

St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School

History and Geography Policy



"I came so that you may have life, life in all its fullness" John 10:10

St Michael Catholic Primary School and Nursery is a Catholic family of faith following the teachings of Christ. We strive to create an environment where all members of our school community respect the values of: Church, Independence, Resilience, Caring, Learning and Enjoyment for all. Belief in these values will nurture all as individuals and instil in them the confidence to meet their full potential, providing them with the best grounding for their future place in an ever-changing world.

Policy Date	September 2026
Signed by Head Teacher	Mrs N Collins
Review Date	September 2027

Rationale and Purpose of Study:

The National Curriculum (2014) for History states that "A high-quality history education will help pupils gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain's past and that of the wider world. It should inspire pupils' curiosity to know more about the past. Teaching should equip pupils to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, and develop perspective and judgement. History helps pupils to understand the complexity of people's lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time."

The National Curriculum (2014) for Geography states that "A high-quality geography education should inspire in pupils a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people that will remain with them for the rest of their lives. Teaching should equip pupils with knowledge about diverse places, people, resources, and natural and human environments, together with a deep understanding of the Earth's key physical and human processes. As pupils progress, their growing knowledge about the world should help them deepen their knowledge of the interaction between physical and human processes and the formation and use of landscapes and environments.

Geographical knowledge, understanding, and skills provide the frameworks and approaches that explain how the Earth's features at different scales are shaped, interconnected, and change over time."

Our aims and provision

Incorporating Catholic Social Teachings (CST) into every facet of our curriculum, including History and Geography, is paramount in fostering a holistic education that aligns with our school's deeply rooted values. CST provides a moral compass that transcends academic subjects, guiding our students towards a profound understanding of compassion, justice, and the dignity of every individual. By infusing CST principles into subjects ranging from science to history, we not only impart knowledge but also cultivate a sense of responsibility towards society. Through this integrated approach, pupils learn to view the world through a lens of solidarity, prioritising the well-being of the marginalised and vulnerable. This holistic educational experience empowers our students to become not only knowledgeable scholars but also compassionate advocates for positive social change, ensuring they carry the transformative teachings of CST into their lives beyond the classroom.

Our History and Geography curriculum is mapped out to ensure that children explore the geography and history within the overarching topics in a way that provides opportunities to recap prior learning from previous topics throughout the year and the previous year groups. Each term's learning builds on and consolidates essential geographical and historical skills needed to progress and retain knowledge across our pupils' time at Saint Michael's. Through both History and Geography, we want our children to engage with memorable, exciting, and high-quality learning experiences by planning hooks and celebration days at the start and end of topics. In addition, we develop cross-curricular links between our topics and other core and foundation subjects by encouraging a range of lessons, including written, debating, performance and drama, musical, creative, computing research and presentation, statistical

and mathematical graph analysis, as well as scientific exploration. History and Geography lessons are taught for 2 hours weekly, and each lesson contains elements of history as well as geography to ensure that both geographical and historical skills are developed simultaneously, providing the links between place knowledge as well as key historical events are understood to gain context and a deeper understanding of life in particular periods.

Our History curriculum is designed to:

- Build on knowledge throughout the school to ensure opportunities to retain and build on prior knowledge are continual and embedded throughout life at Saint Michael's.
 - Inspire children to want to know more about the past and to think and act as historians.
 - Encourage links with learning to a range of topics,
 - Encourage investigation of and interpretation of the past, understand chronology, build an overview of Britain's past as well as that of the wider world, and be able to communicate historically.
 - Develop the following characteristics to help our Saint Michael's children become active historians: developing a sense of period and time and evaluating and engaging with their own and others' views using historical evidence from a range of sources.
 - Develop respect and understanding of how to use historical evidence and the ability to make critical use of it to support and extend their learning.
- Develop an understanding of people's diverse experiences from the past around the world that have shaped today's society.

Our Geography curriculum is designed to:

- Build on place knowledge and skills throughout the school to ensure opportunities to retain and build on prior knowledge are continual and embedded throughout life at Saint Michael's.
- Develop our children's curiosity and fascination about the world and its people that will remain with them for the rest of their lives.
- Develop an understanding of their place in the world and responsibilities as global citizens.
- Investigate and make enquiries about our local area of Medway so that our children can develop and celebrate a sense of who they are and what makes our local area so unique and special.
- Explore the heritage of all children from our school by ensuring that we teach and explore the key countries our children are from.
- Investigate a range of places worldwide to help develop their knowledge and understanding of the Earth's physical and human processes.
- Develop the children's ability to apply geographical skills to enable them to explore, enquire, and confidently communicate their findings and geographical understanding to a range of audiences.

The Learning Environment:

- Every class has a set of Atlases and a globe on display, which can be accessed every lesson for the children to secure a deep-rooted understanding of the world around us, including the situation of countries, continents, oceans, and seas, connecting the countries together.

- Every class has a world map used for weekly reference.
- Most year groups have subject-specific artifacts to use during lessons and display alongside their learning wall.
- Learning walls reflect essential vocabulary and visual guides and sources used from each lesson to support a building journey across the term and retention of knowledge and skills from the prior week's learning.

