



Geography at Ashmole Primary School

'With Geography at Ashmole Primary School, you've got the whole world in your hands.'

Intent

At Ashmole Primary School, the study of geography involves our pupils exploring the relationship and interactions between people and the environments in which they live. The amount of opportunities and challenges that will arise during their lifetime will be very much about geography at personal, national and global scales.

Geography lessons at Ashmole Primary School generate a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people that we hope will remain with each child for the rest of their lives. Our pupils learn about diverse places, people, resources, environments, with a deepening understanding of the Earth's key physical and human processes and of the formation of landscapes and environments over time.

All geography lessons are linked to a project and 'KWL boards' provide children with an enquiry-led approach to their learning, leading to them developing their own questions to investigate. Children are given the opportunity to deepen their geography knowledge and develop key geography skills by working like geographers. Out-of-classroom learning is essential and many stimulating varied 'beyond the classroom' learning experiences regularly take place. We aim to experience geography first-hand by getting outside, visiting various geographical sites or bringing geography to the classroom through interactive tools. Fieldwork is a key part of our geography lessons with fieldwork opportunities, both around and beyond our school.

At Ashmole Primary School, geography gives pupils a very good understanding of the ways in which places are interdependent and interconnected. Pupils are given opportunities to carry out increasingly complex geographical enquiry, apply questioning skills and use effective analytical and presentational techniques in a wide range of contexts. The learning objectives of each lesson draw from knowledge and skills included in the National Curriculum. Projects provide highly productive opportunities to use and apply literacy, numeracy and computing skills whilst learning geography through a variety of stimulating, creative activities.

We have strong links with the local and wider community - these relationships provide a rich, and real, context to learning about national and global issues.

At Ashmole Primary School, we believe that our children have excellent experiences of geography as an active subject, essential to understanding, describing and caring for our planet and all its peoples. We have established a school curriculum plan for geography as an entitlement for all pupils that is:

- Aspirational in terms of instilling in our pupils a desire to achieve the highest levels of success through providing them with the opportunities to excel in terms of their acquisition of long lasting knowledge and understanding, and mastery of core geographical skills.

Such high aspirations are clearly identifiable in the progressive and increasingly challenging objectives of the schemes of work of each enquiry, which define what the pupils will know, understand and be able to do;

- Logical, relevant, broad and balanced in terms of the areas of subject content we have selected which reflect the guidance of the National Curriculum. We have ensured that content includes an even proportion of physical and human investigations such as the effect of rivers on the landscape and the impact of the rise of major cities in the world. Consideration has been given to relevancy and topicality through including enquiries that engage pupils in studying issues such as climate change, flooding and trade;
- Sequenced to ensure that pupils can build on previous knowledge and understanding as they tackle more complex and demanding enquiries;
- Progressively more challenging in Years 1 through 6, both in terms of the complexity of the subject knowledge we want our pupils to acquire and also the critical thinking skills we support them in utilising to ensure they understand the significance of that knowledge;
- Built upon and has continuity with the provision for geography established in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in particular that which addresses the knowledge and skills expectations of the People, Culture and Communities Early Learning Goal;
- Inclusive in terms of delivering the same curriculum to all of our pupils irrespective of specific learning needs or disabilities and differentiating where necessary through in-class support, providing different learning environments, alternative learning activities and assessment outcomes.

Implementation

By working like geographers and exploring 'KWL boards', geography is brought to life and made memorable for our pupils. We implement an 'enquiry-led, skills based' approach to learning and teaching in geography which develops our pupils as young, knowledgeable geographers.

Through enquiry, our pupils not only build subject knowledge and understanding, but become increasingly adept at critical thinking, specialised vocabulary and their grasp of subject concepts. We structure learning in geography through KWL board led enquiries about relevant geographical topics, places and themes. Our curriculum is therefore 'knowledge rich' rather than content heavy as we recognise that if we attempt to teach geographical topics, places, themes and issues in their entirety we restrict opportunities for pupils to master and apply critical thinking skills and achieve more challenging subject outcomes. We adopt a policy of immersive learning in geography that provides sufficient time and space for our pupils to acquire new knowledge and subject vocabulary, and to develop subject concepts and understand the significance of what they have learned.

Our learning and teaching in geography is interactive and practical, allowing opportunities for pupils to work independently, in pairs and also in groups of various sizes both inside and outside of the classroom. Learning activities are varied including the use of mysteries, maps at different scales, geographical puzzles, photographs and drama.

Similarly, we provide varied and differentiated ways for pupils to record the outcomes of their work. This way knowledge will become embedded and we ensure that our pupils can build on what they know and understand from one year to the next.

Each geographical enquiry has clear objectives and anticipated outcomes. They are also carefully structured through the use of mini questions to enable pupils to build their knowledge and understanding in incremental steps of increasing complexity, until they reach the point where they are able to answer the question posed at the beginning of the investigation.

Our learning and teaching in geography also recognises the importance of fieldwork with a number of our investigations involving observation, recording, presentation, interpretation and the evaluation of geographical information gathered outside of the classroom. Residential trips occurring in Key Stage 2 include fieldwork elements to give children hands-on opportunities and memorable experiences.

Impact

Each geography lesson has a clear objective and set outcomes for pupils in terms of knowledge and understanding and skills acquisition. Lessons are differentiated to ensure that all children are challenged. We ensure that when assessing pupils, evidence is drawn from a wide range of sources to inform the process, including interaction with pupils during discussions and related questioning, day-to-day observations, practical activities such as artwork and role play drama, the gathering, presentation and communication of information and writing responses. The outcomes of each lesson and 'big question' enquiry serve to inform the teacher's developing picture of the knowledge and understanding of each pupil and accordingly plan future learning. Outcomes are used to build an emerging picture of what the pupil knows, understands and can do.

At the end of each academic year, we make a summative judgement about the achievement of each pupil. At this point teachers decide upon a 'best fit' judgement as to whether the pupil has achieved and embedded the expected learning outcomes, exceeded expectations or is still working towards the age-related expectation. These decisions are based on the professional knowledge and judgement that teachers possess about the progress of each pupil, developed over the previous three terms. This allows an informed and holistic judgement of attainment to be made. Achievement against the learning goals for geography at the end of the year is used as the basis of reporting progress to parents.