

Geography Policy

St Vincent's School for Sensory Impairment and Other Needs



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1. Purpose of the policy

This policy reflects the aims and values of St Vincent’s School. It ensures all stakeholders — staff, governors, parents, and pupils — work towards shared goals. Geography is a vital part of our curriculum, helping pupils make sense of the world around them, understand their place within it, and appreciate how people and environments are interconnected.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set out a framework for teaching, learning, and assessment in Geography.
- Ensure alignment with the **National Curriculum** and the **Curriculum Framework for Visual Impairment (CFVI)**.
- Provide clarity for staff, governors, and parents about what pupils learn and how.
- Enable consistent planning, delivery, and monitoring of Geography across the school.
- Demonstrate our commitment to providing accessible, meaningful geographical experiences for all learners.

This policy is available on the school website: www.stvin.com

2. Subject vision

Our vision for Geography is to **inspire curiosity and fascination about the world and its people**, helping pupils develop an understanding of diverse places, cultures, and environments.

At St Vincent’s, Geography provides pupils — regardless of visual or sensory need — with opportunities to explore, question, and engage with the world through **practical, experiential, and tactile learning**.

We aim to develop pupils who:

- Understand how physical and human processes shape the world.
- Recognise the importance of sustainability and caring for the planet.
- Appreciate their local environment as well as the wider global community.
- Build spatial awareness through accessible and adapted methods, including tactile maps, models, fieldwork, and sensory experiences.

St Vincent's School follows the National Curriculum while enriching it with **locally relevant and sensory-based experiences** that reflect the unique needs and interests of our learners.

3. Aims and outcomes

Aim:

The national curriculum for geography aims to ensure that all pupils:

- Develop knowledge of globally significant places — both terrestrial and marine — and understand their physical and human characteristics.
- Understand key physical and human geographical processes and how they interact.
- Are competent in geographical skills including map reading, data interpretation, fieldwork, and enquiry.
- Communicate geographical information through maps, writing, diagrams, models, and discussion.

At St Vincent's, we aim to:

1. Provide a **broad, balanced, and accessible Geography curriculum** tailored to the needs of pupils with sensory impairments.
2. Encourage **curiosity and questioning** about the world and its people.
3. Develop pupils' understanding of **place, space, and scale** through hands-on, multi-sensory learning.
4. Promote awareness of **environmental issues** and sustainable living.
5. Build on pupils' prior knowledge and experiences of the local area and extend to global understanding.
6. Foster a sense of **community, identity, and responsibility** towards others and the environment.

Outcomes

By the time pupils leave St Vincent's, they will be able to:

- Use geographical vocabulary and enquiry skills to explore and explain the world around them.
- Identify and describe physical and human features of local and global environments.
- Understand key environmental challenges such as climate change, sustainability, and resource use.

- Apply fieldwork and mapping skills appropriate to their ability and access needs.
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4. Teaching and learning

Geography is taught through a combination of **practical investigation, discussion, and sensory exploration**. Lessons are designed to be inclusive, interactive, and accessible for all pupils.

Our curriculum draws on:

- The **National Curriculum for Geography (2014)**
- The **Curriculum Framework for Visual Impairment (CFVI)**
- Guidance from **QTVIs** and specialists in sensory education
- Adapted resources from organisations such as the **Royal Geographical Society** and **Boost Learning**

Teaching methods include:

- Use of **tactile maps, globes, and 3D models** to support spatial awareness.
- **Sensory geography** — exploring places through touch, sound, smell, and temperature.
- **Local fieldwork** — learning geography through school grounds, local parks, and Liverpool’s environment.
- **Cross-curricular projects** linking geography to science, history, art, and PSHE.
- **Discussion and role-play** to explore geographical concepts and human issues.
- **Assistive technology** such as digital talking maps, magnification tools, and accessible online mapping.

Progression in Geography is based on developing understanding from the **local to the global scale**, ensuring knowledge and skills build sequentially year by year.

5. Curriculum overview

At St Vincent’s School, the Geography curriculum is designed to develop pupils’ understanding of the world around them, from their local environment to global issues. The curriculum is carefully sequenced to build key geographical knowledge, skills, and vocabulary as pupils move through the school, with a strong focus on accessibility and experiential learning for pupils with visual impairments.

