

SPECIALIST EDUCATION SERVICES

Geography Policy and Practice

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1 RATIONALE

This document should be read in conjunction with the Curriculum Statement, which outlines specific issues underpinning the Curriculum approach at SES

The very nature and purpose of the holistic provision at our establishments means that the focus is always on the 'whole child'. This is amplified in the range of documentation, policy and practice that reflects our philosophy of '24hr' learning, coupled with our "no limits' positive psychology.

The intensity of work in this respect, with both the child and where possible, family, is beyond what any child in a mainstream setting, and in many other specialist settings, would experience because of the very purpose and nature of practice at SES.

This document sets out the policy and principles that underpin the whole process of learning across the twenty-four hour learning experience available.

2 CURRICULUM INTENT

The intent of our geography curriculum is to inspire in students a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people that will remain with them for the rest of their lives. Teaching should equip them 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 students progress, their growing knowledge about the world should help them to deepen their understanding of the interaction between physical and human processes, and of 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.

Many of the students coming to our establishments may well have had difficult experiences with Geography, either in the way it has been taught or in the way they have received the teaching. Their low self esteem and poor self image as learners, coupled with their learned avoidance behaviours often used for self protection against the risk of failure, mean that they may never have experienced the excitement and satisfaction of success in Geography.

Our aim is to provide experiences that will improve the child's self esteem allowing them to develop confidence and at the same time enjoy success in areas of endeavour specific to the subject.

Geography can and should:

- stimulate students' interest in their surroundings and in the variety of human and physical conditions on the earth's surface;
- foster students' sense of wonder at the beauty of the world around them;
- help students to develop an informed concern about the quality of the environment and the future of the human habitat and thereby enhance students' sense of responsibility for the care of the earth and its people.

This can be an extremely useful process for youngsters with SEMH insofar as it takes them out of their immediate and personal concerns and helps them reflect on that wider sense of self and place in the world, coupled with an understanding of the diverse and sometimes difficult lives others lead.

"You can travel the seas, poles, and deserts and see nothing. To really understand the world you need to get under the skin of the people and places. In other words, learn about geography. I can't imagine a subject more relevant in schools. We'd all be lost without it."

Michael Palin

3 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GEOGRAPHY

3.1 PLANNING FOR GEOGRAPHY EXPERIENCES

The teaching of Geography provides opportunities for students to experience and explore Geography in a variety of contexts.

Geography schemes of learning are highly personalised and derived from our underpinning Geography knowledge sequences, in order to support them in future pathways.

Our Geography knowledge sequences are guided by the National Curriculum Framework for Geography. As a non-core subject, it is arranged in steps from 1- 9. Age related expectations are indicated on the knowledge sequence. Each step is equivalent to the corresponding year group, e.g. step 3 is year 3.

The knowledge sequences for Geography have the following outline:

- Local Knowledge
- Place Knowledge
- Human Geography
- Physical Geography
- Geography Skills and Fieldwork

The students personalised Geography pathway builds on their previous learning, and knowledge is strengthened, broadened and deepened over time. This approach allows teachers to identify gaps in learning and provide opportunities that will allow them to recover and catch up over time.

Each scheme of learning provides the planning, including knowledge and objectives, for a unit of learning. A scheme of learning will relate to the SES knowledge sequence, as well as, where applicable, to the requirements of any examination syllabus chosen in KS4. They are intrinsically flexible; it is useful to use a variety of approaches and teaching strategies covering the same core unit to develop a variety of skills.

A scheme of learning may be designed to be revisited as many times as is judged necessary across all year groups and key stages. Schemes of learning are designed primarily to be enjoyable, to offer the chance of success, to enrich and enthuse the experience of each individual and to offer the opportunity of development across the experience of Geography.

Planning for Geography will take a variety of forms for which personalised learning episodes and units of work will include:

- Individual work
- Group Work
- Classroom based learning
- Extended learning in the wider community

Geography offers opportunities for students to:

- investigate a wide range of people, places and environments at different scales around the world;
- study geographical patterns and processes and how political, economic, social and environmental factors affect contemporary geographical issues;
- investigate how places and environments are interdependent;
- carry out geographical enquiry, including identifying geographical questions and developing their own opinions;
- carry out geographical investigations inside and outside the classroom;
- use a range of investigative and problem-solving skills and resources, including different types of maps and atlases, satellite images, aerial photographs, texts and ICT.

