



# **St Mary's Primary School Banbridge**

## **World Around Us Policy**



**Updated June 2025**

**Our Vision**

**“Safe. Valued. Empowered to Thrive.”**

## Our Mission

We are dedicated to creating a **safe**, nurturing, and inclusive environment where every individual feels **valued**, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential.

We inspire a love of learning, foster a sense of belonging, and cultivate the skills, values and resilience needed to **thrive** in a diverse and ever-changing world.

## Core Values

Family  
Community  
Respect  
Resilience  
Kindness  
Tolerance  
Perseverance  
Responsibility

## Our Vision and Mission

The World Around Us policy supports our school vision by encouraging children to explore and understand the diverse world they live in, fostering empathy, respect, and a sense of global citizenship. It promotes inclusive and meaningful learning experiences that reflect the backgrounds and perspectives of all pupils, helping them feel seen and heard.

By inspiring curiosity and connecting learning to real-life contexts, this policy nurtures a genuine love of learning. It also strengthens children's sense of belonging through exploration of local heritage, community roles, and shared responsibilities. As children engage with environmental issues, cultural diversity, and social responsibility, they develop the critical thinking, values, and resilience needed to thrive in an ever-changing world. The World Around Us policy not only supports academic growth but also helps shape compassionate, confident, and capable individuals.

## Our School in Context

St Mary's Primary School, Banbridge is a vibrant and inclusive learning community, home to approximately 503 pupils. Nestled in a town rich with history and natural beauty, our local environment offers a wealth of opportunities that enrich our World Around Us curriculum. From our engaging town walks and Victorian history trails to riverside explorations and visits to Whyte's Estate, our pupils benefit from hands-on, place-based learning that brings the curriculum to life.

In 2025, we continue to champion sustainability and active lifestyles through our ongoing partnership with Sustrans, proudly holding both the Bronze and Silver Active Travel Awards. Our commitment to environmental education is further reflected in the work of our Eco Council, which includes enthusiastic representatives from P4 to P7, alongside our youngest Eco Captains and Ambassadors from P1 to P3.

Our **Gardening Club** remains a cornerstone of our eco-initiatives, making full use of our school grounds, our outdoor classroom, our sprawling willow dome, dedicated seating areas, our Memory Garden, Bug Hotels, polytunnel, and planting beds to create a greener, more welcoming environment for all.

One of our proudest achievements is the collaborative creation of our Outdoor Areas in partnership with Dankse Bank and Live Here, Love Here initiative.

We are immensely proud to be the current holders of the **Eco-Schools Green Flag Award**, a prestigious recognition we have held since 2023. This award is a powerful testament to the unwavering commitment, creativity, and environmental stewardship demonstrated by our entire school community—from our youngest learners to our dedicated staff and supportive families.

At St Mary's, sustainability is not just a subject we teach; it is a way of life woven into the fabric of our school culture. Our pupils take real ownership of their environment, leading initiatives that make a tangible difference—from maintaining our vibrant school gardens and polytunnel to caring for our bug hotel and promoting biodiversity across the grounds. Our **Eco Council**, **Gardening Club**, and **Eco Ambassadors** work tirelessly to ensure that our school remains a beacon of environmental responsibility and innovation.

Danske Bank



The Memory Garden

The Willow Dome



Apple Trees



**Eco-Schools  
Green Flag Award**



## The World Around Us

Children are naturally curious and often ask profound questions about themselves and the world they live in. The World Around Us is one of the six Areas of Learning in the Northern Ireland Curriculum, designed to nurture this curiosity by helping children explore and understand their environment through the lenses of **Geography, History, and Science and Technology**.

This area of learning encourages pupils to investigate the natural and human-made world, develop a sense of place and time, and understand how things work. It promotes inquiry-based learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving, enabling children to make connections between past, present, and future, and between local and global contexts.

At St Mary's Primary School, we are committed to retaining the strengths of traditional subject teaching while embracing a topic-based, integrated approach. This allows us to:

- Foster meaningful cross-curricular connections.
- Ensure a **broad and balanced** curriculum experience.
- Support the development of **skills for life and work**, including observation, investigation, communication, and collaboration.
- Encourage **active learning** through hands-on experiences, outdoor learning, and the use of digital technologies.

