



# Scoil San Eoin

## Whole School Plan Geography



## Introductory Statement

This plan was formulated following discussion and evaluation of the Revised Curriculum. All teachers were involved. A detailed analysis of the content, resources and methodologies was undertaken prior to drawing up this plan.

## Rationale

This plan was drawn up in order to conform to the principles outlined in the Revised Curriculum and to implement in the most effective way the content outlined. We recognise that Geography helps the children to develop a sense of place, space and environment, and thus contributes to self-identity, an integral part of children's development

## Vision

The Geography plan seeks to ensure that children will experience a broad and balanced curriculum through the development of geographical skills in the interrelationship of natural and human features and the lives of people and the relationship of humanity to environments at a variety of levels from the local to the global.

## Principles

The underlying principles and broad aims of Geography Education are:

### **A. Knowledge Based:**

- To develop knowledge and understanding of local, regional and wider environments and their interrelationships

### **B. Skills Based:**

- To develop the ability to use a range of communicative methods, especially those concerned with the development of mapping. (mapping and other non-verbal, non numerical forms of data presentation)
- To encourage the development of a sense of place and special awareness
- To develop an understanding of appropriate geographical concept

## Principles

### **C. Attitude Based**

- To encourage an understanding and appreciation of the variety of natural and human conditions on the Earth
- To encourage the development of caring attitudes and responsible behaviour towards the environment, and involvement in the identification, discussion, resolution and avoidance of environmental problems.
- To develop empathy with people from diverse environments and an understanding of human interdependence

## Aims

Taking the ethos of Scoil San Eoin into account, we aim to:-

- Develop a gradual interest in, and knowledge and understanding of natural and human environments in the locality, region, Ireland, Europe and the World
- Understand some of the natural, social or economic processes which create, sustain or change environments
- Heighten awareness of environmental issues
- Engage in active exploration of local environments as an intrinsic element of learning
- Use and value creative, innovative thinking in the exploration and/or resolution of human and environmental issues
- Extend, refine and apply artistic, linguistic and mathematical skills
- Acquire the ability to use and understand appropriate investigative methods in the study of natural and human features and phenomena in local and other environments
- Develop an ability to acquire, analyse and communicate geographical knowledge using a wide variety of sources, including oral, written and geographical forms, models, maps and globes, information technology and other media
- Foster local, national and European identity

## Content

### Strands and Strand Units

	Infants	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Human Environments</b>	Living in the local community	Living in the local community	People living and working in the local area	People living and working in the local area
	People and places in other areas	People and places in other areas	People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland	People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland
			People and other lands	People and other lands
			County, regional and national centres	County, regional and national centres
				Trade and development issues
<b>Natural Environments</b>	The local natural environment	The local natural environment	The local natural environment	The local natural environment
	Weather	Weather	Weather, climate and atmosphere	Weather, climate and atmosphere
	Planet Earth in Space	Planet Earth in Space	Planet Earth in Space	Planet Earth in Space
			Land, rivers and seas of my county	Land, rivers and seas of my county
			Rocks and soils	Rocks and soils
				Physical features of Europe and the world

<b>Environmental awareness and care</b>	Caring for my locality	Caring for my locality	Environmental Awareness	Environmental Awareness
			Caring for the Environment	Caring for the Environment

We will ensure that the children experience a broad and balanced programme of work at each of the four levels. Each year children will experience topics from each strand unit. It is intended that over a two year period all strand units from each strand will be covered

### Skills and Content

The following are the strategies that will be used by each class to develop the child's skills and concepts development under the three heading

#### ■ A Sense of Place and Space

##### **A) A Sense of Place**

Children in all classes will become aware of, explore and discuss some of the distinctive human and natural features of the locality and develop some awareness of people and places in other areas. From third to sixth classes an awareness of distinctive human and natural features will be broadened to places in Ireland and other parts of the world

##### **B) A Sense of Space**

Children in all classes will refer to or use locational terms, discuss and record journeys to and from places in the immediate environment and refer to or use directions within home, classroom and school. Children from first to sixth class will discuss and record the relative location of familiar human and natural features in the locality. In third and fourth classes the children will be enabled to establish and use cardinal compass points in the locality and come to develop an awareness of the names and relative location of some European countries. Children in fifth and sixth classes will be enabled to estimate and measure distances and establish cardinal directions during exploration of the locality. They will also begin to develop an understanding of the names and relative location of some natural and human features of Europe and the World.

## ■ Maps, Globes and Graphical Skills

### **A) Picturing Places**

Children in the junior classes will refer to or use simple drawings of areas, make model buildings with bricks, Lego and other play materials. They will also become aware of globes as models of the Earth.

