

Making Geography Inclusive

At Giles Junior School, it is our responsibility to ensure we are teaching a broad and balanced geography curriculum that inspires pupils' curiosity and imagination, helping them to understand the world in which we live and how it has evolved. We understand how geography encourages a holistic appreciation of how the world works and of the interconnections between concepts such as scale, community and cultural diversity. As teachers, it is our responsibility to ensure that all children with SEN/disabilities are supported and challenged appropriately and can thus enjoy their geography learning, fostering a passion for the subject.

Teaching and learning

To make geography lessons inclusive, teachers need to anticipate what barriers to taking part and learning particular activities, lessons or a series of lessons may pose for pupils with particular SEN and/or disabilities. When accessing the Giles Junior School geography curriculum, you need to consider ways of minimising or reducing identified barriers so that all pupils can fully take part and learn.

In some activities, pupils with SEN and/or disabilities will be able to take part in the same way as their peers. In others, some modifications or adjustments will need to be made to include everyone.

For some activities, you may need to provide a 'parallel' activity for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities, so that they can work towards the same lesson objectives as their peers, but in a different way – e.g. using a computer simulation of a process rather than manipulating equipment.

Occasionally, pupils with SEN and/or disabilities will have to work on different activities, or towards different objectives, from their peers.

Maintaining an inclusive learning environment

Regular fine motor skill practise:

- Pupils should be engaging daily in various activities to strengthen and develop finger dexterity.
- Tasks such as cutting and drawing facilitate the development of fine motor skill abilities.

Sound and light issues:

- Background noise and reverberation are reduced.
- There is enough light for written work/work on computers.
- Teacher's face can be seen – avoid standing in front of light sources, e.g. windows.

- Pupils use hearing and low vision aids where necessary (ear defenders etc).
- Video presentations have subtitles for deaf or hearing-impaired pupils and those with communication difficulties, where required.
- Interactive whiteboards are non-reflective to reduce glare.
- Ensure sound is appropriately pitched to accommodate the needs in the room

Seating:

- Pupils should be able to see and hear clearly, as necessary: the teacher, each other, the whiteboard.
- Seating allows for peer or adult support.
- There is room for pupils with mobility difficulties to obtain their own resources, equipment and materials.
- Furniture is suitable (choice of chairs and desks, e.g. adjustable heights, raised boards).

Resources:

- All resources needed should be accessible and within reach.
- Labelled clearly to encourage independent use, e.g. using images, colour coding, large print.
- Racks should be used for storing so resources can be found easily and put away in the correct place, e.g. pens and scissors.
- Children who require specialist equipment e.g. scissors and cutting tools should have access to this.
- Generic aids such as frames or adhesives to hold down pupils' work to surfaces should be accessible.
- Drawing aids available such as templates, grids and viewfinders should be accessible.

Displays

- Should be accessible, within reach, visual and tactile.
- Informative and engaging.
- Not distracting.
- Display pupils' achievements.

Health and Safety:

- Plenty of room for children with mobility difficulties to leave the site of an accident.
- Important to remember that children with ASD may have a low awareness of danger.

Multi-sensory approaches including ICT

Multi-sensory approaches:

- Pupils' preferred learning styles are identified and built on.
- When teaching, visual/tactile/auditory/kinaesthetic approaches are used, such as supporting teacher talk with visual aids; using subtitled or audio-described film/video.
- For recording – alternatives to written recording are offered, e.g. drawing, scribing, word processing, mind maps, digital images, video, voice recording.
- To promote security and aid organisation – e.g. visual timetables are used to show plans for the day or lesson; visual prompts for routines, such as how to ask for help; shared signals are developed so that pupils can convey their understanding, uncertainty or need for help.
- Children should be allowed time for sensory exploration when working with new materials and artefacts.
- Children could create sensory stories to support their geography understanding and development.
- Copying off the board reduced - children given printed notes if necessary
- Adapt tasks to focus more on visual learning, e.g. summarising ideas in pictures, modifying visual sources to show changes, comparing visual sources from different environments, explaining patterns in graphs, using visual timelines, using or presenting information in tables or diagrams, rather than unbroken text, storyboarding text, and demonstrations – eg illustrating different physical and human features of an area.
- Adapt tasks to focus on auditory learning, e.g. listening to topic based poetry, songs or famous speeches/ announcements instead of reading them
- Adapt activities to include more movement breaks, e.g. role play, card sorting or using the IWB.

ICT:

- Accessibility features are used to include pupils with SEN and disabilities, as appropriate: keyboard shortcuts instead of a mouse, sticky keys, foot controlled mouse/wireless mouse, screen filters to cut down glare, increased font sizes, clear font type, appropriate contrast between background and text, talking word processor to read out text.
- ICT can: provide pupils and teachers with access to a wide range of historical source material which can be analysed in detail using readily available ICT tools; help pupils develop geographical enquiry skills, and help them to realise the importance of these skills in the study of geography; promote collaboration between pupils, which in turn can help to develop historical thinking and enable teachers to present historical materials in ways most suited to individual and personal needs.
- Maximise the impact of using ICT within geography learning by: using word processors to structure written work, cut and paste material into cause and effect tables, use bold, underlining or highlighting to identify fact and opinion; using the

internet to find sources and explore their accuracy, validity and reliability; using computer simulations to allow pupils to make decisions in a geographical context and explore the results – software, such as digimaps, allows pupils to look at high quality maps across the world

Working with additional adults

Consulting pupils:

- Wherever possible, pupils are consulted about the kind and level of support they require.

