



Castleplunkett NS

*SESE Geography
Whole School Plan*

Whole School Plan for SESE Geography

Introductory Statement and Rationale

(a) Introductory Statement:

This plan will form the basis of each teacher's long and short term planning in Geography and so will influence teaching and learning in individual classrooms.

It will also inform new or temporary teachers of our approaches and methodologies in this subject area. This plan was drafted in 2019 after a process of consultation within the staff and draws on the experience and content of previous whole school plans developed over a number of years in Castleplunkett NS.

(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 and of those in the wider world. 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 Castleplunkett NS.

Vision and Aims

(a) Vision

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 immediate and wider environments. Castleplunkett NS is a rural school in Co. Roscommon. As we live in a rural area, our locality is rich in features of the natural environment e.g Turloughs, streams, woodlands, hedgerows. We aim to help pupils to come to an understanding of and take an interest in the natural and human environments around them and the wider world. We believe an appreciation of geography is essential for an understanding of the wider world. Environmental activities in our school will foster a positive attitude and sense of responsibility among our pupils for the natural environment and its relationship with the human environment. We hope that our pupils will have a clear awareness and knowledge of their immediate local area through the study of Geography in our school. Our mission statement states that we wish to promote tolerance and respect within the school community. Through our geography curriculum we hope to promote tolerance and respect for other cultures in Ireland and the wider world.

(b) Aims

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 graphicacy
- 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

Specific Short Term Aims

- We will audit our geography resources and use them to enhance the teaching of Geography.
- We will continue to participate in the Green Flag Programme annually.
- Every class will continue to take part in weather observation and recording.
- Senior classes will take part in One Big idea initiative.
- The pupils will engage with environmental issues and continue to promote positive ways to ensure environmental awareness and care.
- SEAI will visit the school and develop awareness and skills towards sustainable energy

Curriculum Planning

1. Strands and Strand Units
- 2.

Each teacher is familiar with the strands and strand units, content objectives for his/her class level and indeed for each other's class levels. This is to ensure a coherent programme throughout the school.

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.

Junior Infants – Second class

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

Human Environments	Natural Environments	Environmental Awareness and Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in the local community; • People and places in other areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local natural environments • Weather • Planet Earth in Space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for my locality

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.

Third and Fourth classes

Human Environments	Natural Environments	Environmental Awareness and Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People living and working in the local area • People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland <p><i>Explore these 2 strand units through a selection of sub-units:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People and communities 2. Natural Environmental features and people 3. Settlement: homes and other buildings 4. People at Work 5. Transport and communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and other lands <p><i>Choose an environment in another European country</i> <i>And an environment in a non – European country.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County, regional and national centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local natural environment • Land, rivers and seas of my county • Rocks and soils • Weather, climate and atmosphere • Planet earth in space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental awareness • Caring for the environment

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 as stated in the above curriculum.

We never forget the children's growing knowledge of their own local environment.

Fifth and Sixth classes

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

Human Environments	Natural Environments	Environmental Awareness and care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People living and working in the local area • People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland <p><i>Explore these 2 strand units through a selection of sub-units:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People and communities 2. Natural Environmental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local natural environment • Land, rivers and seas of Ireland • Rocks and soils • Weather, climate and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental awareness • Caring for the environment

<i>features and people</i> 3. <i>Settlement: homes and other buildings</i> 4. <i>People at Work</i> 5. <i>Transport and communication</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and other lands <i>Choose an environment in another European country each year</i> <i>And an environment in a non – European country each year</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County, regional and national centres. • Trade and development issues. 	atmosphere <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planet earth in space • Physical features of Europe and the world. 	
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Ever increasing wider global environments are introduced at this level. This is the spiral nature of the curriculum. More complex geographical issues are explored in the above curriculum.

We are aware that undue repetition of content is to be avoided so the children will be taught different content objectives in each class. To this end, teachers in our school co-operate in the choice of content objectives, contrasting places within Ireland and countries. In as far as possible, opportunities are provided to individual teachers to study locations of interest to them.

