

Geography

How we teach Geography at Crofton Infants' School

Intent

In our diverse society children need, more than ever before, to understand other people and cultures. Geography makes a major contribution to children's physical, intellectual, social and emotional development.

Geography teaches an understanding of places and environments. Through their work in geography, children learn about their local area and compare their life in this area, with that in other regions in the United Kingdom and in the rest of the world. They learn how to draw and interpret maps and they develop the skills of research, investigation and problem-solving. Through their growing knowledge and understanding of human geography, children gain an appreciation of life in other cultures. Geography teaching also motivates children to find out about the physical world and enables them to recognise the importance of sustainable development for the future of mankind.

Implement

Geography is taught through a 'theme' based approach. This allows coverage of the National Curriculum objectives for Geography and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, in a more meaningful context. Our children start by learning about their own immediate locality, allowing them to start to learn and use the language associated with geography, as they begin to develop basic fieldwork skills. Children then learn to compare their own locality to places in the United Kingdom, before going on to learn about and make comparisons to places in the wider world. They use atlases to plan and plot journeys around the world. They point out where the equator, north pole and south pole are on a globe or atlas. The children name the continents of the world and the countries that form the United Kingdom including the capital cities. They also consider the seas that surround these.

Whenever possible, we teach geography as a discrete lesson, but with cross curricular links with other subjects, to enable children to embed learning and make connections. This leads to a greater depth of understanding within the subject. The content is therefore chosen to make effective links with key themes, reflect expectations in the National Curriculum programmes of study and EYFS framework and engage the children. The content may also be chosen based upon the needs or interests of specific cohorts or links to events which are taking place in the community or wider world.

Three key themes run throughout the year through the teaching of geography:

- Human Impact in relation to caring for our World.
- Comparing the Physical and Human Features of the places that we study.
- Comparing similarities and celebrating differences to our own way of life, to that of people in another country.

Each Year group follows the progression in skills document, this is used for planning to ensure sequenced content for each specific year group. Teachers are clear on the learning expectations for each year group and these subject specific documents ensure that children build on prior knowledge and skills. Teachers are expected to differentiate in order to meet the needs of all learners.

How is the subject taught?

A long term plan maps out the coverage of the discrete teaching and learning opportunities for children to develop and embed specific skills and key knowledge in Geography. The knowledge content is carefully selected and skilfully taught alongside the key skills and the three main geographical concepts, which are threaded throughout the Geography curriculum. This allows children ample opportunities to revisit, reinforce and embed learning.

New vocabulary is taught with the emphasis on words and phrases relating to the passing of time. We introduce new language however emphasis is placed on embedding the basics and not to over complicate language for young children. Children are introduced to new language but also reminded of key vocabulary. Questioning is used to check understanding of prior knowledge.

When children are learning about a subject through discrete teaching sessions they are told they are going to be 'geographers'.

Within each discrete block of geography teaching, class teachers carefully plan the specific outcomes for their year group, based upon age appropriate knowledge and skills, as well as the needs of the cohort or individuals within it.

In Geography these are:

- find and name places on maps / globes.
- say what places are like.
- say how places are similar or different.
- ask and answer questions.
- say how a place has changed.

In addition to discrete teaching in this subject, opportunities and links are made to this subject throughout the year. For example, subject knowledge about places, continents and oceans is an ongoing theme, which links to other subjects being taught. Learning about seasons and the weather also continues throughout the year.

Local and national events are taught and referred to in a geographical context. Teachers talk to children daily about current significant events in the world and highlight on maps where in the world these events are happening eg hurricanes, volcanoes erupting.

The lives of significant people nationally and globally are carefully chosen across subjects and year groups so that children are continually developing a sense of place, identifying and locating countries across the world and applying the geographical language they have learnt.

Teaching Geography in the Early Years :

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps; -
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class; -
- Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate – maps.

Reception children take part in environment walks around school discussing the features of their environment and how they are similar, or different, to their own setting. The children use books and stories as a focus to discuss similarities and differences between their culture and that of others. The children also look at the habitats of animals. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur. They begin to consider how physical and human features can affect how animals live.

What wider opportunities are provided for our children?

Children have the opportunity to participate in regular visits out to places, including exploring their own locality to develop a sense of belonging. Visits around the locality and participating in local events, allow them to question why things are as they are where they live and start to make comparisons with other places.

Fieldwork is at the heart of being a geographer and this is carried out through carefully planned activities for all children in school to participate in. Fieldwork enables the children to develop a true sense of place. To use their senses to explore and become curious about the world around them, and develop their investigative skills to ask questions about where they live. Geography gives children a



sense of pride and belonging as they get to know their own locality before exploring the wider world.

Our geography curriculum allows our children to find their place in the world! They are shown how to look out at the world and how to respect others. They are equipped with the skills and knowledge to ensure they are responsible citizens in their school, local and wider global community