

# *World Around Us Policy*



*St. Mary's Primary School,*

*Bellaghy*

## Introduction

This policy is based on the requirements of the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum document which is the starting point for planning a school curriculum that meets the needs of individual children. With these requirements it is our aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for the children of Bellaghy preparing them for a world which is rapidly changing.

## What is The World Around Us (WAU)?

The World Around Us (WAU), one of the Areas of learning in the Curriculum, consists of three contributory elements: Geography, History and Science and Technology. It is the exploration and understanding of the children's surroundings and the world in which they live.

WAU is split into four interrelated strands:

- INTERDEPENDENCE
- PLACE
- MOVEMENT+ENERGY
- CHANGE OVER TIME.

As the strands are context free in nature, they give the teachers flexibility and the choice to move the topic they are studying in what ever direction they and the pupils choose. It is our aim to try and retain good practice from the three previous subject areas within the new format of WAU. In developing a theme based approach which connects with all areas of the curriculum it is important that we ensure breadth and balance in our teaching.

## **Aims**

Our aims in teaching WAU within the Revised Curriculum are:

- enjoy studying the world around them
- develop an awareness of themselves and their place in the world
- develop an awareness of other cultures and their impact on the environment around them
- develop their knowledge and understanding of places in local, regional, national, international and global contexts keeping in mind our Rights Respecting School (RRS) ethos
- explore ways in which changes have and will occur in the world and the effect on those who live there
- explore sources of energy in the world and the possibilities of protecting and managing these resources.
- Explore the positive and negative effects of natural and human events upon place and time
- Explore why things move and how they work

In WAU as teachers, we want to begin to foster and develop the skills of enquiry, investigation, analysis, evaluation and presentation.

## **Skills**

Through the Teaching of WAU all children will develop skills in the areas listed below:

- Literacy/Numeracy/ICT
- Managing Information
- Thinking/Problem Solving/Decision Making
- Being Creative
- Working With Others
- Self management

*(See Appendix One)*

## **Planning Approaches**

The WAU programme will be implemented at a level appropriate to the needs of the children in the context of our school whilst providing opportunities for pupils to explore their world in the context of home, school, the local area and wider world(keeping in mind RRSA).

Whilst initial planning is for the pupils, pupils will be encouraged to be active participants and contribute to the planning process.

All planning will be based on the statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

Our planning for WAU should be directed towards promoting the following:

- Good Investigations and the development of children's enquiry skills
- Good use of ICT to support teaching and learning
- Effective use of the environment /educational visits and visitors
- Progress in all three subject areas which make up WAU

## **Principles and Strategies of the teaching and learning of WAU**

### **Principles;**

The World Around Us is important because:

- The skills and knowledge of WAU have wide applicability in everyday life
- It is the knowledge essential to our understanding of the world around us, interpreting and making sense of it
- It is both interesting and enjoyable providing an awareness of other places and peoples

### **Strategies:**

- The emphasis is on an integrated approach with links between the three WAU areas as well as the other curriculum areas.
- The curriculum is organised on a topic based approach integrated into yearly programmes throughout the school.
- Emphasis on stimulating the minds of children and promote the need to '*know the reason why*'
- Make the subject real offering opportunities for direct experience, practical activities and exploration.
- Use a range of teaching approaches, whole class/group etc.
- SEN pupils have the exact same entitlement to WAU as all other pupils.

## **Planning For Progression and Continuity**

Planning for WAU builds on the earlier experiences of children and continues to help them explore the world in which they live. At foundation stage, skills and concepts are developed during play and other planned activities relevant to the interests and experiences of the children. Observation informs the planning of future experiences within WAU.

It is important to insure that the overall programme of learning in any one year group and across the key stages is broad and balanced with input from the pupils to ensure that continuity and progression are evident in learning.

### **Inclusion**

In our school WAU is part of a broad and balanced curriculum which is inclusive of all pupils regardless of ability. Opportunities will be provided for all pupils to make progress. We will do this by setting suitable challenges responding to the different or additional needs of the children in our school.

## **Assessment**

Assessment in WAU, as in all areas of learning will be used as a means of promoting, enhancing and deepening children's learning. It involves all methods normally used, either individually/in a group/whole class.

The key reasons for assessment in WAU will be to:

- enhance performance, self confidence and self esteem.
- promote greater resilience when faced with challenges.
- increase independence.
- develop a positive climate for learning

## **Outdoor Learning**

The outdoors provides children with one of the best and most effective environments to learn.

*'The best kept classroom and the richest cupboard are roofed only by the sky'*

We are presently developing the potential for outdoor learning through the on-going physical development of several outdoor learning areas within the school grounds. Our pupils will get the opportunity to develop skills and concepts in these new outdoor areas as members and representatives of our School Council and Eco Council. Pupils will also be responsible for assisting with the upkeep and maintenance of areas such as the school garden and fish pond.

## **Links with Outside Agencies**

It is advised that all classes go on trips which can be linked into the topics covered in WAU. Close relationships exist with a number of local schools and businesses as well as Queens University Belfast and University of Ulster. STEM and STEP projects are undertaken by the teachers in KS2.

## **Health and Safety**

In the event of pupils taking part in activities/trips outside the classroom, it is important to carry out risk assessment prior to the activity to ensure that it is safe and appropriate for all pupils. Should extra help (adults/supervisors) be required please request assistance through the subject co-ordinator.

## **Monitoring and Review.**

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all teaching staff. The monitoring of standards of work and quality of teaching within WAU is the responsibility of the Co-ordinator.

Time to be allocated to allow the Co-ordinator opportunities to fulfil his/her role.

## **Resources**

As far as is possible, staff will use all relevant, available resources from N. Ireland Revised Curriculum toolkit and also from other connected sources. One very significant resource will be our outdoor learning environment.