



**MONEENROE NATIONAL SCHOOL**  
**Roll No: 16204F**



# Geography Whole School Plan

September 2023

## **Introductory Statement and Rationale**

### **(a) Introductory Statement:**

This plan was formulated, drafted and agreed upon by the staff of Moneenroe National School. This plan will form the basis of each teacher's long and short term planning in Geography. It will document our approaches and methodologies in this subject area.

### **(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.
- 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 in Moneenroe National School.

## **Vision and Aims**

### **(a) Vision:**

- As a school community we aspire to enable each and every child to reach his/ her full potential.
- We are aware of the contribution SESE makes to the harmonious development of the child.
- 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 environment.

## **(b)Aims**

- We endorse the aims of Social, Environmental and Scientific Education as outlined on Page 4 of the SESE Geography Curriculum Statement.
- 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 geography
- 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

## **Curriculum Planning**

### **Strands and Strand Units**

- Each teacher is familiar with the strands and strand units, content objectives for his/her own class levels and indeed for each other's class levels.
- This is to ensure a coherent programme throughout the school.
- As children move from one classroom to another teacher's liaison with each other to ensure continuity in progression.
- We realise that 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.

### **Infants and First and Second classes**

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

<b>Human Environments</b>	<b>Natural Environments</b>	<b>Environmental Awareness &amp; Care</b>
<b>Living in the local community; People and places in other areas</b>	<b>The local natural environment Weather Planet Earth in Space</b>	<b>Caring for my locality</b>

- 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.
- We recognise the emphasis placed in this curriculum on starting with children’s ideas at every level.
- We agree that knowledge and skills are of equal importance.

### Third and Fourth Classes

We are aware that the curriculum for third and fourth is as follows:

Human Environments	Natural Environments	Environmental Awareness & Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People living and working in the local area</li> <li>• People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland</li> </ul> <p><i>Explore these 2 strand units through a selection of sub-units:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ People and communities</li> <li>➤ Natural Environmental features and people</li> <li>➤ Settlement: homes and other buildings</li> <li>➤ People at work</li> <li>➤ Transport and communication</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People and other lands <i>Choose an environment in another European country and an environment in a non-European country.</i></li> <li>• County, regional national centres.</li> <li>• Trade and development issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local natural environment</li> <li>• Local rivers and seas of my county</li> <li>• Land, rivers and seas of my county.</li> <li>• Rocks and soils.</li> <li>• Weather, climate and atmosphere.</li> <li>• Planet earth in space.</li> <li>• Physical features of Europe and the world.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental awareness</li> <li>• Caring for the environment</li> </ul>

- 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.

When choosing countries to study under the strand “Human Environments”, we will consider:

- Children from other countries who have come to 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 in our school.
- Places of interest to teachers
- Topics in the history curriculum with possibilities for integration.
- The local environment remains a rich resource at this level.
- Starting with the children’s own ideas will remain important.
- We will endeavour to reach a balance between knowledge and skills.

**Fifth and Sixth Classes:**

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

Human Environments	Natural Environments	Environmental Awareness & Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>People living and working in the local area</b></li> <li>• <b>People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland</b></li> <li>• <b><i>Explore these 2 strand units through a selection of sub-units:</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>People and communities</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Natural Environmental features and people</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Settlement: homes and other buildings</i></li> <li>➤ <i>People at work</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Transport and communication</i></li> <li>➤</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>People and other lands</b> <b><i>Choose an environment in another European</i></b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The local natural environment</b></li> <li>• <b>Land, rivers and seas of Ireland</b></li> <li>• <b>Rocks and soils</b></li> <li>• <b>Weather, climate and atmosphere</b></li> <li>• <b>Planet earth in Space</b></li> <li>• <b>Psychical features of Europe and the World</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Environmental awareness</b></li> <li>• <b>Caring for the environment</b></li> </ul>

<p><b><i>country and an environment in a non-European country.</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>County, regional and national centres.</b></li> <li><b>Trade and development issues</b></li> </ul>		
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--

*Ever increasing wider global environments are introduced at this level while the local environment remains a vital resource.*

*Children's own ideas remain the starting point.*

*We will continue to endeavour to reach a balance between knowledge and skills at this level.*

When choosing countries to study under the strand "Human Environments", we will consider:

- Children from other countries who have come to 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 in our school.
- Places of interest to teachers
- Topics in the history curriculum with possibilities for integration.