We have collaborated to make these decisions on the content of the curriculum:

Human Environments

Human environments: We study our local place under the strand unit “People living and working in the local area”. We have made a selection of sub-units per class (There is a natural overlap or linkage between these units and they are never done entirely in isolation from one another)

Living in the local community area

Living and working in the local and contrasting

Junior Infants	Senior Infants	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth
-My family and my community -Homes -School	-People at work -People at Play -People and places in other areas	-My family and my community -Homes and Shelter	-People at play - People at Work -People and places in other areas	-People and places in other areas -People and communities (local and contrasting) -Settlement: homes and other buildings (local and contrasting) -Natural Environmental features and people (local and contrasting)	-People at work (local and contrasting) -Transport and Communication (local and contrasting)	-People and communities - People at work (at least one economic activity) -Natural Environmental features and people	-Settlements: homes and other buildings -People at work: (at least one economic activity) -Transport and Communication

Strand Unit

People and Other Lands Rang 3 (Location in Ireland/Europe)
County Regional and National Centres Rang 3 & 4
People and Other Lands Rang 5 (Location in Europe/Rest of World)
County Regional and National Centres Rang 5 & Rang 6
Trade and Development Issues Rang 5 & 6

Strand Unit – County, Regional & National Centres

Junior Infants	Senior Infants	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth
World, Ireland, Europe -identify and become aware of location		World, Ireland, Continents -identify and become aware of location		Ireland -identify provinces, counties	Ireland -identify main cities/towns in each county	Ireland - origin of place names Europe – identify all countries and capital cities	Europe – Identify all countries and capital cities. Identify all countries and capital cities of another continent

These are our choices of contrasting places in Ireland in each class from 3 – 6 class

<u>Rang 3</u>	<u>Rang 4</u>	<u>Rang 5</u>	<u>Rang 5</u>
Blanchardstown	Arranmore Island	Sligo	The Burren Co. Clare

When choosing countries to study under the strand “Human Environments” these are our considerations:

- any foreign nationals in 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 to our school.
- places of interest to teachers
- one European and one non-European country to be studied across all classes from 3 to 6 in any one year.
- consideration of the history curriculum with possibilities of integration in mind.....

European Country

<u>Rang 3</u>	<u>Rang 4</u>	<u>Rang 5</u>	<u>Rang 5</u>
Britain	Italy	Greece	France

Non European

<u>Rang 3</u>	<u>Rang 4</u>	<u>Rang 5</u>	<u>Rang 5</u>
Egypt	Japan	China	Mexico

Trade and Development:

Rang 5 :Trade

Rang 6: Development and aid and/or Famine

Strand :Natural Environments.

Junior Infants	Senior Infants	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth
-The Local Natural Environment -Weather	-The Local Natural Environment -Planet Earth in Space	-The Local Natural Environment -Weather	-The Local Natural Environment -Planet Earth in Space	- The Local Natural Environment -Land, rivers and seas of my county -Rocks and soils	-The Local Natural environment -Weather, climate and atmosphere -Planet Earth in Space	-The Local natural environment -Land, rivers and seas of Ireland -Rocks and soils	- The Local natural environment -Physical features of Europe and the world -Weather, atmosphere and climate

Physical Features- Land, rivers, seas, mountains, bays, lakes, headlands

Junior Infants	Senior Infants	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth
				Ireland Mountains	Ireland Rivers Seas	Ireland Rivers Seas Mountains Bays Lakes Headlands	Europe- France USA and one other country of choice

We have completed a Geographical Environmental audit of our school grounds and immediate locality and county and identified natural features that can be focused on when focusing on the strand Natural Environments. These are:

Junior Infants	Senior Infants	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth
-School Grounds -Local Trails	--School Grounds -Local Trails	Local Trails	Local Trails	Local Trails	Local Trails	Local Trails	Local Trails

Local Trails:

School Ringfort, Glenkeen, Ballyroan Bridge, Sacred Heart Church, Town Park, Glenkeen woodland, Inch Loop, Templemore Town Park, Cabragh Wetlands.