### **B) Using Pictures, Maps and Models**

Children in first and second classes will be enabled to:

- a. Record areas in the immediate environment and places in stories using simple picture maps, models and other methods
- b. Explore the outlines and plans of small everyday items
- c. Develop some awareness of maps and if possible aerial photographs of limited areas in the locality
- d. Identify land and sea on maps and globes
- e. Use maps of Ireland and the globe to develop an awareness of other places

Children from third to sixth classes will be enabled to:

- a. Make simple maps of home, classroom, school and the immediate environment
- b. Identify major geographical features and find places on the globe
- c. Develop an understanding of and use some common map features and conversations
- d. Develop some familiarity with and engage in practical use of maps and photographs of different scales and purposes

## ■ Maps and Globes

Children in fifth and sixth classes will be enabled to:

- a. Compare maps, globes, aerial photographs, satellite photographs and other remotely sensed images
- b. Recognise key lines of latitude and longitude on the globe
- c. Develop some awareness of problems associated with map construction

## ■ Geographical Investigation Skills

Working geographically will involve the children in:

### **a. Observing**

Teacher questions/comments about the natural and human features in order to focus the child's attention. Children will be asked to observe, compare and describe, classify and communicate

### **b. Questioning**

Questioning is a means by which the child will make a link between previous and new experiences and also will form the basis for investigative work

### **c. Predicting**

Prediction is a guess or a suggestion about what will happen next in a situation. It poses ideas or simple theories that may be tested by experimentation.

### **d. Investigating and Experimenting**

A simple investigation set by the teacher to make observations and collect data and information from a variety of sources, for example IT or photographs

### **e. Estimating and Measuring**

Children at junior level will estimate and compare non-standard units. At senior level, the children will estimate, use appropriate simple instruments and techniques to collect data and use appropriate units of measurement

### **f. Analysing**

At infant level, the children will sort and group objects according to observable features. Children from first class to sixth classes will sort/group people, features, events and natural phenomena, begin to look for and recognise patterns and relationships in the environment, draw conclusions from simple investigations and offer explanations.

### **g. Recording and Communicating**

At infant level, the children will describe and discuss observations orally using expanding vocabulary, and represent findings pictorially or using other media. Children from first to sixth classes will record and present findings and conclusions using a variety of media e.g. oral, written, pictorial, photographic, IT.

## **h. Evaluating**

Children in fifth and sixth classes will review the methods used in investigations and assess their usefulness

### **Children's ideas**

At the start of a lesson, the teacher may use the children's ideas of place and space as a starting point for geography activities. Through talk and discussion, questioning, listening, problem solving, tasks, drawing, the teacher can find out what the children know already

### **Approaches and Methodologies:**

The use of a wide range of methodologies and approaches is essential for the development of a balanced range of geographical skills, concepts and attitudes. The different strand units will require the use of a variety of teaching methods and we will seek to enable the children to engage in lively, purposeful activity in the classroom and in extensive exploration of the local environment.

### **Organising and managing the lesson**

#### **Whole-class Work**

Teachers use this approach when introducing a new topic, providing background information that may be required for an activity, demonstrating new methods of work and when drawing the lesson to a conclusion, encouraging different groups to report on their tasks. Teachers may adopt a holistic or theme based approach, in particular in the middle and senior classes.

#### **Small Groups**

The children are organised into groups depending on the task

- Several groups working on similar activities
- Small groups working on different activities
- Small groups rotating around different activities
- One small group working on a task
- Depending on the lesson, teachers use this approach when introducing a new topic, providing background information

#### **Individual Work**



### Methodologies

- Guided and discovery learning
- Teacher directed approach
- Active learning
- Problem solving
- Use of the Environment
- Co-operative learning
- Collaborative learning
- Talk and Discussion
- Developing skills through content

The above teaching strategies are dependent on a number of key considerations

- The nature of the lesson
- The needs of the pupils
- The multi-class nature of our school
- The class level

Irrespective of the approach selected, children's learning in geography should

- Result from a process of enquiry in which children are encouraged to ask questions, to collect information and evidence, to search for patterns, share ideas and draw conclusions
- Build upon geographical information about their immediate and other environments which children bring to school and integrate with S.P.H.E programme and in the senior classes with the Science, Mathematics and the History Curriculum
- Introduce pupils to geographical concepts in a structured and systematic way and provide plenty opportunities for concepts to be visited and refined.
- Arouse enthusiasm and curiosity about the environment
- Develop skills of co-operation, communication and problem solving
- Encourage the development of attitudes of mutual respect and tolerance

### Project work

Projects are a valuable way in which children may become active in their own learning. They accord with the importance that the language curricula attaches to writing for an audience, drafting and redrafting and fostering the child's impetus to write.

