



SUTTON BENDER C of E AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL
Humanities Policy

1 Aims and objectives

1.1 Geography teaches an understanding of places and environments. Through their work in geography, children learn about their local area and compare their life in this area to other regions in the United Kingdom and in the rest of the world. They learn how to draw and interpret maps and they develop the skills of research, investigation, analysis and problem solving. Through their growing knowledge and understanding of human geography, children gain an appreciation of life in other cultures. Geography teaching also motivates children to find out about the physical world and enables them to recognize the importance of sustainable development for the future of humanity. Fieldwork plays an integral part to geography. Children use their local environment as well as travelling further afield to enhance their fieldwork and geographical skills.

The aim of history teaching is to stimulate the children's interest and understanding about the life of people who lived in the past. We teach children a sense of chronology, and through this, they develop a sense of identity and a cultural understanding based on their historical heritage. Thus, they learn to value their own and other people's cultures in modern multicultural Britain and, by considering how people lived in the past, they are better able to make their own life choices today. We teach children to understand how events in the past have influenced our lives today; we also teach them to investigate these past events and, by so doing, to develop the skills of enquiry, analysis, interpretation and problem solving.

1.2 The aims of geography are:

- to develop contextual knowledge of the location of globally significant places – both terrestrial and marine – including their defining physical and human characteristics and how these provide a geographical context for understanding the actions of processes
- to understand the processes that give rise to key physical and human geographical features of the world, how these are interdependent and how they bring about spatial variation and change over time
- to be competent in the geographical skills needed to:
 - to collect, analyse and communicate with a range of data gathered through experiences of fieldwork that deepen their understanding of geographical processes
 - interpret a range of sources of geographical information, including maps, diagrams, globes, aerial photographs and Geographical Information Systems (GIS)
 - communicate geographical information in a variety of ways, including through maps, numerical and quantitative skills and writing at length.

The aims of history are:

- to know and understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the earliest times to the present day: how people's lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world
- to know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world: the nature of ancient civilisations; the expansion and dissolution of empires; characteristic features of past non-European societies; achievements and follies of mankind
- to gain and deploy a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as 'empire', 'civilisation', 'parliament' and 'peasantry'
- to understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically-valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses
- to understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed
- to gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history; and between short- and long-term timescales.

2 Teaching and learning style

2.1 We use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our geography lessons. Through enquiry-based activities, we encourage children to ask as well as answer geographical questions. We offer them the opportunity to use a variety of data, such as maps, statistics, graphs, pictures, aerial photographs, audio/visual stimulus, field sketching and questionnaires. We use computing in geography lessons where this serves to enhance the children's learning. Children take part in role-play and discussions, and they present reports to the rest of the class. They engage in a wide variety of problem-solving activities. Wherever possible, we involve the children in 'real' geographical activities, e.g. research of a local environmental problem or use of the Internet to investigate a current issue.

History teaching focuses on enabling children to think as historians. We place an emphasis on examining historical artefacts, primary and secondary sources. In each key stage, we give children the opportunity to visit sites of historical significance and other appropriate places such as museums. We encourage visitors to come into the school and talk about their experiences of events in the past. History is taught through a variety of teaching methods to ensure an exciting and interactive curriculum. We recognize and value the importance of stories in history teaching and we regard this as an important way of stimulating interest in the past. We focus on helping children understand that historical events can be interpreted in different ways and that they should always ask searching questions, such as 'how do we know?', about information they are given.

2.2 We recognise the fact that there are children of widely different abilities in all classes, including those with special educational needs and learners who are gifted and talented. We provide suitable learning

opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this by:

- setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty, some children don't complete all the tasks;
- grouping children by ability and setting differentiated tasks or mixing ability in order for children to support each other's learning;
- creating opportunities to express information in varying ways using a variety of media (illustrations, extended writing, role play, iPads)
- providing resources of different complexity according to the ability of the child;
- using teaching assistants to support the work of individual children or groups of children.

3 Curriculum planning

3.1 We use a skills based curriculum for the humanities as the basis for our curriculum planning. We plan the topics so that they build upon prior learning. Children of all abilities have the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit and, through planned progression built into the scheme of work, we offer them an increasing challenge as they progress up the school.

3.2 Our curriculum planning is in two phases (long-term and medium-term). Our long-term plan maps the humanities topics to be studied as part of our two-year curriculum cycle. In this way, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the National Curriculum but do not repeat topics.