In geography, students acquire and apply knowledge and understanding of four aspects of geography:

- the ability to undertake geographical enquiry and use geographical skills;
- knowledge and understanding of places;
- knowledge and understanding of geographical patterns and processes;
- knowledge and understanding of environmental change and sustainable development.

3.2 TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLES

Key elements of teaching methods in Geography are:

- Knowledge imparted by the teacher,
- Fieldwork
- Creative activities related to elements of the topic
- Question and answer
- Individual and group enquiries
- Use of a range of media presentation
- Use of Computing (including Geographical Information Systems)
- Use of a variety of printed and textual material
- Role play and drama
- Discussion and debate

- Story telling

Approaches to learning will to a greater or lesser extent involve an enquiry method:

- Asking questions and possibly forming hypotheses
- Planning investigations
- Finding, collecting and recording information
- Analysing and interpreting information
- Drawing conclusions
- Evaluating and organising information

Activities that enhance student skills and experience are:

- Discussion and debate with others
- Writing including narrative, analysis, explanation and description
- Communication/presentation of findings in a variety of ways to the group or a wider audience
- Tasks which develop knowledge, skills and understanding
- Activities should be balanced between activities which are short in duration and those which have scope for development over an extended period
- Activities should, where appropriate, use student's own interests or questions
- Activities should, where appropriate, involve both independent and co-operative work
- Activities should encourage students to become more confident in the use of a range of media and equipment
- Activities should encourage students to become confident in the use of a range of materials available through Computing (including Geographical Information Systems)

3.3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

SES is committed to ensuring that all students are treated with equality of regard.

This will involve:

- Providing equality of opportunity in the Geography curriculum in an attempt to maximise the potential of each individual pupil.
- Treating as of equal value the different needs, interests and abilities of individual students.
- Through their experiences within history pupils should have respect for others and the idea that all should be treated as equals.

In pursuing this policy with regard to individual students, there are four categories of difference between groups of students, in which it is generally acknowledged that 'treatment as equals' may be problematic and for which it is therefore important to have specific policies. These are:

- Racial/Cultural differences
- Social-class differences
- Ability differences
- Gender differences

3.3.1 Racial/Cultural Differences

It is vital that staff avoid any racial bias or stereotyping with respect to the particular individuals who are from ethnic-minority backgrounds and that they are alert to and willing to challenge any such discrimination or stereotyping by students.

3.3.2 Gender Differences

Equal opportunities in terms of participation are carefully considered, however, issues of prejudiced attitudes and stereotyping towards the opposite sex can be in existence and can potentially be magnified in our environments, especially given the contextual background and past experiences of our young people.

Staff should therefore be aware of this and should be willing to challenge any such discrimination or stereotyping by students. Furthermore such risks can be mitigated through planned teaching strategies.

3.3.3 Social Class Differences

Staff should be aware of making assumptions about student's levels of knowledge and opportunities for acquisition of knowledge whatever their background.

3.3.4 Ability Differences

SES establishments are resourced such that students receive a highly individualised curriculum based on their Portfolio of Achievement and Needs. Implicit in this is a response to differing levels of ability.

It is also important that protected characteristics as defined in the SES Equality and Diversity Policy are considered when planning and implementing teaching practice to ensure equal opportunities. This policy should therefore be read in conjunction with the SES Equality and Diversity Policy and Practice document and the DfE guidance around our equality duty.

3.4 GEOGRAPHY AS A CROSS CURRICULAR SUBJECT

It is important to stress the inter-relationship of geography with many other areas of the curriculum and with aspects of learning, communication and social functioning beyond the Learning Centre day. At each establishment every aspect of its operation is viewed as a potential vehicle for building upon children's knowledge, understanding and skills. All staff need to be skilled at finding unobtrusive ways of supporting cross-curricular links through taking advantage of the total living experience without this intruding on the naturalness of domestic living.

As well as being a worthwhile educational experience in its own right, geography provides an excellent vehicle to enrich the wider curriculum by giving children a real context for their learning. Geography is well placed to make a significant contribution to the curriculum priorities of literacy, numeracy, ICT and citizenship.

