



WORLD AROUND US POLICY

Date Ratified by Board of Governors: 11/9/23

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WHAT IS THE WORLD AROUND US?

Children are naturally curious and often ask profound questions about themselves and the nature of the world around them. The purpose of this area of learning is to find age-appropriate answers to some of these big questions from the perspectives of geography, history and science and technology. (P83 N.I. Curriculum document)

The World Around Us is one of the six Areas of Learning in the Northern Ireland Curriculum. It focuses on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in Geography, History, Science and Technology. St John's PS aims to retain the best of current practice within the three subjects, while developing a topic/theme-based approach to this area of learning, and making relevant connections across all areas of learning, while ensuring breadth and balance.

The statutory curriculum for World Around Us is structured as follows:

Foundation Stage:

- The World Around Us including Geography, History and Science and Technology

Key Stages One & Two:

- The World Around Us through the contributory elements of Geography, History and Science and Technology

The World Around Us is presented as four inter-related strands that connect learning.

- Interdependence
- Place
- Movement and Energy
- Change Over Time

AIMS

- To develop knowledge, understanding and skills in the context of the World Around Us
- To promote understanding, respect and appreciation for the world in which they live
- To acknowledge and appreciate a sense of the past, changes which have occurred and how these affect the world today
- To develop an understanding of how relevant and important Science and Technology are in everyday life
- To develop in children the desire to enquire, investigate, analyse, evaluate and present

SKILLS

At St John's PS we also develop Geography, History and Science skills through the World Around Us. (These skills are listed in Appendix 1) **Links with the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities Framework have been highlighted to enable teachers to cross reference both.**

While many of the skills will be developed incidentally, we also plan for the development of subject specific skills when appropriate.

PLANNING APPROACHES

Our planning for WAU aims to promote through KWL:

- Good investigations and the development of children's enquiry skills
- Good use of ICT to support teaching and learning
- Effective use of the school/local environment, educational visits and visitors to the classroom
- Progression in key aspects of geography, history and science and technology.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

In St John's PS, Learning and Teaching approaches provide suitably challenging opportunities for all pupils to take part in lessons fully and effectively. Learning experiences are active, practical and enjoyable. We make use of a wide range of teaching methods balancing whole class, group and individual activities to engage children in effective learning.

In the Foundation stage children experience much of their learning through well planned and challenging play. Children have opportunities to make choices and decisions, developing their own ideas and interests, either as starting points for learning activities or pursuing a topic in more depth. They are supported in taking risks in their efforts to succeed and are actively involved in planning, carrying out and reflecting on their work within the World Around Us Learning Area.

INCLUSION

At our school the World Around Us forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs.

LEARNING IN THE OUTDOORS

At St John's PS we have a new outdoor learning area, good playground space and our local GAA grounds as part of our outdoor learning areas, as well as the old school building and chapel. The outdoor area provides children with one of the best environments in which to learn.

As Margaret McMillan (c1925) says, 'the best kept classroom and the richest cupboard are roofed only by the sky'.

Our pupils have opportunities to develop skills and concepts in an outdoor learning environment where they will:

- Become more aware of, more observant in and more responsive to their surroundings
- Develop an approach to careful observation, accurate recording and thoughtful analysis
- Encourage an interest in environmental issues
- Foster a sense of wonder and discovery

HEALTH AND SAFETY

We enable pupils to have access to the full range of World Around Us activities. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure it is safe and appropriate for all pupils. For WAU activities, we assess and manage risks with reference to the following documents as outlined in the whole school Health and Safety Policy.

- ASE: 'Be Safe!' which provides detail on legislation, teacher responsibilities, risk assessment and curriculum activity
- ELB/ESA: 'Out of School' details statutory obligations of schools when taking children off the school premises.

WAU COORDINATOR/CURRICULUM LEADER ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the World Around Us coordinator to

- Draw up an action plan for the development of the World Around Us in our school
- Monitor the running of the World Around Us scheme, Cross Curricular samples and ICLS to ensure continuity and progression throughout the school
- Negotiate, in accordance with the whole school Learning and Teaching policy, the place of WAU within the SDP and be involved in Monitoring and Evaluating
- Develop and disseminate knowledge and expertise of WAU in the context of the whole school policy on CPD
- Advise and guide colleagues with regard to appropriate classroom practice
- Formulate policy / scheme of work in association with teachers in line with SDP
- Promote and disseminate the policy within school
- Undertake monitoring to include lesson observations, examination of planning, and carry out evaluations
- Ensure that the area of learning is properly resourced in terms of acquisition, safe storage and access
- Organise Science Week and liaise with outside agencies and parents

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all teaching staff. Monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in Geography, History and Science and Technology within the World Around Us is the responsibility of the coordinator/ curriculum leader.

