

Curriculum Statement

Geography



Hooked on Thinking

Working With and For Local Families



Intent – Geography at Hindhayes

Recent research used to inform practice: **The Geographical Association; Leading Primary Geography (LPG) (2019); Research Review Series (RRS): Geography (2021); Geography in Outstanding Schools (2021); The National College – Primary Geography (2021); The Education Inspection Framework (2019); Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework (2021); National Curriculum (NC) (2014).**

Geography has traditionally had a low status in primary schools with there being a huge decline in the amount of time spent learning about the subject. Her Majesty's Inspectors and Ofsted frequently criticise the quality of geography education being taught in primary schools referring to it as in a relatively poor state (RRS: Geography 2021). However, a revised EYFS has been introduced this year (2021) which includes many new references to the teaching of geography under various areas of learning. This demonstrates how geography can be taught holistically to young children which can then be built on as they move up through the school system. The subject is experiencing a revival and many references have been made to how geography can strengthen children's comprehension across other subjects. At a time of great uncertainty, "Geography education in the 21st century should be about teaching and learning in a spirit of hope and optimism, which recognises the rights and responsibilities of both present and future generations, on a global scale" (LPG 2019). "Geography education can help to show children how they can contribute to building a better world – a world in which co-operation, fairness, sensitivity and kindness to each other and the environments that sustain us become our guiding values" (Teaching Primary Geography 2017).

Developing skilled geographers at Hindhayes: Our aim is to nurture young geographers through engaging and empowering learning, to develop their natural curiosity and understanding of the world around them and instil in them the desire to find out more. We want to give our children an inquisitiveness, a love of finding out how and why our planet is as it is, and an appreciation of their bit of the world they see every day when they step outside their home. Our ambition is for our geography teaching to help build the knowledge and skills the children of today will need to realise their own potential and to solve the problems that will confront them in the future. Through our geography teaching, we hope our children to be able to make greater sense of, and act more thoughtfully about, both where they live and the wider world. Our intention is for our children to see that what happens in their localities and across the globe affects them, directly and indirectly. Through high quality teaching we aim to blend the three threads of geographical knowledge: facts, themes and key concepts (or big ideas) to help our children learn to think geographically. We also aim to offer the children opportunities to develop the key geographical skills to help them to understand geographical patterns and processes, building their interest in the subject and enriching their learning experiences. Our children will have the opportunity to develop their observational, questioning and investigative skills through first-hand enquiry-based learning experiences and fieldwork. We hope that through our geography teaching we will facilitate two of the most important linked ideas: looking at similarity and difference and moving in understanding and knowledge from the local to the global. The curriculum content has been carefully selected and sequenced to reflect this vision and to support the school context.

Implementation We use the EYFS framework (2021) in the Foundation Stage to plan and provide learning experiences to our youngest children to develop their understanding of geographical concepts. For example, when the children start school in September, they are gradually introduced to their new school environment and its surroundings, meeting those who work there, finding out about their roles. We provide opportunities to meet with local professionals, such as the fire brigade and take part in visits to local areas of interest, such as farms and wildlife centres, to broaden the children's understanding of their local area. Children in the Foundation Stage have many opportunities to explore atlases, maps and globes in their play and are actively encouraged to interact with geography resources, such as compasses, in a fun and playful manner. As the children move into Key Stage 1 we use the NC (2014) as a basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the geography programme of study. We start with what the children know, building on what they have been learning in the Foundation Stage and use this knowledge, together with the geography programme of study, to plan and provide an engaging geography curriculum. We support our children to develop their appreciation of geographical concepts through hands-on enquiry-based learning that is both meaningful and purposeful. The children are given the opportunity to explore their world using maps, atlases and globes to build a sense of their place in the world. Fieldwork is carried out in both our extensive outdoor school environment and during school trips in the local area and wider locality as opportunities to work in this way improve our children's geography skills and knowledge. Building a good understanding of geographical concepts is key and having the opportunities to immerse themselves in their fieldwork helps children develop their sense of place and space. Scale is also important and being able to zoom in and out of locations, using Google Earth for example, helps children to develop an understanding of how places are connected. Through their explorations and investigation children's geographical vocabulary is developed with opportunities arising for children to practise using their newly acquired words in context. Promoting critical thinking amongst our learners is essential. We encourage children to ask questions, to find out answers to their questions and to evaluate the evidence they have gathered so that they can form their own opinions and present their own arguments. Children with SEND learn alongside their fellow classmates in a supportive and inclusive environment with teaching staff on hand to scaffold the learning as we believe in providing a geography curriculum for all.

Developing Cultural Capital in the EYFS

At the beginning of the reception year, we spend time getting to know the child and their family and finding out about their homelife and where they live. The children start to explore their new school and grounds and develop their understanding of their school, its space and their place within it. Many of our children have had limited life experiences and so we believe in providing opportunities to develop their understanding of their village further. We offer opportunities to take part in walks to local areas of interests, such as parks, places of worship and theatres. Meeting members of the local community helps to build children's understanding of their locality, as they come to see who uses these spaces and they begin to understand what occurs here. We are lucky to be based in a rural part of Somerset and are surrounded by countryside meaning opportunities to explore woods and farmland as well as nature reserves and hills are prevalent. Having a basic understanding of where they live means children can begin to compare where they live to other places in the world. Through high quality texts, we explore other countries and cultures and begin to think about what it might be like to live in other places. Children are encouraged to explore new lands through small world play, for example. This opens the world to the children as they begin to understand about different places and environments on planet Earth.

Impact

Children's progress in geography will be assessed in their understanding of the key geographical concepts, or 'big ideas'. Teachers will use ongoing informative assessment, in the form of questioning and observation, to assess the progress their class are making. Teachers will check in with groups and individuals at regular intervals, providing useful feedback, addressing any misconceptions, scaffolding any difficulties as they occur. Teachers will use this awareness to adjust their lessons to ensure their class have grasped the concepts being explored. Having an audience for children to share their work with is a powerful way to give meaning to the work the children have produced. Children will feel a sense of empowerment by such an approach and the experience will live with the children for a long time to come. Our children will develop a real sense of awe and wonder about the world in which they live. They will have a good understanding of the key concepts and skills and will be able to communicate their ideas using geographical vocabulary.