

Geography

Geography Rationale

We want our children to strive to be bus or train drivers, weather forecasters, town planners, conservationists or even geography teachers! We want them to embody our core values. Our children will always strive to be "Ready, Willing and Able" to learn and develop. For example, We have a geography afterschool club. The children enjoy developing their map reading skills. Each class has a News Board where the children can display up to date news about themes such as global weather disasters. Bringing geography alive in a modern, challenging and rapidly changing society is important at SMAAA!

Intent

The geography curriculum promotes curiosity and a love and thirst for learning. It is ambitious and empowers our children to become independent and resilient - like all curriculum areas.

The art curriculum at SMAAA promotes curiosity and a love and thirst for learning. It is ambitious and empowers our children to become:-

S-Sensitive M-Motivated A-Articulate A-Adventurous A- Adaptable.

We want to equip them with not only the minimum statutory requirements of the geography National Curriculum but to prepare. For example, our children had the opportunity to visit Wild Air in Cranton where they were able to Learn survival skills to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

We want our children to use the vibrancy of our great city to learn from other cultures, respect diversity, co-operate with one another and appreciate what they have. We achieve this by providing a strong SMSC curriculum, with British Values and our core values placed at the heart of everything we do. This often feeds into the geography curriculum.

For example our children were learning about, 'How to stay safe in the city.' The route started at Kirkby Station to Liverpool Central. From there, the children walked to Queen's Square bus station, where they were then given a safety talk from a city guide named Billy.

The bus took them from there to James Street train station, then on to Hamilton Square. They walked to the ferry and took the ferry across the Mersey where they had the opportunity of a tour of the U Boat Museum, in Birkenhead. The children then took the train back to Kirkby Station.

We enrich their time in our school with memorable, unforgettable experiences and provide opportunities which are normally out of reach - this piques their interests and passions.

For example the children went to Shropshire and spent two nights of outdoor adventurous activities such as zip wiring and orienteering.

Implementation

In July 2019, a complete audit of the geography curriculum was conducted. On the back of the findings from this audit, the geography curriculum has been carefully built and the learning opportunities and assessment milestones for each year group crafted to ensure progression and repetition in terms of embedding key learning, knowledge and skills. We believe that our pupils need to be actively involved in making sense of their learning and therefore an enquiry approach was implemented, encouraging higher-order thinking and allowing our children to explore in a way that is meaningful to them. Within each year group, geography strands are revisited in a progressive manner. For example, when encouraging an understanding of places and connection, Year 1 focus on observing human and physical features within their locality. This understanding of our place in the world develops through the year groups through comparisons within the UK, Europe and the wider world and then in both Year 6 topics there is an emphasis on understanding how places across the world are interconnected and the position of Liverpool within that.

Staff also receive specialist INSET training during staff meetings. These Master Classes support their understanding of and develop their own skills. Initially pupils take inspiration from maps, map reading skills and local landmarks to help generate ideas. They explore and practice the practical skills and techniques involved in the topic. They use their professional diary to record their observations and to review and revisit ideas before producing a final piece. Each discipline is taught and re-visited in each phase, at a progressively deeper level. For example, Yr 1 will experience local fieldwork, key features in the local area and communicating geographically then these themes will be repeated in Yr 3 and Yr 5 in greater depth.

Geography subject specific characteristics, which we expect the children to demonstrate, have been developed and shared with all stakeholders. These characteristics underpin all work in geography and form a focal point for display areas and provide a common subject specific vocabulary for staff and pupils. These characteristics are:

- An extensive base of geographical knowledge and vocabulary.
- An excellent knowledge of where places are and what they are like.
- An excellent understanding of the ways in which places are interdependent and interconnected and how much human and physical environments are interrelated.
- Fluency in complex, geographical enquiry and the ability to apply questioning skills and use effective analytical and presentational techniques.
- The ability to reach clear conclusions and develop a reasoned argument to explain findings.
- Significant levels of originality, imagination or creativity as shown in interpretations and representations of the subject matter.
- Highly developed and frequently utilised fieldwork and other geographical skills and techniques.
- A passion for and commitment to the subject, and a real sense of curiosity to find out about the world and the people who live there.
- The ability to express well-balanced opinions, rooted in very good knowledge and understanding about current and contemporary issues in society and the environment.

We empower our staff to organise their own year group curriculums under the guidance of our subject leaders. Teachers are best placed to make these judgements. Staff develop year group specific long-term curriculum maps which identify when the different subjects and topics will be taught across the academic year. The vast majority of subjects are taught discretely but staff make meaningful links across subjects. They link prior knowledge to new learning to deepen children's learning.

Our short-term plans are produced on a half-termly and weekly basis. We use these to set out the learning objectives for each lesson, identifying engaging activities and resources which will be used to achieve them.

We encourage staff to teach a weekly geography lesson. This was a notable change after the geography audit. This helps to ensure sufficient time is allocated to geography and that geographic subject matter can be revisited frequently. We believe that by crafting our curriculum this way, we improve the potential for our children to retain what they have been taught, to alter their long-term memory and thus improve the rates of progress they make.

Impact

We use both formative and summative assessment information in every geography lesson. Staff use this information to inform their short-term planning and short-term interventions. This helps us provide the best possible support for all of our pupils, including the more able. The assessment milestones for each phase have been carefully mapped out and further broken down for each year group. This means that skills in geography are progressive and build year on year.

Our staff use geography formative assessment grids to systematically assess what the children know as the topic progresses and inform their future planning. These formative assessment grids then inform summative assessment judgements for each topic.

Assessment information is collected frequently and analysed as part of our monitoring cycle. This process provides an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the quality of education in geography. A comprehensive monitoring cycle is developed at the beginning of each academic year. This identifies when monitoring is undertaken. The last geography monitoring took place during the week beginning 3rd June 2019. Monitoring in geography includes: book scrutinies, lesson observations and/or learning walks, pupil/parent and/or staff voice.

All of this information is gathered and reviewed. It is used to inform further curriculum developments and provision is adapted accordingly.

At SMAAA our children are geographers.

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Willing
Able*

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