



The Meadow Community Primary School and Pre-School

Curriculum position statements – **September 2023**

Geography

Historical

I have been Geography lead for approximately 14 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 Perrin. 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, 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 are 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. 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. 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. Due to the Lockdowns and online teaching over the past couple of years, teachers needed more time to fully embed this into their planning. In the summer term of 2021, I completed some online CPD looking at successful ways of implementing practical geography and fieldwork into the geography curriculum which I then disseminated to staff in the autumn term. In July 2022, I conducted a book scrutiny which showed that on the whole, MTPs were being used with lessons linked together and in some cases across subject areas. There was some evidence that activities stretched the GD children and some classes used Digimaps but there is a need for greater fieldwork to be undertaken. Data has historically shown that levels are broadly in line with English and Maths.

Current

The school is now in its sixth year of using the PlanBee scheme of work, 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. A whole school priority which has been taken from the latest OFSTED report is to develop all curriculum plans with clear expectations of what the children are expected to learn, making adaptations to ensure the recall of pupil's knowledge is high. The geography planning reflects this. We are currently in the process of developing Knowledge Organisers across the school and these are being written for Geography, using the scheme of work as a basis. Overall, the teaching of geography within the school is strong. The books show that the children



learn in a variety of ways, practical lessons are evident as are knowledge acquisition lessons. It is hard to generalise areas of improvement for units of work, however ensuring that all progression statements are met throughout the year is key, as is ensuring that lessons are engaging, topical, relevant and extend children. The use of the Knowledge Organisers and the overarching questions will ensure that learning is given context and is purposeful. It will also allow children to link their knowledge to previous work and compare localities. Whole school data shows that 79.6% of children across the school are at or above the expected level.

Future aspiration

The focus and direction of Geography is to enhance the curriculum to ensure that the children are able to compare and contrast localities making clear links between them. Their learning will also be enhanced by learning experiences other than lessons, trips, visitors, themed days etc. The children have shown that this is an area of the subject that they enjoy, fieldwork increases engagement in the theme. Alongside this is the development of geography teaching that is relevant to our children. The surrounding area has its own unique geography, both human and physical, which we could make more use of, to again increase enjoyment and engagement, making it more personal and relevant to the children. Ultimately, an exciting, progressive, engaging, relevant curriculum is the aim. Other things to consider would be the further development and evolution of the themes themselves. New teachers in school will need support in using the scheme, however more experienced teachers will feel more confident in what they have to teach. This should allow them to move away from following the scheme prescriptively, as I believe that lessons are more effective when planning is adapted not only to suit the needs of the children as well as the style of the teacher.