

Scoil Íde, Jesus and Mary Primary School

Whole School Development Plan for Geography (updated September 2020)

Introductory Statement and Rationale

Introductory Statement

This policy was created by the teaching staff of Scoil Íde. It is our response to the 1999 Primary School Curriculum to conform to the principles outlined in this curriculum statement and to review our practices in the light of these principles. All teaching staff attended the training days on Geography and worked collaboratively on this document. As a whole school plan it will guide and organise the teaching and learning of this subject area and will serve as the basis for all long and short term plans in Geography. It will also guide our approach for new teachers joining the school.

Rationale

We, in Scoil Íde, recognise that Geography is an integral part of the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education of our pupils. "SESE provides the opportunities for the child to explore, investigate and develop an understanding of the natural, human, social and cultural environment in which s/he lives and those of the wider world" (T.G Pg. 2-5)

Vision and Aims of our Geography Policy

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 an understanding of appropriate geographical concepts

Additional Aims of the Geography Curriculum that relate to Scoil Íde

Approaches and Methodologies

- Use of the Environment
 - SESE Trails in the Local Environment
 - Salthill Beach: Developing knowledge and understanding of the local environment, Infants to Sixth
 - SESE Trails of the School Garden-identification of trees
 - Natural/ Human Environment- School, Homes, Town
 - Geographical Investigation Skills explored

Skills and Concepts Development

- Maps, Globes and Graphical Skills
- Mapping as a skill infants to sixth
- Maps of the locality, county, Ireland, Europe, World
- Simple maps of locality and wider environments
- Mapping simple routes of areas in the locality and in the school, routes in a story, routes from home to school
- Photos-aerial, satellite images
- Map construction and associated problems
- Use of ICT in mapping

Curriculum Content

- Integration within SESE
- Selection of topics/themes for integration within SESE
Infants to Sixth
- Strand and Strand Units from History, Geography and Science explored through a thematic approach
- Suggested topics-Home, School, Food, Animals, Transportation, Communication etc.

**This Geography Plan will be addressed under the following
headings**

Curriculum Planning:

1. Strands and Strand Units
2. Skills Development
3. Children's Ideas
4. Approaches and Methodologies
5. Linkage and Integration
6. Assessment and Record Keeping
7. Children with Different Needs
8. Equality of Participation and Access

Organisational Planning:

9. Timetable
10. Resources and ICT
11. Health and Safety
12. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting
13. Staff Development
14. Parental Involvement
15. Community Links
16. Success Criteria
17. Ratification and Review

1. Strands and Strand Units

As a staff all teachers are familiar with the strands/strand units/content objectives for the relevant class level.

- 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

Overview of the Geography Programme for Infants to Second

All strands and all strand units to be covered every year.

Human Environments

- Living in the local community
- People and Places in other areas

Natural Environments

- Local Natural Environment
- Weather
- Planet Earth in space

- Environmental Awareness and Care
- Caring for my locality

Overview of Geography Programme for Third to Sixth

All strands and all strand units to be covered every year

Human Environments

- People living and working in local area
- People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland
Explored through a selection of sub units
- People and communities

Natural Environment

Features and people

- Settlement: homes and other buildings
- Transport and communication
- People and other lands
- County, regional and national centres
- Trade and Development Issues (5th + 6th only)

Natural Environments

- Local natural environment
- Land, rivers and seas of my county (Ireland 5th + 6th)
- Rocks and soil
- Weather, climate and atmosphere
- Planet earth in space
- Physical features of Europe and the World (5th + 6th)

Environmental Awareness and Care

- Environmental Awareness
- Caring for the environment

It is recommended in the curriculum that children will have the opportunity to explore every year

- A contrasting part of Ireland
- One European country
- One Non European country

To ensure continuity and avoid duplication the specific areas have been selected by the teachers and will be changed when necessary.

Class Yearly Plan 2020/2021 - Choice selection

Class	Local Study	Contrasting Part of Ireland	European Country	Non-European Country
Third	Salthill Beach	Urban Suburb: Blanchardstown, Dublin	Britain	Egypt
Fourth	Salthill Beach	Arranmore Island, Co. Donegal	Austria Italy	Japan
Fifth	Salthill beach	The Burren, Co. Clare	France	Mexico
Sixth	Salthill beach	Sligo, Rural Tipperary	Greece	China

2. Skills and Concepts Development

We are aware that one of the key messages of the Geography Curriculum is that Knowledge and Skills have equal importance. To ensure that this occurs every effort will be made by the class teachers to incorporate the skills of working as a geographer into a unit of work.

