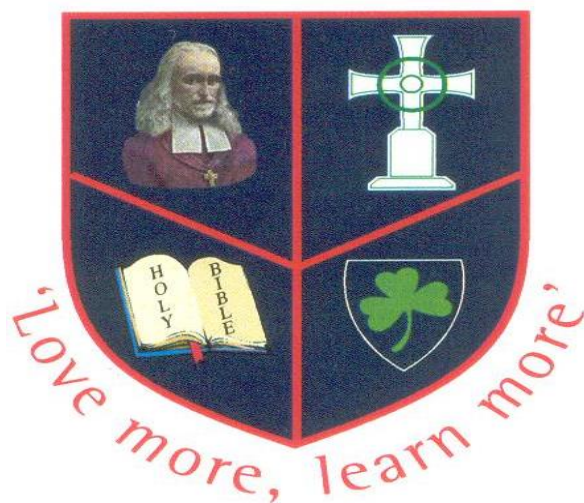


St Oliver Plunkett Primary School
and Nursery Unit
Toomebridge



World Around Us Policy

June 2024

Approved by Board of Governors:

Board of Governor (Chair):

Principal:

Date:

Rationale

This policy is based on the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum document which is the starting point for planning a school curriculum that meets the needs of individual children. Within these requirements, we at St Oliver Plunkett Primary School aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum so as to prepare our children for a rapidly changing world.

Our school is situated in the village of Toomebridge. There is a large playground at the back of the school, and a recently developed outdoor play area for Foundation Stage children. We are currently developing an Eco Garden.

What is the World Around Us?

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 and Science and Technology. St Oliver Plunkett Primary School aims to retain the best of current practice within the three subjects, while developing agreed topic/theme-based approaches to this area of learning. The staff continues to make relevant connections across all areas of learning while ensuring breadth and balance.

We at St Oliver Plunkett Primary School are committed to designing learning experiences within World Around Us which ensure a balance of these contributory elements through the delivery of the four inter-related strands throughout all Key Stages:

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

The three contributory elements within the World Around Us are:-

Geography

This explores the relationship between the earth and its people through the study of the environment, place and space. It develops knowledge of places and environments throughout the world, an understanding of maps and a range of investigative and problem-solving skills both inside and outside the classroom. Our children will be provided with opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of their place in the world, other places and the processes which affect the people, conditions and life in that place. They will explore ideas about

people, jobs, the weather and the environment both locally and globally and begin to consider their part in maintaining a sustainable world.

History

This is concerned with the concepts of sequence and time and with evidence which allows us to find out what happened in the past. Children will be provided with opportunities to gain an awareness of their past and changes which have occurred over time through examining evidence, looking at photographs, watching TV and multimedia clips and listening to stories. Our children will recognise the importance of evidence in giving a picture of the past but will understand that there can be different interpretations of this depending on how it is viewed.

Science and Technology

This aims to stimulate a child's curiosity in finding out why things happen in the way they do. It teaches methods of enquiry and investigation to stimulate creative thought. Our children will learn to ask scientific questions and begin to appreciate the way science will affect their future on a personal, national, and global level. They will have opportunities to develop the skills of Science and Technology and to develop awareness of the relevance and importance of Science and Technology in everyday life in finding out about themselves, the environment, the material and physical world. St Oliver Plunkett Primary School is committed to designing learning experiences within World Around Us which ensure a balance of these contributory elements through the delivery of the four inter-related strands throughout all Key Stages.

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 our children live and their immediate environment
- To acknowledge and appreciate a sense of the past, changes which have occurred and how these affect the world today
- To develop an appreciation of the relevance and importance of Science and Technology in everyday life
- To develop in children the skills of enquiry, investigation, analysis, evaluation and presentation.

Skills

At St Oliver Plunkett Primary School we develop Geography, History and Science skills through the World Around Us. We also incorporate the use of TSPC into World Around Us lessons.

Planning Approaches

The WAU programme will be implemented at a level appropriate to the needs of the children in our school. It will provide opportunities for pupils to explore their world in the context of home, school, the local area and the wider world. Based on the statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum we will adopt a themed approach combining the ideas for Connected Learning, guidance material from CCEA and ELBs in our planning. Whilst initial planning is for the pupils, at all stages children will be encouraged to become active participants in the planning of their own learning through the use of K.W.L. boards at the start of each theme. At St Oliver Plunkett Primary School plans are flexible and seen as working documents which can be adapted depending on pupil's responses and own learning.

Planning for Progression and Continuity

Planning for W.A.U. builds on the earlier experiences of children and continues to help them to explore the world they live in. At Foundation Stage, skills and concepts are developed through Play-Based Learning, and other planned activities relevant to the children's interests and experiences. Careful observation informs the planning of future learning experiences within the World Around Us.

