

Clocha Rince NS



Geography Whole School Plan

Geography

■ Title: Whole School Plan for SESE Geography – a work in progress

■ Introductory Statement and Rationale

(a) Introductory Statement:

This plan was developed by the school teaching staff during the 2012/2013 school year. This plan will form the basis of each teacher's long and short term planning in Geography and so will influence teaching and learning in individual classrooms.

It will also inform new or temporary teachers of our approaches and methodologies in this subject area. The Plan was further developed by the Board of Management and ratified at a meeting on Thursday 20th June 2013

(b) Rationale

We recognise that Geography is an integral part of the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education of our pupils. In our school SESE provides opportunities for the child to explore, investigate and develop an understanding of the natural, human, social and cultural environment in which he/she lives and of those in the wider world. The distinct role Geography plays in SESE is one of helping the child understand and appreciate the physical and human features of their immediate and wider environments.

This plan is drawn up in response to the 1999 Primary School Curriculum, to conform to the principles outlined in this curriculum and to review our practices in light of these principles.

As a whole school plan it guides the organised teaching and learning of Geography

■ Vision and Aims

(a) Vision

We believe that the Geography Curriculum enables children to make sense of the natural and human environments in which they live and in the wider world. As such, Geography is pivotal to each child's rounded environmental education. Geography prepares pupils to contribute and play a role in their communities by encouraging them to appreciate the interdependence of people. Geography promotes an understanding of and respect for different cultures and ways of life. The Geography curriculum fosters children's responsibility for the immediate and wider environments.

Aims

We endorse the aims of the SESE Geography curriculum as outlined in the Geography Curriculum P. 14:

- To develop knowledge and understanding of local, regional and wider environments and their interrelationships
- To encourage an understanding and appreciation of the variety of natural and human conditions on the Earth
- To develop empathy with people from diverse environments and an understanding of human interdependence
- To develop the ability to use a range of communicative methods, especially those concerned with the development of graphicacy
- To encourage the development of a sense of place and spatial awareness
- To encourage the development of caring attitudes and responsible behaviour towards the environment, and involvement in the identification, discussion, resolution and avoidance of environmental problems

- To develop an understanding of appropriate geographical concepts

Short Term Aims:

- We will audit our Geography resources and use them to enhance the teaching of Geography.
- We will focus on the production and use of weather recording equipment from Junior Infants- 6th class.
- We will develop age appropriate SESE trails for each class level.
- We will register to participate in the green flag programme

■ Curriculum Planning

1.Strands and Strand Units

Each teacher is familiar with the strands and strand units, content objectives for his/her class level and indeed for each other’s class levels. This is to ensure a coherent programme throughout the school.

All strands and all strand units must be covered each year but not all the content objectives need be addressed within a strand unit.

The three strands of the Geography curriculum are: Human Environments; Natural Environments and Environmental Awareness and Care.

Junior Infants – Second class

We are aware that the content of the Geography Curriculum at this level is

Human Environments	Natural Environments	Environmental Awareness and care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in the local community; • People and places in other areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local natural environments • Weather • Planet Earth in Space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for my locality

We are aware that one of the key messages in this Geography Curriculum is that children start developing geographical concepts by exploring their local, immediate environment.

In this way the children get a strong sense and appreciation of their own place. This will be reflected in our teaching at this level and subsequent levels.

Third and Fourth classes

Human Environments

- People living and working in the local area
- People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland

Explore these 2 strand units through a selection of sub-units:

1. *People and communities*
2. *Natural Environmental features and people*
3. *Settlement: homes and other buildings*
4. *People at Work*
5. *Transport and communication*

- **People and other lands**

Choose an environment in another European country

And an environment in a non – European country.

- **County, regional and national centres.**

Natural Environments

- The local natural environment
- Land, rivers and seas of my county
- Rocks and soils
- Weather, climate and atmosphere
- Planet earth in space

Environmental Awareness and care

- **Environmental awareness**
- **Caring for the environment**

We are aware that the children's knowledge and sense of awareness is extending to wider environments at county, regional, national and international level. This then is reflected back to our own locality. This is reflected in the above curriculum.

We focus on the children's growing knowledge of their own local environment.

Fifth and Sixth classes

We are aware that the content of the Geography curriculum at this level is

Human Environments

- People living and working in the local area
- People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland

Explore these 2 strand units through a selection of sub-units:

1. *People and communities*
2. *Natural Environmental features and people*
3. *Settlement: homes and other buildings*
4. *People at Work*
5. *Transport and communication*

- People and other lands

Choose an environment in another European country

And an environment in a non – European country.

