# Geography Curriculum Rationale

At St Thomas of Canterbury, we believe that high quality geography education develops children's curiosity and understanding of the world around them and instils in them the desire to find out more.

Children will learn to explore their world geographically by: asking geographical question; assessing and critically evaluating potential answers to those questions; making reasoned judgements based on evidence; understanding and empathising with the views of others; considering possible actions/reactions and their consequences.

Exploring the world in this way will enable children to

## INTENT

**Alignment to National Curriculum**

The geography curriculum at St Thomas of canterbury uses the National Curriculum as a basis for its content and framework. The Rising Stars scheme and Ark scheme are used to support teachers where needed.

**End Points**

Having mastered the powerful geographical knowledge identified by our school, children moving on to secondary school will be able to: recognise that people perceive situations and places differently; to value the importance of local context in understanding the relevance of wider global connections; to have a sense of citizenships and justice rooted in our Catholic faith, which gives confidence to challenge and support different viewpoints.

**Sequencing**

The National Curriculum has clear end points for the end of KS1 and KS2. Children progress from developing knowledge of the United Kingdom and their own locality in KS1 to learning about Europe and North and South America as well as more in-depth knowledge of their locality in KS2. Topics within KS2 have been sequenced in a way that supports children's development of schema and ideas. For example, Y3s learn about biomes, Y4s, contrast North and South America and Y6 children learn about the Amazon and how to protect the environment.

**Addressing Social Disadvantage**

Young (2008) says that knowledge is crucial for social justice. All children have a right to know and remember the powerful knowledge and key vocabulary identified in our curriculum. To this end, we use knowledge organisers to capture this and are committed to ensuring all children master it. Retrieval practice is key to achieving this goal and is incorporated into our day-to-day teaching.

**Local Context**

Our local area is utilised to support the teaching of geography, specifically geographical enquiry. Sheffield is one of the greenest cities in the world. St Thomas of Canterbury is set within walking distance of Graves Park. There has also been much regeneration of the city, some of which has been within our locality.

## IMPLEMENTATION

**Pedagogical Approaches**

In geography lessons, teachers will ensure children have substantive knowledge which may be shared via direct instruction. Children will then apply their knowledge and skills through a geographical enquiry approach to teaching & learning.
Guided, independent and retrieval practice, as described by Rosenshine and rooted in cognitive science, are used, where appropriate, to ensure children remember the key substantive knowledge needed for enquiry activities that require deeper thinking.

**Teachers' Expert Knowledge**

The demonstration of good subject and curriculum knowledge is a requirement in the DfE teaching standards. To this end, it is expected that teachers whose curriculum knowledge is not sufficiently developed will take steps to address this gap (e.g. through reading or using the support materials supplied by Rising Stars/Ark). It is essential that teachers have the required level of expert knowledge so that explanations are clear and accurate, and children's misconceptions are anticipated and addressed as they arise.

**Promoting Discussion and Understanding**

Discussion (both pupil to pupil and pupil to teacher) has an important role in the development of geographical ideas. Effective questioning by the teacher is key to allow pupils to practise new knowledge and to help them make links between new material and prior learning (Rosenshine). Essentially, through these opportunities for talk, key vocabulary, and so core knowledge, is truly mastered.

**Knowing More and Remembering More**

Knowledge organisers set out the powerful knowledge, core vocabulary and big ideas that all children are expected to master. A first lesson for each unit of work is used to review the 'smaller' ideas mastered in previous units, ready for their development in the new one. Opportunities for retrieval practice are included in geography lessons to ensure knowledge is transferred into long-term memory. Retrieval activities may require children to remember learning from the previous lesson, previous topic or even previous year to ensure the retrieval strength of powerful knowledge is high.

**Teacher Assessment**

Formative assessment is essential in the implementation of the geography curriculum to ensure that all children are developing the declarative and procedural knowledge needed. Effective questioning, as outlined in Rosenshine's principles, plays a fundamental role in checking for understanding and ensuring misconceptions are quickly addressed. Success criteria are used to aid both self, peer and teacher assessment.

## IMPACT

**Approach to Assessment**

The five strategies of formative assessment (Wiliam 2011) are used in geography to support and promote deep learning. Specific recall activities like quizzes, are used to enable teachers and children to monitor the depth of understanding of core procedural and declarative knowledge and the strength of its retrieval.

**Performance Data**

Data for geography is generated using retrieval quizzes and is collected by the teacher on a master copy of the knowledge organiser.

**Pupils' Work**

Pupils' work, in written and photographic forms, is used to secure and demonstrate children's learning. It informs teacher assessment, both formative and summative, and is used by subject leaders as part of the monitoring process.

**Talking to Pupils**

The subject leader talks to pupils about their learning as part of the monitoring process. Children's books and knowledge organisers are used to guide discussion and provide the subject leader with the information required to measure how much of the powerful knowledge and core vocabulary has been remembered and understood.

### Links / References


The National Curriculum for Geography
David Didau – Learning Spy (References to Young)
Rosenshine's Principles for Instruction
Dylan Wiliam – Embedded Formative Assessment