



AUGHNACLOY
PRIMARY SCHOOL

World Around Us Policy



JANUARY 2016

1. Introduction

This policy is based on the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum document (2007) which is the starting point for planning a school curriculum that meets the needs of individual children. Within these requirements, we at Aughnacloy PS aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum so as to prepare our children for a rapidly changing world.

School Ethos

“Nothing will stand in your way if you walk wisely, and you will not stumble when you run. Always remember what you have learnt. Your education is your life, guard it well”.

(Proverbs Chapter 4 verses 12-13).

Aughnacloy P.S aims to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of the pupils in a caring and relaxed atmosphere reflecting the love that each parent feels for their individual child. **UNCRC Article 28- Every child has a right to an education.** The school is committed to involving pupils in discussions and decisions on school life that directly affects them and to listen to their views. **(UNCRC Article 12 - Every child has the right to say what they think in all matters that affect them, and to have their views taken seriously).** The school aims to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of the pupils in a caring and relaxed atmosphere reflecting the love that each parent feels for their individual child. **Article 28- Every child has a right to an education.** We are committed to being a healthy school, to supporting healthy children, who are better able to learn and develop. **(Article 24- Every child has the right to the best possible health).**

Aughnacloy Primary School is a rural school, catering for children of both sexes between the ages of 5 and 11. The school is situated on the edge of the market town in a building that has been extensively rebuilt to a high standard. Within our school grounds we have an organic garden with five beds where the children plant and harvest a variety of fruit and vegetables; an orchard, a natural willow-dome and tunnel; a composting station; solar panels and a wind turbine.

Aughnacloy College has premises, which are adjacent to our school, providing us with access to the computer suite, gymnasium, science laboratory and technology rooms. The expertise of Aughnacloy College’s staff is also at our disposal and we have excellent links with the school. Full use is made of our local environment in providing learning experiences, for example, the nearby Eco Park.

2. What is The World Around Us?

Children are naturally curious and often ask profound questions about themselves and the nature of the world around them. The purpose of this area of learning is to find age appropriate answers to some of these big questions from the perspectives of geography, history and science and technology. (Pg83 N.I. Curriculum document)

The World Around Us is one of the six Areas of Learning in the Northern Ireland Curriculum. It focuses on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in Geography, History, Science and Technology. Aghnacloy Primary School aims to deliver best practice within the three subjects through a thematic/topic based approach, making relevant connections across all areas of learning, while ensuring breadth and balance.

The statutory curriculum for World Around Us is structured as follows:

- **Foundation Stage:** The World Around Us including Geography, History and Science and Technology
- **Key Stages One & Two:** The World Around Us through the contributory elements of Geography, History and Science and Technology.

The **World Around Us** is presented as four inter-related strands that connect learning.

- **Interdependence**
- **Place**
- **Movement and Energy**
- **Change Over Time**

The three contributory elements within the World Around Us are:- Geography

This explores the relationship between the earth and its people through the study of the environment, place and space. It develops knowledge of places and environments throughout the world, an understanding of maps and a range of investigative and problem solving skills both inside and outside the classroom. Our children will be provided with opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of their place in the world, other places, and the processes which affect the people, conditions and life in that place. They will explore ideas about people, jobs, the weather and the environment both locally and globally and begin to consider their part in maintaining a sustainable world.

History

This is concerned with the concepts of sequence and time and with evidence which allows us to find out what happened in the past. The concepts of chronology, change/continuity, empathy and cause and effect will be developed through investigation of life in the past. Children will be provided with opportunities to gain an awareness of their past and changes which have occurred over time through examining evidence, looking at photographs, watching TV and multimedia clips and listening to stories. Our children will recognise the importance of evidence in giving a picture of the past but will understand that there can be different interpretations of this depending on how it is viewed.

Science and Technology

This aims to stimulate a child's curiosity in finding out why things happen in the way they do. It teaches methods of enquiry and investigation to stimulate creative thought. Our children will learn to ask scientific questions and begin to appreciate the way science will affect their future on a personal, national, and global level. They will have opportunities to develop the skills of Science and Technology and to develop awareness of the relevance and importance of Science and Technology in everyday life in finding out about themselves, the environment, the material and physical world.