### **Project work**

One useful method is to help the child frame a number of questions about the topic of the project in advance and afterwards discuss the questions and answers between pupils and teacher. The children will develop skills to select and use suitable reference books and other sources of information. Children can conduct surveys among their peers, the school staff, family and community. They will also be encouraged to obtain information from sources such as the Internet, newspapers etc to obtain information collected in ways which are different from the original sources

Once a year Scoil San Eoin has an opening day, where current parents, potential parents/pupils and the wider community are invited into the school to view the projects and listen to the children present their work. Project work is now accessed via our school website.

### **The Role of Maps and Mapping in the Geography Lesson**

The use and construction of maps is one of the most distinctive of all geographical skills. Maps enable us to record and present information about places and spatial relationships and they can also help us to understand more about environments, both those in which we live or move about and those in which we have no direct experience. Understanding and using maps involves the simultaneous use of a number of concepts and skills.

- A map is a two-dimensional representation of a three-dimensional landscape
- Maps use a wide range of symbols to convey information
- If a map is to be used to find a route or as an aid to understanding an environment it must be aligned correctly with the features on the ground
- Locating positions on a map involves the use of some type of grid system or co-ordinates which allows positions to be described using horizontal and vertical references
- The use of a key
- The symbols which are used on maps
- The concept of scale and distance

Among the maps which could be used are:

- Architectural drawings and plans of buildings
- Plans of rooms
- Scale drawings of cars
- Large wall maps
- Atlases
- Globe
- Ordnance survey maps

Mapping activities in the infant and junior classes should enable children to come to appreciate the uses and possibilities of maps. Through drawing pictures of events and places children should begin to appreciate that they can communicate information about their environment to others through the medium of maps.

### **Linkage and Integration**

Integrated learning both within subjects and between curricular areas is an important principle of the curriculum. Integration also allows blocks of time to be utilised in the most efficient way and is particularly useful in our multi-class situation. When planning teachers will identify themes that will enable them to integrate aspects of Geography, with SPHE, Mathematics, Visual Arts, P.E., Science, History, Drama, Music, Religion, Irish and English. For example many of the features that give a place its distinctive character are the result of the actions of people over several generations in the past. History and Geography play complementary roles in helping children to understand the world around them. Linkage takes place within the Geography curriculum. Although the curriculum is presented in three strands almost all geographical studies will encompass elements from at least two and perhaps all three strands. For example the study of the locality and other environments will normally include the examination of both human and natural environmental features and these studies may also give rise to discussion of environmental issues and concerns.

### **Multi-grade Teaching**

In our multi-class setting, systematic classroom planning is essential. In order to use a thematic approach, care must be taken to ensure adequate subject coverage and a balanced range of content within each subject for the blocks of time to be utilised efficiently. Integration with other subjects can also be adopted

## Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning and is essential and on-going in the geography curriculum

### **Role of Assessment**

- It will provide an indication of the child's overall achievement
- It will help the teacher evaluate suitability of the S.E.S.E. programme for the particular group
- It provides the basis for decision making about pupils, further learning needs and assists in planning better educational experiences
- It will enhance the teacher's awareness of individual learning and provide accurate information about the child's understanding and skills
- It will indicate areas of difficulty encountered by the child

### **Assessment Tools**

- Teacher observation
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests
- Work samples and projects

Children's participation in a broad range of geographical activities will provide a flow of information about their progress in achieving the objectives of the curriculum.

A number of techniques will be used in collecting and recording information about pupil progress in geography. Each has its contribution to make in assisting the teacher in assessing progress.

### Teacher observation

The details of children's learning which teachers notice as geographical topics are explored and taught provide essential and immediate information about each child's progress. Clarifying in advance the expected outcomes of the learning situation will also help to enhance the observations made.

### Teacher-designed tasks and tests

The active learning situations in which these tasks will take place can be used to assess the progress of individuals and groups and can be especially useful in evaluating children's development of skills and attitudes.

### **Teacher-designed tasks and tests**

The way in which children complete investigations in the environment will provide much crucial evidence of learning in geography. The critical skills applied to information obtained will be noted.

Children's pictorial and written work and their communication in other forms such as maps, plans, photographs, learning logs and computer files should provide opportunities for them to demonstrate what they know and understand about the local and wider environment and what geographical skills they can apply.