Strand: Environmental Awareness and Care

Junior Infants	Senior Infants	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth
- Caring for my locality	- Caring for my locality	- Caring for my locality	- Caring for my locality	- Environment al awareness	- Caring for the environment	- Environment al awareness	- Caring for the environment

2. Skills Development

We are aware that the development of Geographical skills is of equal importance to strand content in this curriculum.

The skills working as a Geographer are:

- **A sense of place and space**
- **Maps , globes and graphicacy**
- **Geographical investigation skills .(questioning , observing , predicting , investigating and experimenting , estimating and measuring , analysing , recording and communicating , evaluating)**

These skills will be developed through the content of the strands and strand units. Strategies for development of these skills will involve the children being actively involved in fieldwork, trails and outdoor investigations as suggested in Teacher Guidelines starting on page 68.

Infants-1st Classes:

- **Journey stories e.g We're going on a bear hunt, Rosies Walk**
- **Simple mapping activities: use of playmat, jigsaw.**
- **Simple drawings of materials, plans of bedroom, classrooms.**
- **Following simple directions when drawing and placing objects in correct places during play**
- **use of Lego and K-NEX for Infants**
- **Use of Globe for Infants**
- **Pictorial use of Weather symbols**

Second-Fourth classes:

- **Simple drawings and materials**
- **use of K-NEX**
- **Use of Google Earth**
- **Drawing routes of familiar areas/journeys**
- **reading keys and legends from maps**
- **Use of mazes**
- **Grid referencing of maps, globes and atlases.**

Fifth-Sixth Classes:

- **Simple drawings of materials**
- **Use of K-NEX**
- **Use of mazes**
- **Simple maps of school grounds and village**
- **Examining different views of objects-oblique/aerial photos**
- **Grid referencing of maps,**
- **Globes, and atlases**

A sense of place and space will be developed through direct and indirect experiences first in relation to the child's own home and immediate surroundings but will later extend to include wider environments.

The geographical investigation skills will be included in various indoor and outdoor investigation work.

By following the content of this curriculum and by developing the geographical skills the pupils in our school are given opportunities to work as geographers at every class level.

3. 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
- Active Learning
- Play and experimenting
- Enquiry process and questioning
- Brainstorming
- Concept maps
- Use of the environment

We do this to build on the children's previous knowledge or to challenge the existing ideas if they are not accurate.

4. Approaches and Methodologies

Our teachers will follow the recommended sequential approach for Geography whereby local areas are first studied followed by regional, national, European and global studies.

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.

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

Fieldwork and trails
Survey
Interview
Models
Maps
Photographs
Artefacts
Story

Mapping skills and mapping concepts are developed using the following techniques:

- Use of the globe
- Journey stories
- Plans of bedroom
- Plans of classroom
- Route to school
- Route around village
- Reading road networks on maps
- Identify towns on maps
- Directions around the school

- Awareness and knowledge of Cardinal points
- Use of Ordnance Survey maps

5.Linkage and Integration

Linkage: When we are studying the local environment, we will study both the natural and human environments and the effect one has on the other.

When we are studying distant places under the Human Environment strand, we also learn about the natural environments of these places.

The strand Environmental Awareness and Care is by its nature, linked strongly with the other two strands.

Integration:

We will explore possibilities to integrate the SESE subjects at all class levels, We will refer to the Teacher Guidelines in Geography, History and Science in order to choose topics or themes for SESE integration.

In particular the use of environmental trails in Geography will complement the study of living things in Science while the strand of Environmental Awareness and Care is common to both curricula. The use of trails will also lead to the study of how places and features have been shaped by the actions of people in the past and so integrate naturally with Local Studies in History.