The skills

- Developing a sense of place and space
- Mapping and graphicacy

- Geographical Investigation Skills will be developed as work is completed on the strand and strand units of the curriculum as a spiral approach from infants to sixth. Strategies for developing these skills will involve the active participation of each child

Sense of place and space

Sense of place

- Explore distinctive human and natural features of locality/county/Ireland
- Development of an awareness of people in other areas

Sense of space

- Record journeys in the immediate and wider environment
- Use of maps
- Use of cardinal points- measure distances
- Develop an awareness of major physical features of Europe and the World

Maps and Graphicacy

- use simple drawing of areas- immediate and wider environment
- record routes and directions
- make model building
- develop and awareness of the globe
- explore plans and outlines
- develop aerial perspective
- use a wide variety of maps, globes, aerial photos and other images
- engage in practical use of maps

Geographical Investigation Skills

- questioning
- observing
- predicting
- investigating & experimenting
- estimating & measuring
- analysing
- recording & communicating

3. Children's Ideas

We plan to use children's ideas as a starting point for all geography activities. We will do this to build on their previous knowledge and to challenge misconceptions. We find out what children already know by:

- talk and discussion
- questioning
- problem-solving tasks
- before and after drawings
- teacher designed tasks and tests
- KWL Charts
- concept maps
- brainstorming

4. Approaches and Methodologies

We plan to use the six central methodologies of the Primary Curriculum in the teaching of Geography:

- Active learning
- Problem solving
- Developing skills through content
- Talk and discussion
- Co-operative learning
- Use of the environment

In addition to the central methodologies we will use the methodologies specific to Geography namely

- Fieldwork
- Surveys
- Interviews
- Maps
- Photographs
- Artefacts

As highlighted above we have prioritised approaches and methodologies that we will endeavour to implement over the next two years

- Use of the Environment - local and wider community
- Field work - SESE Trails in the Local Environment
- Mapping - as a methodology and a skill area
- Photographs - of locality and other areas

Approaches and methodologies used in the teaching of:

Human Environments

Fieldwork

Surveys

Photographs

Artefacts

Natural Environments

Fieldwork

Local Trails

Surveys

Photographs

Local Environments

Fieldwork

SESE Trails

Surveys

Photographs

Interviews

Mapping

Internet

5. Linkage and Integration

As prioritised in our additional aims we endeavour to use a thematic approach to teaching SESE.

Suggested topics/ themes where linkage and integration have a natural place and incorporate individual class teachers yearly planning include:

Juniors/ Seniors First/ Second Third / Fourth Fifth/ Sixth Classes

- Myself
- My Family
- Toys
- Games
- Water
- Clothes
- Food
- Farming
- My Family
- Feasts & Festivals
- My locality
- Weather
- My Community

- School
- Built Environment
- Spain
- Dublin City
- Egyptians
- Normans
- Maoris
- Native Americans
- Towns Co Galway
- Homes
- Transport & Communication
- Africa
- Fishing Industry
- Pompeii
- Celts
- Aboriginal People
- Aztecs

6. Assessment and Record Keeping

As in all subject areas, assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. Assessment will fulfil the following roles:

- Diagnostic - to identify areas of difficulty in order to respond to the needs of the children.
- Summative - to establish the outcomes of learning after completing a unit of work. This can provide the essential information for reporting and communicating to parents.
- Evaluative- to assist teachers in their own practice, methodologies, approaches and resources. Assessment methods used in Geography must assess the children's knowledge and skills. They must assess their progress in
 - their knowledge of the world
 - ability to use geographical skills
 - development of values and attitudes

Assessment tools and some examples used include:

Teacher Observation

Teacher designed tests/ tasks

Children's work and projects

Curriculum Profiles

Indicators/ check list

- Participation in class discussions
- Interaction with peers in collaborative activities
- Understanding of geographical language

- Ability to work independently and in group situations
- Oral, written and pictorial recordings
- Ability to undertake fieldwork
- Completing trails individually and in group situations
- Using maps and globes
- Asking questions about the environment
- Analysing objects and processes
- Predicting outcomes and investigations
- Completing revision tests
- Drawings, diagrams, concept maps, written reports.
- Completed fieldworks, task cards, written experiments
- Map work
- Examples of work in progress
- Written accounts
- Drawings, diagrams and concept maps
- Completed work cards
- Tests
- Short sentences outlining a range of geography knowledge, skills & attitudes
- match observations with check list

7. Children with Different Needs

This Geography programme aims to meet the needs of all the children in the school. This will be achieved by teachers varying the pace, content and methodologies to insure learning for all pupils. This will be recorded in the teacher's yearly notes.

Strategies that support differentiation in teaching children with different needs include:

- Whole class teaching, group work with tasks of different complexities
- Questioning, simple recall to complex higher order questions
- Specific tasks graded
- Different methods of recording and communicating findings, simple drawings to written reports
- Additional research for exceptional able students
- Making an effort to create opportunities for hands on practical activities
- Employing a variety of methodologies in the classroom
- More able pupils will be encouraged to carry out research in certain topic areas

The requirements of children with special needs will be taken into account when planning class lessons and related activities. The S.N.A. supports particular children and groups as directed by the class teacher.

