



Pontarddulais Primary School

Geography Policy



At Pontarddulais Primary School everyone is important, everyone is unique, everyone deserves the very best.

This document outlines the purpose and management of the geography taught and learned in Pontarddulais Primary School, Swansea, Wales. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all the teaching staff.

Aims and Objectives

Geography is concerned with the study of places, the human and physical processes which shape them and the people who live in them. Geography helps children to gain a greater understanding of the ways of life and culture of people in other places. The study of the local area forms an important part of the geography taught at our school. Through our teaching of geography we aim to:

- stimulate the children's interest in and curiosity about their surroundings;
- create and foster a sense of wonder about the world;
- inspire a sense of responsibility for the environment and people of the world we live in;
- develop children's competence in specific geographical skills;
- increase the children's knowledge and awareness of the world ;
- help children acquire and develop the skills and confidence to undertake enquiry, investigation, problem solving and decision-making.

We hope that children will increase their knowledge and understanding of the changing world and will want to look after the earth and its resources. We hope that they will begin to develop respect and concern for, and an interest in, people throughout the world regardless of race, gender, religion, social background, culture, age or disability.

Roles and Responsibilities

Each member of the teaching staff will have responsibilities for the teaching of geography and they will need to ensure that their own knowledge is continually updated. The school has a geography leader to assist this process, and take specific responsibility for geography issues in the school.

Key Skills

Pupils should be given the opportunity to develop and apply the key skills in a meaningful context. The Skills Framework has been developed in order to provide guidance about continuity and progression in developing thinking, communication, ICT and number for learners aged 3-19.

Learning across the curriculum.

Learners should be given opportunities to promote their knowledge and understanding of Wales, and also their personal and social development and well being.

Good Practice for Geography

The teaching and learning of geographical enquiry and skills are effective where pupils are taught the broad range of skills that are identified in the programme of study. Pupils need to be given opportunities to:

- build progressively on their map skills;
- extract and record pertinent information from a variety of secondary sources such as books, photographs, videos, pictures, maps and information and communication technology;
- use their skills when studying places and themes;
- gain and use a vocabulary of geographical terms;

- obtain information first hand through fieldwork in a variety of places;
- set up and carry out ordered and structured enquiries on geographical themes and places;
- use plans, maps, atlases and globes to establish a setting for their geographical work.

The teaching and learning of geographical enquiry and skills are effective where:

places of different sizes are studied, varying from the local scale, through to the regional, national and international scale;

- pupils are taught about where they are in Wales and how their local area fits into Wales as a whole;
- places are studied in their own right and as a whole by studying the physical and human features that give a place its character and identity;
- information is accurate, up to date and avoids creating stereotypical views of certain peoples and ways of life;
- the content of the work on places is accessible and interesting to pupils by focusing on the people, especially the children, who live there;
- description develops into explanation, so that pupils not only identify the features and any similarities and differences, but also explain how they have come about;
- as pupils get older, the work on places increases in depth, detail and precision;
- pupils develop and acquire a 'locational framework' through the regular use of atlases, wall maps and globes;
- fieldwork and visits are used to make places real, or if visits are not practical, stimulating resources such as photos and videos are used to help pupils gain a feel for the place.

The teaching and learning of the patterns and processes in physical and human geography are effective where:

- work on themes is set in actual places and, in key stage 2, on more than one scale and in different context;
- fieldwork, such as visits to rivers, farms, shopping centres and settlements, is used as a starting point;
- work on a single theme is extended to different contexts and scales; for example, work on rivers can start with the local stream and its place in its drainage system, to other rivers in Wales and perhaps, a large river elsewhere such as the Nile or Amazon;
- the work leads to explanations and to the identification of key geographical concepts and ideas which enable pupils to say what they have found out as a result of their work;
- the work has substance and detail which should increase as pupils get older;
- pupils follow a clearly defined route for enquiry in response to key geographical questions such as 'What and where is it?' 'What is it like?' 'How did it get like this?' 'How and why is it changing? What might happen?';
- pupils are encouraged to apply their newly acquired understanding to unfamiliar situations, for example in explaining how services are provided in a different community to the one they have been studying;
- processes are linked to patterns, for example, in saying what effect river erosion has on the shape of its channel or how the weather affects what a farmer grows.

The teaching and learning of the interaction between people and environment are effective where:

- fieldwork or practical projects form the core or starting point for the work, for example visits to the site of a local environmental issue or the development of the school wildlife area;
- the work is based on real and interesting issues, especially those which have a bearing on the pupils own lives, such as traffic congestion or local flooding or the 'Sea Empress' disaster;
- the topics for study are selected, like those for other themes, from a range of scales and contexts;
- key concepts such as 'links', 'interdependence', 'diversity', 'change', 'preservation', 'protection' and 'management' are to the fore so that the work helps to promote education for sustainable development;

- there is a balanced and in depth approach which involves consideration of a range of views and the weighing upon of evidence;
- a structured, enquiry approach is used, for example, starting with a definition of the problem, question or issue and then moving through a logical sequence of analysis and explanation to a well considered conclusion.

(From Aiming for Excellence in Geography, Estyn, 2000)

Assessment

Assessment is an essential part of the work of all teachers; it needs to be carried out in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes. Assessment should support and encourage good practice. A balanced approach should always be maintained in assessment procedures. Assessment should be integral to class work. Assessment should always be assessment for learning.

For more detail see the Pontarddulais Primary assessment policy.

Developing Welsh as a Second Language

Where appropriate, using and developing Welsh in geography sessions is encouraged.

Special Needs

It is the policy of the school to encourage all pupils to fulfill his / her potential through the provision of varied opportunities. Children experiencing difficulty will be supported and encouraged to carry out activities at an appropriate level. Work is to be differentiated by task, outcome, support or approach as appropriate. More able children will be supported in work at a higher level and are to be guided towards appropriate resources to extend their work.

Equal Opportunities

Positive attitudes towards geography are encouraged in all pupils regardless of race, gender or ethnicity. See Equal Opportunities Policy.

Health and Safety

If the children are involved in fieldwork, health and safety has to be considered.

Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship

Education for sustainable development enables people to develop the knowledge, values and skills to participate in decisions about the way we do things individually and collectively, both locally and globally that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future.

Sustainable development is all about using the resources we need to live without taking too much or damaging the chance of life in the future. If the world is to continue sustaining future life, people must be more aware of the impact of their potentially damaging actions and should be encouraged to change practice. A major outcome of the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 was Agenda 21 – a ‘blueprint for the planet’ for the 21st century. Although it is a voluntary agreement, Agenda 21 has become the guiding document for managing the environment in many parts of the world. ‘Think globally, act locally’ is just one of the messages it promotes.

Children have an essential part to play in managing the environment. Not only by behaving in ways which support sustainable living themselves, but also by persuading families and friends to become more environmentally responsible.

As teachers we can act as positive role models and set an example within our classrooms, in all areas of the curriculum, for our pupils to follow.

GEB 2010.