Our approach aligns with current educational thinking, which emphasizes relevance, engagement, and real-world application. By exploring The World Around Us, children develop not only knowledge and understanding but also a sense of responsibility for the world they share.

The World Around Us – Statutory Curriculum Structure (Aligned with CCEA 2024 Progression Framework)

**Foundation Stage:** The World Around Us is delivered as a holistic area of learning, integrating:

- Geography
- History
- Science and Technology

Children explore their immediate environment and begin to develop awareness of place, change, and interdependence. Learning is play-based, nurturing

curiosity and encouraging children to ask questions, observe, and investigate the world around them.

Key Stages 1 and 2: The curriculum continues through the contributory elements of:

- Geography – understanding place, space, and environment
- History – exploring change over time and historical context
- Science and Technology – investigating how the world works and how things are made

These are taught through **interconnected strands**:

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

This thematic and inquiry-based approach supports the development of:

- Whole Curriculum Skills and Capabilities: Communication, Using Mathematics, Using ICT, and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities
- Personal Development: Encouraging children to become confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors to society and the environment.

## **The Three Contributory Elements of The World Around Us**

**Geography** helps children explore the relationship between people and the Earth through the study of **place, space, and environment**. It develops:

- Knowledge of local and global places and environments.
- Understanding of maps and spatial awareness.
- Investigative and problem-solving skills through real-world contexts.

Children are encouraged to:

- Understand their place in the world and how it connects to others.
- Explore human and physical processes that shape environments.
- Consider the impact of human activity and their role in creating a sustainable future.



**History** supports children in developing a sense of **time, change, and continuity**. It focuses on:

- Understanding chronology and historical sequence.
- Investigating the past through evidence and sources.
- Exploring cause and effect, empathy, and different perspectives.

Children learn to:

- Examine how life has changed over time using photographs, artefacts, stories, and media.
- Recognise that historical evidence can be interpreted in different ways.
- Develop critical thinking and an appreciation of their personal and shared heritage.

**Science and Technology** nurtures curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking by encouraging children to explore how and why things happen. It promotes:

- Scientific enquiry and investigative skills.
- Understanding of the natural and physical world.
- Awareness of the role of science and technology in everyday life.

Children are given opportunities to:

- Ask questions, test ideas, and draw conclusions.
- Explore the relevance of science and technology at personal, local, and global levels.
- Understand how innovation and discovery shape the world around them.

## **Aims of The World Around Us Across the Curriculum**

The World Around Us aims to inspire children to explore, understand, and care for the world they live in. Through engaging, inquiry-based learning, we aim to:

- Foster curiosity and enjoyment in exploring the natural and human-made world.
- Develop knowledge, understanding, and transferable skills in Geography, History, and Science and Technology.
- Promote respect, empathy, and responsibility for people, places, and the environment—locally and globally.

- Encourage historical awareness, helping children understand the past and how it shapes the present and future.
- Highlight the relevance of Science and Technology in everyday life and its role in shaping society and the environment.
- Cultivate enquiry and critical thinking skills, including investigation, analysis, evaluation, and effective communication.
- Support personal development, encouraging children to care for themselves, others, and the living world.
- Build confidence and self-esteem, enabling children to express ideas and appreciate the beauty, complexity, and wonder of the world.
- Enhance digital literacy, helping children understand the impact of Information and Communication Technology on their lives and the wider world.

## **Skills Development in The World Around Us**

The Northern Ireland Curriculum places a strong emphasis on the development of skills and capabilities that prepare children for lifelong learning and effective participation in society. Through active, meaningful learning experiences, children are supported in developing the Cross-Curricular Skills of Communication, Using Mathematics, and Using ICT, alongside the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities that underpin independent and collaborative learning.

At St Mary's Primary School, we are committed to embedding these core skills within The World Around Us by providing rich opportunities for children to explore, question, investigate, and reflect. In addition to the cross-curricular focus, we explicitly plan for the development of subject-specific skills in Geography, History, and Science and Technology, ensuring that children build a strong foundation in each discipline.

While many of these skills are developed naturally through integrated and inquiry-based learning, we also identify and plan for key skill development at appropriate stages. Teachers are supported in this process through clear links to the **Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities Framework** (See Appendix 3), which enables effective cross-referencing and progression tracking. A detailed overview of subject-specific skills in Geography, History, and Science is provided in Appendix 2.



