HIPPINGS METHODIST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Geography Policy

'As a family we do our best with God in our hearts'
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me: Philippians 4 verse 13

Our loving school endeavours to provide the best possible all-round education in a Christian setting. We will be a family that does our best with God in our hearts understanding that we are all His children. We aim for all within our school to develop spiritually, morally, academically and culturally.

Geography Intent

At Hippings Methodist Primary School, pupils are encouraged to develop a greater understanding and knowledge of the world, as well as their place in it. We seek to inspire children to be curious and inquisitive about the world and its people which will remain with them for the rest of their lives; to promote the children's interest and understanding of diverse places, people, resources and natural and human environments, together with an understanding of the Earth's key physical and human processes.

1. Aims and objectives

1.1 Geography teaches an understanding of places and environments. Through their work in Geography, children learn about their local area and compare their life in this area with that in other regions in the United Kingdom and in the rest of the world. They learn how to draw and interpret maps and they develop the skills of research, investigation, analysis and problem-solving. Through their growing knowledge and understanding of human geography, children gain an appreciation of life in other cultures. Geography teaching also motivates children to find out about the physical world and enables them to recognize the importance of sustainable development for the future of mankind. We encourage children to work as part of a team to further each other's knowledge of different areas of Geography and question how and why life has changed in different areas.

1.2 The aims of Geography are:

•to enable children to gain knowledge and understanding of places in the world;
•to increase children's knowledge of other cultures and, in so doing, teach a respect and understanding of what it means to be a positive citizen in a multicultural country;
•to allow children to learn graphic skills, including how to use, draw and interpret maps;
•to enable children to know and understand environmental problems at a local, regional and global level;
•to encourage in children a commitment to sustainable development and an appreciation of what 'global citizenship' means;
•to develop a variety of other skills, including those of enquiry, problem solving, ICT, investigation and how to present their conclusions in the most appropriate way.
•to show resilience in their approach to discovering new information.

2. Teaching and learning style

2.1 We use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our Geography lessons. We believe in whole-class teaching methods and we combine these with enquiry-based research activities. We encourage children to ask as well as answer geographical questions. We offer them the opportunity to use a variety of data, such as maps, statistics, graphs, pictures, and aerial photographs, and we enable them to use IT in geography lessons where this serves to enhance their learning. Children take part in role-play and discussions, and they present reports to the rest of the class. They engage in a wide variety of problem-solving activities. Wherever possible, we involve the children in 'real' geographical activities, e.g. research of a local environmental problem or use of the Internet to investigate a current issue.

2.2 We recognise the fact that there are children of widely different geographical abilities in all classes and we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this by:
•setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
•setting tasks of increasing difficulty, some children not completing all tasks;
•grouping children by ability in the room and setting different tasks to each ability group;
•providing resources of different complexity according to the ability of the child;
•using classroom assistants to support the work of individual children or groups of children.
•using paired or group work to encourage children to work as a team to achieve a shared goal

3. Geography curriculum planning

3.1 We use the New Curriculum 2014 as the basis for our curriculum planning. We have adapted the national scheme to the local circumstances of our school, i.e. we make use of the local environment in our fieldwork and we also choose a locality where the human activities and physical features provide a contrast to those that predominate in our own immediate area.
3.2 Our curriculum planning is in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). Our long-term plan maps the Geography topics studied in each term during each key stage. The Geography subject leader works this out in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each year group. We combine the geographical study with work in other subject areas, particularly English. At other times we arrange for the children to carry out a geographical study independently.
3.3 Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The Geography subject leader writes and reviews these plans on a regular basis. In this way we ensure that children have complete coverage of the National Curriculum but do not have to repeat topics.
3.4 Each class teacher creates a plan for each lesson. These lesson plans list specific learning objectives. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and can discuss them with the Geography subject leader on an informal basis.
3.5 We plan the topics in Geography so that they build upon prior learning. Children of all abilities have the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit and, through planned progression built into the scheme of work, we offer them an increasing challenge as they move up the school.

4. Foundation Stage

4.1 We teach Geography in Reception classes as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the Reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the geographical aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. Geography makes a significant contribution to the ELG objectives of developing a child's knowledge and understanding of the world through activities such as collecting postcards from different places, singing songs from around the world, or investigating what makes a 'good' playground.