In Key Stage 2, there is an increasing emphasis on independent study. We endeavour to make cross-curricular links wherever possible to enhance the teaching and learning of a topic area. We teach the knowledge, skills and understanding set out in the National Curriculum through the corresponding programme of study. Certain topic areas have a focus for Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2 depending on suitability and these are allocated accordingly.

3.3 Our medium-term plans use our skills-based curriculum to plan each term's work in each class. These plans specify the skills and activities for each lesson throughout the topic unit. Cross-curricular links made with other subjects are identified in these plans. The humanities subject leader reviews these plans on a regular basis.

4 Foundation Stage

4.1 We teach the humanities in the Foundation Stage as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. The objectives set out in the Knowledge and Understanding section of the Foundation Stage Curriculum underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

5 The contribution of geography and history to teaching in other curriculum areas

Through effective cross-curricular links a range of resources are covered and skills are consolidated through the following subject areas.

5.1 English

The humanities contribute significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Children develop their oracy and listening skills through questioning, debating geographical and historical questions and issues as well when reporting findings to peers. We ensure that some of the texts that we use in English are geographical and, or, historical in nature. Children develop their writing ability by composing reports, letters and recording information.

5.2 Mathematics

The humanities contribute to the teaching of mathematics in a variety of ways. Children use numbers when developing a sense of chronology through activities such as time-lines. They are taught how to draw and read maps, and use graphs and charts to interpret, explore and analyse historical and geographical data. The children study space, scale and distance and they learn how to use four- and six-figure grid references. They also use graphs to explore, analyse and illustrate a variety of data.

5.3 History and geography

Geography contributes to the teaching of history and vice versa in a variety of ways. We investigate historical changes to the landscape (e.g. changes within our village or local environment) and political and historical changes that affect countries and their boundaries.

5.4 Computing

We make provision for the children to use computing in geography and history lessons where appropriate. They use it to enhance their skills in data handling, in presenting written work, and they research information using the Internet and other sources. We also offer children the opportunity to use iPads to record and use photographic images. Floor robots also enhance learning in geography (e.g. using grid references).

5.5 Personal, social and health education (PSHE)

The humanities contribute significantly to the teaching of personal, social and health education. Firstly, the subject matter lends itself to raising matters of citizenship and social welfare. Secondly, the nature of the subject means that children have the opportunity to take part in debates and discussions. Finally, children develop self-confidence by having opportunities to explain their views on a number of social questions.

5.6 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

We offer children in our school many opportunities to examine the fundamental questions in life through the medium of the humanities. For example, their work on the changing landscape and environmental issues leads children to ask questions about the evolution of the planet. We encourage the children to reflect on the impact of humanity on our world and we introduce the concept of 'stewardship' in relation to sustainable development. Through teaching about contrasting localities, we enable the children to learn about inequality and injustice in the world. We help children to develop their knowledge and understanding of different cultures so that they acquire a positive attitude towards others. We provide children with the opportunity to discuss moral questions and what is right and wrong. Children learn about the role of the religion in the past and they find out how society has changed over time.

6 Children with special educational needs and children who are able, gifted and talented learners

- 6.1** The teaching of the humanities forms part of the school's curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. We take into account the targets set for individual children in their support plans and ensure that children who are identified as more able, gifted and talented learners receive appropriate challenge.

7 Assessment and recording

- 7.1** We assess the children's work in the humanities by making informal judgements as we observe and question the children during lessons. Once the children complete a piece of work, we mark and comment as necessary. At the end of each unit of work, teachers assess children's progress against the specific objectives taught from the skills based curriculum. We use this information to plan future work with pupils, to provide the basis for assessing the progress of the child, and to pass information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

8 Resources

- 8.1** As a school, we endeavour to review resources regularly to ensure suitable resources are provided to enhance the teaching and learning. The library contains a good supply of topic books to support children's individual research. The school also buys into a successful library loan service from Wiltshire, which helps children and teachers to access the curriculum in new and exciting ways.

9 Monitoring and review

- 9.1** The humanities subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standard and quality of teaching and learning in geography and history. They monitor this through looking at planning, informal observations, work scrutiny, pupil conferencing and curriculum walks. They report back to staff and link governors regularly. The subject leader is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of the humanities, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The subject leader highlights areas to be developed and shares this with staff through an action plan, which is acted upon, reviewed and updated regularly.