



Rationale for our Geography Curriculum

Our Intent

At St Mary's, our aim is to provide a high-quality geography curriculum that inspires a love of learning about the world, fostering curiosity and a sense of responsibility towards our environment and communities. Underpinned by the values of our Catholic faith, our geography education seeks to help children understand their place within the world, appreciate the diverse cultures that enrich our lives, and recognise the need for stewardship of God's creation. We intend to:

- Promote Cultural Understanding: Equip students with the geographical knowledge and skills to appreciate the diversity of communities, fostering respect for all cultures in line with our Catholic ethos.
- Encourage Environmental Stewardship: Instil a sense of responsibility in students towards environmental conservation and sustainability through the study of local and global issues.
- Develop Critical Thinking and Skills: Through inquiry-based learning, students will develop critical thinking, data analysis, and enquiry skills, enabling them to interpret and engage with both human and physical geography.
- Link Learning to Faith: Integrate Catholic Social Teaching principles into geography, helping students to understand the moral implications of geography in our world today

Early Years

Through the Early Years Framework, our reception children are introduced to thinking like a Geographer through the Understanding the World ELG. Within this Learning Goal, the children are encouraged to explore their local context and make observations about the world as they see it. They build on this learning by making links between their own lives and the lives of people in another country.

Year 1

The children build on these foundations when they move into Year 1. They develop their understanding of the seasons and corresponding weather patterns. They explore the school grounds and our local nature reserve, as well as go on local walks to look at the different settlements within their village, all adding to the sense of home and community that they build in Early Years. In Year 1, the children continue to build their understanding of the wider world by drawing comparisons between the UK and Kenya. Within this unit of work, pupils learn about the capital cities of the different countries that make up the UK.

Year 2

In Year 2, the children develop their understanding of capital cities further and are able to locate them on maps of the UK using atlases. Furthermore, the children begin to identify several human features (landmarks). In Year 2, the children's local knowledge is extended beyond their school and village as they explore different land types studying the village of Port Sunlight, town of Ellesmere Port and city of Liverpool. Furthermore, the children begin to understand their knowledge of islands and the fact that the British Isles is surrounded by three major seas: North Sea, the Irish Sea and the English Channel.

Year 3

In Year 3, the children further develop their understanding of the UK by developing their knowledge of cities and counties. They use atlases, maps and online sources to help them identify the county of Cheshire and neighbouring counties as well as establishing the biggest cities across the UK. The children also explore different land use in Year 3 and go on a local walk to identify some of the different uses within their immediate environment. Through their work on the Roman Empire in history, links are made between the lives of people in the UK and those of the people of Italy.

Year 4

By the time the children arrive in Year 4 they have a wealth of knowledge about their local and national context and environment that they are able to begin to explore countries from the continent of Europe and beyond. The children use the mapping skills they develop in Years 1, 2 and 3 to help them locate and identify several European cities and also major cities across the globe. Year 4 provides the children with lots of opportunities to develop their knowledge of physical geographical features, such as rivers and mountains – initially in the UK – and also globally. It is in Year 4 that the children can build on the knowledge they collated in Year 1 on seasons and weather patterns to understand the water cycle and why some places are wetter than others.

Year 5

By Year 5, the children are able to draw comparisons between their lives and the lives of people in North America. They explore different human and physical geographical features in North America and are able to build on prior learning to locate the different countries of the continent. The children learn about biomes in Year 5 and are able to make comparisons with topics on Kenya, Rainforests, Greece and Egypt. Through this topic the children can discuss their learning from Year 3 of the tropics and also recall what they know about weather and climate in the rainforests. Whilst the children enjoy learning about life in North America, they end the year looking at what is so special about their town, Ellesmere Port. Their prior learning from Year 2 on villages, towns and cities is invaluable as the children begin to look at how Ellesmere Port develops from a tiny farmstead in the 1800s into an industrial lynch pin in the early 1900s thanks to its close proximity to Liverpool with its worldwide trade links. The children develop their navigational skills to read and explore Ordnance Survey maps and can map routes around Little Sutton using four-figure grid references.

Year 6

In Year 6, children learn about the continent of South America, building on the mapping and locational skills developed in Year 5. The children are able to build a better understanding of the importance of the Amazon rainforest due to the work they completed in Year 3 on rainforests, Year 4 on rivers and Year 5 on biomes. The children are able to complete a detailed comparison of life within a developing country and life in the UK. This builds on the comparison work which the children do throughout both Key Stage 1 and 2. In Year 6, the children become more accurate with their navigational skills and build precision using the 8 points of a compass (building on the four points which are introduced in Year 2) when describing the location of countries in South America. Year 6 offers the children an opportunity to further develop their fieldwork skills by learning how to use 6-figure grid references, allowing them increasing accuracy when map reading places with a higher density of buildings and population.

The Geography curriculum at St Mary's builds progressively. It allows our younger children the opportunity to develop a sense of self and pride in their local environment built on their experiences of the world around them. As the children progress through the curriculum, their inquisitiveness is skilfully and deliberately nurtured. By the end of Key Stage 2, the children have a breadth of knowledge about not only the British Isles, but also Europe, North America and South America. Our pupils leave school as budding, inquisitive citizens, equipped with a knowledge of the key issues surrounding the wellbeing of our village, town and planet, with big ideas on how to make things better for future generations.