The distinctive characteristics of geography allow it to contribute to the wider

curriculum by providing children with opportunities to:

- develop and extend their investigative and problem-solving skills, including skills in number and ICT, inside and outside the classroom
- participate in a range of independent and collaborative learning experiences that extend their personal, social and study skills
- gain experiences that help them make connections between themselves, their communities and the wider world
- develop awareness and understanding of a range of peoples and cultures, and a respect for many different attitudes, views and beliefs
- recognise the need for a just and equitable society, and their own role in making this possible
- explore issues of environmental change and sustainable development, and develop the skills and attitudes necessary for active involvement as citizens.

Cross curriculum dimensions provide important unifying areas of learning that help young people make sense of the world and give education relevance and authenticity. They reflect the major ideas and challenges that face individuals and society.

3.4.1 Learning Outside the Classroom

SES supports and endorses the Learning Outside the Classroom initiative as its principles and philosophy match the SES Vision Statement. We believe that every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances.

The use of places other than the classroom for teaching and learning often provide the most memorable learning experiences and help us to make sense of the world around us by making links between feelings and learning. They stay with us into adulthood and affect our behaviour, lifestyle and work. They influence our values and the decisions we make. They allow us to transfer learning experienced outside to the classroom and vice versa.

Students can benefit from well-organised visits, community activities and getting involved in wider learning projects (such as helping to organise information, reviewing policies and providing peer support). As students progress, work placements and visits help shape their decisions about future opportunities.

All children and young people have the opportunity to participate in both focused field trips and extended residential weeks, throughout a range of local and national locations. In addition to the social and personal benefits, these offer real life geographical knowledge and experience which can be developed in context.

3.5 PRESENTATION OF WORK

At SES we believe presentation of work is vital aspect of creating a positive and stimulating environment and in enhancing student motivation and self-esteem. Presentation of work can take a wide variety of forms ranging from:

- Written format
- Recording (oral and photographic)
- Displays
- Through use of computing and digital media
- Through witness statements created pupils and adults

Adults at SES, are expected to make a professional judgement with regards to each individual pupil's aptitude and ability in terms of facilitating presentation of work. We seek to continually implement our 'No Limits' thinking in the way we facilitate presentation of work ensuring feedback is given to support young people's continual progress in this area.

3.6 PROGRESSION IN GEOGRAPHY

Progression includes:

- a steady acquisition of new skills, knowledge and understanding
- moving from familiar to unfamiliar contexts or places
- meeting needs which demand more complex or difficult solutions
- students' awareness of their growing capabilities in Geography be it knowledge or skills
- consolidation of skills in a range of contexts

Students should develop and consolidate the following:

- a gradual extension of content, increasing complexity, greater awareness and understanding
- a progression from the use of more generalised geographical knowledge to the application of abstract ideas
- opportunities to apply skills, knowledge and understanding in a range of relevant contexts.
- an appreciation of artefacts/texts and sources which are familiar and unfamiliar and which increase in complexity as abilities develop.
- use of information technology in open and closed research work.

3.7 DIFFERENTIATION

Students at our establishments will clearly differ in ability and teaching should take account of this by providing a range of learning situations and approaches. In addition the philosophy of SES is such that personalised learning is a cornerstone.

Differentiation is a process not a single event. This process involves recognising the variety of individual needs within a group, planning to meet those needs, providing appropriate delivery and evaluating the effectiveness of the activities in order to maximise the achievements of individual students.

Geography provides wide opportunities for differentiation by:

- Input
- Resource

- Task
- Support
- Outcome
- Response

In planning for our students the following factors should be considered:

- Activities should build on what our students already know and can do
- Our students need immediate and regular encouragement, praise and reward
- The activities should be broad enough to allow scope for development and not prevent more able students from extending their learning
- The work should be pitched at the age, maturity and ability of the group and/or individual
- Tasks should be differentiated according to individual student needs
- Consider the balance between group activities and individual differentiated tasks for specific students

To achieve this, clear attention should be given to the following:

- A range of appropriate equipment
- Using a variety of teaching methods to elicit a particular response
- Organising the group in different ways appropriate to particular objectives
- Setting open-ended tasks so that students can respond at their level
- Issuing different 'challenges' to different students
- Providing extension work for students with greater ability
- Allowing time for individual diagnosis, teaching and feedback.

