

Collins Connected geography – Intent, Implementation and Impact

Intent of Collins Connected Geography

Connected geography provides a carefully designed and resourced geography curriculum which is coherent, progressive and rigorous learning programme. Connected Geography serves years 1-6, with enquiry based learning units which engage and motivate pupils, encouraging them to see the world as young geographers. Connected Geography provides a knowledge and skills based approach to pupil learning, ensuring that the children are empowered to understand both the physical and human world around them. Many pupils in primary education today will live to see the next century and the content and approach to learning adopted in the Connected Geography programme recognises this. It seeks to identify the most relevant and meaningful aspects of the suggested subject content of the National Curriculum in geography to explore in depth, rather than providing a textbook that attempts comprehensive coverage at the expense of subject rigour and challenge.

Connected Geography aims to use a wealth of resources to help facilitate and inspire learning including photographs, GIS data sets, satellite imagery, videos, newspapers and maps at a variety of scales which are included with every enquiry.

The central purpose or rationale of geography, often referred to as its paradigm, is to enable pupils to understand the interaction of human beings with their environments – at personal, local, regional, national and global scales. This paradigm is central to all of the eighteen enquiries in the *Connected Geography* programme – with each exploring people – environment relationships – see Page 1 of the planning documentation of each enquiry. Throughout the design and writing of the programme considerable thought has been given to concentrating on the most relevant and purposeful aspects of the topics, places and themes of the geography content of the National Curriculum so as to provide pupils with subject base fit for purpose in the 21st century. All geographical investigation is essentially placed based and the enquiries have been written to provide a comprehensive range of examples at different scales of locations around the world, in line with National Curriculum requirements, to illustrate key geographical concepts. As such, Connected Geography has a clear context and purpose within every enquiry.

Implementation of Collins Connected Geography

Connected geography is an outcome focused curriculum. Learning objectives are outcome focused and progressively more challenging for Years 1–6 and reflect what it means for a pupil to get better at geography. The learning objectives, which highlight outcomes in bold, appear on the first page of the planning for each enquiry. They recognise that whilst it is important for pupils to increase and extend their knowledge of the subject it is also vital that they have space and time to develop as geographers.

Important subject knowledge is implicit in each enquiry but this is balanced with adequate time and opportunity for pupils to master key subject skills and outcomes by ‘doing less better’. This ensures progression in both the complexities of content and in terms of pupils applying their knowledge to achieve higher order outcomes as they move through the programme. The eighteen *Connected Geography* enquiries have been written to ensure that pupils are progressively challenged to achieve the following outcomes as they move through the programme. This progression reflects increasing mastery of the subject, which is highlighted in the learning objectives of each investigation.

Subject vocabulary is at the forefront of all Connected Geography enquiries. Choosing subject content carefully and effectively ‘doing less better’ provides space to ensure that appropriate and specialised geographical vocabulary is introduced and consolidated with pupils. This is an area of planning that is

often overlooked when there is an emphasis on building curricula around content rather than subject outcomes. To this end the front page of each enquiry includes a comprehensive list of subject vocabulary as a starting point for teachers to introduce and develop with pupils as the investigation unfolds.

Language and Literacy and Numeracy and Mathematics are of course embedded throughout all of the enquiries. In addition each enquiry highlights relevant links to the content of other National Curriculum subjects. This adds huge value to pupils learning as such connections provide different perspectives and viewpoints about issues and illustrate how interconnected and interdependent the world is in the twenty-first century.

