



## **Geography Policy**

### **Whole School Geogrpahy Plan**

While we have reflected on History, Geography and Science individually, we will adopt common approaches to SESE planning.

Specifically, as Oral Language is a key element of our School Improvement and Self-Evaluation plans, we will target language specific to History, Geography and Science at each relevant grade.

We will target improvements to the interior and exterior of the school through the developments of a School/ Garden, develop habitats, increase tree planting, vegetable/ potato/ nesting boxes/ bird-feeders/ signage/ tree-labelling/ bulb-planting etc.

We will invite guest speakers from our community E.G. A garda, a farmer, Road Safety talks, RSA, RNLI, Streetscape, INTO Heritage Scheme, Ornithologist, Environmentalists etc.

### **Review and Targets:**

We read our Geography Policy and noted current practice. We feel that we have largely met the targets of our previous policy, and we will seek to enhance this work in the coming years. Among the strengths we identified as having worked well were Whole School Approaches and thematic approaches to geography. In an effort to harmonise integration across SESE, we feel that we could develop our School Grounds and environment through habitats, gardens, bird nests, tree planting, Orienteering, Mapping etc.

We feel that linking with visits to the community is really beneficial; possibilities include Young at Heart group; Communion and Confirmation class groups, sharing experiences. Interview a local older resident/ historian. We will invite guest speakers from our community/ Visit by farmer with young lambs each year/ visit by local Garda/ Road Safety experts/ Streetwise project/ Cycling Safety course/ INTO Heritage Scheme, Ornithologist, Environmentalists etc

We will, as a staff, begin to discuss the language of Geography, Teaching and Learning, and Assessment in a formal whole school manner and that this has benefited our approach to teaching and to pupil's learning. We feel that staff discussions on what works well leads to a greater collegiality among staff, enhancing professionalism and the experiences of all involved. We can target keywords at each relevant grade.

In our planned improvements to the interior and exterior of the school, we will specify weather instruments, community walking trail, mapping of the grounds, green school

working areas etc.

Specifically, as Oral Language is a key element of our School Improvement and Self-Evaluation plans, we will target language specific to Geography at each relevant grade and produce a graded sheet noting progression through the levels.

We will target improvements to the interior and exterior of the school through the developments of a School/ Garden, develop habitats and trails, increase tree planting, vegetable/ potato/ nesting boxes/ bird-feeders/ signage/ tree labelling/ bulb-planting etc.

### **Introductory Statement**

#### **Rationale**

Geography helps the children to focus on their immediate world around them as well as broadening their horizons to the wider world. It was decided to focus on this in order to:

- benefit teaching and learning in our school
- conform to principles outlined in the primary curriculum
- review the existing plan for geography.

### **Vision and Aims:**

#### **Vision**

The plan reflects the school's characteristic spirit (ethos) which encourages all children to respect their environment both immediate and global and to nurture and foster it for future generations.

#### **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 and understanding of appropriate geographical concepts.

This Geography plan will be addressed under the following headings.

### **Curriculum Planning:**

Strands and stand units

Skills development

Children's ideas

Approaches and methodologies



Linkage and integration  
 Assessment and record keeping  
 Children with different needs  
 Equality of participation and access  
 Time table  
 Resources and ICT  
 Health and safety  
 Individual teachers' planning and reporting  
 Staff development  
 Parental involvement  
 Community links

	Infant classes	First and second classes
Strands	Strand units	Strand units
Human Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Living in the local community</li> <li>People and places in other areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Living in the local community</li> <li>People and places in other areas</li> </ul>
Natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The local natural environment</li> <li>Weather</li> <li>Planet Earth in space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The local natural environment</li> <li>Weather</li> <li>Planet Earth in space</li> </ul>
Environmental awareness and care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caring for my locality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caring for my locality</li> </ul>
	Third and fourth classes	Fifth and sixth classes
Strands	Strand units	Strand units
Human Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People living and working in the local area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People living and working in the local area</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland</li> <li>• People and communities</li> <li>• Natural environmental features and people</li> <li>• Settlement: homes and other buildings</li> <li>• People at work</li> <li>• Transport and communications</li> <li>• People and other lands – <i>an environment in another European country, an environment in a non-European country</i></li> <li>• County, regional and national centres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland</li> <li>• People and communities</li> <li>• Natural environmental features and people</li> <li>• Settlement: homes and other buildings</li> <li>• People at work</li> <li>• Transport and communications</li> <li>• People and other lands – <i>an environment in another European country, an environment in a non-European country</i></li> <li>• County, regional and national centres</li> <li>• Trade and development issues</li> </ul>
<b>Natural environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local natural environment</li> <li>• Land, rivers and seas of my county</li> <li>• Rocks and soils</li> <li>• Weather, climate and atmosphere</li> <li>• Planet Earth in space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local natural environment</li> <li>• Land, rivers and seas of Ireland</li> <li>• Physical features of Europe and the world</li> <li>• Rocks and soils</li> <li>• Weather, climate and atmosphere</li> <li>• Planet Earth in space</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental awareness and care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental awareness</li> <li>• Caring for the environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental awareness</li> <li>• Caring for the environment</li> </ul>