### **Skills development**

- We are aware that the development of Geographical skills is of equal important to strand content in this curriculum.
- The following skills will be developed through the context of the strands and strand units:
  - ***Geographical Investigation***
  - ***A sense of space and place***
  - ***Mapping and graphical skills***

Strategies for development of these skills will involve:

- The children being actively involved in fieldwork, outdoor investigation as suggested in Teacher Guidelines starting on page 68.
- The use of maps, globes and atlases will be used in an age appropriate way from infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class.

- 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.

### **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 by:
  - *Talk and discussion*
  - *Questioning and listening*
  - *KWL Charts*
  - *Annotated drawings*
  - *Brainstorming*
  - *Concept Maps*
  - *Quizzes*

We do this to build on the children's previous knowledge and to address any misconceptions they might have.

### **Approaches and Methodologies**

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
- ✓ Trails/Orienteering/Physical Investigative Experience

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

- ✓ Fieldwork
- ✓ Survey
- ✓ Interview
- ✓ Models
- ✓ Maps
- ✓ Photographs
- ✓ Artefacts
- ✓ Trails/Orienteering/Physical Investigative Experience

When exploring other places, we will consider these approaches and methodologies:

- Artefacts
- Atlases, maps and places
- places.
- Interviews
- Photographs
- Textbooks
- Trails/ Orienteering/Physical Investigative Experiences
- Quizzes
- Fact Pages

### **Linkage and Integration**

#### **Linkage:**

- ✓ When we are studying the local environment, we will study both the natural and human environments and the effects one has on the other.
- ✓ When we are studying distant places under the Human Environment strand, we also consider the natural environments of these places.
- ✓ The strand Environmental Awareness and Care is by its nature, linked strongly with the other strands.

#### **Integration:**

- ✓ We will explore possibilities to integrate the SESE subjects at all class levels, teachers create their own integrated topics and / or referring to the Teacher Guidelines in Geography, History and Science.

#### **Integration of History and Geography:**

- ✓ When choosing a European and non-European country in the Human Environments Strand, we shall consider our choices in History under the “Life, society, work and culture in the Past” strand (for example; if we chose Germany in Geography, we could choose to focus on WW2 in History; Italy – Renaissance under eras of conflict and Change in History; Britain – Industrial Revolution).

#### **Multi-Grade Teaching**

- ✓ We will use integration as much as possible.
- ✓ We will differentiate the work for the different ages by expecting the older children to cover more ground in depth and content and presentation.



## **Assessment and Record-keeping**

Assessment in Geography seeks to achieve a balanced picture of the children's progress in the acquisition of knowledge and skills and in the development of important positive attitudes.

Methods we will use:

- Teacher observation of the children's learning of the geography curriculum is implemented.
- Teacher designed tasks and tests at the end of units of work.
- Work samples, e.g. finished projects and investigations.
- These records will inform the teacher as the progress of the child and as to the effectiveness of their teaching methodologies.
- Children are given the opportunity to present and record their work in a variety of different ways, e.g. concrete material, oral presentation, photographs, written records, maps, projects, drawings, graphs, models, etc.
- Assessment information is reported to parents at the official parent / teacher meeting in November, at the end of the school year by means of end of year school report, in Test Copy and at other times during the year.
- Geography/Biodiversity Quiz each June.

## **Children with Different 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 abler students...
- Different ways of recording and communication findings will be encouraged; drawing, ICT, written records, oral reports and models.
- All children benefit from active involvement in the environment so that 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.
- Children who were born abroad or who have lived in other countries will be invited to share their experiences with the other pupils.
- Children will be provided with opportunities to work co-operatively.
- Special Needs Assistants may have a wider role/responsibility during field work, e.g. overseeing safety of a group of pupils.

## **Equality of Participation and Access**

Boys and girls will have equal opportunities to participate in geography lessons and activities.

We will endeavour to make Geography accessible to all.

## **Organisational Planning**

### **Timetable**

In keeping with the recommendations in the Primary School Curriculum Introduction (page 70) for SESE, the following is the minimum time allocation for geography:

Junior & Senior Infants – 45 minutes' weekly

1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Class – 1 hour per week.