5. The contribution of Geography to teaching in other curriculum areas

5.1 English
Geography makes a significant contribution to the teaching of English in our school because it actively promotes the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. At Key Stage 2 we organise debates on environmental issues because we believe that these develop speaking and listening skills. Reports, letters and recording information will all develop children's writing ability. We also use environmental issues as a way of developing the children's writing ability by asking them to record information and write reports and letters.
5.2 Mathematics
Geography in our school contributes to the teaching of mathematics in a variety of ways. We teach the children how to represent objects with maps. The children study space, scale and distance and they learn how to use four-figure and six-figure grid references. They also use graphs to explore, analyse and illustrate a variety of data.
5.3 Information and communication technology (ICT)
We make provision for the children to use the computer in geography lessons where appropriate. Children use ICT in geography to enhance their skills in data handling and in presenting written work. They research information through the Internet. We also offer children the opportunity to use iPads and digital camera to record and use photographic images.

5.4 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship
Geography contributes significantly to the teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship. Firstly, the subject matter lends itself to raising matters of citizenship and social welfare. For example, children study the way people re-cycle material and how environments are changed for better or for worse. Secondly, the nature of the subject means that children have the opportunity to take part in debates and discussions. Geography in our school promotes the concept of positive citizenship.
5.5 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
We offer children in our school many opportunities to examine the fundamental questions in life through the medium of Geography. For example, their work on the changing landscape and environmental issues leads children to ask questions about the evolution of the planet. We encourage the children to reflect on the impact of mankind on our world and we introduce the concept of 'stewardship' in relation to sustainable development. Through teaching about contrasting localities, we enable the children to learn about inequality and injustice in the world. We help children to develop their knowledge and understanding of different cultures so that they learn to avoid stereotyping other people and acquire a positive attitude towards others. We help contribute to the children's social development by teaching them about how society works to resolve difficult issues of economic development. They are also encouraged to take part in group work to help them develop their ability to work as part of a team to achieve a shared goal Geography contributes to the children's appreciation of what is right and wrong by raising many moral questions during the programme of study.

6. Teaching Geography to children with special educational needs

6.1 At Hippings Methodist Primary school we teach Geography to all children, whatever their ability. Geography forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our Geography teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels.
6.2 When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.
6.3 Intervention through School Action and School Action Plus will lead to the creation of a Teaching and Learning Plan (TLP) for children with special educational needs. The TLP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to Geography.
6.4 We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning Geography. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a field trip, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

7. Assessment and recording

7.1 We assess the children's work in Geography by making informal judgements as we observe the children during lessons. Once the children complete a unit of work, we make a summary judgement of the work for each pupil as to whether they have yet to obtain, obtained or exceeded the expectations of the unit. We record the results in our assessment files and we use these to plan future work, to provide the basis for assessing the progress of the child, and to pass information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.
7.2 The Geography subject leader keeps samples of the children's work in a portfolio. Class teachers keep the children's Geography work in the Geography folder and/or Geography book.

8. Resources

8.1 We are continually reviewing resources in our school to be able to teach all the Geography units in our Scheme of Work. We keep these resources in a central store where there is a box of equipment for each unit of topic. We also keep a collection of geography equipment which the children use to gather weather data, and a variety of atlases. In the library we have a good supply of Geography topic books. There is a range of educational software to support the children's individual research in the classes and recommended websites are listed on the staff shared drive.

9. Fieldwork

9.1 Fieldwork is integral to good Geography teaching and we include as many opportunities as we can to involve children in practical geographical research and enquiry.
9.2 In the Foundation stage and at Key Stage 1 all the children carry out an investigation into the local environment and we give them opportunities to observe and record information around the school site. At Key Stage 2 the children do a study of the local area. We also offer the opportunity to take part in a residential visit to Tower Wood, where pupils are able to participate in orienteering, map reading activities and ghyll scrambling which provides an opportunity to identify parts of a river system. We also have a Cross Curricular orienteering course in our school grounds.

10. Monitoring and review

10.1 The Geography subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standard of the children's work and the quality of teaching in Geography. The Geography subject leader is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of Geography, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The Geography subject leader gives the headteacher an annual action plan in which they evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicate areas for further improvement. We allocate special time for the vital task of reviewing samples of children's work and for visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject.

Subject Leader - Mrs Laura Hollinshead