This approach ensures that children not only acquire knowledge but also develop the ability to think critically, solve problems, communicate effectively, and apply their learning in real-world contexts.

## **Planning Approaches**

The World Around Us programme at St Mary's Primary School is implemented in a way that is responsive to the needs, interests, and experiences of our pupils. It provides meaningful opportunities for children to explore their world in the context of home, school, the local community, and the wider world. All planning is firmly rooted in the statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

In developing our WAU programme, we draw on a range of high-quality resources including Ideas for Connected Learning, Thematic Units, and other guidance materials provided by CCEA and the Education Authority. While initial planning is teacher-led to ensure curriculum coverage and progression, children are encouraged to become active participants in their learning. Their questions, interests, and ideas help shape the direction of inquiry and investigation, fostering ownership and engagement.

## **Planning for Progression and Continuity**

Planning for The World Around Us builds on children's prior experiences and supports them in deepening their understanding of the world they live in. At Foundation Stage, learning is rooted in play and purposeful activity, with skills and concepts introduced through contexts that are meaningful and relevant to the children. Teachers use careful observation to inform the planning of future learning experiences, ensuring that each child's development is supported.

Across Key Stages 1 and 2, we ensure that the programme of learning is broad, balanced, and coherent. There is a clear focus on continuity and progression, both within and across year groups. Our approach follows a spiral model, where key concepts, knowledge, and skills are revisited and deepened over time. This ensures that learning is reinforced in a variety of contexts, avoids unnecessary repetition, and addresses potential gaps in understanding.

## **Connected Learning in The World Around Us**

At St Mary's Primary School, we recognise the importance of making meaningful connections across the curriculum to enrich children's learning experiences. In line with the Northern Ireland Curriculum, our detailed topic-

based planning ensures breadth and balance in the development of knowledge, skills, and understanding within The World Around Us.

We place a strong emphasis on the totality of children's learning by creating opportunities for them to make links between different areas of learning. This integrated approach encourages pupils to transfer and apply their understanding and skills across a range of contexts, deepening their learning and promoting real-world relevance.

Our planning for The World Around Us is designed to promote high-quality learning experiences through:

- The development of strong enquiry and investigative skills, enabling children to ask questions, explore ideas, and draw conclusions.
- The purposeful use of ICT to enhance teaching, learning, and research, supporting children in becoming confident digital learners.
- The effective use of the school grounds, local area, educational visits, and visitors to bring learning to life and connect it to the real world.
- A clear focus on progression in key aspects of geography, history, and science and technology, ensuring continuity and challenge throughout the primary years.

This connected approach supports children in becoming active, engaged learners who can think critically, solve problems, and make informed decisions about the world around them.

## **Learning and Teaching in The World Around Us**

Our learning and teaching approaches are designed to provide all pupils with meaningful, engaging, and appropriately challenging opportunities to participate fully and effectively in their learning.

Learning experiences within The World Around Us are active, practical, and enjoyable. We use a wide variety of teaching strategies, balancing whole-class, group, and individual activities to ensure that all children are supported and motivated to learn. These approaches encourage collaboration, independence, and critical thinking.

In the Foundation Stage, much of the learning takes place through well-planned, purposeful play. This allows children to explore, investigate, and make sense of the world around them in ways that are developmentally appropriate and deeply engaging.

Children are given opportunities to make choices, express their interests, and develop their own ideas. These interests often serve as starting points for learning activities or are used to explore topics in greater depth. This child-centred approach fosters ownership of learning and encourages curiosity and creativity.

Pupils are supported in taking risks in their learning, developing resilience and confidence as they plan, carry out, and reflect on their work. They are encouraged to ask questions, seek answers, and think critically about the world around them.

At all stages, children are active participants in the learning process. Teachers aim to involve pupils in the selection of topics that interest them and, where possible, make connections to current events and real-world issues. This ensures that learning is relevant, meaningful, and responsive to the world in which they live.

