

**UN CRC Article 28**

All children have the right to a primary education

## World Around Us Policy

Adopted January 2016

Reviewed January 2019

Due for next review January 2022

### **Introduction**

This policy is based on the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum document (2007) which is the starting point for planning a school curriculum that meets the needs of individual children. Within these requirements, we at Knockloughrim Primary School aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum so as to prepare our children for a rapidly changing world.

Knockloughrim Primary School is set in an educationally and experientially rich rural context.

The school grounds, the immediate local countryside, the close proximity of farming and the nearby town of Magherafelt provide many opportunities in which to explore 'The World Around Us' (WAU). The beautiful wider local area provides a wealth of further opportunities.

### **1. What is the World Around Us?**

Children are naturally curious and often ask profound questions about themselves and the nature of the world around them. The purpose of this area of learning is to find age appropriate answers to some of these big questions from the perspectives of geography, history and science and technology (P83 Northern Ireland Curriculum document.)

The 'World Around Us' is one of the six Areas of Learning in the Northern Ireland Curriculum. It focuses on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in Geography, History, Science and Technology. Knockloughrim Primary School aims to retain the best of current practice within the three subjects, while developing a theme based approach to this area of learning, and making relevant connections across all areas of learning, while ensuring breadth and balance.

The 'World Around Us' is presented as four inter-related strands that connect learning.

- **Interdependence**
- **Place**
- **Movement and Energy**
- **Change Over Time.**

**Three contributory elements within the 'World Around Us':**

**Geography** explores the relationship between the earth and its people through the study of the environment, place and space. It develops knowledge of places and environments throughout the world, an understanding of maps and a range of investigative and problem solving skills both inside and outside the classroom. Children should develop knowledge and understanding of their place in the world, other places, and the processes which affect the people, conditions and life in that place.

They should explore ideas about people, jobs, the weather and the environment both locally and globally and begin to consider their part in maintaining a sustainable world.

**History** is concerned with the concepts of sequence and time and with evidence which allows us to find out what happened in the past. The concepts of chronology, change/continuity, empathy and cause and effect will be developed through investigation of life in the past. Children should gain an awareness of their past and changes which have occurred over time through examining evidence, looking at photographs, watching TV and multimedia clips and listening to stories.

Children will recognise the importance of evidence in giving a picture of the past but will understand that there can be different interpretations of this depending on how it is viewed.

**Science and Technology** aims to stimulate a child's curiosity in finding out why things happen in the way they do. It teaches methods of enquiry and investigation to stimulate creative thought. Children learn to ask scientific questions and begin to appreciate the way science will affect their future on a personal, national, and global level.

Children should have opportunities to develop the skills of Science and Technology and to develop awareness of the relevance and importance of Science and Technology in everyday life in finding out about themselves, the environment, the material and physical world.

Knockloughrim Primary School is committed to designing learning experiences within World Around Us which ensure a balance of these contributory elements through the delivery of the four inter-related strands throughout all Key Stages.

## **2. Aims**

- To develop knowledge, understanding and skills in the context of the World Around Us.
- To promote understanding, respect and appreciation for the world in which they live and their immediate environment.

- To acknowledge and appreciate a sense of the past, changes which have occurred and how these affect the world today.
- To develop an appreciation of the relevance and importance of Science and Technology in everyday life.
- To develop in children the skills of enquiry, investigation, analysis, evaluation and presentation.

### 3. Skills

*'At the heart of the curriculum lies an explicit emphasis on the development of skills and capabilities for life-long learning and for operating effectively in society. Through opportunities to engage in active learning contexts . . . children should develop **Cross-Curricular Skills** (in Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT) and **Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities**.'* (NIC P5)

At Knockloughrim Primary School we also develop Geography, History and Science skills through the World Around Us. While many of the skills will be developed incidentally, we also plan for the development of subject specific skills when appropriate.

### 4. Planning Approaches

The WAU programme will be implemented at a level appropriate to the needs of the children in the context of our school and will also provide opportunities for pupils to explore their world in the context of home, school the local area and the wider world. All planning is based on the statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. When appropriate to the interests and needs of our pupils and teachers and to the relevance of our chosen themes, we will also use the Ideas for Connected Learning, Thematic Units and other guidance material from CCEA and EA in our planning. Whilst initial planning is **for** the pupils, at all stages children will be encouraged to become active participants in the planning/ learning process as we plan **with** the children as part of a plan, do, review process in all Key Stages.

#### Planning for Progression and Continuity

Planning for the WAU builds on the earlier experiences of children and continues to help them to explore the world they live in. At Foundation Stage, skills and concepts are developed during play and other planned activities relevant to the children's interests and experiences. Careful observation informs the planning of future learning experiences within the 'World Around Us'.

We ensure that the overall programme of learning in any one year group, and across the key stages, is broad and balanced and that there is continuity and progression in children's learning. We are adopting a spiral approach to the World around Us *'so that concepts, knowledge and skills are introduced without undue repetition or significant gaps and are reinforced in a variety of contexts.'* (NIC P85)

## Connected Learning

Recognising the changes and requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, we have in place detailed themed planning which ensures breadth and balance of knowledge, skills and understanding of the World Around Us and which are flexible to take account of the interests of the children. We emphasise the totality of the children's learning across the curriculum by making meaningful links across the learning areas. We encourage children to transfer understanding and skills from one context to another, allowing them to practise and apply the skills they have gained.