Opportunities that exist for integration with other subject areas are :

- SPHE : The development of the child's sense of identity sand citizenship
- Mathematics ; The skills outlined in mapping and graphicacy
- Visual Arts: Aesthetic awareness in the environments and making drawings.
- Physical Education: Outdoor and adventure activities.
- Language: Discussion of ideas and relationships in Geography. The language of location , direction and position.

6. Assessment and Record Keeping

As in all subject areas Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning of Geography. We as a staff have a common understanding of its purpose and the ways in which the progress of children in Geography will be assessed, documented and reported.

We recognise that assessment techniques used in Geography must seek to assess progress in

- Children's knowledge of the environment and of the world.
- Children's ability to use geographical skills
- Children's development of attitudes

The assessment tools we will use will range from the informal means to the more structured approaches.

Methods we will use are:

- Teacher observation of the children's learning as 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.
- Project group work and classroom displays of pupils work
- Feedback from pupils

These records will inform the teacher of the child's progress, the effectiveness of teaching methodologies employed and will also inform future planning.

The assessment records will form the basis for reporting and discussing the child's progress with parents. This information will be relayed at Parent Teacher Meetings and in annual school reports. In line with our school policy on Assessment, the primary purpose underlying assessment in Geography is to enhance the learning experiences of the child

8.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 more able students.
- Different ways of recording and communicating findings will be encouraged: drawing, ICT, written records, oral reports and models.
- All children benefit from active involvement in the environment so 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.
- Content, methods of recording and desired learning outcomes will be differentiated for children with general learning difficulties .

All teachers will familiarise themselves with the Guidelines for Children with General Learning Disabilities (NCCA) and Draft Guidelines for Exceptionally Able Students (NCCA) in this regard

9. Equality of Participation and Access:

- Equal opportunity will be given to boys and girls to experience all strands
- Boys and girls will have equal opportunities to participate in geography lessons and activities.
- Provision for children with physical difficulties will be made so that they can access the geography curriculum.
- Children whose first language is not English will be supported in accessing the geography curriculum also.

The Geography programme in our school will allow children to learn of and come to value the diversity of peoples, cultures and societies in Ireland and throughout the wider world and so promote cultural awareness. (c.f. DES Intercultural Ed Guidelines)

10. Organisational Planning

10. Timetable

In keeping with the recommendations in the Primary School Curriculum Introduction (page 70) a minimum of two and quarter hours per week is devoted to SESE in infant classes and a minimum of three hours per week for classes 1st to 6th.

One hour of this time will be spent on Geography.

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

- working on an integrated project
- exploring the local environment

Teachers will use discretionary curriculum time (2 hours per week) for SESE as appropriate.

11. Resources and ICT

We have a supply of age appropriate equipment for carrying out weather investigations.

We use text books as a resource in our teaching of geography.

We have a stock of photographs of the local human and natural environment which will be used as a methodology for teaching Geography.

Environmentalists in the community will be asked to talk to the children and share their knowledge with them.

***In relation to ICT :**

We will make use of data handling programs to record and analyse geographical findings.

We have bought software with a geographical focus for use in our computers.

We have DVD's / videos that show places of relevance to the programme we have planned.

We have access to the internet so that we can use the web as a geographical resource.

12. Health and Safety

We have a Health and Safety policy in place in our school which covers safety concerning the handling of equipment and out of school activities such as fieldwork (See Geography Teacher Guidelines P 74 – 78 for guidance on such a policy)

Teachers will consult with Ms. Hannon (Principal) whenever it is proposed to engage in fieldwork. During practical work teachers will be aware of the safety implications of any exploratory or investigative work to be undertaken. Successful and enjoyable investigations require sensible planning, good supervision and adherence to safety rules.

Outdoor work will be based in areas that are accessible for children, teachers and helpers and that are safe.

We will consult our school safety statement for advice on safety during such activities.

13. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting.

Teachers will consult this Whole School Plan and the curriculum documents for Geography when they are drawing up their long and short term plans.

Teachers will include all the strands and strand units every year and will select objectives within the strand units each year. Staff teaching the same class level will decide collaboratively on objectives chosen and will inform subsequent teachers of content covered to ensure continuity in our spiral curriculum.