## **Assessment in The World Around Us**

Assessment within The World Around Us, as in all areas of learning, is a vital tool for promoting, enhancing, and deepening children's understanding. It encompasses a range of strategies used to evaluate learning, both individually and in groups, and provides valuable insights into each child's progress in relation to the knowledge, skills, and processes outlined in the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

At St Mary's Primary School, assessment is an integral part of the learning process. We use a combination of formative and summative approaches to ensure that assessment is purposeful, supportive, and informative. In particular, we place a strong emphasis on Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies, including the sharing of clear learning intentions, the use of peer and self-assessment, and the celebration of success. These strategies help guide planning, inform teaching, and support pupils in taking ownership of their learning. Assessment in The World Around Us is used to:

- Enhance children's performance, self-esteem, and confidence in their abilities
- Promote resilience and a positive attitude when faced with challenges
- Foster independence and responsibility for learning
- Create a supportive and reflective climate for learning

Through ongoing observation, dialogue, and the use of assessment tools, teachers can identify next steps in learning, ensure progression, and provide timely feedback that supports each child's development.

## **Inclusion in The World Around Us**

The World Around Us is an integral part of our commitment to providing a broad, balanced, and inclusive curriculum for all pupils. We believe that every child should have access to high-quality learning experiences that enable them to make progress, regardless of their individual needs or abilities.

Our teaching is designed to be responsive and flexible, ensuring that all children are supported through appropriate levels of challenge and differentiated learning opportunities. Teachers plan with awareness of the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (SEND O), ensuring that learning experiences are accessible, meaningful, and tailored to meet the diverse needs of our pupils.

We recognise that children learn in different ways. To support this, we use a variety of teaching strategies and resources that cater to visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic learning styles. Pupils are encouraged to demonstrate their understanding in a range of formats, including oral presentations, written work, creative tasks, and digital media, allowing them to express their learning in ways that suit their strengths and preferences.

Children with additional needs are supported through targeted interventions and adapted resources, while those with exceptional ability are provided with opportunities to explore more complex concepts and engage in extended learning tasks. Where appropriate, additional resources or support may be provided to ensure that all pupils are able to access and succeed within this Area of Learning.

Inclusion is at the heart of our approach, ensuring that every child feels valued, supported, and empowered to explore and understand the world around them.

## **Pupil Voice in The World Around Us**

At St Mary's Primary School, we believe that children learn best when they are actively involved in shaping their learning experiences. Pupil voice is a central part of our approach to The World Around Us, empowering children to contribute their ideas, interests, and questions to the learning process.

We encourage pupils to take ownership of their learning by involving them in the selection of topics, the planning of investigations, and the evaluation of their work. Their curiosity and perspectives help guide the direction of inquiry, ensuring that learning is relevant, meaningful, and responsive to the world they live in.

Children are given regular opportunities to express their thoughts, reflect on their learning, and suggest ways to extend or deepen their understanding. This may take the form of class discussions, learning journals, pupil-led projects, or feedback sessions. Teachers listen carefully to pupil input and use it to inform planning, adapt teaching strategies, and create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment.

By valuing and acting on pupil voice, we foster a sense of agency, build confidence, and promote a culture of mutual respect. Children learn that their ideas matter, that they can influence their learning journey, and that they are active participants in exploring and understanding The World Around Us.

## **Learning in the Outdoors**

We recognise the immense value of outdoor learning as a powerful context for developing children's curiosity, creativity, and connection to the world around them. As Margaret McMillan famously observed, the best kept classroom and the richest cupboard are roofed only by the sky. Our outdoor spaces provide rich, dynamic environments where children can explore, investigate, and learn in meaningful and memorable ways.

Outdoor learning is embedded within The World Around Us and offers pupils opportunities to develop key skills and concepts in real-world contexts. Through outdoor experiences, children are encouraged to become more observant, responsive, and reflective. They learn to engage with their surroundings through careful observation, accurate recording, and thoughtful analysis. These experiences also foster a sense of wonder, discovery, and responsibility for the natural world.