**Our planning for WAU** aims to promote:

- Good investigations and the development of children's enquiry skills.
- Good use of ICT to support teaching and learning.
- Effective use of the school/local environment, educational visits and visitors to the classroom.
- Progression in key aspects of geography, history and science and technology.

## **5. Learning and Teaching (see Knockloughrim Primary School Learning and Teaching policy)**

In Knockloughrim Primary School, Learning and Teaching approaches provide suitably challenging opportunities for all pupils to take part in lessons fully and effectively. Learning experiences are active, practical and enjoyable. We make use of a wide range of teaching methods balancing whole class, group and individual activities to engage children in effective learning.

In the Foundation stage children experience much of their learning through well planned and challenging play. This is further developed through well planned, challenging Activity Based Learning experiences in Key Stage One. Throughout the school, children have opportunities to make choices and decisions, developing their own ideas and interests, either as starting points for learning activities or pursuing a theme in more depth. They are supported in taking risks in their efforts to succeed and are actively involved in planning, carrying out and reflecting on their work within the World Around Us Learning Area.

We at Knockloughrim Primary School recognise the strengths of pupils with dyslexia and aim to use these to help them learn in World Around Us. We have high expectations of all our children and achievement of our pupils is seen as everybody's responsibility. We achieve this through encouraging partnerships with parents and engaging pupils in their own learning. For Dyslexia Awareness Week 2014 The British Dyslexia Association's (BDA) defined dyslexia as: *'a learning difference, a combination of strengths and weaknesses which affect the learning process in reading, spelling, writing and sometimes numeracy.'*

## **6. Assessment**

Assessment in WAU, as OF all areas of learning, will be used to promote, enhance and deepen the children's learning. It involves all methods normally used to appraise the children's learning, either individually or in groups.

The outcomes from these assessments can then be used to identify the progress which pupils make in relation to the processes, skills, understanding and knowledge outlined in the NI Curriculum. We take account of 'Assessment for Learning' strategies and allow this formative assessment to help and guide planning.

WAU will be to:

- Enhance performance, self esteem and self-confidence.
- Promote greater resilience when faced with challenges.
- Increase independence.
- Develop a positive climate for learning.

## **7. Inclusion**

At our school the World Around Us forms part of the school curriculum to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs.

The teachers are aware of the requirements of SENCO and plan pupil experiences accordingly. They are able to discuss specific children with the Special Needs Co-ordinator with relation to their theme and how adaptations can be made if required.

Children will be helped to access this 'Learning Area' using a range of learning styles, visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. They are able to record and demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways according to their learning needs and preferences. Children with exceptional ability will have access to more demanding aspects of the WAU and increased resources may be required.

## **8. Learning in the Outdoors**

Knockloughrim Primary School has developed the potential for outdoor learning through the on-going physical development of learning areas within the school grounds (our woodland area), planning for outdoor learning within themes. Play Based Learning and Activity Based Learning and, wherever relevant and possible, facilitating learning through the exploration of the local and wider area. When appropriate, help from outside organisations/facilitators is used to help maximise these opportunities.

Our pupils have opportunities to develop skills and concepts in an outdoor learning environment where they will:

- Become more aware of, more observant in and more responsive to their surroundings.

- Develop an approach to careful observation, accurate recording and thoughtful analysis.
- Encourage an interest in environmental issues.
- Foster a sense of wonder and discovery.

Children should have the opportunity to study aspects of their own immediate world, including different features of town and countryside and make comparisons between local and wider world issues.

## **9. Health and Safety**

We enable pupils to have access to the full range of World Around Us activities. Where children are to participate in activities outside of school we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure it is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

There will always be elements of risk and uncertainty as children engage in active learning. The NI Curriculum document states: *'All activities must be taught within a safe environment and children must be made aware of safe practice at all times.'* (Page 84)

## **10. WAU Coordinator/Curriculum leader Role and Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the 'World Around Us' coordinator to:

- Draw up an action plan for the development of the 'World Around Us' in our school.
- Monitor the running of the 'World Around Us' scheme to ensure continuity and progression throughout the school.
- Negotiate, in accordance with the whole school Learning and Teaching policy, the place of 'World Around Us' within the School Development Plan and be involved in monitoring and evaluating of learning
- Develop and disseminate knowledge and expertise of 'World Around Us' in the context of the whole school policy on Continued Professional Development.
- Advise and guide colleagues with regard to appropriate classroom practice.
- Formulate policy / scheme of work in association with teachers and principal, in line with SDP.
- Promote and disseminate the policy within school. Undertake monitoring to include lesson observations, examination of planning, and carry out evaluations.
- Ensure that the area of learning is properly resourced in terms of acquisition, safe storage and access.
- Liaise with appropriate advisory services from the Educational Authority.

## **11. Monitoring and Review**

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all teaching staff. Monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in Geography, History and Science and Technology within the 'World Around Us' is the responsibility of the coordinator/ curriculum leader.

The work of the WAU coordinator/ curriculum leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of this 'Learning Area', being informed about current developments, and providing a strategic lead and direction.

## **12. Resources**

We are currently developing resources for all WAU themes in the school. Class libraries contain a supply of topic and reference books and computer software and the internet is used to support children's individual research. Further ICT Resources include a digital microscope, digital cameras, video cameras and programmable devices. The school is committed to exploring the use of new and emerging technologies to promote learning within 'The World Around Us'. Our resources are frequently and valuably supplemented by the use of Theme Boxes of books/resources from the Education Authority Schools Library Service.

<p>This policy was opened for comments by parents/carers from the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019 to the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019. No comments were received.</p>
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