative learning opportunities, helps children gain a coherent knowledge of understanding of each unit of work covered throughout the school. As well as this, the spaced retrieval approach that we have in school, and in geography, this ensures that the knowledge children gain are integrated into their schemas, and transferred into their long term memory, as a result children learn more, as well as remembering more.

Our Geography curriculum is high quality and is planned to demonstrate progression, including the children's Geographical skills, where in one unit, each skill set out in the National Curriculum, can be covered multiple times in a unit. We focus on the progression of knowledge and skills, as well as building the child's vocabulary development which forms a significant role in the units of work.

We measure the impact of our curriculum through the following methods:

- Assessing children's understanding of the topic, including linked vocabulary after the unit, as well as during SODA activities across the school
- Summative assessment of pupil discussions about their learning.
- Images and videos of the children's practical learning.
- Conducting pupil voice with the pupils about their learning
- Deep Dives- where pupil's books are scrutinised and there is the opportunity for a dialogue between teachers to understand their class's work
- Annual reporting of standards across the curriculum within the Headteachers report to the Governors.