Where it is meaningful and suitable Geography will be taught in a thematic way to integrate with the other SESE subjects of History and Science.

Each teacher will have a long term plan for the year drawn up collaboratively with teachers of the same class level. Individual teachers will then take these yearly outlines and tailor them to the needs

of their own classes in their short term planning.

Cúntais Míósúil will assist in recording work covered, in evaluating progress in Geography and in informing future teaching.

14. Staff Development

- Teachers will have access to reference books, resource materials and websites dealing with Geography. Staff will be encouraged to research and try out new approaches and methodologies.
- All teachers will be responsible for keeping resource material up to date and will arrange for opportunities for resources to be assessed for purchase and for new resources/approaches to be piloted in the school.
- The culture in our school is one that encourages the sharing of experience and good practice.
- School personnel can research new methodologies and approaches and are encouraged to use these in the classroom and share with colleagues
- Teachers are made aware of Geography courses available in Carrick on Shannon and Athlone Education Centre.

15. 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 are encouraged to come to the school to help out in the delivery of this programme by

- a. Participating in surveys and interviews
- b. By helping out in supervision of fieldwork when/if needed
- c. Talking to the children about their lives, work, cultural and leisure interests.
- d. Parents are asked to send the school postcards from places they visit.
- e. Parents are invited to accompany on outdoor pursuits.
- f. Parents are involved in supporting the Green schools programme in the school.

Parents are invited to celebrate and view results of projects, surveys, investigations in the school or read about them in the school website.

Parents will be encouraged to invite the children to view places of interest like orchards, farms or distinctive natural environments with which they are familiar.

Parents from distant lands will be encouraged to share their heritage with the rest of the school if they so wish or if it is appropriate.

Parents will be advised to study the Primary School Curriculum; Your child's learning, Guidelines for Parents (NCCA); The What, Why and How of children's learning in primary school, NCCA DVD (2006).

16. Community Links

- People in the local community who have an interest and knowledge in the environment will be invited to speak to the children.
- The local library will be a source of knowledge for the children.
- Local businesses will be approached to host a visit to a factory or other work –place
- The work of some National agencies relates to aspects of the Geography programme e.g Heritage in our Schools programme. As well as accessing materials produced by these agencies specifically for schools, we will welcome visits by speakers from these organisations

- Visits to the local Fire station in Roscommon town
- Local Environmental officer from Roscommon County Council
- Archaeologists in the Interpretative Centre in Tulsk

■ Success Criteria

We shall review this whole school plan in the future under the following headings:

- How individual teacher preparation , planning and teaching reflects this plan.
- How procedures outlined in this plan consistently followed, ie procedures for fieldwork , assessment.
- How methodologies listed in this whole school plan are working in the classroom.
- Resources
- How well are geographical concepts learnt by the children
- How well are the children's geographical skills progressing: a sense of place and space, geographical investigation skills, and mapping.

Means of assessing the outcomes of the plan will include

- Revisiting the aims of this plan as a staff
- Teacher / Parent feedback
- Children's feedback
- Inspectors reports / suggestions
- Results of class assessment

■ Implementation

(a) Roles and Responsibilities.

The plan will be supported, developed and implemented by all staff members.

All staff members will have responsibility for the following :

- Geographical audit of school grounds and immediate locality
- Fieldwork trails and packs
- Purchase , maintenance and storage of resources
- Leading the development of new methodologies identified.
- Liaising with community organisations and relevant agencies
- The development of ICT as a learning tool in Geography and the vetting of websites.
- Attendance at up skilling workshops and courses and providing feedback to staff.

■ Review

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the Geography curriculum. We aim to review this plan in three years or beforehand if considered necessary or in response to any curriculum developments.

Those involved in the review will be: Principal, Teachers, BOM / DES, Other: e.g. PDST advisor etc.

■ **Ratification and Communication**

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management on October 01st 2019.

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____