### Strands and strand units

Teachers are familiar with the strands/strand units/content objectives for the relevant class level and have organised the units in pairs class groups as per the curriculum.

***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***

There is continuity and progression in the geography programme from class to class.

Checks are made to avoid gaps and undue repetition between classes.

From 3rd to 6th classes, locations are agreed for the strand unit people living and working contrasting part of Ireland

In the strand unit people and other lands, one location in Europe and one location in another part of the world are agreed per year from 3rd to 6th classes.

Opportunities are provided for individual teachers to develop a sense of place for either national or international locations of interest to them.

**Skills and concepts development**

Steps are taken to ensure that there is a balance between skills development and the acquisition of knowledge throughout the programme.

Strategies are used by each class to develop the child's skills and concepts development under the three headings.

A sense of place and space

Maps, globes and graphical skills

Geographical investigation skills

**Children's ideas**

Children's ideas of place and space are used as a starting point for all geography activities.

We find out what children know already by discussion work and allowing them to bring photos and other memorabilia from home.

Some of the strategies used to find out these ideas are – Talk and discussion; questioning; listening; problem – solving tasks; drawings; teacher designed tasks and tests.

**Approaches and methodologies:**

The key methodologies of the Primary Curriculum used as part of the geography programme are:

Active learning

Problem solving

Developing skills through content

Talk and discussion

Co-operative learning

Use of the environment

Teachers are following the recommended sequence for geography – local, regional, national, European and global and then reflecting it back to their own location

Approaches and methodologies used in learning about the environment include fieldwork, exploratory trails, photographs.

Fieldwork is incorporated into the geography programme as classes go out into the college grounds on a regular basis to examine an aspect of work

Approaches and methodologies used to investigate human environments include fieldwork,

surveys, photographs, artefacts, interviews, and environmental audit.

Approaches and methodologies used to investigate natural environments include, fieldwork, trails, photographs.

Approaches and methodologies used to investigate about other places include artefacts, atlases, globes, interviews, photographs, school twinning.

Mapping skills and mapping concepts are developed as part of the geography programme.

Pupils have access to local maps, plans, photographs, internet etc.

Class teachers select maps, globes, and atlases to be used in the school. These are reviewed each year to ensure they are up to date.

### **Linkage and integration:**

#### **Linkage:**

There are opportunities to link one strand with another strand in the geography programme.

Strands are linked using a thematic approach.

#### **Integration:**

Discovery and discussion activities integrate geography with the other SESE subjects – history and science.

Oral Language Curriculum.

Art, Craft, Music, English (OLC), Maths, Irish ( OLC) and PE activities are integrated with geography.

This integration is planned and organised by the class teacher

Theme based activities are used to support integration.

### **Assessment and record keeping**

Teachers assesses the child's knowledge and understanding of environment matters, the acquisition of geographical skills and the development of attitudes.

Assessment tools used to gather information about a child's progress are

Teacher observation

Teacher designed tasks and tests

Work samples and projects

### **Children with different needs**

Teachers support and ensure the participation of children with special needs.

Classes are organised and adapted to include children who may have a physical disabilities i.e. large lens for children seeing difficulties.

Children with exceptional ability/interest in geography are encouraged and supported by use of project work and IT.

Children who were born or have lived in other countries contribute to the geography programme by telling the class about their homeland.

Equality of participation and access

Equal opportunities are given to boys and girls to participate in classes and activities.

Boys and girls have equal opportunities to experience all strands

The SNA is used to assist a child experiencing autism

Children whose first language is not English are helped by other class members and the teacher gives as much assistance as is practicable.

### **Intercultural**

The geography class is used as an opportunity to integrate the culture of all

The geography programme is used in our school celebrates difference as well as promoting cultural awareness.

### **Organisational Planning:**

#### **A) Timetable:**

Time is allocated at each class level for geography for the S.E.S.E allocation as per the guidelines for the Primary School Curriculum.