The work of the WAU coordinator/ curriculum leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of this Learning Area, being informed about current developments, and providing a strategic lead and direction. There is time allocated for fulfilling the vital task of reviewing samples of children's work and visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject. The WAU coordinator / curriculum leader gives the Board of Governors an annual report in which he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in this Learning Area.

RESOURCES

We are currently developing resources for all WAU topics/themes in the school. Class teachers will supplement these resources with their own (and pupils') materials. The class libraries and mobile libraries contain a good supply of topic and reference books and computer software to support children's individual research.

| Stages | Learning Intentions (we are learning...) |
|-------------------|---|
| Foundation | |
| | <p>To begin to have a sense of the world around them (BC)</p> <p>To become familiar with concepts such as fair/not fair, the past, my place (MI)</p> <p>To use our senses to find out about our world (TPD)</p> <p>To stop to look closely and carefully (MI)</p> <p>To use a magnifying glass, digital microscope (MI)</p> <p>To record independently in a variety of ways (MI)</p> <p>To make suggestions when planning what to do (BC)</p> <p>To use simple subject specific language (TPD)</p> <p>To begin to have a sense of the passage of time (MI)</p> <p>To be aware of how to find out about the past (TPD)</p> <p>That we can find out by exploring (BC)</p> <p>To begin to ask questions relevant to our explorations (BC)</p> <p>To recognise change in our own lives (MI)</p> |

| Stages | Learning Intentions (we are learning...) |
|----------------------|---|
| Key Stage One | <i>As for Foundation Stage and</i> |
| | <p>To begin to have a sense of how geography, history, science and technology help us to understand our world (MI)</p> <p>To begin to ask more focussed questions around our observations (BC)</p> <p>To make simple predictions and give reasons for these (TPD)</p> <p>To recognise and begin to explain why tests are fair/not fair (TPD)</p> <p>To classify according to simple differences (TPD)</p> <p>To recognise patterns in the natural and built environment e.g. Spring growth, house types etc. (MI)</p> <p>To interpret information from simple maps (MI)</p> <p>To begin to plan what to do (MI)</p> <p>To follow a structured enquiry (MI)</p> <p>That we may use all senses to explore and survey the natural and built environments (MI)</p> <p>To use standard measures when working (MI)</p> <p>That we can record work in a variety of ways (MI)</p> <p>To describe what happens and explain why (TPD)</p> <p>To relate what happened to what we predicted (TPD)</p> <p>To examine evidence and opinions from a range of sources (TPD)</p> <p>To record information using simple timelines (MI)</p> <p>To begin to understand what life was like for older people we know (BC)</p> <p>To be aware of how people's experiences may have influenced how they felt (BC)</p> <p>To identify how life in other time periods is similar to, or different from, the present day (TPD)</p> <p>To begin to identify why events happened in the past (TPD)</p> |

| Stages | Learning Intentions (we are learning...) |
|----------------------|--|
| Key Stage Two | <i>As for Key Stage One and</i> |
| | <p>That history, geography, science and technology help us to understand our world (MI)</p> <p>To use more precise subject specific language (TPD)</p> <p>To suggest subject specific questions using an enquiry-based approach (MI)</p> <p>To record and present information in appropriate formats (MI)</p> <p>To use different ways to find out about our world e.g. exploration, survey, fair test (BC)</p> <p>To make predictions based on previous knowledge (TPD)</p> <p>To design and carry out a fair test (TPD)</p> <p>To make observations noting close detail and to be able to use microscope (MI)</p> <p>To make observations taking account of the need for care and accuracy (SM)</p> <p>To make decisions about what, when and how to measure with increasing accuracy (TPD)</p> <p>To draw conclusions and make comparisons from our work (TPD)</p> <p>To sort and classify according to more complex similarities and differences, offering explanations (TPD)</p> <p>To begin to relate cause with effect (TPD)</p> <p>To structure a simple enquiry (TPD)</p> <p>To investigate an issue from different viewpoints (BC)</p> <p>To develop a sense of place through the use of maps, plans, photographs and atlases etc. (MI)</p> <p>To examine evidence and opinions from a range of sources and distinguish between fact and opinion (TPD)</p> <p>To order and sequence information to demonstrate understanding (TPD)</p> <p>To create timelines within a broad historical period (MI)</p> <p>To identify change and continuity within a period studied and suggest reasons (TPD)</p> <p>To appreciate that there may be different points of view / different causes and consequences of an event or situation (BC)</p> |