8. Equality of Participation and Access

We view the Geography programme as playing a key role in ensuring equality of opportunity for all children. The programme at each class level will be flexible so that the learning requirements of all children may be addressed. We provide an equal educational experience for both boys and girls as we recognise that stereotyped expectations of gender roles can inhibit children's educational achievements. Children with special needs will be included in all activities.

Organisational Planning:

9. Timetable

In keeping with the recommendations of the Primary School Curriculum SESE Geography will be allocated 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ hours per week in infant classroom and 3 hours for classes first to sixth. This will include 1 hour per week for Geography.

Teachers may use discretionary time (2 hrs) for SESE Geography as appropriate. On occasion, time will be blocked for

- Field work, environment trails
- Exploring local environment
- Project work
- Visiting local museum

10. Resources and ICT

We have completed an environmental audit of the immediate locality and compiled trails and field work activities. To assist our additional aims of mapping and graphicacy each class has a number of local, national, European and world maps where appropriate for their level. We have access to the internet so that we can use the web as a geographical resource. A list of current geography resources are added to this document.

11. Health and Safety

We have a Health and Safety policy in place in our school which covers safety concerns around out of school activities. Teachers will consult with the Principal whenever it is proposed to engage children in Geography activities in the immediate environment. Provision will be made for extra adult help where necessary.

12. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

Teachers will base their yearly and short term plans on the approaches set out in the whole school plan for Geography. Each teacher has a long term plan for the year and from this will plan fortnightly schemes. From infants to second all strands and strand units will be covered every year. Teachers from third - sixth have planned collaboratively to avoid duplication and unnecessary repetition of the strands and strand units. SESE Geography will be taught in a thematic way from time to time to integrate other curricular areas in a meaningful way. The cuntas miosiuila is linked to the short term plans of each individual teacher and is handed up to the Principal every month.

13. Staff Development

Teachers will be made aware of any opportunities for further professional development through participation in courses available in education centres or other venues.

14. Parental Involvement

Parents have an important role to play as custodians of local knowledge that can be shared with their children as we, as a school, explore the various aspects of the local environment.

15. Community Links

- People in the local community who have an interest and knowledge in the locality may be invited in to speak with the children.
- Personnel from Trocaire/Concern may also be invited in to speak with the senior pupils.
- The local library will be used as a source of geographical knowledge for the children where necessary.
- The work of some national agencies and local groups related to aspects of the geography programme will be acknowledged and we will welcome visits by speakers from these organisations e.g. Duchas, Heritage Council, Galway City Library, Westside Library, Galway City Council etc.
- Children will be brought on visits to different places of local interest as they progress through the school. Trips to the beach, the farm, the Burren, museums, sites, galleries and interpretive centres will form part of the geography programme.

Due to Covid-19 unfortunately these won't, more than likely, take place this academic year 2020 to 2021.

16. Success Criteria

This plan shall be reviewed in the future under the following headings

- Has the plan achieved its aims?

Means of assessing the outcomes of the plan include

- Teacher feedback
- Parent feedback
- Children's feedback
- Formal assessment
- Inspectors' suggestions/reports

Reference Section

_ Primary School Curriculum: *Geography* (1999)

_ Primary School Curriculum. *Your Child's Learning: Guidelines for Parents* (available on the NCCA website www.ncca.ie)

_ *The What, Why and How of children's learning in primary school*, NCCA (2006)

Resources

Local Environment: School, Garden,

Salthill Seashore

Salthill Atlantaaquarium

Barna Woods

Galway City

The Burren

Small World 1st Class

Small World History, Geography & Science 2nd Class

Small World Geography & Science 3rd Class

Small World Geography & Science Activity Book 3rd Class

Small World Geography & Science 4th Class

Small World Geography & Science Activity Book 4th Class

Small World Geography & Science 5th Class

Small World Geography & Science Activity Book 5th Class

Small World Geography & Science 6th Class

Small World Geography & Science Activity Book 6th Class

A range of Atlases

Ordinance Survey Books

Tourist Brochures

Development Agencies e.g. Concern, Trocaire

Mapbooks
Maps and Globes
Photographs
Wind Vane
Cloud Identification Charts
Water Funnels
Barometer
Compasses
Magnifying glasses
Plastic beakers
Photographs of Salthill
Charts and Posters
Websites, Internet

Useful Websites

www.pdst.ie/geography
www.seomraranga.com/links/geography
www.askaboutireland.ie
www.weatherwizkids.com
[www.teachingideas.co.uk>geography/map.htm](http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/geography/map.htm)
www.kidsgeo.com
www.trails.ie
www.treecouncil.ie
www.enfo.ie
www.coillte.ie
www.sei.ie
www.trocaire.org
www.concern.ie
www.opw.ie
www.irelandinformationguide.com
www.multimap.com
www.graphicmaps.com
www.solarviews.com
www.treecouncil.ie
www.scoilnet.ie

17. Ratification and Review

This plan was worked on collaboratively and agreed by all staff in September 2020. It was ratified by the BOM in ____.

This plan was revised in September 2020.

Signed: _____

Date: _____