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

- Working on an integrated project
- Exploring the local environment
- *Teachers might use discretionary curriculum time (2 hours per week for senior classes and 1 hour per week for infant classes) for SESE as appropriate.*

## **Resources and ICT**

The following are a list of books and other resources available in the school to assist with the delivery of the geography curriculum:

- EarthLink Series
- Geography Quest Series
- Small World
- Atlas
- Maps of Ireland and the world
- Wall charts and posters
- Photographs
- Moneenroe NS Geography Junior Trail
- Moneenroe NS Geography Senior Trail
- Maps of Local Area

## Websites:

- [www.askaboutireland.com](http://www.askaboutireland.com)
- [www.seomranga.ie](http://www.seomranga.ie)
- [www.primaryresources.co.uk](http://www.primaryresources.co.uk)
- [www.kent.org.co.uk](http://www.kent.org.co.uk)
- [www.met.ie](http://www.met.ie)
- [www.ppst.com](http://www.ppst.com)
- [www.topmarks.co.uk](http://www.topmarks.co.uk)

- A digital camera is available within the school.
- Education Resource Packs are used to support the geography curriculum. These packs are sent to the school from time to time.
- Environmentalists and other experts in the community will be asked to talk to the children and share their knowledge with them if and when appropriate.

## Health & Safety

We have a Health and Safety policy in place in our school, which covers safety concerns around out of school activities and is available in the school office.

## Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

- Individual teachers go to more detail re. Content, skills, resources needed, methodologies, recording of work and assessment in their short term planning.
- Cúntas Miosúil assists in evaluating progress in Geography and inform future teaching.
- Parents are informed of children's progress in Geography at parent teacher meetings and end of year reports.
- Teachers are aware of the curriculum covered at each class level in order to ensure the children experience a coherent, broad and balanced programme by the time they leave 6th class.

## Staff Development

- Teachers who attend geography related workshops, seminars in-service days, etc., are encouraged to report back and share the expertise they acquired with their colleagues by means of a hand-out.
- If required, time will be allocated at staff meetings to discuss issues related to geography.
- Members of staff who have particular expertise/interest are willing to share this with their colleagues.
- Teachers are encouraged to research new approaches and methodologies.

- When appropriate, teachers can arrange to try out resources on a pilot basis and assess whether or not they should be purchased.
- Whole School Plans will be distributed to all staff at the start of each school year.
- Moneenroe School Geography Trails (Junior and Senior) will be distributed to all school staff at the start of each school year.
- Ways to promote Geographical Investigation and Exploration skills in lessons and within pupil population will be discussed at Staff Meetings and Croke Park Hours.

### **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 may be encouraged to help out in the delivery of this programme by participating in surveys and interviews.
- Parents from other countries may be encouraged to share their heritage with the rest of the school if they so wish or if it is appropriate.
- Geography Fact Pages will be distributed to Parents.

### **Community Links**

- People in the local community who have an interest and knowledge in the environment may be invited to speak to the children.
- The local library will be a source of the knowledge for the children.
- Organisations such as Concern / Trocaire / Fair Trade/ Hope are sometimes in contact with the school and send information regarding their organisations.

### **Success of Criteria**

We hope that this plan will make a difference to the teaching and learning of geography in our school.

- The Criteria that will indicate success includes:
- How methodologies listed in this whole school plan are working in the classroom.
- Use of Resources.
- How procedures for fieldwork are working in the school.
- How well are geographical concepts learned by the children.
- How well are the children's geographical skills progressing: a sense of place and space, geographical investigation skills, and mapping.
- Are the key messages being adhered to?
- The primary resource for geography is the environment, starting with the local, then regional, national, European and global.
- Knowledge and skills are of equal importance.

- Feedback from Geography Biodiversity Quizzes
- Feedback from Geography Fact Pages
- Use and enjoyment of Moneenroe NS Geography Trails
- Pupil and Parent Questionnaires
- Geography is about developing a sense of place and space.

### **Implementation**

This Whole School Plan for Geography was implemented during the 2016 / 2017 school year and revised in September 2019 & 2023

### **Review**

This Whole School Plan for Geography was last revised in September 2023 and will be reviewed in the 2024/2025 school year when necessary changes will be made. The responsibility for co-ordinating the review lies with Mr. Michael McKeogh, Deputy Principal.

### **Ratification and Communication**

This Whole School Plan for Geography was ratified at our Board of Management meeting on September 26<sup>th</sup> 2023.

A copy of this plan will be published on our school website.