



St. Patrick's NS Strangsmills

# Geography Plan

Revised: 2024

[www.strangsmillsns.ie](http://www.strangsmillsns.ie)

16875G

## **Introductory Statement and Rationale**

### **Introduction**

This policy outlines the teaching and organisation of Geography at St. Patrick's NS Strangsmills. The policy has been drawn up as a result of staff discussion and meetings. The initial plan was completed in 2007, revised in February 2012, reviewed in October and November 2019 and further updated in April 2024. This plan will form the basis of each teacher's long and short term planning in Geography and so will influence teaching and learning in individual classrooms. It will also inform new or temporary teachers of our approaches and methodologies in this subject area. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all the teaching staff.

### **Rationale**

Geography is a valued part of the curriculum at St. Patrick's NS Strangsmills, as it provides a means of exploring, appreciating and understanding the world in which we live and how it has evolved. Geography explores the relationship between the Earth and its people. It promotes environmental awareness and our duty of care to our surroundings. It gives us an understanding and appreciation of different cultures and peoples of the world and teaches us to respect those differences.

Geography stimulates curiosity and imagination and we aim to build upon the child's personal geography by developing geographical skills, understanding and knowledge through studying places and themes.

We encourage children to learn by experience. We value working in the natural school environment, the school garden and school grounds. We visit other local habitats when suitable, as an integral part of the Geography Curriculum. We recognise that Geography is an integral part of the S.E.S.E programme and as such is never an isolated aspect of it.

## **Vision**

We believe that the Geography Curriculum enables children to make sense of the natural and human environments in which they live and in the wider world. As such, Geography is pivotal to each child's rounded environmental education. Geography prepares pupils to contribute and play a role in their communities by encouraging them to appreciate the interdependence of people. Geography promotes an understanding of and respect for different cultures and ways of life. The Geography curriculum fosters children's responsibility for the immediate and wider environments.

## **Aims**

We endorse the aims of the SESE Geography curriculum:

- To develop knowledge and understanding of local, regional and wider environments and their inter-relationships
- To encourage an understanding and appreciation of the variety of natural and human conditions on the Earth
- To develop empathy with people from diverse environments and an understanding of human interdependence
- To develop the ability to use a range of communicative methods, especially those concerned with the development of graphics (mapping and other non-verbal, non-numerical forms of data presentation)
- To encourage the development of a sense of place and spatial awareness
- 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 an understanding of appropriate geographical concepts

## **Broad Objectives**

The broad objectives of Geography are to

- Develop 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
- Study the impact of environmental conditions on the lives of people in the locality and in other areas, and come to appreciate some of the ways in which humans use, modify or influence their environments
- Engage in active exploration of local and other environments as an intrinsic element of learning
- 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 a sense of place: an understanding and appreciation of the major characteristics of different places
- Develop a sense of space: an understanding of how natural and human features are located and distributed in local and other environments and how and why they relate to each other
- Develop an appropriate cognitive map of the local area and extend the process to wider geographical settings
- Acquire an ability to understand, develop and use a growing range of plans, maps and globes

- Develop an ability to acquire, analyse and communicate geographical knowledge using a wide variety of sources, including oral, written and graphical forms, models and globes, information technology and other media
- Extend, refine and apply artistic, linguistic and mathematical skills
- Learn that the sharing, responsible use and conservation of the Earth's natural and human resources are necessary for the continued existence of life
- Develop aesthetic sensitivity to the natural and human elements of the environment and to the repercussions of human actions
- Learn of and come to value the diversity of peoples, cultures and societies in Ireland and throughout the world, acquire an awareness of human interdependence and develop empathy with others
- Use and value creative, innovative thinking in the exploration and/or resolution of human and environmental issues

## **Curriculum Planning:**

### **Environmental Education**

Environmental Education forms an integral and important part of the Geography curriculum.

