



# MALLUSK INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL

## World Around Us Policy



## **Ethos**

At Mallusk Integrated Primary School we maintain that learning should be active, rewarding, meaningful, exciting and accessible. We believe in child-centred teaching and learning and believe in working closely with parents and pupils to ensure all our children reach their potential regardless of gender, religious, social, ethnic, linguistic and educational background. We are committed to providing a stimulating, caring and safe environment for our children. Through making thinking visible and providing exciting, supportive and challenging teaching and learning experiences, we support the children in developing metacognition and self regulation. Our activities reflect the diversity in the school community and challenge gender, race, or cultural stereotypes. We maintain that these will help our children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

We encourage our children to adopt a Growth Mindset, to take a pride in their work, to recognise the importance of high standards of presentation and behaviour and to respect and accept everyone in our school community. We believe in the centrality of good relationships within the school community and believe everyone has a valuable contribution to make. We encourage good self-esteem, mutual understanding, respect and acceptance.

Our broad, well balanced and flexible curriculum will ensure that children are equipped with the knowledge, skills and capabilities which will prepare them for their future lives. We believe that our school community can be a model for society, where acceptance and diversity go hand in hand, so we aim for balance and equality in our school community, in keeping with the Core Principles of Integration.

## **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 Mallusk Integrated Primary School aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum in order to prepare our children for a rapidly changing world.

## **Definition of the World Around Us**

Children are naturally curious about themselves and the nature of the world around them. The World Around Us is one of the six Areas of Learning in the Northern Ireland Curriculum. The purpose of this area of learning is to focus on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in from the perspectives of Geography, History, 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

### Three contributory elements to the World Around Us

**Geography** 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.

Children should 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 should 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** 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, cause and effect will be developed through investigation of life in the past. Children should 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. 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.



The area of **Science and Technology** 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. Children learn to ask scientific questions and begin to appreciate the way science will affect their future on a personal, national and global level.

Children should 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 world and the physical world.



## **Aims**

- To develop knowledge, understanding and skills in the context of the World Around Us.
- To promote understanding, respect and appreciation for the world in which children live and their immediate environment.
- To acknowledge and appreciate a sense of the past, changes which have occurred and how these affect the world today.
- To develop an appreciation of the relevance and importance of Science and Technology in everyday life.
- To develop in children the skills of enquiry, investigation, analysis, evaluation and presentation.

## **Skills**

*“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.” (NI Curriculum page 5).*

At Mallusk Integrated Primary School we develop Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities through our WAU thematic planning (Scheme of Work). This enables us to deliver the Cross Curricular Skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT.

## **Planning Approaches**

Our WAU Scheme of Work is implemented at a level on an all ability and inclusive basis, providing equal access to the curriculum for all our pupils. It is appropriate to the needs of the children in the context of our school and provides opportunities for pupils to explore their world in the context of home, school, the local area and the wider world. All planning is based on the statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

We use a Thematic approach to planning. Whilst initial planning is for the pupils, at all stages children will be encouraged to become active participants in the planning/ learning process. Due to the composite class structure, the Themes are broadly written for FS, KS1 and KS2. When planning, class teachers differentiate according to the year groups within the class- e.g. ‘Going Green’ is a KS1 theme but Learning Intentions and activities will be adapted in order to meet the needs of FS pupils in a P2/3 class.

As an Integrated school, our themes have been chosen to reflect the Integrated ethos and the diversity within our school. We have chosen many themes which empower our pupils to affect positive change in a shared society.

Our themes encourage our pupils to respect others and celebrate their own and other cultures. They should also help them learn to live peacefully and protect the environment. Many themes support the work being done by those pupils coming forward for sacramental preparation. Our themes offer opportunities to develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world. Pupils are enabled to acknowledge their own individual goodness and that we are connected to each other and the world around us.