- County, regional and national centres.
- Trade and development issues.

Natural Environments

- The local natural environment
- Land, rivers and seas of Ireland
- Rocks and soils
- Weather, climate and atmosphere
- Planet earth in space
- Physical features of Europe and the world.

Environmental Awareness and care

- Environmental awareness
- Caring for the environment

Ever increasing wider global environments are introduced at this level. This is the spiral nature of the curriculum. More complex geographical issues are explored in the above curriculum.

We are aware that undue repetition of content is to be avoided so the children will be taught different content objectives in each class. To this end, teachers in our school co-operate in the choice of content objectives, contrasting places within Ireland and countries. In as far as possible, opportunities are provided to individual teachers to study locations of interest to them.

In 2013 we made these decisions on the content of the curriculum:

Human environments:

We study our local place under the strand unit “People living and working in the local area”. We have made a selection of sub-units per class (There is a natural overlap or linkage between these units and they are never done entirely in isolation from one another)

Living in the local community

Living and working in the local and contrasting area

Junior Infants	Senior Infants	Rang 1	Rang 2	Rang 3	Rang 4	Rang 5	Rang 6
-My family and my community -Homes -Schools	- People at work - People at Play -People in places in other areas	-My family and my community -Homes and Shelter	- People at play - People at Work -People and places in other areas	-People and communities (local and contrasting) - Settlement:homes and other buildings (local and contrasting) -Natural Environmental features and people (local and contrasting)	-People at work (local and contrasting) -Transport and Communication (local and contrasting)	People and communities People at work (at least one economic activity) Natural Environmental features and people	Settlements: homes and other buildings People at work: (at least one economic activity) Transport and Communication

Strand Unit

People and Other Lands

County Regional and National Centres

People and Other Lands

County Regional and National Centres

Trade and Development Issues

Rang 3 (Location in Ireland/Europe)

Rang 3 & 4

Rang 5 (Location in Europe/Rest of World)

Rang 5 & Rang 6

Rang 5 & 6

Strand Unit – County, Regional & National Centres

Juniors	Seniors	Rang 1	Rang 2	Rang 3	Rang 4	Rang 5	Rang 6
World, Ireland, Europe -identify become aware of location	World, Ireland, 7 Continents -identify, become aware of location	World, Ireland, 7 Continents -identify, become aware of location	Ireland – identify provinces, counties	Ireland – identify main cities/towns in each county	Ireland – identify all countries and capital cities	Europe – identify all countries and capital cities	Europe – Identify all countries and capital cities. Identify – all countries and capital cities of another continent (school specific obj)

These are our choices of contrasting places in Ireland in each class from 3 – 6 class

Rang 3	Rang 4	Rang 5	Year 6
Donegal	Kerry	Galway/ Mayo	Wexford

When choosing countries to study under the strand “Human Environments” these are our considerations:

- any foreign nationals in our school who might welcome a focus being placed on their country of origin. If this is acceptable to them, we could use this opportunity to make them especially welcome to our school.
- places of interest to teachers
- one European and one non-European country to be studied across all classes from 3 to 6 in any one year.
- consideration of the history curriculum with possibilities of integration in mind.

Rang 3	Rang 4	Rang 5	Rang 6
Germany	Italy	Great Britain	France

Non European countries chosen per class from 3 – 6 class

Rang 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
China	Peru or Mexico/Guatemala/Bolivia (Mayan Civilisation)	Australia/ New Zealand	An African Country

Trade and Development:

Rang 5 : Trade

Year 6: Development and aid and/or Famine

Natural Environments.

Junior Infants	Senior Infants	Rang 1	Rang 2	Rang 3	Rang 4	Rang 5	Rang 6
-The Local Natural Environment - Weather	-The Local Natural Environment - Planet Earth in Space	-The Local Natural Environment - Weather	-The Local Natural Environment - Planet Earth in Space	-The Local and Natural Environment - Land, rivers and seas of my county -Rocks and Soils	-The Local Natural Environment - Weather, Climate and Atmosphere - Planet Earth in Space	-The local and natural environment - Land Rivers and Seas of Ireland - Rocks and Soil	- The Local and Natural Environment - Physical Features of Europe and the World - Weather, Climate and atmosphere -Planet Earth in space

Physical Features – Land, Rivers, Seas, Mountains, Bays, Lakes, Headlands

Juniors	Seniors	Rang 1	Rang 2	Rang 3	Rang 4	Rang 5	Rang 6
				Kildare	Ireland Rivers Seas	Ireland Rivers Seas Mountains Bays Lakes Headlands	Europe – 4 Chosen European Countries and 4 countries of other chosen continent???