In the **Primary phase**, we follow the **Kapow Primary Geography Scheme**, which provides a structured and engaging progression through key geographical themes such as place knowledge, human and physical geography, and environmental sustainability. Lessons are adapted to meet the needs of pupils with vision impairment through the use of tactile maps, sensory exploration, outdoor learning, and differentiated resources.

In **Key Stage 3**, we use **Boost Learning resources** to deliver a broad and balanced Geography curriculum. Topics include ecosystems, tectonic processes, population, weather and climate, and development. Teaching is supported by practical, tactile, and multi-sensory approaches that allow all learners to access and engage with geographical concepts and enquiry.

At **Key Stage 4**, pupils can follow one of two accredited pathways:

- The **AQA GCSE Geography** course, which develops analytical and evaluative skills through the study of physical and human geography, fieldwork, and decision-making exercises.
- The **WJEC Entry Level Humanities (Geography units)** pathway, which provides a flexible and accessible route for pupils requiring a more supported learning approach. Units include topics such as threatened ecosystems, sustainable tourism, and responding to natural hazards.

Across all key stages, fieldwork and enquiry-based learning form an essential part of the curriculum, enabling pupils to apply their knowledge to real-world contexts. Lessons are planned to ensure that all pupils can participate safely and meaningfully in geographical investigation and exploration.

Detail of programmes of study/curriculum maps can also be found on our school website: www.stvin.com

5.6 Programmes of study

	Autumn term		Spring term		Summer term	
Primary 1	Why are rainforests important to us?		Where does our food come from? How sustainable is our school?		What are rivers and how are they used?	
Primary 2	What is life like in the alps?	Why do oceans matter?	Would you like to live in the desert?	Why does population change?	Where does our energy come from?	Can I carry out an independent field work enquiry?
Year 7	What is Geography?	How do we use our planet as a natural resource?	What is an economy?	What is weather and climate?	Why do we need to understand how the earth works	Is the geography of Russia a hindrance or benefit?
Year 8	Why are rivers important	What is development?	One planet, many people; how are populations changing?	Why do people move and what impact does this have?	What happens where the land meets the sea?	Diverse and dynamic: how is Asia changing?
Year 9	Why do we need to understand why volcanoes and earthquakes occur?	What are the challenges and opportunities for countries in Africa?	How does ice change the world?	Why is the middle east an important world region?	Are natural disasters natural?	What is the future for our planet?
Year 10	AQA GCSE WJEC Entry Level	AQA GCSE WJEC Entry Level	AQA GCSE WJEC Entry Level	AQA GCSE WJEC Entry Level	AQA GCSE WJEC Entry Level	AQA GCSE WJEC Entry Level
Year 11	AQA GCSE WJEC Entry Level	AQA GCSE WJEC Entry Level	AQA GCSE WJEC Entry Level	AQA GCSE WJEC Entry Level	AQA GCSE WJEC Entry Level	AQA GCSE WJEC Entry Level

6. Cross-curricular links

Geography supports learning across the curriculum:

- **Science:** ecosystems, weather, environmental change.
- **Maths:** data handling, measurement, scale, and map reading.
- **English/Communication:** discussion, description, and report writing.
- **History:** studying how geography shapes historical events (e.g. trade, settlement).
- **PSHE and Citizenship:** global responsibility, sustainability, and cultural awareness.
- **Technology:** use of mapping tools, GPS, and digital research.
- **Physical Education:** links to outdoor exploration and fieldwork.

Geography also contributes to **SMSC** by fostering respect for people and environments, and supports **Gatsby Benchmarks** by exploring careers in sustainability, urban planning, conservation, and travel.

7. Assessment, recording and feedback

Assessment in Geography follows whole-school policy and focuses on pupils' progress in:

- Geographical knowledge and understanding
- Application of enquiry skills
- Use of vocabulary and communication
- Engagement and participation

Pupils are assessed termly as **Emerging, Developing, On Track, Secure, or Exceeding**.