The thematic approach facilitates connected learning across all areas of the Curriculum, developing the children's skills and knowledge in a range of meaningful contexts. Connecting the learning in this way can motivate and engage children and allows them to practise and apply the skills they have gained. We believe that this whole school approach ensures progression in the children's learning about the key concepts and skills across the contributory strands of History, Geography, Science and Technology. It encourages and promotes investigations and the development of children's enquiry skills.

Planning for WAU builds on the earlier experiences of children and continues to help them to explore the world they live in. At Foundation Stage and Key Stage One, 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 our programme of learning in each year group and across the key stages is broad and balanced and that there is continuity and progression in children's learning. The themes are also flexible to take account of the interests of the children. We have adopted: *"a spiral approach to the World around Us so that concepts, knowledge and skills are introduced without undue repetition or significant gaps and are reinforced in a variety of contexts"*. (NI Curriculum page 85)

### **Learning and Teaching**

In Mallusk Integrated Primary School, 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 enjoyable. 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 and Key Stage One, children experience much of their learning through well-planned and challenging play. All the children have opportunities to make choices and decisions, developing their own ideas and interests, either as starting points for learning activities or pursuing a theme 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 area of World Around Us. We endeavour to provide effective use of the school/local environment, educational visits and visitors to the classroom.

## **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 understanding, self esteem and self-confidence
- Promote greater resilience when faced with challenges
- Increase independence
- Develop a stimulating, positive environment for learning.

## **Inclusion**

Mallusk Integrated Primary School is committed to equality and inclusion. We recognise the value of diverse environments and strive to promote a culture in which all pupils, staff and members of the school community are welcomed and supported to fulfil their potential, irrespective of their background or personal characteristics. Our school community reflects a wide range of beliefs, cultures, abilities and ethnicity. We are committed to an ethos and culture of inclusion for all pupils, irrespective of race, religion/belief, political views, disability, SEN status, gender or gender identity.

We strongly believe that every child has the right to access a full, broad and balanced curriculum and to be taught in a supportive manner, according to his or her needs. We employ a range of teaching strategies to ensure we meet the needs of children with disabilities or SEN and identify adjustments, resources and provisions needed for pupils with a disability. In keeping with the Code of Practice for SEN, the class teacher, SENCO and any relevant outside agencies, work together to develop a planned programme suited to the needs of the individual child (see Special Educational Needs Policy).

We use the following strategies to support children with Special Educational Needs:

- Identifying children with SEN at an early stage in order to implement early intervention strategies.
- Differentiation within planning and class teaching & management, suited to the individual's needs.
- Developing of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in conjunction with parents, the child and all adults involved.
- Effective use of classroom assistants to support learning.
- Regular evaluation of targets and communication with parents and relevant personnel regarding progress and future planning.
- Praise, encouragement and celebration of success and effort.

We believe that Gifted and Talented children are those who have the potential to develop significantly beyond what is expected for their age. We employ the following strategies when teaching gifted and talented pupils:

- Work is differentiated to provide challenges and includes problem solving and investigations.
- Teachers communicate higher expectations to gifted and talented children.
- Children's successes and achievements are celebrated and shared.
- Children are given increased responsibility and independence.
- Developing of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in conjunction with parents, the child and all adults involved.

### **Learning Outdoors**

In recent years we have worked hard to develop the quality of outdoor learning and have enhanced the school grounds. The outdoor area provides children with one of the best environments in which to learn.



Our children 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.

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. For outdoor learning, we make use of resources such as the school grounds, the school garden, the Mallusk Heritage Trail, the local river and the graveyard. The children have regular opportunities for connected educational visits and visitors or outside providers.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation of this policy and monitoring of standards is the responsibility of all teaching staff. As necessary, WAU is prioritised in the School Development Plan.

## Coordination of WAU

The Principal has overall responsibility for coordinating WAU, but it is also the responsibility of all teaching staff to:

- Place WAU on the SDP.
- Monitor & evaluate the running of the Scheme of Work to ensure continuity of progression throughout the school.
- Develop and disseminate knowledge & expertise of WAU in the context of CPD.
- Develop the policy/ scheme of work in line with the SDP.
- Ensure the area is properly resourced.
- Liaise with advisory services.