Pupils explore environmental issues, compare local and global features, and study aspects of their immediate environment, including both urban and rural landscapes. Our school grounds are used extensively to support this learning, offering a variety of natural and built features that serve as rich stimuli for investigation and exploration. These include:

- A bug hotel that supports biodiversity and observation of mini beasts
- A polytunnel for growing and studying plants and food production
- Outdoor seating areas that support group work and reflection
- A covered sand pit and playhouse that encourage imaginative and sensory play
- Designated planting areas for hands-on gardening and science investigations
- A selection of trees and shrubs that provide seasonal learning opportunities

In addition to our school grounds, we make full use of our local area to enhance The World Around Us topics. Regular visits to places such as Banbridge Library, Solitude Park, the FE McWilliam Gallery, and local monuments and buildings of historical interest help children connect classroom learning to the wider world. These experiences deepen their understanding of place, history, and community, and help them develop a sense of belonging and stewardship.

Outdoor learning is not an add-on but a vital part of our curriculum, supporting physical, emotional, and intellectual development while nurturing a lifelong appreciation for the environment.

### **Educational Visits in The World Around Us**

Educational visits play a vital role in enriching the World Around Us curriculum at St Mary's Primary School. These experiences provide pupils with valuable opportunities to explore learning beyond the classroom, deepen their understanding of key topics, and make real-world connections to the knowledge and skills they develop in school.

Visits are carefully planned to support and enhance WAU topics across year groups. Examples of educational visits include:

- Streamvale Farm – exploring animals, farming, and food production
- Navan Centre – investigating early Irish history and archaeology
- Palace Stables – learning about life in the past through immersive experiences
- Armagh Planetarium – developing understanding of space, science, and technology
- Ulster American Folk Park – exploring emigration, history, and cultural heritage
- St Patrick's College – engaging with local history and religious heritage

All educational visits are organised in accordance with the school's policy and the guidance outlined in Educational Visits: Policy, Practice and Procedures. Risk assessments are carried out, and visits are designed to be inclusive, safe, and educationally purposeful.

These experiences not only support curriculum objectives but also help to foster curiosity, independence, and a sense of place and identity in our pupils.

## **Health and Safety in The World Around Us**

We are committed to ensuring that all pupils have safe and meaningful access to the full range of World Around Us activities. When learning takes place inside the classroom or in the wider environment, health and safety is a central consideration in all planning and delivery.

When children participate in activities beyond the classroom, including educational visits and outdoor learning, a thorough risk assessment is carried out in advance. This ensures that all activities are appropriate, inclusive, and conducted in a safe environment for every pupil.

We recognise that active learning, by its nature, involves a degree of risk and uncertainty. However, we are guided by the principle outlined in the Northern Ireland Curriculum that all activities must be taught within a safe environment and that children must be always made aware of safe practices. To support this, we assess and manage risks with reference to the following key documents, as outlined in our whole-school Health and Safety Policy:

- Education Authority (EA) Health and Safety Guidance: This includes risk management procedures, safety alerts, and the use of the Online Accident Reporting System, ensuring compliance with the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978.
- Department of Education Guidance: Including the most recent circulars and updates relevant to school safety and off-site activities.
- CLEAPSS: Providing practical science and technology safety advice and resources for classroom teachers.
- ASE 'Be Safe!': Offering detailed guidance on safe practices in science and technology education, including legal responsibilities and risk assessment procedures.
- EA 'Out of School' Guidance: Detailing statutory obligations and best practices for managing educational visits and off-site learning experiences.



By embedding these practices into our planning and teaching, we ensure that children can explore The World Around Us confidently, safely, and with a strong awareness of personal and collective responsibility.

### **Role and Responsibilities of the World Around Us Coordinators**

The World Around Us (WAU) Coordinators at St Mary's Primary School play a key leadership role in ensuring the effective planning, delivery, and development of this Area of Learning across the school. Their responsibilities include:

The development of a clear and strategic action plan for The World Around Us, aligned with the School Development Plan (SDP), to guide ongoing improvement and innovation.

Monitoring the implementation of the WAU curriculum to ensure continuity, progression, and consistency in teaching and learning across all year groups.

Collaborating with school leadership to position WAU within the broader context of whole-school learning and teaching priorities and contributing to the school's monitoring and evaluation processes.

Supporting staff professional development by sharing expertise, identifying training needs, and signposting relevant CPD opportunities that enhance classroom practice in Geography, History, and Science and Technology.

Advising and guiding colleagues on effective teaching strategies, curriculum planning, and the use of appropriate resources to support high-quality learning experiences.

Leading the development and review of WAU policy and schemes of work in consultation with staff and the principal, ensuring alignment with statutory requirements and school priorities.

