



**Culmore Primary School**

**The World  
Around Us Policy**

## **Rationale**

This policy is based on the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum document (2007) which is the starting point for planning a school curriculum that meets the needs of individual children. Within these requirements, we at Culmore Primary aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum so as to prepare our children for a rapidly changing world. Our school is situated on the outskirts of Derry City. There are two playgrounds and an outdoor play area.

## **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. Culmore Primary School aims to retain the best of current practice within the three subjects, while developing a topic/theme based approach to this area of learning. Staff are moving towards a more connected approach to the teaching of History, Geography and Science and Technology as the three contributing elements of the World Around Us. They are also aware of the statutory strands of Interdependence, Place, Movement and Energy and Change Over Time that connect learning.

We at Culmore 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.

## **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 Culmore Primary School we develop Geography, History and Science skills through the World Around Us. While many of the skills will be developed incidentally, we also plan for the development of subject-specific skills when appropriate.

## **Planning Approaches**

The World Around Us programme will be implemented at a level appropriate to the needs of the children in the context of our school and will also provide opportunities for pupils to explore their world in the context of home, school, the local area and the wider world. All planning is based on the statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. When appropriate to the interests and needs of our pupils and teachers and to the relevance of our chosen themes, we will also use the Ideas for Connected Learning, Thematic Units and other 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/learning process as we plan **with** the children as part of a plan, do, review process in all Key Stages. At Culmore Primary School plans are flexible and can be adapted depending on the pupils' responses and interests.

Planning for the World Around Us 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 during play 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. We are adopting a "spiral approach to the World Around Us so that concepts, knowledge and skills are introduced without undue repetition or significant gaps and are reinforced in a variety of contexts". (NIC page 85)

## **Connected Learning**

Recognising the changes and requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, we plan thematically. We emphasise the totality of the children's learning across the curriculum by making meaningful links across the learning areas. We encourage children to transfer understanding and skills from one context to another, allowing them to practice 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.
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## **Learning and Teaching**

In Culmore Primary School, Learning and Teaching approaches provide suitably challenging opportunities for all pupils to take part in lessons fully and effectively. Learning experiences are 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 well planned and challenging play. This is further developed through well planned, challenging Activity Based Learning experiences in Key Stages One and Two. 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 within 'The World Around Us', as in all areas of the curriculum, will be used to promote, enhance and deepen the children's learning. Methods used will be in line with those used throughout the curriculum. The outcomes of these assessments can then be used to identify the progress the pupil's make in relation to the processes, skills, understanding and knowledge outlined in the Northern Ireland Curriculum. We take account of assessment for learning strategies and allow this formative assessment to help and guide planning on an ongoing basis. The key reasons for assessment within World Around Us will be to:

- enhance performance, self-esteem and self-confidence
- promote greater resilience when faced with challenges
- increase independence
- develop a positive climate for learning.

## **Inclusion**

At our school the World Around Us forms part of the school curriculum to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. 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 range of learning styles, visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. They are able to record and demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways according to their learning needs and preferences. Children with exceptional ability, including gifted and/or talented children, will have access to more demanding aspects of the World Around Us and increased resources may be required.

## **Learning in the Outdoors**

Culmore Primary School has developed the potential for outdoor learning through the creation of gardens, planning for outdoor learning within themes, Play Based Learning and Activity Based Learning and, wherever relevant and possible, facilitating learning through the exploration of the local and wider area.

Our pupils have opportunities to develop skills and concepts in an outdoor learning environment where they will:

- become more aware of, more observant in and more responsive to their surrounding
- develop an approach to careful observation, accurate recording and thoughtful analysis
- encourage an interest in environmental issues
- foster a sense of wonder and discovery.

Children should have the opportunities to study aspects of their own immediate world, including different features of town and countryside and make comparisons between local and wider world issues.

All educational visits will be undertaken in accordance with "Educational Visits, Policy, Practice and Procedures 2009".

## **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”. For World Around Us activities, we assess and manage risks with reference to the following document as outlined in the whole school Health and Safety Policy:

- ASE: “Be Safe!” which provides detail on legislation, teacher responsibilities, risk assessment and curriculum activity.
- ELB/ESA: “Out of School” details statutory obligations of schools when taking children off the school premises.
- CLEAPSS: providing direct assistance to classroom teachers.

## **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 with the SDP and be involved in Monitoring and Evaluation
- Developing and disseminate knowledge and expertise of World Around Us in the context of the whole school policy on CPD
- 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**

We are currently developing resources for all World Around Us themes in the school. Class teachers will supplement these resources with their own (and pupils’) materials. Class libraries contain a supply of topic and reference books and computer software and the internet is used to support children’s individual research. Further ICT resources include digital cameras and programmable devices. The school is committed to exploring the use of new and emerging technologies to promote learning within The World Around Us. Our resources are frequently and valuably supplemented by the use of Theme Boxes of books/resources from the Schools Library Service.

## **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/curriculum leader.

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/curriculum leader gives the principal and/or the Board of Governors an annual report in which she evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in this Learning Area.

This policy will be reviewed annually.