

Geography Policy

Overview

This policy for Geography teaching and learning should be read alongside the school's generic curriculum policy for foundation subjects. It has been updated to reflect our developing Harmony curriculum approach, in which pupils learn both about Nature and from Nature. Geography is taught through meaningful enquiries that help children understand the world as an interconnected whole and recognise their responsibility to care for people, places and the natural systems that sustain life.

- Curriculum coverage
- Teaching and learning guidelines
- Roles and responsibilities
- Inclusion
- Assessment, recording monitoring and reporting
- Key competencies

1) Aims and Opportunities

1.1 Aims

At Bridstow School we believe that Geography helps children make sense of the changing world in which they live and their place within it. Through a Harmony approach, pupils explore people, places and environments by looking closely at the principles that shape healthy natural systems: interdependence, cycles, diversity, adaptation, health, geometry and oneness. Geography therefore supports pupils to develop a strong sense of place, belonging, identity and responsibility. We aim to take an enquiry-led and investigative approach to geography teaching and learning, asking purposeful questions that connect local, national and global issues.

- Investigate people, places and environments through first-hand experiences, maps, fieldwork, stories and data.
- Recognise interdependence: how people, places, living things and systems are connected locally and globally.
- Explore cycles in Nature and human activity, including weather, water, seasons, food, waste, travel and patterns of settlement.
- Understand diversity in people, places, habitats and landscapes, and how diversity supports resilience.
- Consider adaptation, including how living things and communities respond to their environment and to change.
- Promote stewardship, sustainable futures and thoughtful action so that pupils learn how to care for the Earth and for one another.

Through geographical enquiry, pupils are encouraged to notice patterns, ask questions, make connections, use evidence and consider how their choices can contribute to healthier communities and a more sustainable future.

1.2 Opportunities

Geography offers opportunities to:

- Develop, enhance and apply English, Maths, computing, digital literacy and graphicacy skills through purposeful enquiry.

- Use atlases, globes, maps, plans, aerial images and digital mapping tools, including age-appropriate GIS, at a range of scales.
- Create maps, plans, diagrams, sketches and models that help pupils represent place, pattern, movement and scale.
- Learn directly from Nature by observing, comparing, measuring, questioning and reflecting on the school grounds and local environment.
- Use a wide range of sources to collect geographical information, including books, photographs, maps, art, film, poetry, stories, local records, news reports and digital media.
- Work with local experts, families, community groups and relevant agencies to deepen pupils' understanding of place and sustainability.
- Solve problems, make decisions and consider the impact of choices on people, places and the natural world.
- Develop geographical vocabulary and use it accurately when explaining observations, patterns, processes and connections.
- Be active, informed global citizens who understand sustainability, climate responsibility and the importance of caring for shared places.
- Connect local fieldwork with wider geographical issues, helping pupils see how small actions can contribute to larger systems.
- Engage with real and current geographical issues through news, debate, enquiry questions, pupil voice and practical action.
- Develop fieldwork skills through regular use of the school, grounds, immediate locality and places further afield to collect, interpret and communicate primary information.

2) Organisation and Planning

2.1 Time allocation

KS1 - Geography will be taught for at least 24 hours each year.

KS2 – Geography will be taught for at least 27 hours per year.

Geography units may be taught for 2 afternoons a week in 2 or 3 week blocks to give greater coherence to children's learning – this will be at the discretion of individual class teachers. Geography may be integrated into other subjects and topic-based projects in which the teaching and learning of geography is implicit. The time allocated to geography aspects of study within other subjects should be considered.

2.2 Planning

Geography planning is shaped by the National Curriculum and informed by The Harmony Project's principles for learning from Nature. Because of Bridstow's combined year group model, long-term planning is based on a two-year rolling programme to ensure coverage, progression and repeated opportunities for pupils to revisit key geographical concepts. Units are planned as meaningful enquiries, each beginning with a clear question and providing opportunities for pupils to explore local, national and global connections.