Promoting the WAU policy across the school community and undertaking regular monitoring activities, including the review of planning, pupil work, and classroom practice.

Ensuring that the WAU area is well-resourced, with appropriate materials that are safely stored, accessible, and effectively used to support learning.

Liaising with external agencies and advisory services such as Sustrans, Eco-Schools, local historians, CLEAPSS, and the Association for Science Education (ASE) to enrich the curriculum and provide real-world learning opportunities.

Establishing and overseeing the school's Eco Committee and gardening club, promoting environmental awareness and sustainability through pupil-led initiatives.

Developing and maintaining the school's outdoor learning environment, ensuring it is a safe, engaging, and well-managed space for cross-curricular learning.

Organising and coordinating Science Week and other enrichment events, including collaboration with external partners to enhance pupils' engagement and understanding of science and the wider world.

## **Monitoring and Review**

The successful implementation of The World Around Us policy is a shared responsibility among all teaching staff. Each teacher plays a vital role in delivering high-quality learning experiences that reflect the aims and values of this Area of Learning.

The World Around Us coordinator have a key role in monitoring both the standards of children's work and the quality of teaching across the contributory elements of Geography, History, and Science and Technology. This includes reviewing planning, observing classroom practice, and sampling pupils' work to ensure consistency, progression, and high expectations throughout the school.

In addition to monitoring, the coordinators provide ongoing support to colleagues, offering guidance on effective teaching strategies, curriculum planning, and the use of resources. They remain informed about current developments in the curriculum and pedagogy, ensuring that the school's approach remains up to date and aligned with best practice.

Dedicated time is allocated to coordinators to carry out these responsibilities effectively, including the review of planning documentation and pupil outcomes. This structured approach ensures that monitoring is purposeful, developmental, and contributes to whole-school improvement.

An annual report on The World Around Us is prepared by the coordinators and shared with the principal and/or the Board of Governors. This report outlines

key developments, highlights strengths, identifies areas for improvement, and informs strategic planning for the year ahead.

## **Resources for The World Around Us**

We are committed to providing high-quality resources that support the effective delivery of The World Around Us across all year groups. Class teachers continually review and develop materials to ensure that each topic or theme is well-resourced, engaging, and aligned with curriculum objectives.

Each year group has access to a wide range of resources tailored to their specific topics. These include topic boxes, artefacts, visual aids, and teacher-created materials that enrich learning and promote curiosity.

Class libraries are regularly updated with a variety of topic and reference books to support independent and guided research. In addition, teachers make extensive use of educational websites and digital platforms to enhance learning and provide opportunities for pupils to explore topics in greater depth.

Our ICT provision includes tools such as iPads, programmable devices (e.g. Spheros), and a digital microscope, which allow children to investigate, record, and present their findings using modern technologies. These resources support the development of digital literacy and scientific enquiry skills.

We also benefit from the **Education Authority Schools' Library Service**, which provides themed resource boxes that complement our curriculum and offer high-quality, curated materials to support classroom learning.

The school grounds serve as a valuable extension of the classroom. With a wide variety of trees, shrubs, and plants, as well as a dedicated gardening area, pupils have regular opportunities to explore nature, observe seasonal changes, and engage in hands-on learning about growth, biodiversity, and sustainability.

*See Appendix 4 for a recommended list of websites.*

## **Policy Review**

This World Around Us policy reflects the vision, values, and practices of St Mary's Primary School in delivering a broad, balanced, and engaging curriculum that supports children in exploring and understanding the world around them.

The implementation of this policy is the shared responsibility of all teaching staff, with leadership and oversight provided by the WAU coordinator. It is designed to be a living document that evolves in response to curriculum developments, school priorities, and the needs of our pupils.

This policy will be formally reviewed every two years to ensure it remains current, relevant, and aligned with statutory guidance and best practice. The next scheduled review is due in **June 2028**.

## Appendix 1: **CCEA 2024 Progression Framework** for The World Around Us

### **Foundation Stage – Learning Intentions (We are learning to...)**

We are learning to begin to develop a sense of the world around us by exploring people, places, and living things in our immediate environment.

We are learning to become familiar with early concepts such as fairness, the past, and our place in the world.

We are learning to use our senses to explore, observe, and investigate the world around us.

