

# Brookhurst Primary School

## Geography Policy

### The purpose of this document:

This policy reflects the school values and philosophy in relation to the teaching of geography. It sets out a framework within which the teaching and non-teaching staff can operate and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. The policy should be read in conjunction with the Schemes of Work, which set out in detail what pupils in different year groups will be taught. This document is intended for teaching staff and non-teaching staff with classroom responsibilities, School Governors, parents, inspection teams and L.E.A advisors. Copies are provided to school staff and the Governing Body. Additional copies are kept in the school office.

### Why do we teach Geography at Brookhurst Primary School?

Geography is a valued part of the curriculum at Brookhurst Primary school as it provides a means of exploring, appreciating and understanding the world in which we live and how it has evolved. Geography explores the relationship between the Earth and its people. It stimulates curiosity and imagination and at Brookhurst we aim to build upon the child's "personal geography" by developing geographical skills, understanding and knowledge through studying places and themes.

We encourage children to learn by experience and we value fieldwork as an integral part of the geography Curriculum. At Brookhurst Primary school we believe in the importance of Geography as stated in Geography, The National Curriculum for England 1999 p.14.

"Geography provokes and answers questions about the natural and human worlds, using different scales of enquiry to view them from different perspectives. It develops knowledge of places and environments throughout the world, an understanding of maps, and a range of investigative and problem-solving skills both inside and outside the classroom. As such, it prepares pupils for adult life and employment.

Geography is a focus within the curriculum for understanding and resolving issues about the environment and sustainable development. It is also an important link between the natural and social sciences. As pupils study geography, they encounter different societies and cultures. This helps them realise how nations rely on each other. It can inspire them to think about their own place in the world, their values, and their rights and responsibilities to other people and the environment."

## What are our aims in teaching Geography?

At Brookhurst we teach geography with the aim to enable our pupils:-

- to make sense of their own surroundings through learning about their own locality, and the interaction between people and environment
- to extend their interest, knowledge and understanding of contrasting localities in Britain, Europe and the World
- to develop knowledge and understanding of the human and physical processes which shape places
- to appreciate similarity and difference in the world about them and to respect other peoples beliefs, attitudes and values
- to develop the geographical skills and vocabulary necessary to carry out effective geographical enquiry
- to formulate appropriate questions, develop research skills and evaluate material to inform opinions
- to develop interest and enjoyment of geographical experiences and build confidence and understanding
- to recognise and understand issues concerning the environment and sustainable development.

## Teaching and learning style:

At Brookhurst we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our geography lessons. We believe largely in whole-class or group teaching methods and we combine these with enquiry-based research activities. We encourage children to ask as well as answer geographical questions. We offer them the opportunity to use a variety of data, such as maps, statistics, graphs, pictures and aerial photographs, and we enable them to use ICT in geography lessons where this serves to enhance learning. Children take part in role-play and discussions, and they present reports to the rest of the class. They engage in a wide variety of problem-solving activities. Wherever possible we try to involve the children in 'real' geographical activities, e.g. research of a local environmental issue/problem or the use of the internet to investigate a current issue.

Key features of classroom practice in geography include opportunities to engage pupils in well planned tasks which make use of a range of resources including the locality:

- Investigating real places and themes across a widening range of scales
- Developing a knowledge and understanding of physical, and environmental geography and the patterns and processes at work in them
- Undertaking geographical enquiry, applying skills and techniques, collecting and analysing evidence, drawing conclusions and communicating findings in a variety of ways e.g. questionnaires, graphs, tables, databases etc

- Using maps at various scales and plans, fieldwork, instruments. I.C.T. and other sources of evidence such as photographs, newspapers visitors to inform their work

We recognise the fact that there are children of widely different geographical abilities in all classes and we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this by:

- setting common tasks which are open-ended and invite a variety of responses
- setting tasks which are suitable and appropriate for all the pupils' starting levels ensuring that the more able pupil can be challenged and those with SEN achieve with confidence
- grouping children by ability, setting different tasks to each ability group
- providing resources of different complexity according to the ability of the child
- using classroom assistants, where possible, to support the work of individual children or groups of children
- other opportunities, e.g. extra-curricula activities, club links and interest groups for the development of excellence

### Geography curriculum planning

Planning is the responsibility of each Class Teacher, together with help from the Geography Co-ordinator. We plan the topics in geography so they build upon prior learning. Children of all abilities have the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit and, through planned progression built into the scheme of work, we offer them an increasing challenge as they move up the school.