When planning lessons teachers will follow these guidelines:

- start from pupils' own experiences, interests, questions and prior learning
- use enquiry questions that encourage pupils to investigate, connect ideas and think deeply
- make explicit links to relevant Harmony principles, such as interdependence, cycles, diversity, adaptation, health, geometry and oneness

- build progressively on pupils' geographical knowledge, vocabulary, understanding and fieldwork skills
- give pupils opportunities to learn outside, observe carefully and use the local environment as a rich source of evidence
- include practical fieldwork, map work, data collection, discussion, drawing, modelling and digital tools
- encourage collaboration, careful listening, curiosity, critical thinking and respect for different viewpoints
- help pupils communicate their findings in varied ways, including writing, speaking, maps, diagrams, presentations and creative outcomes
- connect geography meaningfully with science, maths, English, art, design technology, computing, history and outdoor learning
- support pupils to reflect on how geographical learning can inform responsible choices and positive action

In the EYFS, regular geography activities are planned; some initiated by children and some led by adults.

2.3 Extending the curriculum – local geography

Children should develop geographical understanding through first-hand experience of their school, grounds, local community and wider locality. Wherever possible, pupils will visit areas of geographical interest such as the River Wye, local farms, Ross-on-Wye and other places that help them investigate settlement, land use, transport, rivers, farming, habitats and change over time. Fieldwork should enable pupils to learn from Nature by noticing patterns, cycles, relationships and adaptations in real places. Pupils should take part in geography fieldwork at least once every year and preferably more often.

2.4 The learning environment

We aim to provide a learning environment where children are inspired by geography and feel connected to the places they study. Classrooms and shared spaces should celebrate enquiry, fieldwork, maps, pupil questions, local studies and examples of Nature's patterns and systems. Outdoor areas should be used as learning spaces wherever possible, supporting pupils to observe, compare, classify, measure and reflect. Resources, displays and texts should help pupils see geography as a living subject that connects people, places and the natural world.

3.5 Management and organisation of resources

Individual class teachers are responsible for sourcing and keeping resources particular to their geographical studies.

3) Links with other subjects and key competencies

3.1 Writing

Geography lends itself to a number of different writing genres particularly those involving informational and explanation texts. Other suitable writing genres include: discussion/argument; persuasive; journalistic; letter writing; poetry.

3.2 Speaking and listening

The scope for discussion, explanation and debate in geography is wide! From technical explanations of landforms to debates on the suitability of a woodland for a housing development, speaking and listening opportunities in geography are at the core of the subject. Teachers can plan exciting opportunities for

pupils to present the results of research as small performances, mock interviews, tv programs, journalist reports etc.

3.3 Research (books and ICT)

Geography is an enquiry led subject which requires pupils to ask, frame, answer and explain questions and hypotheses. Research using available sources both book and ICT based is essential, helping pupils to hone associated skills.

3.4 Maths

Geography, especially geographical fieldwork, can involve data collection and analysis as well as the use of formulas and algebra (eg. Calculate the height of a tree or building; work out the area of a field/car park/ playground etc.).

3.5 Science

Geography, although often considered to be one of the ‘humanities’ is often studied as a science at degree level, particularly the ‘physical geography’ areas of study eg, meteorology, geology, hydrology etc. In primary school, setting up a scientific study within the context of geographical study can be very beneficial – giving purpose to the science involved eg, rainfall patterns study over a period of time. Asking scientific questions and formulating an experiment to test a hypothesis eg. Vegetation growth under trees is always less dense than that in open spaces.

3.6 Sustainability and global citizenship

Geography is central to our Harmony curriculum because it helps pupils understand the relationship between people and the natural world. Through studies of climate, food, water, settlement, transport, biodiversity, pollution and resource use, pupils learn how human choices affect the health and balance of natural systems. They are encouraged to move beyond awareness towards thoughtful action, developing the knowledge, skills and values needed to contribute to a more sustainable future.

3.6 Teamwork

Geography often works best when pupils collaborate as geographers: asking questions, gathering evidence, discussing viewpoints, testing ideas and presenting findings. Group enquiries provide opportunities for pupils to practise listening, cooperation, compromise, shared decision-making and respect for different perspectives. This reflects the Harmony principle of interdependence, recognising that effective learning and responsible action are strengthened when people work together.