We have completed a Geographical Environmental audit of our school grounds and immediate locality and county and identified natural features that can be focused on when focussing on the strand Natural Environments. These are:

Junior Infants	Senior Infants	Rang 1	Rang 2	Rang 3	Rang 4	Rang 5	Rang 6
School Gardens & Buildings	Seomra Glas	Peatland Clonbullogue	Donadea	Rahan Wood	Royal/Gr and Canal	Lullymore Bog	Nurney Organic Farm

Strand – Environmental Awareness and Care

Junior Infants	Senior Infants	Rang 1	Rang 2	Rang 3	Rang 4	Rang 5	Rang 6
Caring for my locality – First two objectives	Caring for my locality – Last two objectives	Caring for my locality – First 4 objectives	Caring for my locality – Last 5 objectives	Environmental Awareness	Caring for the Environment	Environmental Awareness	Caring for the Environment

2. Skills Development

We are aware that the development of Geographical skills is of equal importance to strand content in this curriculum.

The skills working as a Geographer are :

- A sense of place and space
- Maps , globes and graphicacy
- Geographical investigation skills (Questioning , Observing , Predicting , Investigating and experimenting , Estimating and measuring , Analysing , Recording and communicating , Evaluating)

These skills will be developed through the content of the strands and strand units. Strategies for development of these skills will involve the children being actively involved in fieldwork, trails and outdoor investigations as suggested in Teacher Guidelines starting on page 68.

- A sense of place and space will be developed through direct and indirect experiences first in relation to the child's own home and immediate surroundings but will later extend to include wider environments.

- The use of maps, globes and atlases will be used in age appropriate way from infants to 6th class and will encompass a wide range of graphical activities
- The geographical investigation skills will be included in various indoor and outdoor investigation work.

By following the content of this curriculum and by developing the geographical skills the children in our school are given opportunities to work as geographers at every class level.

3. Children's ideas

We plan to use the children's ideas of places and spaces as a starting point for all geographical activity.

We find out what the children already know through assessment techniques as outlined in our Assessment Policy.

We do this to build on the children's previous knowledge or to challenge the existing ideas if they are not accurate.

4. Approaches and Methodologies

Our teachers will follow the recommended sequential approach for Geography whereby local areas are first studied followed by regional, national, European and global studies.

We plan to use the key methodologies of the Primary Curriculum in the teaching of Geography :

- Active learning
- Problem solving
- Developing skills through content
- Talk and discussion
- Co-operative learning
- Use of the environment.

In learning about our own natural and human environments we will use methodologies specific to Geography:

Fieldwork and trails
 Survey
 Interview
 Models
 Maps
 Photographs
 Story- with references to geographical elements

In learning about distant lands, we will use these approaches and methodologies:

Atlases, maps and globes
 Interviews
 ICT
 Photographs
 School twinning - Comenius
 School textbooks

Fieldwork and mapping will be prioritised as methodologies where applicable.

The resources we need for these methodologies are:

Geographical Audit
 Photographs of local environment
 Maps of local environment

Local History of the area

5. Linkage and Integration

Linkage: When we are studying the local environment, we will study both the natural and human environments and the effect one has on the other.

When we are studying distant places under the Human Environment strand, we also learn about the natural environments of these places.

The strand Environmental Awareness and Care is by its nature, linked strongly with the other two strands.

Integration:

We will explore possibilities to integrate the SESE subjects at all class levels, We will refer to the Teacher Guidelines in Geography , History and Science in order to choose topics or themes for SESE integration. See list of integrated themes attached.

In particular the use of environmental trails in Geography will complement the study of living things in Science while the strand of Environmental Awareness and Care is common to both curricula. The use of trails will also lead to the study of how places and features have been shaped by the actions of people in the past and so integrate naturally with Local studies in History.

Opportunities that exist for integration with other subject areas are :

- **SPHE :** The development of the child's sense of identity and citizenship
- **Mathematics ;** The skills outlined in mapping and graphicacy
- **Visual Arts:** Aesthetic awareness in the environments and Making drawings.
- **Physical Education:** Outdoor and adventure activities.
- **Language:** Discussion of ideas and relationships in Geography. The language of location, direction and position.

6. Assessment and Record Keeping

As in all subject areas. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning of SESE Geography

We as a staff have a common understanding of its purpose and the ways in which the progress of children in geography will be assessed, documented and reported.

