St Mary and St Michael Catholic Primary School



"Learning together as we follow in the footsteps of Christ"

Geography Policy

Reviewed: September 2026
Update: September 2028

Intent

Geography covers the breadth of the Bailiwick curriculum.

Geography is essentially about understanding the world we live in. During Geography lessons we aim to provoke and provide answers to questions about the natural and human aspects of the world.

Our intent, when teaching Geography, is to inspire in children a curiosity and fascination about the world and people within it; to promote the children's interest and understanding of diverse places, people and natural and human environments. We will combine this with a deep understanding of the Earth's key physical and human processes.

As pupils progress through our school, their growing knowledge about the world helps them to deepen their understanding of the interaction between physical and human processes, and of the formation and use of local and global landscapes and environments.

We seek to inspire in children a thirst for knowledge and an awareness of the world and its people which will remain with them for the rest of their lives, equipping them well for further education and beyond.

Statutory Requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of Geography are laid out in the Bailiwick of Guernsey Curriculum and The Geography Entitlements document. For Early Years, children are able to access Geography through the Understanding the World element of Development Matters.

Geography Bailiwick Curriculum Aims

Learners should build secure knowledge of the following:
a. How the present has been shaped by events in the past, through exploring change and continuity over time, and understanding why and where things happened
b. How and why places and environments develop, how they can be sustained and how they may change in the future
c. How identities develop, what we have in common, what makes us different and how we organise ourselves and make decisions within communities
d. How people, communities and places are connected and can be interdependent at a range of scales.

Implementation

The implementation of our curriculum ensures balanced coverage of the main themes outlined in the Bailiwick Curriculum: key geographical skills, mapping skills and pattern, place and people (which includes a knowledge and understanding of physical, human and environmental geography).

In St Mary and St Michael Geography lessons are sequenced so that every year group has 2 Geography units which they study throughout the year and these have been sequenced in year groups' long term plans to encourage retrieval practice and embed knowledge in children's long term memory.
The units of geography delivered cover the programmes of study for Geography set out in the Bailiwick of Guernsey Curriculum alongside the Guernsey Geography Entitlement Document. In our Reception classroom they follow Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (2012) which lays the foundations for geographical learning throughout the school.

Geography in the Early Years

Vital aspects of geographical skills, knowledge, and experiences can be found in our Early Years classroom and these form the first rung of a vital progression ladder for Geography. Through teacher led activities and continuous provision the children are able to develop key geographical skills such as; spatial awareness, use of positional vocabulary and exploration of other countries and their local area.

Geography in KS1 and kS2

Each Year group in KS1 and KS2 cover two units of Geography each year. Progression throughout the school means that each year the children are revisiting key geographical knowledge and skills and building on prior learning.

Key Geographical Skills

Fieldwork

We deliberately plan for fieldwork to occur in and around our local environment. Geography is, by nature, an investigative subject, which develops an understanding of concepts, knowledge and skills. We want our children to learn through hands-on experiences and investigations of physical and human geography in the local environment as far as possible, while embedding key substantive knowledge.

Mapping Skills

Our aim is to ensure that all children develop contextual knowledge of the location of globally significant places. Throughout their time at our school the children are exposed to a variety of types of mapping; atlases, globes, world maps, ordinance survey maps and geographical information systems (GIS). We also give children a chance to demonstrate their geographical knowledge and understanding by creating their own maps. The spatial skills associated with the use of maps and map-making are not just essential to Geography but valuable across the curriculum.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary forms a key part of our curriculum. Supporting pupils in the acquisition of knowledge, through the use of key concepts, terms, and vocabulary, provides opportunities to build a shared and consistent understanding. Knowledge organisers, vocabulary mats/strips along with regular recall and revision, will be used to support this approach. We outline the progression of geographical vocabulary and teachers understand the important of prior knowledge and will assess this at the beginning of a new unit.

Inclusion and SEND

In our school we use the Quality First Teaching approach across all subjects. In our school, staff play a vital role in supporting children in many year groups.
In geography our children are supported by-

- Knowledge organisers and vocabulary mats/strips used to scaffold learners.
- Clear chunked instructions with visuals.
- Frequent checking of understanding through mini assessment tasks, such as quizzes.
- Flexible groupings- teams, talk partners, LSA or teacher working with specific groups.
- Accurate and continued assessment with constructive and instant feedback at the point of learning.

Assessment

To ensure progression in Geography across our school teachers use formative assessment to recognise children's progress, understand their needs and to plan further activities and support.
This formative assessment is done at different times throughout the unit-

1. At the beginning of a unit to assess if the children have a secure understanding of prior knowledge.
2. During a lesson to check understanding of a key concept or new vocabulary being taught.
3. At the end of a lesson to inform the teaching and activities for the next lesson.
4. At the end of a unit to ensure children have a secure knowledge of all the key concepts and vocabulary taught.

Formative assessment in our school can take on a variety of forms; quizzes, exit tickets, assessment papers, vocabulary games, daily challenges, class discussions/debates and teacher observations.

Author: Jennifer Langlois