Planning support:

- Support from additional adults is planned to scaffold pupils' learning, allowing them increasingly to work independently.
- Planning should identify: which individuals/groups will receive support, where in the lesson pupils will need support, the type of support pupils should receive, and when pupils should be allowed to work independently.
- Additional adults should: be clear about the lesson objectives, know the sequence of the lesson, understand the lesson content, know how to break tasks into more manageable chunks, are provided with key questions to encourage formative assessment, and where appropriate, are familiar with any ICT used to support pupils.
- Effectiveness of support should be regularly monitored and reviewed.
- Teachers must consider the lesson activity and decide how best to support children with SEN/disabilities.
- Make sure pupils are well prepared for visits and trips. Preparation can include using photographs, videos, artefacts etc, so that pupils are not worried about unfamiliar situations
- Consider pre-teaching to support children learning important vocabulary.
- Scaffold speaking or writing through sentence stems and speaking frames.

Managing peer relationships

Grouping pupils:

- All forms of pupil grouping include pupils with SEN/disabilities.
- Manageable mixed-ability grouping or pairing is the norm, except when carefully planned for a particular purpose.
- Sequence of groupings is outlined for pupils.

- The transition from whole-class to group or independent work, and back, is clearly signalled (this is key for autistic children).

Managing group work and discussion:

- Pupils move carefully from paired discussion to group discussion (the language necessary for whole-class discussion work may be a barrier for pupils who find it difficult to express themselves in public. Paired and small group discussions provide opportunities for all to take part).
- Pupils should be assigned specific roles to keep them focused and active, e.g. writer, reporter, observer.
- For some pupils, e.g. those on the autistic spectrum, developing ideas with others can be challenging. Pairings and groupings need to be sensitive to this.

Developing responsibility:

- Pupils with SEN/disabilities should be given opportunities to initiate and direct projects, with support as appropriate.
- Pupils should be involved as equal contributors in class/governance and decision making.

Adult-pupil communication

Teachers' communication:

- Language used should be clear, unambiguous and accessible.
- Key words, meanings and symbols are highlighted, explained and written up, or available in some other way.
- Instructions are given clearly and reinforced visually, where necessary.
- Wording of questions is planned carefully, avoiding complex vocabulary and sentence structure.
- Questions are prepared in different styles/levels for different pupils – careful preparation ensures all pupils have opportunities to answer open-ended questions.
- Alternative communication modes are used, where necessary, to meet pupils' communication needs, e.g. signing.
- Text, visual aids, etc are checked for clarity and accessibility. E.g. some pupils might require adapted printed materials or simplified raised diagrams or pictures.

Pupils' communication:

- Alternative communication modes, such as sign or symbol systems, are encouraged, and pupils' contributions valued.

- Advice is sought from the SENCO, speech and language therapist, pupil themselves and geography lead on the best way of using such communication modes in lessons.
- Discussion of experiences and investigations is encouraged to help pupils understand them.
- Pupils should be allowed time to discuss the answers to questions before verbal responses are given.
- Pupils with communication impairments are given: time to think about questions before being required to respond, time to explain, and respect for their responses to questions and contributions to discussions.

Assessment

Assessment for learning:

- Lesson objectives are made clear in picture/symbols/writing as appropriate.
- Objectives are challenging, yet achievable. This will promote self-esteem and enable pupils to achieve success.
- Pupils' own ways of learning and remembering things are emphasised.
- Pupils are encouraged to talk about how they achieved something.
- End of lesson discussions focus on one or more of the ideas explored and the progress that pupils have made towards them during the lesson.
- Pupils are encouraged to look back to previous work/photos/records to see how much progress they have made.
- Emphasis is on the pupils' progress and achievement. Weaknesses are presented as areas for development.
- Praise is given discreetly where pupils find public praise embarrassing or difficult.
- The number of goals/assessment criteria is kept small.
- Pupils are involved in setting their own goals.
- Self-assessment and peer assessment are encouraged.

Memory and consolidation

Memory/consolidation:

- Recapping previous learning is key.
- Main points from the lesson are fed back by pupils, noted down and saved so pupils can refer back to them.

Bilingual learners

Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

Bilingual learners can take up to two years to develop basic communication skills. Some learners may take a long time before they feel confident and comfortable to participate in classroom activities. Silent periods are common and should not be seen as a learning difficulty.

Visual and kinaesthetic learning approaches will be the most positive and successful for EAL learners in geography, as they can watch the instruction and then copy/apply this themselves.

Differentiation and adaptation:

Task differentiation examples:

- Giving children an option between a challenging task and a slightly simpler version – they have the autonomy to pick which they want to do.
- Provide children with a tick list to aid them working through their task so they can follow the steps independently, whilst ensuring they have completed each one.
- Making tasks optional – e.g. extension tasks/homework etc.
- Allocation of time – some children may complete more than one draft and be able to in depth analyse their work, whereas some children may not reach this and instead achieve one draft with basic analysis.
- Scale down an activity to support children with SEN

Feedback:

The way you provide verbal feedback to children should depend on age, ability and individual needs or SEN/disabilities a child may have. Ensure all constructive criticism is positive and consider a 'positive sandwich, e.g. positive comment, constructive feedback, positive comment'.