

Gilnahirk Primary World Around Us Policy

Introduction

This policy is based on the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum document (2007) which is the starting point for meeting the needs of individual children. Within these requirements it is our aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum to help our pupils face the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Our school is set on the outskirts of Belfast. We are in the fortunate of position of being within easy reach of the city and all it has to offer while also being able to take advantage of the local countryside.

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 and skills in the three contributory elements which are Science and Technology, History and Geography. World Around Us is split into four inter-related strands that connect learning

- Interdependence
- Place
- Movement and Energy
- Change over time

At Gilnahirk we aim to encourage the pupil's exploration and understanding of their surroundings through a thematic approach which connects with other areas of the curriculum.

Aims

- To develop knowledge, understanding and skills in the context of The World Around Us.
- To develop an understanding and appreciation of the world and their place in it as well other cultures and environments.
- To acknowledge and appreciate a sense of the past, changes which occur in the world and how these effect people and places.
- To develop an awareness of Science and Technology and its impact on our society.
- To develop in children the skills of enquiry, investigation, analysis, evaluation and presentation.

Skills

Through opportunities to engage in active learning contexts children will develop Cross-Curricular Skills in Communication, Using mathematics, Using ICT and Thinking skills and Personal Capabilities.

At Gilnahirk we also develop Geography, History and Science skills through World Around us (skills listed in Appendix 1). While many 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 a level appropriate to the needs of the children in the context of home, our school, the local area and the wider world. All planning is based on the statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. When appropriate we will use the Ideas for Connected learning, Thematic Units and other guidance materials from CCEA and ELBs in our planning. Whilst initial planning is **for** the pupils, pupils will be encouraged to become involved in the planning process at the beginning of a topic.

Planning for Progression and Continuity

Planning for World Around Us builds on the earlier experiences of children and continues to help them explore the world in which they live. At Foundation Stage, skills and concepts are developed through play and other planned activities relevant to the interests and experiences of the children. Observation helps inform the planning of future experiences within 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 pupil's learning.

Connected Learning

In line with the Northern Ireland Curriculum we plan thematically, where appropriate, across the learning areas. 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

- Investigations and the development of children's enquiry skills.
- Use of ICT to support teaching and learning.
- Effective use of the school environment, educational visits and visitors to the classroom
- Progression in key aspects of Geography, History and Science and Technology.

Learning and Teaching Styles

In Gilnahirk we endeavour to communicate clear learning outcomes to the pupils where appropriate. We use a wide range of teaching methods, balancing whole class, group and individual activities to engage children in effective learning. In Foundation stage pupils experience much of their learning through play. As they progress through Key Stage one this continues and develops into Activity Based Learning experiences. Throughout the school pupils have opportunities to make decisions and choices and develop their own ideas as they plan carry out and reflect on their work.

Assessment

Assessment in World Around Us will be used to promote and enhance the children's learning. It involves all methods normally used individually, in a group or as a class. The key reasons for assessment in World around us will be to

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

Children's work will be recorded in a variety of ways including written work, drawings, photographs and verbal records noted or recorded.

The time devoted to World Around Us will vary throughout the school and depending on the nature of the project. Due to the cross curricular nature of the World Around Us it is difficult to give specific time allocations.

Inclusion

In our school World Around Us is part of a broad and balanced curriculum which is inclusive of all pupils. Opportunities will be provided for all pupils to make progress. We will do this by setting appropriate learning challenges and responding to the different needs of our pupils.

Outdoor Learning

Gilnahirk Primary School has improved its outdoor learning facilities with the addition of several outdoor learning areas around the grounds. These include a Mud Kitchen and a Raised bed for planting opportunities and provide the pupils with opportunities to

- become more aware of and be 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 discovery.

Field Trips and Educational Visits

Pupils are also provided with the opportunities to take part in workshops and go on trips linked to their WAU topics.

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

Health and Safety

In the event of pupils taking part 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.

Co-ordinator

- Coordinating WAU throughout the school.
- Ensuring that schemes of work devised by each year group correlate with statutory requirements.
- Ensure area of learning is properly resourced.
- Monitoring, updating and implementing policy.

- Monitor the running of the World Around Us scheme to ensure continuity and progression throughout the school.
- Liaise with appropriate advisory services.

Monitoring and Reviewing

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all teaching staff. The monitoring of standards of work and quality of teaching within WAU is the responsibility of the coordinator.

Resources

Each year group is responsible for collating and storing the equipment necessary for the study of their topics.