



Elmsleigh
INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL

Geography Policy

2023-2024

Our Intent

"I have learned you are never too small to make a difference." Greta Thunberg

Geography is about people, places and the world around us. It is also about developing life-long geographers who know that they, like Greta Thunberg, are never too small to make a difference. At Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School, our vision, our intention is to approach Geography in exciting ways, exploring the world outside our front door to one end: to equip our children with the essential knowledge and skills that they need not only to be educated citizens but environmental stewards, who make a difference in *their* world.

At Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School, we believe that Geography is an essential part of the curriculum, as it provides a means of exploring, appreciating and understanding the world in which we live and how it has evolved. We are committed to providing *all* children with learning opportunities that engage them in the area of Geography, as we know that it contributes to the cultural, social, spiritual and moral life of children as they learn tolerance for and acquire knowledge of a range of different cultures and traditions.

The teaching of Geography would be difficult without acknowledging the future of our planet. Climate change is a crucial and relevant topic. As the Geography Curriculum places great importance on the interaction between the physical and the human environment, we hope to make our children aware of environmental effects upon their surroundings and further encourage them to be responsible contributors to improving it, however small that contribution might be.

This policy sets out a framework within which teaching and non-teaching staff can work, and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment in this subject area.

Aims

The aims of Geography are:

- To stimulate children's interest in their surroundings and develop a knowledge and understanding of the physical and human processes which shape places.
- 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 multi-cultural country.
- To provide learning opportunities that enthuse, engage, and motivate children to learn and foster a sense of curiosity and wonder at the world around them.
- To encourage in children a commitment to sustainable development and an appreciation of what 'global citizenship' means.
- To make sense of their own surroundings through learning about their own locality and the interaction between people and the environment.
- To develop the geographical skills, including how to use, draw and interpret maps of different scales, and the vocabulary necessary to carry out effective geographical enquiry.
- To be able to apply map reading skills to globes and atlas maps and identify geographical features.
- To formulate appropriate questions, develop research skills and evaluate material to inform opinions.
- To enable children to work geographically in a range of appropriate contexts, using a variety of materials and equipment including other people's experiences and knowledge.

Our Implementation

Geography explores the relationship between the Earth and its people through the study of place, space and environment. Developing geographical skills within that exploration is essential as children live in a world that is wide open to them. Therefore, the children at Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School will undertake a broad and balanced programme that takes account of different abilities and aptitudes, to learn a range of skills, concepts, attitudes and methods of working. With future opportunities to travel and work in different cities and countries across the world, we will encourage our pupils to use maps, charts and other geographical data efficiently to better facilitate their future success.

Early Years

'It is the role of the [EYFS] setting to ensure that children experience the awe and wonder of the world in which they live, through the seven areas of learning.'

We understand that Geography *should* inform the everyday learning of our children; however, we also understand that, due to socio-economic issues, many of our children at Elmsleigh are denied the early learning opportunities that are foundational to knowledge, understanding and enquiry about the world. Therefore, our Early Years setting is a vital starting point in equipping our pupils with the essential knowledge and cultural capital that they need to succeed in life.

From Nursery through to Reception, our pupils build on knowledge about their immediate locality starting with places around our school and grounds. They go on to learn about familiar features in their local area such as houses, farms and shops, building on what everyday experiences they have. They encounter distant places through well-planned theme days, exciting topics and stories, building in knowledge and skills to recognise the similarities and differences between people and life in this country and another.

The development of core Literacy skills underpin the children's learning in Geography. Using Sounds Write and Talk for Writing strategies, our pupils learn to explore, observe and discuss the natural world around them whilst developing important language skills by describing what they can see, hear and feel.

Key Stage 1

The units of study in Key Stage 1 offer a range of opportunities for investigating places around the world, as well as physical and human processes. We are fortunate that within a ten minute walk from school, shops, different types of housing, a leisure centre, library, park, large duck ponds, elderly people's homes and a church are features that are all available for enriching fieldwork.

During Year 1, children at Elmsleigh learn about the countries of the UK and their capital cities and begin to contrast distant localities through engaging stories and topics. Resourced with globes, maps, atlases and aerial photographs, the lessons are intended to improve children's geographical vocabulary, map skills and geographical facts and provide opportunities for consolidation, challenge and variety to ensure interest and progress in the subject.