Assessment in geography in our school will fulfil the following roles :

- **A diagnostic role –** to identify areas of difficulty in order to respond to the needs of the child.
- **A summative role-** to establish the outcomes of learning after completing a unit of work.
- **An evaluative role –** to assist teachers in assessing their own practice, methodologies, approaches and resources.

We recognise that assessment techniques used in Geography must seek to assess progress in

- a) Children's knowledge of the environment and of the world.
- b) Children's ability to use geographical skills
- c) Children's development of attitudes

The assessment tools we will use will range from the informal means to the more structured approaches.

The

These records will inform the teacher of the progress of the child; the effectiveness of teaching methodologies employed and will also inform future planning.

The assessment records will form the basis for reporting and discussing the child's progress with parents. This information will be relayed at Parent Teacher Meetings and in annual school reports.

8. Children with Special Educational Needs

It is important that all children experience a rounded environmental education. Geography plays a pivotal role in this education and so we will do our best to ensure that every child will have opportunities to engage in learning activities appropriate to their abilities.

- Teachers will use a mixture of whole-class teaching and group work, with different groups set tasks of various complexities.
- Teachers will develop their questioning techniques spanning from simple recall to more complex and analytical skills so that all pupils will have opportunities for success.
- Map work will be graded for the less able and the more able students.
- Different ways of recording and communicating findings will be encouraged: drawing, ICT, written records, oral reports and models.
- All children benefit from active involvement in the environment so all will be encouraged to participate in fieldwork.
- The exceptional ability child will be encouraged to undertake additional research and recording their geographical findings in a variety of ways.
- Content, methods of recording and desired learning outcomes will be differentiated for children with general learning difficulties.

All teachers will familiarise themselves with the Draft Guidelines for Children with General Learning Disabilities (NCCA) in this regard

9. Equality of Participation and Access

- Equal opportunity will be given to every child to experience all strands
- All children will have equal opportunities to participate in geography lessons and activities.
- Provision for children with physical difficulties will be made so that they can access the geography curriculum.
- If we have children whose first language is not English, they will be supported in accessing the geography curriculum also.

The Geography programme in our school will allow children to learn of and come to value the diversity of peoples, cultures and societies in Ireland and throughout the wider world and so promote cultural awareness. (Refer to DES Intercultural Ed Guidelines)

■ Organisational Planning

10. Timetable - In keeping with the recommendations in the Primary School Curriculum Introduction (page 70) a minimum of two and quarter hours per week is devoted to SESE in infant classes and a minimum of three hours per week for classes 1st to 6th.

One hour of this time will be spent on Geography in Senior Classes, 45 minutes in Junior classes

* On occasion, time will be blocked as appropriate. This might occur when

- working on a integrated project

- exploring the local environment

Teachers may use discretionary curriculum time (2 hours per week) for SESE as appropriate.

11. Resources and ICT

We will add to our supply of age appropriate equipment for carrying out weather investigations. We use text books as a resource in our teaching of geography, however the textbook is only a resource which can be used as any other resource to enable the pupils achieve the skills and geography objectives. We will stock history textbooks and use as an occasional resource in a bid to reduce the emphasis on the textbook as a primary resource.

We will add to our stock of photographs of the local human and natural environment which will be used as a methodology for teaching Geography.

Education Resource Packs such as Archaeology in the classroom and Trocaire packs are used to support the curriculum.

Environmentalists in the community will be asked to talk to the children and share their knowledge with them.

In order to create a map rich environment we intend to use the following resources for mapping:

- Maps or plans of classrooms

- Map/plan of our school

- Local Street plan (ask local library)

- Ordnance Survey maps of County (OSI)

- Ireland Wall maps

- Europe wall maps

- World Wall maps

- Atlases – a variety of different ones is a good idea – each have their own strengths

- Globes

- * Satellite Images : www.met.ie

- Leisure maps / Tourist maps showing trails etc

- Transport route maps : those found on bus timetables

- Aerial photos particularly of local areas (community library)

- Electronic Maps: CD ROMs and internet have good interactive maps.

In relation to ICT :

We could use data handling programs to record and analyse geographical findings.

We will add to our software with a geographical focus for use in our computers.

We will compile DVD's / videos that show places of relevance to the programme we have planned.

We have access to the internet so that we can use the web as a geographical resource.

We will seek to acquire the following additional resources and materials :

- We will locate a large scale of our school

- Selection of leisure/tourist maps/local maps/School maps

- ICT Software

- Weather equipment- buy or make

The storage arrangements for geography resources :.

In the Resource room.

12. Health and Safety

We have a Health and Safety policy in place in our school which covers safety concerning the handling of equipment and out of school activities such as fieldwork .