We ensure that the overall programme of learning in any one year group, and across the key stages, is broad and balanced and that there is continuity and progression in children's learning.

Connected Learning

Recognising the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, we endeavour to plan thematically. We encourage children to transfer understanding and skills from one context to another, allowing them to practise and apply the skills they have gained

Our planning for World Around Us aims to promote:

- 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/STEM.

Learning and Teaching

In St Oliver Primary School Learning and Teaching approaches provide suitably challenging opportunities for all pupils to take part in lessons fully and effectively. As a school we have recently begun to implement the strategies of TEEP into our classroom practice. In doing so we endeavour to make learning experiences 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 a play based hands on approach. This is further developed through Activity Based Learning experiences in Key Stage One. Throughout the school 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. The children 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.

Assessment

Assessment in World Around Us, as in all areas of learning, will aim to:

- enhance performance, self-esteem and self-confidence

- promote greater resilience when faced with challenges
- increase independence
- develop a positive climate for learning.

Assessment will be used to promote, enhance and deepen the children's learning. It involves all methods normally used to appraise the children's learning, either individual or in groups. The outcomes from these assessments can then be used to identify the progress which pupils make in relation to the processes, skills, understanding and knowledge outlined in the N.I. Curriculum. We take account of Assessment for Learning strategies and allow this formative assessment to help and guide planning.

Inclusion

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. The teachers are aware of the requirements of SENDO and plan pupil experiences accordingly. Children will be helped to access this Learning Area using a learning style most suitable to their needs. They are able to record and demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways according to their learning needs. Children identified as gifted and talented will have access to more demanding aspects of the WAU and increased resources may be required. Newcomers will be supported in their learning of the World Around Us as they develop topic related language skills.

Learning in the Outdoors

At St Oliver Plunkett Primary School, we have a limited green space for outdoor learning. Foundation stage children have access to a recently developed outdoor area which they can access during Play Based Learning. Children have access to recently installed Eco planters and it is our vision to further develop this area. Children can also make use of the local community allotment. Whenever relevant and possible teachers facilitate learning through the exploration of the local and wider area. Using the above it is our aim that children 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 discover.

Educational Visits and Visitors

Within school a number of classes take part in class trips to a variety of locations. We also have a number of groups who come into school to allow the children to experience a wide variety of topics. Some of the groups who come in include Sustrans, SENTINUS, Eco Schools, Recycling Bus and members of the local Police and Fire Service. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy visits from the Dentist/Nurse and local farmer relative to their learning.

All educational visits will be undertaken with a risk assessment carried out prior to going on any trip. Risk assessments are carried out using the guidance and proforma provided by the Education Authority.

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. There will always be elements of risk and uncertainty as children engage in active learning. The Northern Ireland Curriculum document states "All activities must be taught within a safe environment and children must be made aware of safe practice at all times".

All risk assessments are carried out using the documentation provided by the Education Authority.

World Around Us Co-Ordinator/Curriculum Leader Role and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the World Around Us co-ordinator 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 to ensure continuity and progression throughout the school
- Negotiate, in accordance with the whole school Learning and Teaching policy, the place of World Around Us within the School Development Plan and be involved in Monitoring and Evaluating.
- Developing and disseminate knowledge and expertise of World Around Us.
- Advise and guide colleagues with regard to appropriate classroom practice
- Formulate policy/scheme of work in association with teachers and principal, in line with SDP
- Promote and disseminate the policy within school. Undertake monitoring to include examination of planning, and carry out evaluations
- Ensure that the area of learning is properly resourced in terms of acquisition, safe storage and access
- Liaise with appropriate advisory services.

Resources

The teachers in St Oliver Plunkett Primary School will aim to use relevant available resources from the Northern Ireland Curriculum connected learning boxes and their own materials. The library contains a good supply of topic and reference books and further topic boxes are available on request from the school library service. ICT resources include laptops, iPads and programmable devices. We keep some essential equipment and practical materials in a central store.

Eco and the Green Flag

St Oliver Plunkett Primary School is an Eco School and the Green Flag is located at the entrance to the school. Eco Topics are selected each year following an environmental review and the whole school take part in activities during the year linked to these topics.

Our Eco Council is formed of children from P4-P7. Meetings take place every term. The Eco Council lead assemblies and inform the school community throughout the year.

Sustrans Initiative

We have recently become involved with the Sustrans Initiative and are encouraging active travel to and from school. All classes participate in activities related to the programme throughout the year. This involvement also links closely with our work on the Eco Schools Project.

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 co-ordinator.

The work of the World Around Us co-ordinator/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. The World Around Us co-ordinator gives the principal and/or the Board of Governors reports in which evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in this Learning Area.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated if necessary.