### **Work samples and projects**

The collection of samples of the children's work provides one of the most important tools of assessment in geography and SESE.

Specific samples that meet certain criteria will be selected for inclusion in the folder.

- those that show that particular objectives have been achieved, for example at the end of a unit of work
- those that mark significant progress in the application of a geographical skill, for example, if a child demonstrates the use of aerial perspective rather than oblique views or iconic representation on a map
- those that indicate a weakness or gap in the child's knowledge or skills, such as a poor understanding of the location of the home area relative to the nearby urban area or a capital city
- those that indicate significantly greater progress or a breadth of understanding beyond the content of the lessons.

### **Homework**

Homework is given in geography when it is deemed appropriate. Project work can often be included in homework.

### **I.C.T**

The computer provides opportunities for the children to demonstrate what they know and understand about the topic and what geographical skills they can apply.

### **Children with different needs**

In Scoil San Eoin children with different needs are enabled to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes in geography by engaging in geographical activities in a structured way

Material is approached in a variety of ways to present it to different children and therefore some flexibility in planning and preparation will be necessary. In most instances the child with special needs will participate in classroom geography with some modification or adaptation to his/her needs.

Where a child is experiencing difficulties, plenty of encouragement and repetition of instructions will be necessary. A child with emotional or behavioural difficulties will benefit from exposure to a variety of activities. These activities will be structured and have specific rules and instructions

A number of techniques may be used to provide a range of learning activities appropriate to the individual needs of pupils. Consideration will be given so that:-

- The same lesson content would be used with all pupils but different groups of children could be set various tasks ranging in difficulty
- Different levels of questioning are used to challenge different children in a variety of ways
- A wide range of communication skills are utilised, giving opportunities to children to record and tell about their work using drawing, modelling, computers or whatever media is best suited to the child
- Opportunities are provided for alternative investigation work for the more/less able

### **Equality of Participation and Access**

- The Geography Curriculum will afford us the opportunity to broaden the pupils' understanding of other environments and cultures
- Equal opportunities will be afforded to both boys and girls to participate in all activities and to experience all strands while being mindful of individual differences and abilities

### **Interculturalism**

- The Geography class is used as an opportunity to integrate the culture of all pupils, be it rural or urban culture
- The Geography programme in our school celebrates differences as well as promoting cultural awareness.

### **Timetabling**

Teachers allocate a specific weekly amount of time to geography in their timetable. Time allocation may be flexible, as work in each area will complement learning in other subjects

### **Resources and ICT**

Geography provides many opportunities for the development and application of skills in the area of ICT. Computers are a useful resource for geographical investigations as they facilitate children's presentation of their own geographical findings, to record and analyse, to interpret and record data and also to discover additional information. While developing resources within the school appropriate attention will be given to purchasing I.C.T materials which may be used across the various strands.

Please see I.C.T. policy for Code of Practice to ensure safe Internet usage

### **Health and Safety**

During practical work, teachers should be aware of the safety implications of any exploratory work to be undertaken. Children should be encouraged to observe procedures during all tasks.

### **Outdoor Exploration and Investigation**

Outdoor work will be based in areas that are available and accessible to the children. Due consideration will be given to children with specific difficulties. Adequate supervision will be provided. Disposable gloves will be used to investigate plants, hedgerows and walls. Hand washing will be encouraged after all outdoor pursuits.

### **Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting**

Teachers refer to the whole school plan and the curriculum documents for geography to provide information and guidance for their long and short term planning. They plan using the strand and strand units.

### **Staff Development:**

Teachers have access to reference books, resource materials, equipment and websites dealing with geography. Teachers research new approaches and methodologies. They are encouraged to attend in-service courses and to impart/discuss information acquired at these courses. Time is allocated at staff meetings to discuss aspects of the geography curriculum.

### **Parental Involvement**

Parents play a crucial role in the implementation of the geography plan. The geographical experiences acquired in the home are of immense value and should always be encouraged. The emphasis which the geography curriculum places on local studies will mean that members of the children's own families may help to enrich and support the programme in a number of ways. Parents can play a very useful role in helping to identify and understand natural environments, work places, buildings and other places in the locality which might form part of the programme. Parents can support the child in fostering an interest in local, regional, national, European and global geography.

As homework is the main link between home and school, it will provide parents and children with an opportunity to recap and consolidate knowledge from school. Furthermore this link will give parents and children the chance to investigate and talk about topics and ideas developed at school.

### **Community Links**

An important aspect of the programme is concerned with the work and lives of people in the area. This work can become real and tangible for the child when people are willing to talk to children about their lives, work and other interests. Field trips to the local environment will be organised from time to time. Field trips have recently included trips to Kilmacurragh Botanic Gardens and Avondale House and Forest park.