Within the strands and strand units there are units that lend themselves to developing the children's knowledge, understanding, concern and care for the environment.

Staff and pupils began working towards the acquisition of the First Green Flag in the school during 2011. Work has continued on the various themes over the last number of years. Flags for the different themes were awarded as follows:

Litter and Waste	May 2013
Energy	May 2015

Water	May 2017
Global Citizenship Marine Environment	May 2019
Travel	May 2022

### **1. Strands and strand units**

Each teacher is familiar with the strands and strand units, content objectives for his/her class level and indeed for each other's class levels. This is to ensure a coherent programme throughout the school.

All strands and all strand units must be covered each year but not all the content objectives need be addressed within a strand unit. Occasionally a topic may be covered in a certain class informally or at the discretion of the class teacher.

The three strands of the Geography curriculum are:

- Human Environments
- Natural Environments
- Environmental Awareness and Care

We are aware that one of the key messages in this Geography Curriculum is that children start developing geographical concepts by exploring their local and immediate environment. In this way, the children get a strong sense and appreciation of their own place. This will be reflected in our teaching at all levels.

### Overview of the Strands and Strand Units for each Class Grouping

<u>Strands</u>	<u>Human Environments</u>	<u>Natural Environments</u>	<u>Environmental Awareness &amp; Care</u>
	<u>Strand Units</u> ↓	<u>Strand Units</u> ↓	<u>Strand Units</u> ↓
<u>Infant Classes</u> pp. 17-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Living in the local community</li> <li>• People and places in other areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local natural environment</li> <li>• Weather</li> <li>• Planet Earth in space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caring for my locality</li> </ul>
<u>First &amp; Second Class</u> pp. 29-43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Living in the local community</li> <li>• People and places in other areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local natural environment</li> <li>• Weather</li> <li>• Planet Earth in space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caring for my locality</li> </ul>
<u>Third &amp; Fourth Class</u> pp. 45-61	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People living and working in the local area</li> <li>• People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland</li> <li>• People and other lands</li> <li>• County, regional and national centres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local natural environment</li> <li>• Lands, rivers and seas of my county</li> <li>• Rocks and soils</li> <li>• Weather, climate and atmosphere</li> <li>• Planet Earth in space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental awareness</li> <li>• Caring for the environment</li> </ul>
<u>Fifth &amp; Sixth Class</u> pp. 63-84.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People living and working in the local area</li> <li>• People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland</li> <li>• People and other lands</li> <li>• County, regional and national centres</li> <li>• Trade &amp; development issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local natural environment</li> <li>• Lands, rivers and seas of my county</li> <li>• Rocks and soils</li> <li>• Weather, climate and atmosphere</li> <li>• Planet Earth in space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental awareness</li> <li>• Caring for the environment</li> </ul>

**St. Patrick's NS Collaboration and continuity**

Discussion and agreement by our school staff in relation to the headings on the grid below have provided an overview of the geography programme throughout the school, in order to promote continuity and progression and minimise unnecessary overlap and duplication.

Strand Units	Content Selected			
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Class	4 <sup>th</sup> Class	5 <sup>th</sup> Class	6 <sup>th</sup> Class
<b>People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland</b>	Dublin - Blanchardstown	Arranmore, Donegal	Clare	Tipperary
<b>People and other lands</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 location in Europe</li> <li>• 1 location in other part of world</li> </ul> <b>People living and working in a contrasting part of the world</b>	Spain  Egypt	Italy  China	France  Australia	Greece  Africa
<b>County, regional and national centres</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ My county</li> <li>○ Provinces</li> <li>○ Leinster counties</li> </ul>	All counties	Place names	Cities and towns
<b>Trade and development issues</b> <i>Trade or famine or Development &amp; Aid</i>			Famine and causes  The Banana story	Development and Aid  Poverty
<b>Land, rivers and seas of my county</b>	Kilkenny / Waterford	Kilkenny / Waterford		
<b>Land, rivers and seas of Ireland</b>	Seas and lakes of Ireland	Mountains of Ireland	Rivers and bays of Ireland	Headlands and Islands