## WAU Links with Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

Stages	Learning Intentions (we are learning...)
Foundation	
	<p>To begin to have a sense of the world around us (BC)</p> <p>To become familiar with concepts such as fair/not fair, the past, my place (MI)</p> <p>To use our senses to find out about our world (TPD)</p> <p>To stop to look closely and carefully (MI)</p> <p>To use a magnifying glass, digital microscope (MI)</p> <p>To record independently in a variety of ways (MI)</p> <p>To make suggestions when planning what to do (BC)</p> <p>To use simple, subject-specific language (TPD)</p> <p>To begin to have a sense of the passage of time (MI)</p> <p>To be aware of how to find out about the past (TPD)</p> <p>That we can find out by exploring (BC)</p> <p>To begin to ask questions relevant to our explorations (BC)</p> <p>To recognise change in our own lives (MI)</p>





Key Stage 1	<i>As for Foundation Stage and</i>
	<p>To begin to have a sense of how geography, history, science and technology help us to understand our world (MI)</p> <p>To begin to ask more focussed questions around our observations (BC)</p> <p>To make simple predictions and give reasons for these (TPD)</p> <p>To recognise and begin to explain why tests are fair/not fair (TPD)</p> <p>To classify according to simple differences (TPD)</p> <p>To recognise patterns in the natural and built environment, <i>eg Spring growth, house types etc</i> (MI)</p> <p>To interpret information from simple maps (MI)</p> <p>To begin to plan what to do (MI)</p> <p>To follow a structured enquiry (MI)</p> <p>That we may use all senses to explore and survey the natural and built environments (MI)</p> <p>To use standard measures when working (MI)</p> <p>That we can record work in a variety of ways (MI)</p> <p>To describe what happens and explain why (TPD)</p> <p>To relate what happened to what we predicted (TPD)</p> <p>To examine evidence and opinions from a range of sources (TPD)</p> <p>To record information using simple timelines (MI)</p> <p>To begin to understand what life was like for the older people whom we know (BC)</p> <p>To be aware of how people's experiences may have influenced how they felt (BC)</p> <p>To identify how life in other time periods is similar to, or different from, the present day (TPD)</p> <p>To begin to identify why events happened in the past (TPD)</p>



Key Stage 2	As Key Stage 1 and
	<p>That history, geography, science and technology help us to understand our world (MI)</p> <p>To use more precisely subject-specific language (TPD)</p> <p>To suggest subject-specific questions using an enquiry-based approach (MI)</p> <p>To record and present information in appropriate formats (MI)</p> <p>To use different ways to find out about our world <i>eg exploration, survey, fair test</i> (BC)</p> <p>To make predictions based on previous knowledge (TPD)</p> <p>To design and carry out a fair test (TPD)</p> <p>To make observations noting close detail and to be able to use a microscope (MI)</p> <p>To make observations, taking account of the need for care and accuracy (SM)</p> <p>To make decisions about what, when and how to measure with increasing accuracy (TPD)</p> <p>To draw conclusions and make comparisons from our work (TPD)</p> <p>To sort and classify according to more complex similarities and differences, offering explanations (TPD)</p> <p>To begin to relate cause with effect (TPD)</p> <p>To structure a simple enquiry (TPD)</p> <p>To investigate an issue from different viewpoints (BC)</p> <p>To develop a sense of place through the use of maps, plans, photographs and atlases (MI)</p> <p>To examine evidence and opinions from a range of sources and distinguish between fact and opinion (TPD)</p> <p>To order and sequence information to demonstrate understanding (TPD)</p> <p>To create timelines within a broad historical period (MI)</p> <p>To identify change and continuity within a period studied, and suggest reasons (TPD)</p> <p>To appreciate that there may be different points of view and different causes and consequences of an event or situation (BC)</p>

