ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Geography Policy

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'The mountains rose; the valleys sank down to the place that you appointed for them.'

Psalm 104:8

Geography Policy for St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

1. Introduction

At St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, we believe that geography is an essential subject that enables children to explore, understand, and appreciate the world in which they live. As a Catholic school, we view the study of geography not only as an academic subject but also as a means of fostering a deeper connection with God's creation. We aim to nurture responsible global citizens who are curious about the world around them, considerate of their environment, and equipped to make informed decisions that positively impact the world.

2. Aims and Objectives

The main aims of our geography curriculum are to:

- **Inspire curiosity and awe**: To encourage children to explore and ask questions about the world, its people, and its physical and human landscapes.
- **Develop geographical knowledge**: To provide pupils with a strong understanding of diverse places, environments, resources, and people across the world.
- **Foster skills of geographical enquiry**: To develop pupils' ability to observe, interpret, and analyze geographical data, and to think critically about the world's processes and patterns.
- **Encourage ethical and environmental responsibility**: To help children understand the significance of human interaction with the natural world and the importance of caring for God's creation.
- **Promote global citizenship**: To inspire pupils to consider the global issues facing our world, including climate change, sustainability, and human rights, and to recognize their role in creating positive change.

3. Curriculum Overview

Our geography curriculum is designed to be engaging, broad, and progressive, offering opportunities for pupils to build on prior knowledge and explore new concepts. Topics covered include:

- **Key Stage 1**: the physical and human features of their local environment, basic map skills, understanding of continents and oceans, and an introduction to weather and climate.
- **Key Stage 2**: a deeper exploration of human and physical geography, including the study of geographical features such as rivers, mountains, and climates, alongside global issues like population, migration, and natural resources. Pupils also engage with the role of geography in the development of societies and cultures.

The curriculum is taught in a way that connects key geographical skills and concepts with real-world applications. We aim for geography to be a dynamic subject, with pupils applying their knowledge in practical, hands-on experiences such as fieldwork and map-making.

4. Teaching and Learning

Geography is taught through engaging and varied activities designed to stimulate curiosity and critical thinking. Our teaching methods include:

- **Interactive lessons**: Encouraging pupils to ask questions, engage in discussion, and explore geographical concepts through practical activities.
- **Fieldwork**: Children participate in local field trips and outdoor learning opportunities to observe geographical features and collect data, helping them connect classroom learning to real-world settings.
- **Use of resources**: Pupils use a range of resources such as maps, atlases, photographs, and digital tools to enhance their understanding of geographical topics.
- **Cross-curricular learning**: We make links between geography and other subjects such as history, science, and religious education, encouraging pupils to see how geography intersects with broader themes and issues.

Our approach ensures that pupils not only acquire knowledge but also develop skills that can be applied in a variety of contexts. They learn how to use geographical tools, interpret data, and communicate their findings effectively.

5. Assessment

Assessment of geography is continuous and takes place through a variety of methods, including:

- **Formative assessment**: Ongoing observation during lessons, fieldwork, and practical activities to monitor student progress.
- **Summative assessment**: End-of-topic quizzes, projects, and written tasks that assess pupils' understanding of geographical concepts.
- **Peer and self-assessment**: Pupils are encouraged to assess their own and each other's work, reflecting on their learning and setting goals for improvement.

The results of these assessments are used to inform future planning and ensure that all pupils are supported in making progress. Teachers also use feedback from pupils to tailor lessons and make learning more relevant and engaging.

6. Inclusivity

At St. Mary's, we ensure that all pupils, regardless of background or ability, have access to a high-quality geography education. We provide differentiated tasks to support students with additional learning needs and offer extension opportunities for more able students. Our curriculum is designed to be inclusive, offering a range of resources and teaching methods that meet the needs of every child.

7. Health and Safety

Geography teaching at St. Mary's adheres to the school's health and safety guidelines, particularly for fieldwork and outdoor activities. Risk assessments are conducted before any activity that involves potential hazards, and students are trained in the safe use of equipment. Field trips are always supervised with appropriate staff-to-student ratios, and pupils are taught how to behave responsibly during such activities.

8. Links to Catholic Ethos

In line with our Catholic values, our geography curriculum encourages pupils to see the world through the lens of stewardship and care for the environment. We promote the importance of respecting God's creation and

understanding the need to care for the planet. Geography lessons encourage pupils to reflect on how human actions impact the Earth, and how we can all take responsibility for preserving the environment for future generations.

9. Resources

We ensure that a range of high-quality resources are available to support the teaching of geography. This includes:

- **Physical resources**: Maps, atlases, globes, and geographical tools.
- **Digital resources**: Interactive maps, geographical software, and access to online databases.
- **Fieldwork equipment**: Tools for data collection, compasses, and other practical resources for outdoor learning.

These resources are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they are relevant and support the aims of the geography curriculum.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

The geography curriculum is monitored and evaluated by the geography subject leader and senior leadership team. Regular reviews of teaching, learning, and assessment ensure that the curriculum is effective in meeting the needs of all students. Feedback from teachers, students, and parents is used to make improvements and adjustments to the curriculum.

11. Conclusion

At St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, our geography curriculum provides pupils with the knowledge, skills, and understanding to appreciate the world around them, develop critical thinking skills, and become responsible global citizens. Through our focus on enquiry, fieldwork, and ethical responsibility, we aim to inspire a love of learning about the world and prepare our students to care for and protect God's creation for generations to come.

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of our pupils and reflects any changes in national expectations or school priorities.