



# The Meadow Community Primary School and Pre-School

## Curriculum position statements – **November 2020**

### Geography

#### Historical

I have been Geography lead for approximately 9 years, this has been broken up slightly by my maternity leave in May 2011 until March 2012 and December 2016 until October 2017. During these times, the role was undertaken by Danni Steed and Caroline Innes. Geography forms part of the schools connected, themed curriculum. Half of each term is devoted to a Geography unit of work and the children learn a mixture of skills and knowledge that is in line with the National Curriculum. Up until 2017-2018 the school used themes that were derived from the National Curriculum Programmes of study and loosely based upon the QCA documents, tweaked to fit the changes to the 2014 curriculum. However, in 2017 the decision was made to buy in a scheme of work to support the further development of the curriculum and we now use PlanBee as an aid to planning. This decision was made to help to reinvigorate the topics and curriculum while also helping teachers with resourcing and planning. Assessments on the children's learning is made using the SLF statements and teachers are asked to submit their teacher assessments every term. This data is analysed, along with data from book scrutinies, which then inform an action plan. There is a subject leader folder which contains evidence of children working at, below and above expected levels, however this needs updating with recent work to ensure that teacher assessments are accurate. Staff have been surveyed to ensure that any training, planning or delivery needs are met. Pupils have also been surveyed, which showed that they enjoy the theme lessons and like the topics that are covered. Data has historically shown that levels are broadly in line with English and Maths with around 78% of children at expected levels and above at the end of 2018/19.

#### Current

The school is in its second year of using the PlanBee scheme of work. The first year has shown that the scheme is well resourced, is easy to follow and covers the objectives of the National Curriculum. Some classes use the scheme more as a guide, cherry picking the best resources and lessons, combining these with other resources and ideas. Other year groups tend to stick more prescriptively to the planning. As the first year of usage came to an end, each year group was asked to provide feedback regarding the topics they taught and some changes were made. At the end of the Summer term 2019, I undertook some work to ensure that progression was clear and evident across the school. This involved using the SLF statements as a guidance to produce a set of progression statements that essentially track an objective across the school ensuring that it is taught with increasing depth of understanding and application. As the National Curriculum is only split into Key Stages for Geography, it is imperative that progression is ensured as children will invariably cover the same objectives in different year groups. This is more relevant for skills based objectives, however there are occasions when knowledge based objectives are covered over more than one year group too. When this was completed, I then undertook a whole school book scrutiny to look for coverage of these progression statements and opportunity for the children to work at greater depth. Finally, I looked at each unit taught across the school and mapped the progression statements in. Where I discovered opportunities for greater depth work, I matched these with the examples of GDS work from the SLF exemplars.

Overall, the teaching of geography within the school is strong, however there are areas for improvement. The biggest areas for improvement to come from the book scrutiny are the opportunities for greater depth work, the need to ensure that progression is clear and evident across the school and the need for greater fieldwork to be undertaken. As we have recently transitioned from one scheme of work to another, some of these are to be expected. Whole school data shows that 78% of children across the school are at or above the expected level.



### Future aspiration

The main focus and direction of the next year is to ensure that progression is embedded across the school and that the progression statements are covered. This might involve a small change to medium term planning to keep it in the forefront of teacher's minds as they plan their lessons. Other things to consider would be the further development and evolution of the themes. Building in practical lessons, especially those that take place away from the classroom, can allow fieldwork to take place and provide a more effective learning experience. This will need to be suited to the theme, relevant to the skills that need to be covered and also achievable. Hopefully, time can be put aside in an INSET to allow teachers to share ideas and plan such additions to the curriculum together. Moving away from the prescriptive nature of the scheme of work, and feeling more confident in adapting it will hopefully come as teachers become more used to using it. However, again, time to do this and a little direction from me as a subject leader will also greatly help. The children have shown that this is an area of the subject that they enjoy, it increases engagement in the topic. Alongside this is the development of geography teaching that is relevant to our children. Leicester, Wigston and the surrounding areas have their own unique geography which we could make more use of, to again increase enjoyment and engagement. Ultimately, an exciting, progressive, engaging, relevant geography curriculum is the aim.