Planning is used to:

- set clear achievement goals
- ensure work is matched to pupils' abilities, experience and interests
- ensure progression, continuity and subject coverage throughout the school
- provide criteria for assessment and evaluation of teaching and learning

Geography in the National Curriculum has one attainment target which sets out "knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils of different abilities and maturities are expected to have by the end of each key stage".

The Attainment Target has 8 level descriptions which describe the types and range of performance in geography that pupils working at that level should characteristically demonstrate.

At Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils are expected to work in the range of levels 1-3. The majority of pupils at age 7 are expected to attain level 2. At Key Stage 2 the majority are expected to work in the range of levels 2-5, and at age 11 to attain level 4.

Geography is concerned with the study of real places across a range of scales. We believe that many geographical skills and themes can be taught through the study of places. In order to meet the requirements of the KS1 and 2 Programmes of Study for geography Brookhurst Primary school has developed the following long term plan:

### **Key Stage 1**

During key stage 1 pupils investigate their local area and a contrasting area in the United Kingdom or abroad, finding out about the environment in both areas and the people who live there. They also begin to learn about the wider world.

They carry out geographical enquiry inside and outside the classroom. In doing this they ask geographical questions about people, places and environments, and use geographical skills and resources such as maps and photographs.

### **Key Stage 2**

During key stage 2 pupils investigate a variety of people, places and environments at different scales in the United Kingdom and abroad, and start to make links between different places in the world. They find out how people affect the environment and how they are affected by it. They carry out geographical enquiry inside and outside the classroom. In doing this they ask geographical questions, and use geographical skills and resources such as maps, atlases, aerial photographs and ICT.

### **Foundation Stage**

We teach geography in reception classes as an integral part of topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the geographical aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals (ELGs), which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. Geography makes a significant contribution to the ELG objectives of developing a child's knowledge and understanding of the world through a variety of activities including the 'weekly walk'.

## The contribution of geography to teaching in other curriculum areas:

### **English**

Geography makes a significant contribution to the teaching of English in our school because it actively promotes the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. We ensure that some of the texts we use in the Literacy hour are geographical in nature. For example in Key Stage 1 we use the Katie Morag books by Mairi Hedderwick to develop children's knowledge and understanding in the QCA unit, 'An Island Home'. At Key Stage 2 we organise debates on environmental issues because we believe that these develop speaking and listening skills. Reports, letters and recording information will all develop children's writing ability. We also use environmental issues as a way of developing writing skills by asking children to record information and write reports and letters.

### **Mathematics**

Geography in our school contributes to the teaching of mathematics in a variety of ways. We teach the children to represent objects with maps. The children study space, scale and distance and they learn how to use four and six-figure grid references. They also use graphs to explore, analyse and illustrate a variety of data.

### **ICT**

Children use ICT in geography to enhance their skills in data handling and in presenting written work. They use CD-ROMS and the Internet selectively to find information, e-mail to communicate with people in other places and databases/spreadsheets to handle and present information. We also offer the children the opportunity to use the digital camera to record and use photographic images.

### **PSHSE**

Geography contributes significantly to the teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship. Firstly, the subject matter directly lends itself to raising matters of citizenship and social welfare. Children study the way in which people recycle material and how environments are changed for better or for worse. Secondly, the nature of the subject means that children have the opportunity to participate in debate and discussions.

## **History and RE**

In history and RE geographical knowledge is essential in order to place events and themes in context. The enquiry approach is common to all the Humanities subjects.

### **Extra links and projects**

We have well established links with a Primary school in Bo, in Sierra Leone called UBC (United Brethren of Christ). This is a tremendously meaningful link, which helps to bring both communities closer together and enhance geography links throughout the curriculum.

We have had numerous visitors from Bo over the last few years which the children have come to know very well. These visits are planned and linked to the current work being done in years 5 and 6. The children ask questions, which they have prepared, and the experience of getting them answered by Sierra Leonean is an invaluable experience. We also have excellent links with our local community through our UBC link (see appendix 1).