We are learning to stop, look closely, and describe what we see, hear, feel, and notice.

We are learning to use simple tools such as magnifying glasses and digital microscopes to help us observe more carefully.

We are learning to record our findings in different ways, including drawings, marks, models, and digital tools.

We are learning to make suggestions and decisions when planning what to do during investigations and play.

We are learning to use simple subject-specific language related to geography, history, and science.

We are learning to begin to understand the passage of time by talking about past and present events in our own lives.

We are learning to explore how we can find out about the past through stories, photographs, artefacts, and people.

We are learning that we can discover new things by exploring, asking questions, and trying things out.

We are learning to ask questions about what we see and experience, and to talk about what we think might happen.

We are learning to recognise and talk about changes in ourselves, our environment, and the world around us.

### **Key Stage 1 – Learning Intentions (We are learning to...)**

We are learning to explore how living things depend on each other and their environment, and to recognise how we can care for the world around us.

We are learning to describe and compare places, people, and environments, and to begin to understand how location affects how people live.

We are learning to observe and describe how things move and change, and to explore how energy is used in everyday life.

We are learning to recognise and talk about changes over time in our own lives, in the lives of others, and in the wider world.

We are learning to ask questions, make predictions, and carry out simple investigations to find answers.

We are learning to use tools such as maps, globes, and digital devices to explore and record information about the world.

We are learning to use simple scientific and historical vocabulary to describe what we observe and discover.

We are learning to work with others to plan, carry out, and reflect on our learning.

We are learning to use ICT to research, record, and present our findings.

We are learning to express our ideas and understanding in a variety of ways, including through writing, drawing, discussion, and digital media.

We are learning to identify similarities and differences between the past and present, and to understand how people and places have changed.

We are learning to explore local and global issues and begin to understand how our actions can make a difference.

## **Key Stage 2 – Learning Intentions (We are learning to...)**

We are learning to explore how living things interact within ecosystems and how human activity can impact the environment, both positively and negatively.

We are learning to investigate how people, places, and environments are connected locally and globally, and how these relationships influence how people live.

We are learning to explore how energy is used, transferred, and conserved in everyday life, and to investigate forces and movement through practical enquiry.

We are learning to examine how people, places, and technologies have changed over time and to understand the causes and consequences of these changes.

We are learning to ask deeper questions, plan investigations, and use evidence to draw conclusions and justify our thinking.

We are learning to use a range of tools, including maps, timelines, graphs, and digital technologies, to gather, record, and present information.

We are learning to use subject-specific vocabulary confidently to describe, explain, and discuss our findings.

We are learning to work collaboratively, share ideas, and reflect on our learning to improve our understanding.

We are learning to use ICT to research, model, and present information in

creative and meaningful ways.

We are learning to compare and contrast past and present events and to evaluate how historical and scientific developments have shaped the world we live in.

We are learning to consider sustainability and our role in protecting the environment for future generations.

We are learning to think critically about global issues and to understand how our actions can influence change in the wider world.



## Appendix 2: **Subject-Specific Skills in The World Around Us**

This appendix outlines the key skills developed through the contributory elements of *Geography*, *History*, and *Science and Technology*. These skills are embedded in classroom practice and supported through topic-based, inquiry-led learning.

### Geography Skills

- Observing and describing physical and human features of places
- Using and interpreting maps, globes, and other geographical tools
- Asking geographical questions and collecting evidence through fieldwork
- Comparing and contrasting environments and places
- Understanding environmental change and sustainability

### History Skills

- Developing a sense of chronology and sequencing events
- Using evidence to investigate the past (e.g. artefacts, photographs, oral history)
- Identifying cause and effect in historical events
- Recognising different perspectives and interpretations of the past
- Communicating historical understanding through discussion, writing, and creative expression

### Science and Technology Skills

- Asking questions and making predictions
- Planning and carrying out investigations
- Observing, measuring, and recording findings
- Interpreting results and drawing conclusions
- Understanding the application of science and technology in everyday life

## Appendix 3: **Links to the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities Framework**

This appendix highlights how The World Around Us supports the development of the five strands of the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities Framework, enabling teachers to make meaningful cross-curricular connections.

