



Geography

Geography at St Paul's builds on children's natural instinct to wonder about and explore the world around them, helping them to flourish in their journey to the fullness of life.



Our Vision for Geography: Inspired by God's love for us, we illuminate the goodness in others, we care for and protect His children and reach out to help others flourish in their journey to the fullness of life.

"The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth He has given to the sons of men." Psalm 115:16

This verse from the Psalms makes it clear that we are caretakers of the planet upon which we live. Our study of Geography at St Paul's helps our pupils understand how the world in which we live shapes our lives, and how we in turn shape the world around us, using its resources and altering its landscape, in order that the next generation of caretakers are fully equipped to care for this amazing place.

Rationale – Why we do what we do... In recent years, St Paul's has noticed, in line with a national trend, a decline in the language skills of some children as they enter Reception. We have also noted a marked difference in the children's levels of independence, resilience, ambition (skills for life). This, along with a need to promote a more deep-rooted love of reading, has prompted us to shape our curriculum with greater emphasis in these areas, including stories from other cultures and non-fiction texts about global issues and geography topics.

An examination of resourcing and sampling pupils' geographical knowledge revealed that some classrooms lacked essential resources, such as globes, and that atlases had become out-of-date. We found that some children had only a weak understanding of the continents and key countries of the world. We purchased globes for classes in Year 1-Year 6 and replaced our sets of atlases. Furthermore, we examined how we could do more to inspire children about the wonder of the world around them. In addition to the wide range of trips we run, many of which have a Geography focus, we looked to source a truly inspirational scheme that offer quality 'virtual' trips, and we found this in Oddizzi.

How do we enable children to learn more and retain more?

Timings and timetable:

In Reception, Geography is taught as part of the 'The World' aspect of 'Understanding the World'. It is taught through whole class, small group and 1:1 learning with a mixture of adult-led learning and some child-initiated learning with sustained shared thinking. All children in EYFS have a personalised 'Learning Journey' using Tapestry, which is used to record learning from all areas of learning across the year. Teachers use this evidence to ensure that all children are making progress and attaining well.

Across the rest of the school, Geography is taught as part of our Topic curriculum as a discrete subject, and alongside many other subjects, including Art, History and Design and Technology. We use the Oddizzi scheme which ensures resources are age-appropriate, topics adhere to the requirements of the National Curriculum, assessment is rigorous and children are engaged and excited about the subject. Careful planning allows strong cross-curricular links to be made, helping children to feel inspired and engaged with the topic at a deeper level. Furthermore, even in terms or half-terms when History is the focus, relevant geographical skills, such as map work, can still be taught.

Within each year group, the timetabling of Geography is flexible, depending on the topic and the teachers' timetabling choices. However, the timings probably average to approximately 1 hour per week. This ensures breadth and depth of knowledge and secure knowledge retention and skills progression.

Geography– An Overview:

The world is truly a diverse and wonderful place! The study of Geography helps our pupils understand how the world in which we live shapes our lives, and how we in turn shape the world around us.

At St Paul's we aim for a high quality geography curriculum which should inspire in pupils a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people. Geography is taught from the Oddizzi scheme, with staff adapting their teaching appropriately to the needs of their pupils to ensure all pupils, whatever their ability, can engage and enjoy finding out more about the world. High-quality teaching of Geography in all classes equips all our pupils with knowledge about places and people; resources in the environment; physical and human processes; and the variety and use of landscapes around the world.

Throughout their education at St Paul's, our pupils should show an increasing awareness of their role as global citizens, and be able to explain how the personal choices people make have an impact on the planet. They should be knowledgeable about the world, curious to discover more about its wonders, aware of the threats it faces, and passionate about its protection. They should recognise the way we live has been, and continues to be, affected by the geography at local, national and international levels, and be able to identify key physical and human features in landscapes. Our children should leave our school equipped with geographical skills and knowledge that will enable them to be ready for the curriculum at Key Stage 3 and for life as an adult in the wider world.

We want children to develop a wide range of geographical skills: collecting and analysing data; using maps, globes, aerial photographs and digital mapping to name and identify countries, continents and oceans; and communicating information in a variety of ways. To enable our pupils to acquire these skills and build on prior knowledge, clear progression is seen in the way children's understanding of location gradually expands throughout the school. Careful planning of the school's geography curriculum long-term map allows pupils to develop their skills over time, for example, in using the local area to follow maps in Key Stage 1, to comparing the similarities and differences in environments and communities in Lower Key Stage 2, through to debating world issues on pollution in Upper Key Stage 2, becoming ever more aware of the threats our planet faces, and the role they as citizens of the world have in protecting and shaping our future.

We want children to enjoy and love learning about geography by gaining this knowledge and skills, not just through experiences in the classroom, but also with the use of fieldwork and educational visits. We hope that in teaching in this way, our pupils become knowledgeable inhabitants of our planet, aware of its diversity and passionate about its protection.

Assessing Outcomes in Geography

Our methods for assessing outcomes in Geography focus on the children's core skills and knowledge. Teachers regularly review their pupils' learning and knowledge within lessons through questioning and more formal assessments or quizzes, and after lessons through marking. They adapt their teaching in light of this knowledge. Where children are not working at expected standards, teachers provide additional appropriate support.

All acquired knowledge and experimentation of skills linked to Geography is recorded in topic books. Teachers use the outcomes in topic books to assess ongoing attainment and progress, and have the option of using high-quality assessment resources from the Oddizzi scheme to add rigour where necessary. Pupils working below the level expected for their age are assessed against skills from younger year groups when necessary.

The Geography subject leader completes regular monitoring of attainment and progress through a combination of pupil voice, book monitoring and matching actual outcomes to intended outcomes.

The Geography subject leader then has a formal meeting with senior leaders to discuss outcomes and next steps. The Curriculum Senior Leader uses the information given to them to hold Governor sub-committee 'Curriculum and Achievement Meetings' each half term. These are in addition to the Pupil Progress Meetings that identify and celebrate pupil progress and set agreed targets for narrowing any gaps in knowledge and skills.

Enrichment

Enrichment is an important part of the Geography curriculum – getting out in the world is the best way to experience its wonders! Enrichment opportunities within and across all areas of the curriculum are important to St Paul's to help develop the children's skills for life, and show them the world beyond Hereford and Herefordshire. While many of our pupils have the opportunity to travel to other countries with their families, talking to the children shows that some rarely leave the city, have never climbed a hill, or visited a large industrial cityscape. Our enrichment opportunities for Geography provide a clear purpose with plenty of opportunities for extension and challenge. We aim to make them relevant, age-appropriate and inclusive to all.

There are a range of 'field studies' and trips which have been designed with a Geography focus – for example, Year 6, having studied the UK, have a residential trip to London. Children in KS1 walk the local area, observing the features of a semi-rural environment and comparing town and countryside.

Throughout their time at St. Paul's, children also have the opportunity to be a part of our Eco-Council. Their role is to look at ways to improve our school geographical environment, such as through improving our energy efficiency and reducing litter. Our 'Life Skills' KPI 1 also looks at global awareness, and children explore ideas such as recycling and reducing plastic waste. Many children enjoy litter-picking at playtime, and understand both the aesthetic reasons for doing so, and the harm litter does to wildlife. Some pupils choose to raise money for wildlife charities in school as a result of their care for the environment.