<b>Physical features of Europe and the world</b>			Continents and oceans	Countries of Europe
<b>People living and working in the local area</b>	Farming and agriculture	Map of local area GAA	Fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Modern industry</li> <li>○ Tourism</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental awareness</b>	Rainforests Recycling	Natural forces	The Burren	Renewable energy
<b>Weather, climate and atmosphere</b>	Seasons around the world	Water cycle Climate types	Clouds Atmosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Weather measurement</li> <li>○ Met Éireann</li> </ul>
<b>Planet Earth in Space</b>	The Sun	The solar system	Outer space	The moon
<b>Rocks and Soils</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How soil is made</li> <li>○ Common soil in Ireland</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Volcanos</li> <li>○ Rocks</li> <li>○ Earthquakes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Soils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rock products</li> <li>○ The Earth's crust</li> <li>○ Pacific ring of fire</li> </ul>
<b>Maps, Globes &amp; Geographical Skills</b>	Ireland - the counties	Ireland	Europe	The world

## 2. Skills and concepts development

We are aware that the development of Geographical skills is of equal importance to strand content in this curriculum.

The skills working as a Geographer are:

- A sense of place and space
- Maps, globes and graphical skills
- Geographical investigation skills (Questioning, Observing, Predicting, Investigating and experimenting, Estimating and measuring, Analysing, Recording and communicating, Evaluating)

These skills will be developed through the content of the strands and strand units. Strategies for development of these skills will involve the children being actively involved in fieldwork, trails and outdoor investigations as suggested in Teacher Guidelines starting on page 68.

- A sense of place and space will be developed through direct and indirect experiences first in relation to the child's own home and immediate surroundings but will later extend to include wider environments.
- The use of maps, globes and atlases will be used in age appropriate way from infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class and will encompass a wide range of graphical activities
- The geographical investigation skills will be included in various indoor and outdoor Investigation work.

By following the content of this curriculum and by developing the geographical skills the children in our school are given opportunities to work as geographers at every class level.

These strategies used are listed in the *Curriculum pp. 22-23 Junior & Senior Infants; pp. 34-37 First & Second; pp. 50-53 Third & Fourth, pp. 68-71 Fifth & Sixth*

### **3. Children's ideas**

We use the children's ideas of place and space and personal knowledge and experiences as a starting point for all geography activities.

The following strategies are used to find out what the children already know.

- talk and discussion
- questioning
- listening
- problem-solving tasks
- drawings
- KWL charts
- brainstorming
- Concept maps
- teacher designed tasks and tests

## Teaching and Learning

In Geography class teachers strive to:

- Design activities which help pupils answer the geographical questions such as:- *Where is it? What is it like? How has it changed? Why has it changed? How will it change next? What will happen to it? How might it be better? What can be done? How do I feel? What am I learning?*
- Share with pupils what they are expected to learn and how to learn it.
- Provide a variety of learning activities that are used regularly including observation, enquiry, investigation, games, puzzles and problem-solving.
- Encourage pupils to critically evaluate information, ideas and different viewpoints.
- Encourage pupils to describe, explain, predict and evaluate geographical patterns, processes and environmental changes.
- Plan for pupils to make and use maps, to research through atlases and globes regularly, in order to locate places being studied and make use of models for exploration.
- Provide plenty of opportunity for pupils to work individually, in pairs and in groups.
- Encourage discussion so that pupils clarify their thinking.
- Provide pupils with regular feedback about their work and about what they need to do next in order to improve and further understand.
- Use assessment, through teacher observation, correction of pupils' work and the use of focused questions to determine the pupils' knowledge and understanding, before, during and after units of work.
- Expect pupils to record their work in a variety of ways, including diagrams, illustrations, pictures, letters, posters, annotated drawings and maps, reports and accounts. As appropriate, pupils make oral presentations of their work.

