Geography

intent, implementation, impact

intent

Geography plays a crucial role in understanding our world. It makes a vital contribution to our knowledge of the rapidly changing environmental and social challenges facing us and how we should tackle them. At St.Michael's we follow the National Curriculum, and use respected sources of information such as The Royal Geographical Society to develop our curriculum planning, so to give our children opportunities to explore their surroundings, communities and wider geographical issues through engaging lessons coupled with exciting opportunities, both theoretical and practical.

Academic: Our geography curriculum is designed to teach learners geographical knowledge and skills within a context which moves from a micro to a macro level of understanding over time.
Lower school pupils focus on deepening their understanding of our own locality, Bowthorpe, Norwich and Norfolk, where we have established strong links with a range of community members who visit our school to share fantastic personal insights into the varied human and physical geography of our area.

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As the children move through the school, they apply their geographical skills further afield to ever more diverse localities all around the world. Skills and knowledge are built on year-by-year through exciting, practical and engaging activities such as orienteering and fieldwork as well as transferable links to cross-curricular study. We equip our children with knowledge of a range of places and geographical features whilst developing their learning of the Earth's key physical and human processes.

Character: We recognise the importance of raising children as responsible, curious thinkers who are able to process new information, reflect on it, think critically, and apply knowledge and skills to overcome challenges in our ever-changing world. Understanding both human and physical geography will enable our children to have a better understanding of themselves and the wider society they live in as they grow up to be caring, responsible adults who can influence the future of our planet.

Behaviour: Our intention is for our children to embed and nurture a love of the world around us, feel passionate about protecting it and to take steps towards exploring it for themselves one day. As part of our intention we aim to expose children to a range of age-appropriate geo-political issues, such as climate change, natural resources and trade, so that children are able to take part in discussions informed by evidence, in order to express their opinions clearly.

implementation

The overall long term ‘road-map’ for geography is driven by the National Curriculum, but organised to support our pupils’ needs and to work in parallel with other curriculum learning, such as science and history, so to deepen understanding and provide opportunities to use newly acquired skills in different contexts.

Every geography unit will begin with an overarching purpose, through a key question, which till drive the learning and the aspects geography which will be focussed on. Each unit of work builds on skills and knowledge, and key concepts are revisited. For example, in year 5 a map skills unit, will provide the foundational knowledge and skills required in order to begin the later unit of work on mountains. Teachers will consider specifically what knowledge and skills they want children to acquire; what conceptual understandings they want them to reach and the attitudes and values they want to encourage. The overarching purpose will be broken down into smaller learning objectives, which will contribute to the overall understanding. From this new key questions will be created, which will be used to support ongoing assessment through each unit.

Throughout the geography curriculum a range of approaches will be implemented:

- Enquiry: fieldwork, questioning, investigating, discussing possibilities
- Oral geography: eye-witness accounts, memories
- Observation: of landscapes and pictures
- Drama and role-play

A range of resources will be used when reviewing maps: Google maps/ Google Earth, Digi-map software, atlases, globes and ordinance survey.

impact

By the end of their primary education at St. Michael's our learners will have gained a rich body of geographical knowledge and a wide range of transferable skills, which they can apply to other subjects and contexts. We assess at the end of geography units a termly basis, in order to build a rounded picture of each child as a geographer, using practical opportunities, quizzes, discussions and presentations. This enables teachers to set appropriate next steps, building them into future units of work, and to challenge children in their thinking and learning.

Monitoring by the subject leader involves group discussion related to the objectives covered in class and the key questions and ideas set out in medium term planning. Lesson observations, curriculum book evidence, pupil interviews and teacher assessment grids are used to measure impact, and this is reviewed twice per academic year. This process informs next steps for geography.

We measure our impact based on pupils' confidence to ask and explore questions to further their own geographical knowledge and understanding. They will be inquisitive young learners and citizens who choose to understand global environmental issues and seek to make a personal difference in protecting and shaping the world we share. We aspire for children to leave St.Michael's with the knowledge and tools to have a proactive voice, in order to debate and discuss geographical issues and to be able to reflect and form their own opinions on matters such as climate change and natural disasters. In this way, we prepare our learners fully for transition to secondary school when they leave St.Michael's.