



## Geography at St.Alban's CE Primary School

### What is geography?

Geography is a foundation for students to better understand the world that they live in. Geography encompasses a combination of natural and social sciences, as it studies both people and their physical environment. Human geography is concerned with the understanding of the dynamics of cultures, societies and economies while physical geography focuses on the study of landscapes and natural processes. Geography impacts upon almost every aspect of our daily lives, from the food we eat, to travelling to work/school, to the climate that we live in.

### Why is geography important to our school?

Studies over the last decade have unfortunately highlighted a decline in the precedence of the study of geography within primary schools<sup>1</sup>. At St.Alban's however, we value geography. We believe it not only helps our children to develop their understanding of the world but also, allows them to find their own place in it. It is imperative that our geography curriculum inspires in students a curiosity and fascination with the world that continues beyond their years at primary school.

### Environment

With the ever-growing environmental concerns for our planet, it is more important than ever that we not only teach geography to the next generation but also, that we teach it well. At St.Alban's, we believe that teaching about the environment and environmental responsibility is an integral part of our curriculum. Young people should be taught to appreciate the relationship between physical and human geographies rather than seeing the two as separate entities. We are passionate about inspiring the children in our school to be environmentally conscious and know that they can make a difference in the world. We have a school house (house Jericho) dedicated to promoting environmental responsibility in school. House Jericho leaders/ambassadors have recently introduced the use of recycling bins and continue plan new ways to help make St.Alban's more environmentally friendly.



Jericho leaders leading whole school assembly.

<sup>1</sup>F Martin, 'What is geography's place in the primary school curriculum?', in 'Debates in geography education', edited by D Lambert and M Jones, 1st edition, Routledge, 2012, pages 17 to 28

### Local area field work

As well as learning about environmental changes and concerns, at St.Alban's we particularly value the exploration of our local area. Our geography curriculum aims to instil in our students a love for where they live. This helps children to develop their sense of belonging and responsibility for the locality. To do this, we take a more practical approach and local fieldwork is an imperative part of our curriculum. We recognise the importance of providing children with first hand experiences and opportunities to apply their geographical skills practically.



Y6 children using and interpreting maps and compasses.



### Field work beyond the locality

Not only do our children regularly explore the local area but also, we have planned opportunities for pupils to apply field work skills on excursions beyond the locality. We aim to develop the cultural capital of our students by providing them with ample hands-on experiences both near and afar. In Y4, children travel to Castleton, where they explore the incredible caverns there. This trip is mainly field work based and so, students will use many geographical skills such as map reading, using compasses and devising their own maps. From the next academic year, our Y6 children will experience a trip to London. Again, pupils will be provided with opportunities to utilise field work skills during the excursion. Furthermore, this first-hand experience will help children to compare life in the capital city with that in relatively small, northern town.



Y4 children exploring Castleton.

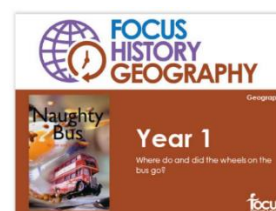


## Curriculum design

At St.Alban's, we follow the National Curriculum, which includes Geography as a compulsory subject for key stages 1 and 2, with statutory Programmes of study. The National curriculum splits the study of geography into four key areas: **locational knowledge; place knowledge; human and physical geography** and **geographical skills and field work**. These key geographical concepts are identified in our progressive KSV (knowledge, skills and vocabulary) documents. A copy of our long-term planning and KSV's are in this document.

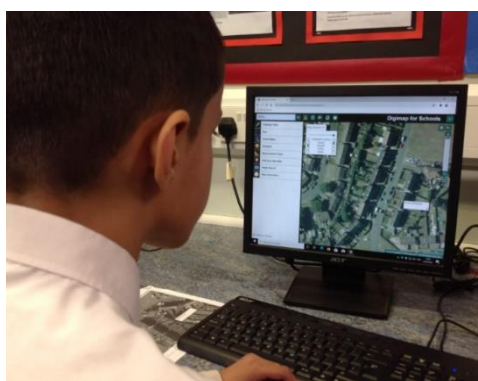
### Focus Education Geography

To help implement this curriculum, we follow the Focus Education Geography scheme. Focus is a knowledge-rich, mastery driven scheme of work which meets National Curriculum requirements. Focus Geography ensures that we have full curriculum coverage across school. Furthermore, it contains exciting, research-based activities that inspire students.