#### **4. Approaches and methodologies**

Our teachers will follow the recommended sequential approach for Geography whereby local areas are first studied followed by regional, national, European and global studies.

We will use the key methodologies of the Primary Curriculum in the teaching of Geography:

- Active learning
- Problem solving
- Developing skills through content
- Talk and discussion
- Co-operative learning
- Use of the environment
- Collaborative learning
- Interviews and surveys
- Fieldwork
- Story
- The following approaches and methodologies are used in learning about places:  
  
photographs, internet, e-mail, artefacts, stories, food, maps, personal experiences, music, clothes, money etc.
- The following approaches and methodologies are used in learning about the environment including fieldwork, exploratory trails, photographs, maps etc
- In St. Patrick's NS we have many trees, which we use for fieldwork including mapping skills, environmental audit, weather station, trails, mini beast hunts etc.
- The approaches and methodologies used to investigate human environments include fieldwork, surveys, photographs, artefacts, speakers, environmental audit etc
- The approaches and methodologies used to investigate natural environment are fieldwork, trails, photographs etc
- The approaches and methodologies used in learning about other places include use of artefacts, atlases, globes, interviews, photographs etc
- Mapping skills and mapping concepts are developed as part of the geography programme using local maps, plans, aerial photographs, internet, models etc

- Names of our county, country, Europe, world and globes are displayed in different classes in the school. Children use individual atlases in fifth and sixth class.

## **5. Linkage and integration**

### *Linkage:*

When we are studying the local environment, we will study both the natural and human environments and the effect one has on the other.

When we are studying distant places under the Human Environment strand, we also learn about the natural environments of these places.

The strand Environmental Awareness and Care is by its nature, linked strongly with the other two strands.

### *Integration:*

We will explore possibilities to integrate the SESE subjects at all class levels. We will refer to the Teacher Guidelines in Geography, History and Science in order to choose topics or themes for SESE integration.

In particular the use of environmental trails in Geography will complement the study of living things in Science while the strand of Environmental Awareness and Care is common to both curricula. The use of trails will also lead to the study of how places and features have been shaped by the actions of people in the past and so integrate naturally with Local studies in History.

Opportunities that exist for integration with other subject areas are:

- English: opportunities for pupils to apply their language and literacy skills

- SPHE : The development of the child's sense of identity and citizenship
- Mathematics: The skills outlined in mapping and graphical skills, numerical skills such as collecting numerical information, data processing and data presentation
- Visual Arts: Aesthetic awareness in the environments and making drawings.
- Physical Education: Outdoor and adventure activities.
- Language: Discussion of ideas and relationships in Geography. The language of location, direction and position.
- Religion: appreciate the beauty and scale of geographical features of the world in which we live, the influence of natural phenomena on our lives and in the lives of others.

## **6. Children with different needs**

It is important that all children experience a rounded environmental education. Geography plays a pivotal role in this education and so we will do our best to ensure that every child will have opportunities to engage in learning activities appropriate to their abilities.

- Teachers will use a mixture of whole-class teaching and group work, with different groups set tasks of various complexities.
- Teachers will develop their questioning techniques spanning from simple recall to more complex and analytical skills so that all pupils will have opportunities for success.
- Map work will be graded for the less able and the more able students.
- Different ways of recording and communicating findings will be encouraged: drawing, ICT, written records, oral reports and models.
- All children benefit from active involvement in the environment so all will be encouraged to participate in fieldwork.

- The exceptional ability child will be encouraged to undertake additional research and recording their geographical findings in a variety of ways.
- Content, methods of recording and desired learning outcomes will be differentiated for children with general learning difficulties.

## **7. Equality of participation and access**

We are committed to providing a teaching environment conducive to learning. Each child is valued, respected and challenged regardless of ability, race, gender, religion, social background, culture or disability.