Time is blocked for SESE according to the topic or theme being covered i.e cross curricular integration

Discretionary curriculum time is used occasionally for SESE.

#### **B) Resources:**

An inventory of resources is available for geography. Teachers have reference and resources material appropriate to their class in their classrooms.

Resources are purchased both centrally and by individual teachers as material is needed and requested funding comes from the PTA

Some additional resources or materials are needed. These are on a separate list to be acquired as needed.

#### **C) ICT:**

ICT is used in the geography programme, e.g use of digital camera, chromebooks, internet, iPads, apps, DVD's/videos, programmes for word processing or data handling.

Some appropriate software is currently available in the school email can be used to contact other schools i.e QMS, interpretative centres, industries, meteorological agencies, embassies, charities and NGO's that focus on development work.

There is a code of practice to ensure safe internet usage. Teachers familiarise themselves with material on websites prior to use by the children and there is ongoing monitoring of these sites.

The following is a list of geography websites, however this list is not exhaustive:

[www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com)

[www.teacherplanet.com](http://www.teacherplanet.com)

[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

[www.met.ie](http://www.met.ie)

[www.barnabybear.co.uk](http://www.barnabybear.co.uk)

[www.scoilnet.com](http://www.scoilnet.com)

[www.seomranga.com](http://www.seomranga.com)

### **Health and safety:**

All health and safety precautions should be adhered to when taking the children on outside excursions/field trips. Children should always wash their hands when they return to the classroom after an outdoor lesson. The Green Committee must wear hi-vis jackets and gloves and use litter pickers when on duty and wash their hands upon return to their classroom. Should an accident occur in the Geography lesson we will follow the procedures outlined for accidents in our Health and Safety policy.

### **Individual teachers' planning and reporting:**

The whole school plan and the curriculum documents for geography will provide information and guidance to individual teachers for their long and short term planning. Teachers will plan using the strands and strand units. A thematic approach will be used occasionally.

The Cúntas Míósúil will serve in reviewing and developing the whole school plan/individual preparation for following years. Copies will be kept on the share drive.

### **Staff Development**

Teachers have access to reference books, resource materials and websites dealing with geography

School personnel can research new approaches and methodologies. They can arrange for opportunities to try to our resources on a pilot basis and assess whether or not they should be purchased.

The school will access the PDST to support the staff in certain strands if necessary.

There is appropriate geography courses available during the summer and teachers are encouraged to attend.

Teachers are encouraged to share the expertise acquired at these courses.

Time is allocated at staff meetings to discuss aspects of the geography curriculum.

Teachers can avail of internal and/or external expertise to inform and up-skill the school community in these areas.

### **Parental involvement**

Parents are encouraged to be involved in supporting the geography plan by helping with homework, projects and sharing their expertise with a class.

Parents can support the child in fostering an interest in local, regional, national and

European and global geography by bringing them to sites of interest, reading literature with them and watching special interest programmes on TV.

Special events are held to focus on the school's SESE curriculum.

### **Community links**

Members of organisations/individuals in the community that support the school's geography programme i.e Heritage in Schools, Goal, Amnesty International, Trocaire, Mission to Seafarers, RNLI.

Community Garden opened in 2022.

Walking trails around Boolavogue & Enniscorthy.

Hampers are given to local charities i.e. event weeks.

### **Success criteria**

This plan will make a difference to the teaching and learning of geography in our school

We will know that the plan has been implemented by

Teachers' preparation based on this plan

Procedures outlined in this plan consistently followed

We will know that the plan has achieved its aim by

Teacher/parent feedback

Class check lists

Children's feedback

Inspectors' suggestions/reports

The plan has promoted the key considerations when implementing the geography programme.

Geography is about developing a sense of space and place

Children's ideas of place are used as the starting point

Knowledge and skills are equal importance

The primary resource for geography is the environment, starting with the local, then regional national, European and global

### **Implementation**

#### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

Class teachers are responsible for the implementation of the geography programme for their individual classes as specified in this document.

### **Evaluating the policy**

Means of assessing the outcomes of the plan may include;

- Teacher/parent/community feedback
- Children's feedback regarding activity levels, enjoyment and skill development
- Inspectors' suggestions/WSE recommendations

**The criteria for evaluating the success of this policy will be :**

- The level of enjoyment exhibited by the children
- The maximum participation by all children
- The development of skills and understanding

- The level of teacher satisfaction in teaching a broad, balanced curriculum.

### **Ratification and communication**

This Geography policy was reviewed in February 2023 and ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_ and parents can inspect the policy in the school office and on our website: [www.boolavoguens.ie](http://www.boolavoguens.ie).

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