The method of assessment and reporting should provide feedback, which is appropriate to students of differing abilities. It should aid their future learning by providing knowledge but should also give them support and encouragement. More specifically, the teacher should consider:

- Resources reading levels and ease of use
- Availability of a range of media/software
- Availability of a range of support equipment
- Where Computing is being used, simplified software guides
- Provision of a variety of tasks to cover the main content area
- Take account of time available to support individuals/group
- Other adult/student support
- Student/student support e.g. pairing
- Various ways of praising achievement
- Use of visual prompts to support learning

3.8 ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING

Assessment is part of an on-going process that informs future planning and subsequent learning. All assessments should take account of:

- Knowledge, skills and understanding acquired
- The contexts of the activity
- The purpose of the activity

Effective formative and summative assessment:

- is embedded in planning, teaching and learning
- requires a shared understanding of learning objectives and success criteria between teacher and learner
- draws on evidence of learners' achievement and progress from a wide range of contexts within and beyond the classroom
- values information that teachers retain in their heads, as well as concrete evidence produced by learners
- is based on evidence generated in the course of continuous teaching and learning, engagement with learners through observation, discussion, questioning, and review and analysis of work
- helps to shape and refine future teaching and learning, and to personalise the experience of individual learners
- provides the basis for discussions with learners themselves, their parents/carers and with other professionals about their strengths, areas for development and future learning targets
- is the foundation upon which periodic assessment can be based
- recognises and celebrates learners' progress in the light of their previous performance and motivates them to improve further
- promotes independence and self-motivation
- develops the capacity for peer and self-assessment among learners.

Assessment is a continuous process and testing and accreditation are built in at various stages of a student's development

Any system of evaluation and assessment should

- Identify what has been taught and learnt
- Monitor student's progress continually
- Monitor student's progress in cross-curricular elements
- Establish student's needs as a basis for further planning and teaching

Student involvement in the assessment and evaluation process is critical.

Evidence can be gleaned from:

- Observing
- Questioning and listening
- Discussion
- Written work, audio and video camera recording, drawings, charts, etc.
- Specific assessments tied to curriculum materials.

3.8.1 The marking of students work

Teachers' responses to students' work should be positive, encouraging, sympathetic, honest and appropriate. Marking should be completed in a pragmatic way, as appropriate to the needs of the student and whenever possible completed in their presence. Further areas of study can then be negotiated with the student.

- Students should be made aware of the assessment criteria being employed, particularly before tackling new situations and subsequently when marking work
- Students should, as a result of the interaction, be aware of the next steps in their learning
- It is sometimes useful for students to respond to each others work

3.8.2 Record Keeping

Records are kept in the form of long term planning (Curriculum Overview), Medium Term Planning (unit objectives) and short term planning (detailed planning of learning episodes). A record of progress is evident in the on-going feedback (verbal and written) between adult and pupil. Where appropriate an evidence base is collated for an episode of learning this can take various forms e.g.files, exercise books, scrap books, digital media files.

3.8.3 Individual Programmes

- The Portfolio of Achievement and Needs of each student will inform the global priority targets to be addressed for the child.
- More detailed educational objectives will be identified by Learning Centre staff and students, and negotiated targets reached.
- Targets set will be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time related.
- Targets will always be compatible with the requirements of the National Curriculum and/or Portfolio of Achievement and Needs

3.9 EVIDENCE FOR LEARNING

Every student has a unique and personalised learning journey that is based on their individual needs and starting point. Evidence of Learning enables Learning Centre staff to capture and create a rich, comprehensive picture and narrative that details learning and progress for each student. The subject knowledge sequences are available to track and record professional judgements on progress, alongside the students personalised EHCP and LCEP outcomes, and broader PAN targets

4 IMPACT

For many students' geography is fun. They enjoy studying diverse environments, places, cultures and peoples. Students are motivated by the opportunities available through fieldwork and ICT to investigate, both critically and creatively, real places and people. Developing an awareness of these places heightens pupils' sense of curiosity about the Earth. They enjoy being given opportunities to respond responsibly to issues, based on knowledge and understanding.

The contribution that geography makes to students' enjoyment derives largely from the opportunities to explore their identity and place in an interconnected world, actively engage with different environments, have their assumptions challenged and challenge the assumptions of others. Geography also evokes in students' a sense of awe and wonder about a wide range of diverse environments at different scales.

Out-of-classroom learning provides important opportunities to develop their understanding of healthy lifestyles, as does investigation of themes such as leisure. Geography also enables them to compare their own lifestyles with those of people in other parts of the world, in particular people in less economically-developed countries.