The lesson journey:

- When appropriate, the first lesson of a new topic or term is a hook lesson, designed to capture children's interests and to answer the questions that the children may have and want to be answered about the topic. This lesson is also used as an assessment for learning lessons to gauge any prior knowledge that individual children may have about the topic. Within this hook lesson, children will complete a knowledge mind map, which gives a formal method of showing the teacher what the children already know. This is added to with a purple pen across lessons and at the end of the topic to show the children's progression of knowledge by the end of the topic. In year 1, this mind map is worked on as a class, with year 2-6 children creating their knowledge mind maps.
- Every lesson will have a statement; this statement will be reflective of a period of time in history or a geographical event, depending on the focus of the lesson. Children will be expected to reflect on this statement by answering a question about it.
- Each history lesson will commence with a discussion of the key historical concepts that will be addressed during the session; these discussions are generated by the children.
- Every lesson will have a starter, a visual stimulus to encourage discussion, spark interest, and encourage children to share and question their learning. Each lesson will also have a quiz, which is multiple choice for KS1 and written as answers for KS2, and consists of 4 questions to aid quick recall of dates and facts learned from prior weeks or previous topics that may link with the current topic.
- At the conclusion of each lesson, pupils are expected to independently respond to a 'lightbulb' question, designed to encourage exploration of the golden threads within their learning and to facilitate the revisiting and reinforcement of prior knowledge.
- Within the journey of the term, children will be exposed to a range of opportunities to show their learning, which consist of active lessons, outdoor learning and fieldwork, role-play, debates, diamond nine work, creating and giving presentations, leaflets, posters, and source exploration. Children interact with sources to understand how we learn about the past and are given the opportunity to critique the sources based on their validity and reliability.
- By the end of the topic, children will be given an assessment task or question to show their understanding of the topic and complete their purple pen mind maps. This will then inform the teacher to assess the child's skills on the target tracker.

Lightbulb questions:

At our school, our lightbulb questions serve as a beacon of enlightenment, deeply rooted in the profound principles of Catholic Social Teachings (CST). These questions are designed to do more than just illuminate a subject; they offer a pathway to profound comprehension, consolidation, and ethical justification. By integrating CST into our inquiries, we ensure that students not only gain factual knowledge but also engage in thoughtful reflection on how their learning aligns with the values of justice, compassion, and the inherent dignity of every person. These questions encourage students to delve deeper into their historical and geographical learning, prompting critical thinking and a deeper understanding of both subjects. In doing so, we foster a learning environment that not only nurtures intellectual growth in History and Geography but also cultivates a strong moral foundation, empowering our students to apply their knowledge in ways that positively impact society and uphold the teachings of CST.

Assessment of History and Geography:

Monitoring takes place regularly through sampling children's work in book scrutiny termly, support with teacher planning, as well as planning scrutiny. Staff are provided with non-negotiables for planning (images a and b below), lesson structure (image c below), and book scrutiny (image d below). These criteria are used to inform staff planning and as a means of monitoring. In addition, teachers are provided with self-audits to ensure that their subject knowledge and confidence are monitored and have termly informal drop-in planning support sessions, where staff can be supported in their planning.

Staff have been provided with assessment banks and are using our whole school target tracker assessment computer system. These two assessment tools are used to conduct a formal assessment of the children for History and Geography termly.

Image a) Planning template.

This template provides a clear expectation for the layout of each lesson, e.g., starter, quiz, activities and pre-planned possible lightbulb question. It also allows for teachers to identify the skills used within that lesson to ensure coverage is being met.

 		Medium Term Plan			
		Subject: History and Geography	Topic/Focus:	Year Group:	Term: 1/2
Term 1/2	Big Ideas/ Learning outcomes What you want your pupils to know by the end of the unit of work.				
	Starter/Quiz Gaps that need to be addressed using information from TT and assessments	'I can' statements	Geography/History skills	Tasks/ Activities	
	WK1	LO:			
	WK2	LO:			
	WK3	LO:			
	WK4	LO:			

Image b) non-negotiables for planning

Non-negotiables for History and Geography planning:

- **Starters** - which target prior learning through maps or pictures.
- **Quizzes**- to aid memory and recall of prior topics/dates/key people/places. Include some knowledge of prior year groups to encourage links and support comparisons.
- **Hooks**- at the beginning of a topic and memorable experiences, where possible, at the end of topics, e.g., dress up days, trips and visitors
- **Key vocabulary cards**- added to the topic wall every lesson.
- **Mind maps**- at the beginning of every topic, and added to with a purple pen across the topic to show progress and learning.
- **Challenging lightbulbs**- that are differentiated for support, where there are children who are working off a different age range.
- **Fieldwork**- at least once every term, where the children are out exploring, collecting data, and surveying the area.
- **A range of tasks and activities planned in** – debating, exploring, researching, writing, presenting, enquiry, and asking questions. Where possible, real-life in-class demonstrations, role-play, and videos. Tasks may not always be differentiated every lesson, but adequate support must be planned where necessary.
- **Use a range of sources**- When teaching history, use a range and encourage the children to identify their pros and cons, e.g. a diary is subjective, a photo, a painting could be abstract or made up, a newspaper clipping.
- **Target tracker statements**- at the front of everyone's book – children can be encouraged to self-assess using these. These should also be highlighted termly on Target tracker.
- **Peer, self, and group assessment**- where possible and where appropriate.

Image c) non-negotiables for books used in book scrutiny

St. Michael's History/Geography Book Look Performance			
Areas	Evident	Comments	Next Steps
Title page which displays LOs (Child friendly)			
TT statements to show pupils' progress and achievements.			
Clear tasks differentiated to challenge pupils at all level			
Evidence of skills being taught			
Quizzes and mind map evident in all books- mind maps added to with new learning			
Challenging lightbulbs- that are differentiated for support when needed			
Range of activities- active and written			
Effective marking- at least 1 comment per term for each child and every lesson key vocabulary highlighted			
Celebratory comments			
Other comments			