### Managing Information

- Asking focused questions during investigations
- Planning and carrying out research using a range of sources
- Recording and presenting findings clearly

### Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision-Making

- Making predictions and testing ideas
- Identifying patterns and relationships
- Evaluating outcomes and drawing conclusions

### Being Creative

- Generating ideas and exploring possibilities
- Using imagination to interpret the past or envision future scenarios
- Responding creatively to real-world challenges

### Working with Others

- Collaborating on group investigations and projects
- Sharing ideas and listening to others' viewpoints
- Taking on roles and responsibilities within a team

### Self-Management

- Reflecting on learning and setting personal goals
- Managing time and resources effectively
- Showing initiative and perseverance in tasks

## THINKING SKILLS AND PERSONAL CAPABILITIES

<b>Managing Information</b> <i>Asking, accessing, selecting, recording, integrating, communicating.</i>	<b>Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making</b> <i>Searching for meaning, deepening understanding, coping with challenges.</i>	<b>Being Creative</b> <i>Imagining, generating, inventing, taking risks for learning.</i>	<b>Working with Others</b> <i>Being collaborative, being sensitive to others' feelings, being fair and responsible.</i>	<b>Self Management</b> <i>Evaluating strengths and weaknesses, setting goals and targets, managing and regulating self.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ask focused questions.</li> <li>plan and set goals, break a task into sub-tasks.</li> <li>use own and others' ideas to locate sources of information.</li> <li>select, classify, compare and evaluate information.</li> <li>select the most appropriate method for a task.</li> <li>use a range of methods for collating, recording and representing information.</li> <li>communicate with a sense of audience and purpose.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sequence, order, classify, make comparisons.</li> <li>make predictions, examine evidence, distinguish fact from opinion.</li> <li>make links between cause and effect.</li> <li>justify methods, opinions and conclusions.</li> <li>generate possible solutions, try out alternative approaches, evaluate outcomes.</li> <li>examine options, weigh up pros and cons.</li> <li>use different types of questions.</li> <li>make connections between learning in different contexts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>seek out questions to explore and problems to solve.</li> <li>experiment with ideas and questions.</li> <li>make new connections between ideas/information.</li> <li>learn from and value other people's ideas.</li> <li>make ideas real by experimenting with different designs, actions, outcomes.</li> <li>challenge the routine method.</li> <li>value the unexpected or surprising.</li> <li>see opportunities in mistakes and failures.</li> <li>take risks for learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>listen actively and share opinions.</li> <li>develop routines of turn-taking, sharing and co-operating.</li> <li>give and respond to feedback.</li> <li>understand how actions and words affect others.</li> <li>adapt behaviour and language to suit different people and situations.</li> <li>take personal responsibility for working with others and evaluate own contribution to the group.</li> <li>be fair.</li> <li>respect the views and opinions of others, reaching agreements using negotiation and compromise.</li> <li>suggest ways of improving their approach to working collaboratively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>be aware of personal strengths, limitations and interests.</li> <li>set personal targets and review them.</li> <li>manage behaviour in a range of situations.</li> <li>organise and plan how to go about a task.</li> <li>focus, sustain attention and persist with tasks.</li> <li>review learning and some aspect that might be improved.</li> <li>learn ways to manage own time.</li> <li>seek advice when necessary.</li> <li>compare own approach with others and in different contexts.</li> </ul>

#### Appendix 4: **Useful Websites for The World Around Us**

- BBC Bitesize – Interactive lessons and videos for Science, Geography, and History at KS1 and KS2
- BBC Science Clips – Engaging science activities and experiments for primary pupils
- BBC Schools – A wide range of resources across all WAU subjects
- Woodlands Resources – Topic-based activities and games for Geography, History, and Science
- Science Kids – Fun science facts, experiments, games, and videos
- [Twinkl – The World Around Us \(NI\)](#) – Downloadable resources, PowerPoints, and worksheets tailored to the NI Curriculum
- [Global Learning NI – Centre for Global Education](#) – Resources and training for teaching global citizenship, sustainability, and environmental awareness
- Eco-Schools NI – Environmental education resources and support for school eco-committees
- National Geographic Kids – Articles, videos, and games on geography, animals, and science
- [Explorify](#) – Free science activities and discussion starters to promote enquiry and thinking skills
- CLEAPSS Primary Science – Practical science guidance and safety advice for teachers