Assessment tools include:

- Observation and questioning
- Work folders or topic books
- Practical activities and fieldwork evidence
- Self- and peer-assessment
- iTrack recording system

8. Resources

Geography at St Vincent's School is supported by a wide range of adapted, high-quality resources designed to make learning accessible, engaging, and meaningful for all pupils, particularly those with visual impairments.

Classroom resources include tactile maps, globes, raised relief models, large print and braille materials, and digital tools such as audio description and screen-reading software. Teachers use

multi-sensory strategies to support geographical understanding, including the use of real objects, sounds, textures, and scents to bring places and processes to life.

Fieldwork is a vital component of Geography learning. Pupils have opportunities to take part in **local and regional fieldwork trips**, enabling them to experience geographical concepts first-hand. These include visits to **rivers, beaches, woodlands, and urban environments**, where pupils can engage in practical enquiry, observation, and data collection. All fieldwork is carefully planned to ensure full accessibility, with adapted equipment and additional adult support where needed.

Trips and outdoor learning experiences are an essential way of promoting independence, curiosity, and spatial awareness. They allow pupils to apply classroom learning to real-world contexts and develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between people and places.

All resources and trips are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain inclusive, safe, and aligned with the school's commitment to providing equal access to the Geography curriculum for every learner.

- Tactile maps, globes, atlases, and 3D models
- Digital mapping tools (Google Earth, Ordnance Survey)
- Audio and large-print resources
- Sensory materials (soil, sand, water, vegetation)
- Access to local fieldwork sites and virtual tours

9. Roles and responsibilities

Responsibilities follow the same structure as all curriculum policies:

- **SLT:** oversight, training, monitoring
- **Subject Leader:** planning, assessment, CPD, resource management
- **Link Governor:** monitoring curriculum impact and engagement
- **Class Teachers:** delivering inclusive lessons and assessments
- **Parents:** supporting learning through discussion and exploration at home

10. Inclusion

Inclusion is at the heart of Geography teaching and learning at St Vincent's School. We are committed to ensuring that every pupil, regardless of ability, sensory need, or learning profile, has full access to a meaningful and challenging Geography curriculum. Our approach recognises that

pupils learn in different ways and that a flexible, personalised approach is essential to enable all learners to reach their full potential.

Teaching strategies are carefully adapted to meet the needs of pupils with **visual impairments** and a range of **additional needs**, including those with complex learning difficulties, physical disabilities, or sensory processing differences. Teachers work closely with **Qualified Teachers of Vision Impairment (QTVIs)**, **Teaching Assistants**, and **therapists** to ensure that all materials, activities, and assessments are accessible.

Adaptations include:

- The use of **tactile maps**, **raised diagrams**, **3D models**, and **Braille or large print resources** to support the development of spatial and locational understanding.
- **Audio description**, **verbal explanations**, and **soundscapes** to bring geographical features and environments to life.
- **Multi-sensory learning experiences**, using touch, sound, movement, and smell to explore geographical processes and places.
- **Flexible groupings** that encourage peer support, communication, and collaboration while allowing for targeted differentiation.
- **Modified fieldwork experiences** that ensure pupils can safely participate in real-world enquiry, with adapted equipment, pre-visits, and mobility training where necessary.

Teachers also take account of pupils' **individual Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)** and work closely with the **VI Resource Team** to ensure that reasonable adjustments are in place. Pupils are supported to develop independence, confidence, and resilience, both in the classroom and during fieldwork activities.

Assessment practices are inclusive and flexible, allowing pupils to demonstrate progress through a variety of means such as oral responses, tactile artefacts, photographs, or digital recordings. Feedback is provided in accessible formats, and progress is tracked against personalised learning goals as well as national expectations.

At St Vincent's, inclusion in Geography is not simply about access — it is about **active participation, empowerment, and equity**. Through an inclusive Geography curriculum, pupils learn that everyone's perspective matters in understanding and caring for the world, fostering a sense of belonging and responsibility as global citizens.

11. Links to other policies

This subject policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Curriculum policy
- Assessment policy
- Marking and Feedback policy
- SEND policy

12. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed by staff and governors every year.