- Equal opportunity will be given to boys and girls to experience all strands
- Boys and girls will have equal opportunities to participate in geography lessons and activities.
- Provision for children with physical difficulties will be made so that they can access the geography curriculum.
- Children whose first language is not English will be supported in accessing the geography curriculum also.

The Geography programme in our school will allow children to learn of and come to value the diversity of peoples, cultures and societies in Ireland and throughout the wider world and so promote cultural awareness. (Refer to DES Intercultural Ed Guidelines)

## **8. Assessment and record keeping**

As in all subject areas Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning of SESE Geography. We as a staff have a common understanding of its purpose and the ways in which the progress of children in geography will be assessed, documented and reported.

Assessment in geography in our school will fulfil the following roles:

- A diagnostic role – to identify areas of difficulty in order to respond to the needs of the child.
- A summative role- to establish the outcomes of learning after completing a unit of work.
- An evaluative role – to assist teachers in assessing their own practice, methodologies, approaches and resources.

We recognise that assessment techniques used in Geography must seek to assess progress in

- a) Children's knowledge of the environment and of the world.
- b) Children's ability to use geographical skills
- c) Children's development of attitudes

The assessment tools we will use will range from the informal means to the more structured approaches.

Methods we will use are:

- Teacher observation of the children's learning as the geography curriculum is implemented
- Teacher designed tasks and tests at the end of units of work.
- Work samples e.g. finished projects and investigations.

These records will inform the teacher of the progress of the child; the effectiveness of teaching methodologies employed and will also inform future planning. The assessment records will form the basis for reporting and discussing the child's progress with parents. This information will be relayed at Parent Teacher Meetings and in annual school reports.



### **Display of Pupils' Work**

Stimulating and interesting displays of Geography topics covering all abilities and ages will communicate learning processes and celebrate pupils' achievement. Our notice boards will often portray the children's work.

### **Organisational Planning**

Most of our classes are single classes with mixed ability and lessons are planned from the strands and strand units from the Revised Primary School Curriculum for Geography. Within these lessons there will be a good balance between whole-class work, group teaching and individual practice.

### **9. Timetable**

The time allocated to the teaching of Geography for **Infant Classes is 45 minutes per week** and for all other classes, **First – Sixth Class one hour per week**. Geography is a cross curricular subject and is integrated with most subjects throughout the day.

On occasion, time will be blocked as appropriate. This might occur when

- working on an integrated project
- exploring the local environment

Teachers will use discretionary curriculum time (2 hours per week) for SESE as appropriate.

### **10. Resources and ICT**

St. Patrick's NS uses the many resources in our area, school based resources and artefacts we have purchased for use in the classroom. Pupils are facilitated to become aware and knowledgeable of the subject area and to explore it in a "hands on" way. Pupils will also

discover how to be active citizens, both in school and at home in relation to each theme of the Geography programme.

### **Other Resources**

Individual teachers keep resources including reference books, globes, maps, photographs and posters in their classrooms which they share with fellow teachers as required. Each classroom and the learning support room have full internet access to use many of the recommended websites.

### **ICT**

ICT is used in various ways to support teaching and motivate children's learning. We use interactive whiteboards, visualisers, software, cameras, laptops, iPads and the internet (see internet usage policy). The Internet is used judiciously to find information, to expand on research and to enhance the learning experience. iPads are used in each class to research information and for games to improve their geographical skills. Computers are also available for specific children with additional needs to aid and support learning.

### **11. Health and Safety**

In their planning of activities, teachers will anticipate likely safety issues. They will also explain the reasons for safety measures and discuss any implications with the children. When undertaking Geographical activities, children will always be encouraged to consider safety for themselves, others and the environment and the resources they use. (See health and safety policy)

Teachers will consult the Principal whenever it is proposed to engage in fieldwork outside the school grounds.

