

The World Around Us

Policy



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As a Rights Respecting School, our pathway to a successful future is grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

ARTICLE 28: All children have the right to a primary education, which should be free.

ARTICLE 29 : Children's education should encourage them to respect others, human rights and their own and other cultures. It should also help them learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a Catholic, co-educational school seeking to promote, throughout the school community, a caring ethos.

Through the development of positive and secure relationships, within and outside the classroom, we create the opportunity for our children to thrive in a rich and varied environment.

In achieving this we recognise that each child is a valued and unique member of God's community.

SCHOOL AIMS

In our loving Catholic ethos we aim,

- To promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of our pupils.
- To give each pupil an awareness of his/her talents, skills and abilities.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to achieve success in a variety of contexts, promoting positive self-esteem and self-image.
- To create a love of learning, a knowledge of how to learn, and the motivation to produce his/her best work.
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to the needs of each pupil at his/her stage of development.
- To develop an attitude which leads to self-discipline, independence, courtesy, good manners and respect for everyone.
- To develop a wider understanding of the wider world in which we live, of the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations, and a tolerance of other religions and ways of life.
- To foster and develop close relationships between home, school and community.

This policy is based on the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum document (2007) which meets the needs of all children within our school. Within these requirements we at Our Lady Queen of Peace P.S. aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum so as to prepare our children for a rapidly changing world.

1. What is the World Around Us?

Children are naturally curious and often ask profound questions about themselves and the nature of the world around them. The purpose of this area of learning is to find age appropriate answers to some of these big questions from the perspectives of geography, history and science and technology. (P83 N.I. Curriculum document)

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, Science and Technology. Our Lady Queen of Peace aims to retain the best of current practice within the three subjects, while developing a topic/theme based approach to this area of learning, and making relevant connections across all areas of learning, while ensuring breadth and balance.

The statutory curriculum for World Around Us is structured as follows:

Foundation Stage:	The World Around Us including <i>Geography, History and Science and Technology.</i>
Key Stages One & Two:	The World Around Us strands of <i>Geography, History and Science and Technology.</i>

The **World Around Us** is presented as four inter-related strands that connect learning.

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

Three contributory elements within the World Around Us

Geography 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. Children should 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 should 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 is concerned with the concepts of sequence and time and with evidence which allows us to find out what happened in the past. The concepts of chronology, change/continuity, empathy and cause and effect will be developed through investigation of life in the past. Children should 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.

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 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. Children learn to ask scientific questions and begin to appreciate the way science will affect their future on a personal, national, and global level.

Children should 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.

2. Aims

- To promote understanding, respect and appreciation for the world in which pupils 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.
- To develop appropriate skills and vocabulary relating to Geography, History and Science and Technology.
- To develop children's knowledge, understanding and interest of other countries, cultures and lifestyles.
- To develop an awareness of the human and physical processes which shape places and people.

3. Skills

Through opportunities to engage in active learning contexts, children should develop cross-curricular skills in Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT. Through these learning experiences, they should also have opportunities to develop Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities.

At Our Lady Queen of Peace P.S. we also develop Geography, History and Science skills through the World Around Us. While many of the skills will be developed through cross-curricular links, we also plan for the development of subject specific skills when appropriate.

4. Planning Approaches

The WAU 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. We will also use the Ideas for Connected Learning, Thematic Units and other guidance material from CCEA and SEELB 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.

Planning for Progression and Continuity

Planning for the WAU 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 aim to provide learning experiences that are broad and balanced across each key stage and are beginning to monitor continuity and progression in children's learning.

Connected Learning

Recognising the changes and requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, we have begun to 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 practise and apply the skills they have gained.

Our planning for WAU 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
- Inclusion of key aspects of geography, history and science and technology throughout the year.

5. Learning and Teaching

In Our Lady Queen of Peace P.S, 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. 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. They 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.

6. Assessment

Assessment in WAU, as in all areas of learning, 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 individually 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 NI Curriculum. We take account of Assessment for Learning strategies and allow this formative assessment to help and guide planning. The key reasons for assessment within WAU 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

7. Inclusion

At our school the World Around Us forms part of the school curriculum policy 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.

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.

8. Learning in the Outdoors

The outdoor area provides children with one of the best environments in which to learn. As Margaret McMillan (c1925) says, ***'the best kept classroom and the richest cupboard are roofed only by the sky'***.

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 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

Children should have the opportunity 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 our own school policy.

9. Health and Safety

We enable pupils to have access to the full range of World Around Us activities.

There will always be elements of risk and uncertainty as children engage in active learning.

The NI Curriculum document states:

'All activities must be taught within a safe environment and children must be made aware of safe practice at all times.' (Page 84)

For WAU activities, we assess and manage risks according to the advice given in the following documents:

- ASE: 'Be Safe!' which provides detail on legislation, teacher responsibilities, risk assessment and curriculum activity
- CLEAPSS: providing direct assistance to classroom teachers.

10. WAU Co-ordinator 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
- Maintain a WAU scheme that shows progression from each key stage.
- Negotiate the place of WAU within the SDP.
- Develop and disseminate knowledge and expertise of WAU.
- Plan and organise events and participate in relevant challenges/competitions.
- Advise and guide colleagues with regard to appropriate classroom practice.
- Begin to formulate a policy in association with teachers and principal, in line with SDP.
- Promote and disseminate the policy within school.
- Undertake monitoring to include lesson observations, book scoops, pupil evaluations and examination of planning. This allows the co-ordinator to evaluate whole school practise.
- Ensure that the area of learning is properly resourced in terms of acquisition, safe storage and access.
- Liaise with appropriate services e.g. CLEAPSS, ASE and EA-SE advisory officers.
- Ensure that the programme of learning to implement all aspects of WAU covers skills and understanding for every age group from Nursery through to P7.

11. Monitoring and Review

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all teaching staff. The standard 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 all staff and will be monitored by the co-ordinator.

The work of the WAU coordinator also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of this Learning Area, being informed about current developments, and providing a strategic lead and direction. The WAU coordinator gives the principal and/or the Board of Governors an annual report in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in this Learning Area.

12. Resources

We are currently developing resources for all WAU topics/themes in the school. We keep some essential equipment and practical materials in a central store. Class teachers will supplement these resources with their own (and pupils') materials. The library services contain a good supply of topic and reference books and computer software to support children's individual.

Policy presented to Board of Governors 15 March 2017