3. Skills

At Aughnacloy Primary School we develop Geography, History and Science skills through the World Around Us. (These skills are listed in Appendix 1) While many of the skills will be developed incidentally, we also plan for the development of subject specific skills when appropriate.

At the heart of the curriculum lies an explicit emphasis on the development of skills and capabilities for life-long learning and for operating effectively in society.

Through opportunities to engage in active learning contexts . . . children should develop **Cross-Curricular Skills** (in Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT) and **Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities.**' (P5 NIC) Links with the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities Framework have been highlighted to enable teachers to cross reference both.

4. Planning

The WAU programme will be implemented at a level appropriate to the needs of the children in the context of our school and will also provide opportunities for pupils to explore their world in the context of home, school the local area and the wider world. We believe that planning within the WAU is an ongoing process that should reflect events in both a local and global context as well as reflecting the input of each individual year group. We plan for continuity and progression in the World Around Us by:

- Using the school schemes for The World Around Us based on the N.I Curriculum. These outline the skills and capabilities, knowledge and concepts to be developed. We will also use the Ideas for Connected Learning, Thematic Units and other guidance material from CCEA and ELBs in our planning. Whilst initial planning is **for** the pupils, at all stages children will be encouraged to become active participants in the planning/ learning process.
- Developing half-term/termly planners for each year group.
- Regular monitoring and evaluation of the planners, by the class teachers and the World Around Us Co-ordinator.
- World Around Us linked to the Global Education Programme

Planning for Progression and Continuity

Planning for the WAU builds on the earlier experiences of children and continues to help them to explore the world they live in. At Foundation Stage, skills and concepts are developed during play and other planned activities relevant to the children's interests and experiences. Careful observation informs the planning of future learning experiences within the World Around Us. We ensure that the overall programme of learning in any one year group, and across the key stages, is broad and balanced and that there is continuity and progression in children's learning.

Our planning for WAU aims to promote:

- Good investigations and the development of children's enquiry skills
- Connected Learning through the transference knowledge, understanding and skills from one context to another
- Good use of ICT and a range of resources to support teaching and learning
- Effective use of the school/local environment, educational visits and visitors to the classroom
- Progression in key aspects of geography, history and science and technology.

5. Learning and Teaching

In Aughnacloy PS, Learning and Teaching approaches provide suitably challenging opportunities for all pupils to take part in lessons fully and effectively. Learning experiences are active, practical and stimulating. We make use of a wide range of teaching methods balancing whole class, group and individual activities to engage children in effective learning.

In the Foundation stage children experience much of their learning through well planned and challenging play. This is further developed through well planned, challenging Activity Based Learning experiences in Key Stage One and Two. Children have opportunities to make choices and decisions, developing their own ideas and interests, either as starting points for learning activities or pursuing a topic in more depth. They are supported in taking risks in their efforts to succeed and are actively involved in planning, carrying out and reflecting on their work within the World Around Us Learning Area.

6. Assessment

Assessment in WAU, as in all areas of learning, will be used to promote, enhance and deepen the children's learning. It involves all methods normally used to appraise the children's learning, either individually or in groups. The outcomes from these assessments can then be used to identify the progress which pupils make in relation to the processes, skills, understanding and knowledge outlined in the NI Curriculum. We take account of Assessment for Learning strategies and allow this formative assessment to help and guide planning. The key reasons for assessment within WAU will be to:

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

Evidence

1. **Class Big Books:** These will be retained for Foundation/Key Stage 1 classes and they will evidence core aspects of the WAU curriculum delivered.
2. **Pupils' Profiles:** Updated annually which highlight the progress achieved and the attainment gained in the WAU. This will be explicit in the pupils' annual reports contained within the pupil profile.
3. **WAU Topic Books/Files:** These will be kept for every pupil from P1 to P7. They will contain a representative sample of all areas of work covered in WAU.
4. **Teachers' Record Books:** Some teachers record individual pupil progress in their own record books. This form of record keeping is to be encouraged. The preceding record keeping and assessment arrangements are under constant review and may be altered in the light of any guidance from C.C.E.A.
5. **Time Allocation:** The time devoted to WAU will vary as the child progresses through the school and it will also vary depending on the nature of the WAU topic. Due to the cross curricular nature of WAU it is not possible to give a specific time allocation.