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (including Philosophy)**

We offer children in our school many opportunities to examine the fundamental questions in life through the medium of geography. Work on the changing landscape and environmental issues lead children to ask questions about the evolution of the planet. We encourage the children to reflect on the impact of mankind on our world and we introduce the concept of sustainable development. Through teaching about contrasting localities, we enable children to begin to learn about inequality in the world. We help children to develop their knowledge and understanding of different cultures and contribute to their social development by teaching them how society works to resolve difficult issues of economic development.

### **Special Educational Needs; Inclusion; Equal Opportunities**

At Brookhurst Primary School we recognise the responsibility to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils. In geography the National Curriculum is the starting point for planning a curriculum that meets the specific needs of individuals and groups of pupils. We have adopted the statutory inclusion statement on providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils. When planning teachers modify, as necessary, the National Curriculum programmes of study to provide all pupils with relevant and appropriately challenging work at each key stage, in order to provide a more inclusive curriculum which:

- sets suitable learning challenges

- responds to pupils' diverse learning needs
- overcomes potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

### The role of the Geography Co-ordinator:

The geography co-ordinator is responsible for preparing policy documents, curriculum plans and schemes of work for the subject. They must also encourage staff to provide effective learning opportunities for all pupils, to develop valid activities appropriate for children at different stages of development and which enable pupils to progress in the subject.

A good co-ordinator will also help colleagues to develop their own subject expertise, collect resources and ensure common standards and formats for recording and assessment.

They also produce reports on the subject in school, e.g. to governors, in newsletters and communicate all developments in the subject, e.g. through staff meetings, distributing information and using notice boards.

They have a responsibility to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the subject within the school by auditing resources and producing updated lists of books, materials and equipment relevant to the subject.

The geography subject also leader keeps samples of the children's work in a portfolio that shows what the expected level of achievement is in geography in each year of the school. We also assess children's work to help to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

### Fieldwork

At Brookhurst we feel that fieldwork is integral to good geography teaching and we include as many opportunities as we can to involve children in practical geographical research and enquiry. At Key Stage 1 we let all the children carry out an investigation of the local environment and we give them the opportunity to observe and record information around the school site. At Key Stage 2 the children carry out a study of the local area. We also offer them the opportunity to take part in residential visits.

## Health and Safety

Teachers are aware of the regulations concerning taking children off the school premises and must produce relevant documentation such as risk assessments and plans of any proposed journeys either by foot or vehicle. These can be found in the office. These should be followed and the utmost care taken to ensure the safety of the children during fieldwork. Staff are also responsible for ensuring that material and instruments are used with care and check children are appropriately equipped and clothed.

## Assessment and Record Keeping:

We assess the children's work in geography in a variety of ways such as by making formative assessments in the form of observing the children during lessons and once a child has completed a piece of work we mark and comment/set targets as appropriate. Also, once the children complete a unit of work we carry out summative assessments of the work in relation to the National Curriculum levels of attainment. We also make a record of which children have exceeded, which have achieved and which are below national expectations. We use these assessments to plan future work, to provide the basis for assessing the progress of the child, and to pass information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning at Brookhurst and is initially based upon teachers' judgements of pupil attainment and progress. Assessment is built in to the planning of learning experiences and clearly related to the learning outcomes that are proposed. We also have a wide variety of assessment procedures which are used to provide opportunities for pupils to achieve across a range of contexts. Activities resulting in written or oral outcomes, project material, models, practical fieldwork, role-play, video/audio presentations factual recall, observations display work may provide a basis for assessment.

Feedback to our pupils is also provided on their attainment against the objectives of geography. Pupils are encouraged to improve their own learning performance through the school marking policy and are becoming very adept at evaluating their own work in order to understand what their future steps to success are.

Review Date: September 2012

This policy was adopted by governors on the \_\_\_\_\_ and will be reviewed either as necessary or every three years.

Jenufa Wood  
2009

## Appendix 1

### **Day of the African Child**

In June we also hosted the Day of the African Child Day where seven other schools visited us for the afternoon. The mayor, numerous members of OWL (one world link) and guest from Sierra Leone all came to join in the event. It was a huge success where our children sang prepared songs, played instruments and dressed in traditional African clothing. We also had a live link with the Head teacher in our link school UBC (united Brethren of Christ) where we talked about what we were doing and shared our experience of the day. The whole school were in attendance and it was enjoyed thoroughly by all. It raised the awareness of The Day of the African Child and not only strengthened our link with UBC but also with the other local schools which joined us.