As our pupils progress from Year 1 to Year 2, their growing knowledge of the world will deepen their understanding of the interaction between the physical and human processes and the consequences of that interaction on landscapes and environments.

In Year 2, Geography skills will include fieldwork, map and image work as well as accurate use of key vocabulary. At Elmsleigh, we strive to bring these skills to life through meaningful and engaging experiences including studying a distant place beyond Europe. Building on their knowledge and skills from Year 1, our pupils contrast this locality with their own local area and begin to present and communicate their findings in a range of ways, developing arguments and explanations using appropriate specialist vocabulary and techniques. To further support their learning in the classroom, children in Year 2 visit a contrasting locality such as a place on the coast and contrast the geography of that place with their local area. Maps, atlases and globes continue to be used skillfully throughout the year in order to develop key geographical skills.

Moral and Cultural Development

Through the exploration of a diverse world, children are able to understand their place in it. Geography provides opportunities for children to reflect on how the environment is affected by decisions made by people like themselves; children are, therefore, able to make more informed choices in the future. Through discussion, the children learn to appreciate the moral dilemmas posed by introducing changes to the environment (for example, building a motorway) and the effects this can have on the surrounding area. By exploring different settlements, the children can also gain knowledge of different cultures, learning tolerance and understanding of their diversity.

Progression and Continuity

The school uses a variety of teaching and learning styles in Geography lessons. Our principal aim is to develop the children's knowledge, skills and understanding in this area. We use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our geography lessons to do this including whole-class teaching methods and small group, enquiry-based research activities. We encourage children to handle artefacts and 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, aerial photographs and geographical footage. There are also many opportunities to use ICT in Geography lessons, enhancing the children's learning. Wherever possible, we involve the children in 'real' geographical activities, e.g. research of a local environmental problem, visiting relevant sites and carrying out fieldwork. We recognise the fact that we have children of differing abilities in our classes at Elmsleigh, and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for *all* of the children, matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies, which are differentiated by task, expected outcome and/or support from peers or adults.

Geography Curriculum Planning

At Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School, Geography is taught through a topic approach. Our Curriculum is carefully planned to engage and excite all our learners. Our long-term and medium-term plans map out the themes covered each term for each key stage. These plans define what we will teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term.

Progress and Achievement

Children will be monitored on a regular basis to check progress. A range of Assessment for Learning strategies are used, for example peer marking in Year 2, where the children comment on each others work using vocabulary related to the skill taught. Children are also encouraged to make personal assessments of their own work through evaluating activities in order to identify what they need to improve. Through assessing achievement against objectives and success criteria, the use of talk partners and end of unit teacher/pupil evaluation, both children and adults are able to recognise the progress being made.

Assessment and Recording

At Elmsleigh, assessment is an integral part of the teaching process. Assessment is used to inform planning and to facilitate differentiation. The assessment of children's work is on-going to ensure that understanding is being achieved and that progress is being made. Feedback is given to the children as soon as possible, and marking work will be guided by the school's Marking Policy.

Monitoring

Monitoring will take place regularly through sampling children's work and teacher planning, through book scrutiny and lesson observations.

Roles and Responsibilities

The staff as a whole will teach the subject; however, each year, time will be set aside for the Geography Co-ordinator to review standards and monitor curriculum provision, ensuring training and resources are up to date.

Health and Safety

Visits and fieldwork are an essential part of the Geography Curriculum helping to develop geographical enquiry and skills. Children learn best when the learning environment is ordered and they feel safe; therefore, any visit should be well organised and provide a stimulating and valuable experience. The pupils should prepare well for the visit and, on their return, use the experience to good effect in the classroom. The class teacher should plan the visit meticulously, with the pupils' safety and welfare paramount. Please see the Policy for Educational Visits for detailed information.

Our Impact

By the end of Key Stage 1, we aim to have developed confident Geographers with a broad knowledge, specific skills and the ability to enquire about the world beyond their front door. We hope that this will go some way to providing our children with recognised and meaningful qualifications in later life. However, we also desire to promote character-building qualities in our children, who, as both educated citizens and environmental stewards, realise the fundamental truth that they started with: they are never too small to make a difference.