7. Inclusion

In Aughnacloy Primary School, the World Around Us forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Children will be helped to access this Learning Area using a range of learning styles: visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. They are able to record and demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways according to their learning needs and preferences. Children with exceptional ability will have access to more demanding aspects of the WAU and increased resources may be required.

8. Learning in the Outdoors

The outdoor area provides children with one of the best environments in which to learn. Our pupils will have opportunities to develop skills and concepts in an outdoor learning environment where they will:

- Become more aware of, more observant in and more responsive to their surroundings
- Develop an approach to careful observation, accurate recording and thoughtful analysis.
- Encourage an interest in environmental issues
- Foster a sense of wonder and discovery

We aim to improve 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.

Children will have the opportunity to study aspects of their own immediate world, including different features of town and countryside and make comparisons between local and wider world issues.

All educational visits will be undertaken in accordance with 'Educational Visits. Policy, Practice and Procedures 2009'

9. Links with Outside Agencies

- We strive to ensure that all classes go on trips which can be linked into the topics covered in WAU.
- A close relationship exists with the local secondary school enabling the children to benefit from the facilities, resources and expertise in WAU.
- Visitors are invited in to school to talk to the children on WAU topics. For example, Council Representatives to discuss Waste Reduction.
- SENTINUS are welcomed into the school each year to deliver a variety of STEM -based activity workshops.
- STEM projects and competitions are undertaken by the teachers in KS2.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

- The World Around Us co-ordinator monitors planners and pupils' books each term. Oral and written feedback is given to principal, S.M.T. and staff.
- Classroom observations are carried out by the WAU co-ordinator
- Review of teachers' planners and World Around Us policy.
- S.M.T overview.
- Principal's report to Governors.

11. The Role of the Co-ordinator

- To promote World Around Us throughout the school.
- To ensure continuity and progression in planning.
- To give guidance and support to teachers.
- To keep staff updated on developments which affect World Around Us.
- To ensure the provision of appropriate resources.
- To monitor and evaluate planners and pupils' work and give oral and written feedback to principal, staff and SMT.
- To analyse the school's standardised tests for literacy and set targets for improvement as part of the School Development Plan.
- To monitor and evaluate the implementation of World Around Us throughout the school.

12. The Responsibility of the Class Teacher

- To contribute to the development and implementation of the whole school World Around Us policy and schemes.
- To use schemes of work and half-term planners to implement agreed approaches and strategies and to ensure continuity and progression throughout the school.

- To monitor World Around Us in the classroom on an ongoing basis.
- To use assessment for learning strategies to monitor the progress and learning needs of pupils in order to plan future work and improve learning.
- To use target- setting and action plans to inform planning and to raise standards as part of the School Development Plan.
- To participate in staff development for world Around Us.

13. Role of the Principal and SMT

- To monitor and evaluate the implementation of World Around Us throughout the school.
- To Monitor and evaluate learning in each Key Stage of the school and set targets for improvement as part of the School Development Plan.
- Class observations by Principal.
- Review schemes of work and World Around Us Policy.
- Principal's report to Governors.

14. Resources

We are currently developing resources for all WAU themes in the school. We keep a large selection of essential equipment and practical materials in a central store. Class teachers will supplement these resources with their own (and pupils') materials. The Central Library and Class libraries contain a supply of topic and reference books. Our resources are frequently and valuably supplemented by the use of Theme Boxes of books/resources from the Boards' Schools Library Service. Computer software and the internet is used to support children's individual research. Further ICT Resources include a digital micro-scope, digital cameras, video cameras and programmable devices.

The school is committed to exploring the use of new and emerging technologies to promote learning within The World Around Us.