During practical work teachers will be aware of the safety implications of any exploratory or investigative work to be undertaken. Successful and enjoyable investigations require sensible planning, good supervision and adherence to safety rules.

Outdoor work will be based in areas that are accessible for children, teachers and helpers and that are safe. Preliminary visits by teachers to the site will be necessary to identify potential hazards. If there are apparent dangers then a more suitable habitat will be selected for study. Habitat studies involve children in working with plants and animals, and teachers will be made aware that some children may be allergic to some animals and plants.

We will consult our school safety statement for advice on safety during such activities.

## **12. Individual teacher planning and reporting**

Teachers will plan using the whole school Geography plan and the curriculum objectives suited to each class level. Strands and strand units will be used to create termly schemes of work. A plan of work is in place for the senior classes 3rd-6th. Strand units and objectives planned will be listed in fortnightly schemes and those achieved recorded in the Cuntas Miosuil. Integration with other subjects will be taken into account while planning.

## **13. Staff development**

The Geography curriculum is implemented by the individual class teachers. There is frequent co-operation and sharing of ideas, approaches, methodologies and resources amongst the staff. Teachers are informed via the staff notice board and local Education centre of any upcoming professional development courses in Geography.

#### **14. Parental involvement/Community links**

Parents have an important role to play as custodians of local knowledge that can be shared with their children as they explore the various aspects of the local environment.

Parents are encouraged to help out in the delivery of this programme by:

- a. participating in surveys and interviews
- b. by helping out in supervision of fieldwork when/if needed
- c. Talking to the children about their lives, work, cultural and leisure interests.

Parents are invited to celebrate and view results of projects, surveys, investigations in the school or read about them on the website or social media.

Parents will be encouraged to invite the children to view places of interest especially distinctive natural environments with which they are familiar.

Parents from distant lands will be encouraged to share their heritage with the rest of the school if they so wish or if it is appropriate.

People in the local community who have an interest and knowledge in the environment will be invited to speak to the children. The local library will also be a source of knowledge for the children. Local businesses/factories may be approached to host a visit to a factory or other workplaces. The work of some national agencies relates to aspects of the Geography programme. As well as accessing materials produced by these agencies specifically for schools, we will welcome visits by speakers from these organisations such as the ESB, Tree Council of Ireland, Personnel from Concern/ Trócaire / Fair Trade may be invited to speak with the senior pupils about trade and development issues and about issues involving the developing world such as famine and fair trade.

### **Success Criteria - How will we know the plan is implemented?**

We will use the following criteria to assess the success of this plan

- Our yearly and classroom planning is based on the Whole School Plan
- There is a balance between skills and content
- Geographical concepts are learned by the children
- Children's geographical skills are progressing: a sense of place and space, geographical investigation skills, and mapping.

### **Has the plan achieved its aims?**

- Revisit the aims of the plan to ascertain if they were achieved
- Evidence that pupils are engaging in studies at an age-appropriate level
- Inspectors' reports and suggestions
- Teacher and Parent feedback
- Children's feedback
- Results of class assessments

### **Has the plan prompted the key considerations when implementing the geography programme?**

- Integrated themes are being developed, on occasion, across the school, using a whole school approach.
- That the curriculum is spiral and developmental in its structure
- Classes are engaged in outdoor observation and trails of the local environment
- Procedures outlined in this plan are consistently followed throughout the school
- Development of geographical skills throughout the classes.

## **Implementation**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

All the teachers are responsible for the implementation of the Geography curriculum in their own classrooms. Teachers will be encouraged to present feedback during reviews of Geography whole school plan. The plan will be monitored on an ongoing basis by all staff.

### **Timeframe**

The revised version of this plan will be implemented from September 2024.

### **Monitoring & Review**

All staff will be involved in monitoring this whole School Plan. This Plan will be reviewed again in 2027/2028.

### **Ratification and Communication**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on April 16<sup>th</sup> 2024.

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

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

Chairperson BOM