



# St John's

Church of England

# Academy

*Part of the*



Durham &  
Newcastle  
Diocesan  
Learning  
Trust

Geography Policy

## Introduction/Rationale

At St John's we are geographers! The ultimate aim of our geography curriculum is to allow our pupils to know more, remember more and understand more about the world they live in. We strive to empower our pupils to become confident global citizens and to explore the world, making the most of the rich opportunities that present themselves as well as appreciating the challenges of their time.

We believe it is essential that our pupils have sound knowledge of their local area, their town and the country they live in, feeling a strong connection to it. We encourage our children to be curious and ask questions about the wider world links between people and places.

By the time they leave St. John's, we want our children to love geography. We aim to create a culture of high aspirations, in line with our school mission, "Guided by God to be the best we can be". We ensure that they are well prepared for the next steps of their education.

It is our view that childhood should be a happy, investigative and enquiring time in life, where there are no limits to curiosity and where all children are exposed to new experiences and knowledge. In pursuit of this, we hope to fulfil the church's vision for education, as quoted in John 10:10, with 'life and all its fullness at its heart.'

## Aims

Geography instils a sense of place, belonging and identity. It gives us a purpose and investment, as well as invoking a sense of awe and wonder about the world around us.

At St. John's CE Academy, the aims of our geography curriculum are:

- To inspire pupils' curiosity to discover more about their world. It is through geography that we unravel the mystery of people, place and environment.
- To explore environmental perceptions, stewardship and sustainable futures.
- To investigate the interaction, interconnectivity and interdependence between people and place.
- To investigate the processes that shape our world – both physical and human.

## Curriculum Design

We believe that our pupils need to be actively involved in making sense of their learning and therefore an enquiry-based approach has been implemented, which encourages higher-order thinking and allows our children to explore in a way that is meaningful to them. Within each year group, learning is revisited in a progressive manner to ensure knowledge, skills and concepts are firmly embedded and subject-specific vocabulary is used in context.

Our curriculum enables our pupils to develop their understanding of the key geographical concepts - location and place, cause and effect and change. In every year group, our pupils learn geographical skills, which focus on map and atlas work. Our geographical enquiry incorporates fieldwork and investigations. We want our children to remember their fieldtrips, to cherish these memories and embrace the geographic opportunities they are presented with.

At St John's, our geography curriculum is ambitious. It fulfils the statutory requirements of the EYFS Framework and the National Curriculum for Geography at Key Stage 1 and 2. Our school context is at the heart of our thinking when designing our curriculum.

The **long-term plan**: Maps the units studied by each year group to ensure coverage and progression.

The **medium-term plans**: Provide an overview of curriculum coverage, progression of knowledge, skills and concepts, assessment opportunities and outline details for enhancement such as trips, visitors and fieldwork.

These then feed into **individual lesson plans**: These are formed on a weekly basis by reviewing and expanding on the MTPs.

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Our EYFS curriculum provides a wide variety of rich experiences central to the Early Learning Goals, specifically, Understanding the World. Pupils are encouraged and supported to describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps. They identify similarities and differences between communities in this country, drawing on their own experiences and what has been read in class. Children will compare life in this country those elsewhere, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and maps.

## **Years 1-6**

In Years 1 to 6, three geography units are taught each year through a weekly geography lesson. Every unit has an overarching question to encourage the use of geographical enquiry, as well as a focus on the acquisition and application of key subject knowledge, concepts and vocabulary. Links are made within and across the units to support pupils in making connections.

## **Teaching and Learning**

### **Progression of skills, knowledge and understanding**

Our geography curriculum is structured to develop students' geographical thinking in a systematic manner. Skills, knowledge and understanding progress through Years 1 to Year 6. These are taught, developed and applied throughout the schemes of work. A range of opportunities are provided to enable all pupils to communicate their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Maps are displayed in every classroom, on the playground and also in communal areas of the school. Vocabulary is intrinsically linked to academic success, and therefore key vocabulary is displayed in each classroom alongside the overarching question. Sentence starters reference geography terms to ensure pupils can think, verbalise and record using subject specific terminology. By exposing pupils to subject specific vocabulary and ensuring the understanding of words in context, we aim to overcome any vocabulary deficit. At the beginning and at the end of lessons, quick quizzes are often used to recap and consolidate new learning.

### **Questioning**

Enquiry is a key focus in our whole school curriculum design and each geography unit has an over-arching key question. Questions are used to open conversations, inspire deeper intellectual thought, and promote student-to-student interaction. These questions focus on eliciting the 'how' and 'why'. The use of this questioning creates opportunities for students to analyse their own thinking, that of their peers, and their work. Pupils' knowledge and skills are built up through specific questions in each lesson, and these enquiries feed into the over-arching key question.

### **Research Skills**

Our geography lessons facilitate research skills. We use a wide range of resources to collect secondary geographical information, poems, story books, novels, travel accounts, brochures, magazines, TV, DVD and newspapers. We are a school with a huge library of maps with a range of scales and types. Pupils construct maps/plans with a range of scales and for a range of purposes. Our pupils are able to communicate geographical information in a variety of ways, including through maps, numerical skills, writing at length, diagrams and survey information. Thus through geography, pupils are presented with opportunities to develop, enhance and apply English, maths, ICT and graphicacy (non-textual) skills.

### **Fieldwork**

Where possible, we provide opportunities for hands on geography and fieldwork. This is conducted in the school, the grounds, the immediate locality and localities further afield, using fieldwork instruments to collect data. At St John's, our pupils are competent in the geographical skills needed to collect, analyse and communicate with a range of data gathered through experiences of fieldwork that deepen their understanding of geographical processes. Pupils use a range of ICT to support subject investigations and enquiries.

### **Marking, Feedback and Assessment**

Teachers assess pupils continuously on an informal basis. This informs the teacher of current achievements and informs future planning. At the end of each unit, children's learning is assessed against our end point assessment criteria. It is completed at the end of each unit and is informative for both the current and future teachers. We maintain appropriate and manageable systems of record keeping, assessments and reporting, which are accessible and meaningful to pupils, parents, staff and other related agencies. Planned assessment activities provide equality of opportunity and scope for children to demonstrate their learning.

At St John's, we strive to adopt and construct a curriculum that is ambitious and aspirational. It is designed to give all learners, including the most disadvantaged and those with additional needs, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in their future lives. Consideration is given to how greater depth will be nurtured, and recognised within each lesson, as well as how learners will be supported in line with the school's commitment to inclusion. We continually strive to make adaptations and reasonable adjustments to enable all our pupils to access our school curriculum and we aim to provide a range of enhancement opportunities to engage all children in their learning. We recognise that all pupils are entitled to a quality of provision that will enable them to achieve their full academic and personal potential.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring of geography is carried out by the subject lead through learning walks, regular monitoring of the schemes of work, planning and assessment tools, book scrutinies and pupil discussions to ensure progression and continuity of learning through the school. The subject lead makes an annual report to the leadership team and the lead governor who will report key findings and recommendations to the full governing body.