## Geographical Language

Geography can be viewed as a language in itself. The gradual introduction of geographical terms enables children to describe and discuss features in the environment. The development of children's understanding of locational and directional terms is closely linked to their sense of place and special awareness. It is important that the school as a whole encourages the accurate and effective use of geographical language.

## Success Criteria

We will know that the plan has achieved its aims when:

- Children have an interest and understanding of natural and human environments in the locality, region, Ireland, Europe and the World.
- Children understand some of the natural, social and economic processes which create, sustain or change environments.
- Children are aware of environmental issues.
- Children engage in active exploration of local environment
- Children have the ability to use and understand appropriate investigative methods in the study of natural and human features in local and other environments.
- Children use and value creative, innovative thinking in the exploration and/or resolution of human and environmental issues
- Children can extend, refine and apply artistic, linguistic and mathematical skills
- Children have the ability to use and understand appropriate investigative methods in the study of natural and human features and phenomena in local and other environments.
- Children have the ability to acquire and communicate geographical knowledge using a wide variety of sources, including oral, written and geographical forms, models, maps, information technology and other media.
- We will know that the plan promoted the key considerations when implementing the geography programme;
  - Geography is about developing a sense of space
  - Children's ideas of place and space are used as the starting point
  - Knowledge and skills are of equal importance
  - The primary source for geography is the environment, starting with the local, then regional, national, European and global

## Implementation and Review

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

It will be the responsibility of the staff to implement the programme. Parents and the Board of management will support the plan.

### **Time Frame and Review**

It will be reviewed as often as required when changes occur but will be reviewed by the whole school on a bi-annual basis

### **Ratification**

This Geography plan was ratified by the Board of Management.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Henry Fleming (Chairman B.O.M.)

Linda Greene (Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 1**

### **Steps used in the undertaking of fieldwork in Scoil San Eoin**

**Quality:** Creative, careful planning and preparation is essential for fieldwork. It should be a meaningful, purposeful and enjoyable experience

**Sustainability:** Respect for the diversity of environments for our children and for future generations. 'Take responsibility for our actions and their impact on the environment'

- **Permission;** Principal, class teacher and parents
- **Organisation:** Identify an area of interest and become thoroughly familiar with it. Conduct the essential background research; decide where and when should the trail take place. Pre-visit the site and plan on-site activities, seek the advice of other teachers and get permission to go on the sites e.g. graveyards, heritage sites etc. Walk the site with the aid of another teacher and look at it from a point of view of road safety and other possible hazards.
- **Preparation:** Make out the trail and check to make sure that skill development is evident. Ensure that the activities are appropriate and that there is adequate supervision for the trail. Prepare the pupils beforehand by ensuring that they have sufficient background knowledge and that they are familiar with the rules governing the trail.
- **Implementing:** Requirements for the trail, time of departure and time of expected arrival back from the trail, first-aid equipment, telephone numbers, lunch arrangements, weather conditions/ contingency plans.
- **Follow-up and Evaluation:** Discussion, written reports, project work, art work, computer work, completion trail booklet.

**All fieldwork/trails should enable the child to: -**

- Recognise items and features which they have encountered in class work or books
- Observe closely colours, shapes and patterns. Provide children with opportunities to draw, sketch or complete an unfinished sketch
- Listen to sounds from the natural or man made environment
- Investigate and carry out simple investigations based on observations
- Predict and suggest outcomes of an investigation based on observations
- Estimate and measure a feature of the environment

- Collect and record facts and details, labelling, notices on buildings, street names, road signs and advertisements.

**All fieldwork/trails should enable the child to: -**

- Classify information, look for particular patterns in the environment
- Notice instances of change and continuity
- Develop map-reading skills, locating places or features
- Construct simple maps of the local environment
- Conduct traffic survey
- Interview people in the local environment
- Conduct an environmental audit of the area
- Conduct a land use survey
- Develop co-operative and group working skills
- Make deductions from available evidence e.g. examining street names

## Geography Equipment Inventory

- There is a library of CDs, DVDs and ICT programmes that support the history programme available.
- Teachers have access to a broad range of textbooks and ancillary materials which will support the strands and strand units being taught-. Therefore, teaching and learning is not textbook driven and uses the prior knowledge of the child as a starting point.
- Teachers manuals/posters are available for each scheme
  - Globes
  - Maps
  - Atlas
  - Compasses
  - Geography Quest
  - Small world
  - What a Wonderful World
  - All around me