The *Connected Geography* programme does not attempt to teach topics in their entirety as this often leads to an over emphasis on content and 'knowing' rather than on enabling pupils to achieve higher order outcomes by interrogating information and applying skills from one context to another. What *Connected Geography* does is to ask big questions about topics, places, themes and issues – questions that are relevant if you are going to live to see the next century. At Key Stage 1 many of these questions will understandably be more tightly defined or closed 'Who', 'What', 'Where' and 'When' questions but a Key Stage 2 a more open ended approach will be apparent to teachers with an emphasis on 'Why' and 'How' questions. Each enquiry has a key question underpinned by several ancillary or sub questions for the pupils to master in turn as they progress through the investigation. All of the ancillary questions have been carefully designed to take the pupil from the known and familiar to the unknown and unfamiliar in a supportive manner. By the time the pupils have completed all stages of the investigation they will be in a position to answer the key question. The key question enquiry structure adopts the approach of initially identifying where the pupils are in terms of their experience or knowledge of the focus of the enquiry; then supporting them to complete a number of ancillary question investigations to progress their understanding; and finally assisting them to make sense of the progress they have made through a range of ways that can track and record achievement against performance descriptors.

Impact of Collins Connected Geography

The impact of Connected Geography is evidenced through the pupils' use and understanding of knowledge, skills, concepts and specialist vocabulary. The performance descriptor below details the outcomes and impacts that connected Geography should have in each key stage.

The final page of the planning documentation of each enquiry suggests possible ways that pupils, achievement and progress might be judged by the teacher. In the assessment table the learning objectives and anticipated outcomes are listed again and cross-referenced this time to the specific ancillary questions where they were addressed. In the right hand column suggestions are made as to how a pupil might demonstrate progress against each outcome i.e. what they might write, make, present, enact or discuss that will enable the teacher to make a judgement of whether an objective has been accomplished, such as being able to describe how a community was affected by a volcanic eruption or explaining the challenges faced by those who manage National Parks. It is not anticipated that every learning outcome will be assessed in every enquiry but it is recommended that teachers select a sample of outcomes to assess in each enquiry to build up a developing picture of how a pupil is progressing as a young geographer. The focus should be on whether the pupil has shown that they have been able to, for example, identify; describe; compare and contrast; explain; make a judgement or evaluate and record. It is not necessary or particularly desirable to attach a numerical value to the achievement of subject outcomes. It is left to the discretion of the teacher as to which outcomes are most appropriate and relevant to assess bearing in mind the priority of identifying the pupil's progress towards end of Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4) and Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6).

Geography performance descriptors

During Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2), our children are encouraged and supported to engage in various geographical investigations through the Connected Geography scheme. These investigations help them develop and utilise basic and appropriate subject vocabulary, as well as subject tools such as maps, aerial photographs, graphical data, and fieldwork skills. Through these activities, they are able to recognise, identify, describe, observe, reason, and begin to explain, in simple terms, how people interact with their environments.

In Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4), our geography curriculum builds upon the knowledge and understanding, skills, and attitudes developed in Key Stage 1. The students continue to progress by being given opportunities to provide explanations, which are based on clear evidence they have collected and presented in graphs. They also draw conclusions about various topics, places, and issues they have studied through the Connected Geography program. Another significant aspect of geography in Key Stage 2 is that our students begin to develop the ability to see the world from different perspectives, considering the interests of different stakeholders. To support this development, we challenge and support our children to engage in geographical investigations using Connected Geography. These investigations enable them to use and apply appropriate and increasingly specialised subject vocabulary and subject tools such as satellite imagery and GIS, alongside fieldwork skills. They can then recognise, identify, describe, observe, reason, explain, and reach basic conclusions about how people interact with their environments.

At Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6), Connected Geography focuses on topics and big questions that further enhance the children's subject skills. This empowers them to make judgments based on their personal perspective and by empathising with others. Additionally, they are provided with opportunities to evaluate what they have learnt and how they have learnt it, and to generate their own research questions. Higher outcomes in geography also involve the ability to apply learned knowledge from one context to another and to understand concepts beyond discrete areas of knowledge. For example, understanding that a "coast" refers to any place where land meets the sea, which could be a beach, cliff, port, estuary, mud flat, or marsh. To foster these skills, we challenge and support our pupils through investigative learning. This enables them to use and apply specialised subject vocabulary, subject tools such as GIS, and fieldwork skills. They can then recognize, identify, describe, observe, reason, explain, reach conclusions, make judgments, evaluate, apply, and hypothesise about how people interact with their environments.