Students learn to stay safe, not only through understanding risk and developing safe working practices while conducting fieldwork, but also through exploring ideas and real world issues, such as hazards and health risks in areas where people are not safe. Exploring and discussing a variety of sources and issues in geography provides opportunities for pupils to examine situations and dilemmas, helping them understand how to make safe choices.

Geography plays a central role in contributing to young people's long-term economic wellbeing by developing the spatial and communication skills essential for many jobs. It encourages students to be adaptable and to suggest informed and creative solutions to real world issues. Students are able to plan, to share their views, and to work effectively in groups. These transferable skills help equip them for lifelong learning. The ability to think critically and draw on a range of evidence is one of the key attributes that leads to geographers being employed in a range of sectors.

Geography inspires students to think about their own place in the world, their values, and their responsibilities to other people and the environment. They begin to think about their roles as world citizens. They consider how to develop their understanding of sustainable development, and how this can inform their actions and choices.

Geography takes a wide and long view of the impacts of human activities. Students examine the social, environmental and economic impacts of what we do, individually and collectively. They realise that taking responsible action on local and global issues makes a positive contribution to society.

Accreditation in Geography is available for individual pupils through either GCSE or Entry Level, depending on ability and interest. Due to our personalised approach to learning, chronological age is not seen as a barrier to accreditation opportunities.

5 SMSC AND BRITISH VALUES IN GEOGRAPHY

At SES we believe the development of SMSC and promotion of British Values, should be embedded within all areas of teaching and learning across both the school and residential setting. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Spiritual, Moral, Cultural and Social Policy and Practice document and the British Values Policy and Practice Document.

5.1 SMSC

At SES we develop SMSC in many aspects of the curriculum through ensuring opportunities for SMSC development are extensive and frequent. These opportunities are reflected in planning documents as well as in outcomes for pupils.

Examples of SMSC development within Geography are:

Spiritual

- Geography is fundamental in promoting a sense of wonder and desire to explore the world, and fundamental to this the development of an understanding of scale, and how small changes such as climatic changes, can have extensive consequence, on both a local and world scale.
- Geography promotes the understanding of links between life and the processes, which create and shape it.
- Within Geography pupils are encouraged to reflect, one right and wrong, the impact of humans on others, ecosystems and land.

Moral

- Geography encourages exploration of impacts, which promote moral debate. For example, the impact human life has on the world and issues around population including overpopulation.
- Pupils are offered the opportunity to explore the different lifestyles of individuals, including individuals who live in shanty towns/favelas and how they are fair and unfair.
- Pupils explore controversial moral issues such as fair trade and food miles and the dilemma around importing food, including the consequences importing has on the wider world.

Social

- In Geography, young people explore social issues, including issues around population, migration and immigration and are encouraged to reflect on the impact of these processes on the world.
- Pupils are encouraged to look at ways they can make a difference, for example through lifestyle choices.
- Pupils are encouraged to be leaders in different situations, as well as to be able to work as part of a team without being in a lead role.

Cultural

- Pupils at SES are actively encouraged to develop an understanding of different cultures.
- In Geography pupils are taught about a range of cultures and traditions. We educate pupils in being able to understand the impact of beliefs and traditions of people, for example, marriage and death.
- Pupils learn about the impact of natural disasters on cultures and understanding the development of the world as a global community.

5.2 BRITISH VALUES

Promotion of British values is an integral part of life at SES. We believe that the promotion of such values should be inherent in teaching and learning as well as in the wider community. We fundamentally believe that the promotion of British Values is an essential strategy in preventing radicalisation. This document should therefore be read in conjunction with our Radicalisation Policy and Practice document.

Examples of the promotion of British Values within Geography are:

Rule of Law

- Geography considers the impact of people on the planet and the way in which different groups are impacted whilst supporting pupils in developing their understanding of laws on a national and international scale.

Democracy

- Geography encourages pupils to demonstrate understanding of the different perspectives that exist between groups of people around the world.

Individual Liberty

- Geography uses examples from different case studies to consider the impact of land use on different individuals and how this impacts their liberties.
- Geography also supports pupils in developing an understanding of the rights of individuals, which may be dependent on location or culture.

Mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith

- Geography teaches pupils about different faiths, and beliefs, fundamentally developing their knowledge and understanding of a range of cultures and traditions.
- In Geography case studies show pupils how different cultures live and encourage them to respect societies with different belief systems.