### DigiMaps

Not only do we use Focus Education to supplement the teaching of geography in our school but also, at St.Alban's we use DigiMaps, an award-winning online mapping service supporting the cross-curricular teaching of geography. We believe that the use and study of maps is central to geographical learning and understanding. As Ofsted stated, in good quality geography teaching "Maps at a variety of scales are used frequently as a matter of routine and are an intrinsic part of learning geography. This ensures that children have a good spatial awareness and are very secure in their ability to locate the places they are studying."<sup>2</sup> In recent years, there has been a significant shift in the way maps are used and accessed in everyday life, as many people are moving away from paper maps and instead using digital data on computers and mobile phones. We therefore think it is essential that students are able to access a variety of maps, including digital mapping, to prepare them for later life in today's world.



Y3 children comparing different types of map.

<sup>2</sup> GOV.UK. 2022. *Research review series: geography*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-geography/research-review-series-geography>> [Accessed 2 February 2022].

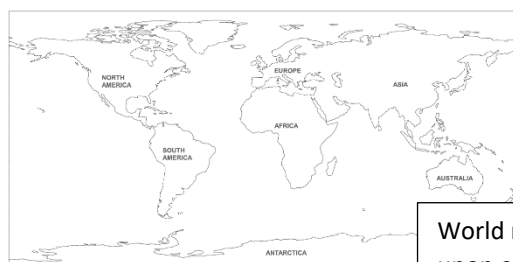


## Spiral Curriculum

Our geography curriculum is taught using a spiral curriculum, where key concepts are regularly revisited to embed knowledge and increase geography fluency. Bruner believed that “to achieve progression in learning, teachers should plan to revisit, reinforce and refine students’ thinking.”

<sup>3</sup> At St.Alban’s, we regularly recall previous learning in geography through the use of review activities detailed in our review PowerPoint to ensure that our children know and remember more. Furthermore, our curriculum is designed so that key areas of learning are revisited in more depth in later years. Children will encounter the same map of the world every year from Year Two up until Year Six. This is so that children become increasingly familiar with the resource and so that new learning is not hindered by having to simultaneously interpret a different map. Pupils are provided with a world map in Year Three which, like scholars, they return to and build on each year with new learning.

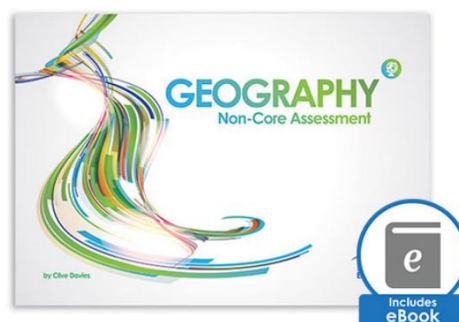
World map in each classroom from Y2-6.



World map that is built upon each year.

## Assessment

At St.Alban’s, we aspire to help children know and remember more. To do this, our geography lessons incorporate regular retrieval of previously acquired knowledge and skills. This ensures that important, sticky knowledge is transferred into our students’ long-term memories. Reviews are used by teachers as a form of formative assessment to gauge pupils understanding. We also use the Focus Education Geography assessment document to outline the age-related geography skills and knowledge expectations for each year group. Teachers should regularly use the Focus assessment materials to check their pupils’ knowledge and skills, including knowledge taught in previous year groups. In Summer 2, practitioners meet to assess children against the end of year assessment criteria for geography to determine whether a child is working towards (WTS) or working at the expected standard (EXP) for their key stage.



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<sup>3</sup> Bruner, J. S. (1960) The Process of education. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press