Teachers will consult (Principal) whenever it is proposed to engage in fieldwork outside the school grounds.

During practical work teachers will be aware of the safety implications of any exploratory or investigative work to be undertaken. Successful and enjoyable investigations require sensible planning, good supervision and adherence to safety rules.

Outdoor work will be based in areas that are accessible for children, teachers and helpers and that are safe. Preliminary visits by teachers to the site will be necessary to identify potential hazards. If there are apparent dangers then a more suitable habitat will be selected for study. Habitat studies involve children in working with plants and animals, and teachers will be made aware that some children may be allergic to some animals and plants.

We will consult our school safety statement for advice on safety during such activities.

13. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting.

Teachers will consult this Whole School Plan and the curriculum documents for Geography when they are drawing up their long and short term plans.

Teachers will include all the strands and strand units over 2 year and will select objectives within the strand units each year. If a situation arises where staff are teaching the same class level, they will decide collaboratively on objectives chosen and will inform subsequent teachers of content covered to ensure continuity in our spiral curriculum.

Where it is meaningful and suitable Geography will be taught in a thematic way to integrate with the other SESE subjects of History and Science.

If ever applicable, each teacher will have a long term plan for the year drawn up collaboratively with teachers of the same class level. Individual teachers will then take these yearly outlines and tailor them to the needs of their own classes in their short term planning.

Cúntais Míosúil will assist in recording work covered, in evaluating progress in Geography and in informing future teaching.

14. Staff Development

- Teachers will have access to reference books, resource materials and websites dealing with Geography. Staff will be encouraged to research and try out new approaches and methodologies. The 'Methodology of the Month' will also incorporate methodologies specific to Geography.**
- All teachers will be responsible for keeping resource material up to date and will arrange for opportunities for resources to be assessed for purchase and for new approaches to be piloted in the school.**
- The culture in our school is one that encourages the sharing of experience and good practice.**

15. Parental Involvement

Parents have an important role to play as custodians of local knowledge that can be shared with their children as they explore the various aspects of the local environment.

Parents are encouraged to come to the school to help out in the delivery of this programme by

- a. participating in surveys and interviews**
- b. by helping out in supervision of fieldwork when/if needed**
- c. Talking to the children about their lives, work, cultural and leisure interests.**

Parents will be encouraged to accompany the children to view places of interest like orchards, farms or distinctive natural environments with which they are familiar.

Natives of other countries will be encouraged to share their heritage with the rest of the school if they so wish or if it is appropriate.

16. Community Links

- People in the local community who have an interest and knowledge in the environment will be invited to speak to the children.**
- The community library will be a source of knowledge for the children.**
- Local businesses will be approached to host a visit to a factory or other work place.**
- The work of some national agencies relates to aspects of the Geography programme. As well as accessing materials produced by these agencies specifically for schools, we will welcome visits by speakers from these organisations, ie Bord Na Mona, Duchais , ESB , Tree Council**
- Personnel from Concern/ Trócaire / Fair Trade will be invited to speak with the senior pupils about trade and development issues about issues involving the developing world such as famine and fair trade.**

■ Success Criteria

We shall review this whole school plan in the future under the following headings:

- How individual teacher preparation, planning and teaching reflects this plan.
- Are procedures outlined in this plan consistently followed? i.e procedures for fieldwork , assessment.
- How methodologies listed in this whole school plan are working in the classroom
- Resources
- How well are geographical concepts learnt by the children
- How well are the children's geographical skills progressing: a sense of place and space, geographical investigation skills, and mapping.

Means of assessing the outcomes of the plan will include

- Revisiting the aims of this plan as a staff
- Teacher / Parent feedback
- Children's feedback
- Inspectors reports / suggestions
- Results of class assessment
- SALF Folders

■ Implementation –

(a) Roles and Responsibilities

The plan will be supported, developed and implemented by all staff members.

The staff members will have responsibility for the following :

- Geographical audit of school grounds and immediate locality – all staff
- Fieldwork trails and packs – each class teacher
- Purchase of Resources - Principal
- Maintenance and storage of resources – Postholder for Resources
- Leading the development of new methodologies identified – Principal
- Liaising with community organisations and relevant agencies – individual teacher
- The development of ICT as a learning tool in Geography and the vetting of websites -Principal

■ Review

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the Geography curriculum. We aim to review this plan during the 2014/2015 school year. On this date we will refer to the tasks in our action plan and check that they have been completed in accordance with the agreed time frame.

■ Ratification

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management on 20th June 2013