

# Meadowburn Primary School Bun Sgoil Innis an Uillt



## SOCIAL STUDIES POLICY

Revised February 2015

*From the youngest age, children want to explore and understand the world - first of all the world immediately around them, and later, how other people live, and the stories of past generations. Learning through social studies can harness the curiosity of young children about their surroundings and the people they know.*

Building the Curriculum 1

### **Rationale**

Through social studies, children and young people develop their understanding of the world by learning about other people and their values, in different times, places and circumstances; they also develop their understanding of their environment and of how it has been shaped. As they mature, children and young people's experiences will be broadened using Scottish, British, European and wider contexts for learning, while maintaining a focus on the historical, social, geographic, economic and political changes that have shaped Scotland. Children and young people learn about human achievements and about how to make sense of changes in society, of conflicts and of environmental issues. With greater understanding comes the opportunity and ability to influence events by exercising informed and responsible citizenship.

### **Aims**

As children and young people participate in experiences and outcomes in social studies they will:

- develop their understanding of the history, heritage and culture of Scotland, and an appreciation of their local and national heritage within the world
- broaden their understanding of the world by learning about human activities and achievements in the past and present
- develop their understanding of their own values, beliefs and cultures and those of others
- develop an understanding of the principles of democracy and citizenship through experience of critical and independent thinking
- explore and evaluate different types of sources and evidence
- learn how to locate, explore and link periods, people and events in time and place
- learn how to locate, explore and link features and places locally and further afield
- engage in activities which encourage enterprising attitudes
- develop an understanding of concepts that encourage enterprise and influence business
- establish firm foundations for lifelong learning and for further specialised study and careers.

### **Learning and Teaching Approaches**

*Although the content of the curriculum is important, our aspirations can only be achieved through high quality learning and teaching.*

CfE, Social Studies Principles and Practice, 2009

The social studies experiences and outcomes will support staff in planning challenging, engaging and enjoyable learning and teaching activities which will stimulate the interest and motivation of

children and young people. Learning and teaching approaches will allow flexibility and choice for both teachers and learners, in accordance with Meadowburn Primary's Effective Learning and Teaching Policy.

In social studies, effective learning and teaching will draw upon a variety of approaches including:

- Active learning which provides opportunities to observe, explore, experiment and play
- Use of relevant contexts and experiences familiar to children and young people
- Appropriate and effective use of technology
- Building on the principles of Assessment is for Learning
- Both collaborative and independent learning
- Discussion and informed debate
- Interdisciplinary learning experiences
- Learning outdoors, field trips, visits and input by external contributors.

### **How are skills developed in Social Studies?**

The development of skills is an essential aspect of learning in social studies and the experiences and outcomes provide frequent opportunities for applying these skills in new and more complex contexts. Terms such as 'investigating', 'exploring', 'discussing' and 'presenting' are used throughout the experiences and outcomes from early to fourth level, recognising that at all stages learners are capable of exercising these skills at a level appropriate to their development. The framework ensures that social studies provide an important context for the development of literacy and numeracy skills.

Children and young people as they learn within the social studies will develop a range of skills including:

- observing, describing and recording
- comparing and contrasting to draw valid conclusions
- exploring and evaluating different types of sources and evidence
- development of curiosity and problem solving skills and capacity to take initiatives
- interacting with others and developing an awareness of self and others
- planning and reviewing investigation strategies
- developing the capacity for critical thinking through accessing, analysing and using information from a wide variety of sources
- discussion and informed debate
- developing reasoned and justified points of view
- developing and using maps in a variety of contexts
- developing and applying skills in interpreting and displaying graphical representation of information
- developing an awareness of sequence and chronology
- presentation skills - oral, written, multimedia.

### **Assessment**

Assessment in social studies will focus on children and young people's knowledge, understanding and skills in their studies of people, past events, society, place, environment, economy and business. Teachers will gather evidence as part of day-to-day learning, as children and young people describe and record, explore and analyse sources, interpret and display information, talk and debate with peers and adults, undertake investigations and present their thinking orally, in writing or in a multimedia format. Children and young people can demonstrate their progress through their skills in using differing sources of evidence, in assessing its validity and reliability, and in applying these in everyday life and work. This will include how well children and young people can use their

knowledge and understanding to interpret evidence and present an informed view, progressing to being able to sustain a line of argument. Learners can also demonstrate progress through their abilities in applying knowledge and skills in increasingly demanding and/or unfamiliar contexts, such as environmental issues, citizenship, and their awareness of the world and Scotland's place in it.

Assessment should also link with other areas of the curriculum, within and outside the classroom, offering children and young people opportunities to develop awareness of social issues such as sustainability and enterprise through trips and meetings with members of the community.

### **Specific Learning Outcomes**

*Social Studies includes experiences and outcomes in historical, geographical, social, political, economic and business contexts.*

Building the Curriculum 1

The social studies experiences and outcomes have been structured under the three main organisers:

- People, past events and societies
- People, place and environment
- People in society, economy and business.

Learning in the social studies will enable young people to:

- develop an understanding of the history, heritage and culture of Scotland, and an appreciation of local and national heritage within the world
- broaden their understanding of the world by learning about human activities and achievements in the past and present
- develop an understanding of their own values, beliefs and cultures and those of others
- develop an understanding of the principles of democracy and citizenship through experience of critical and independent thinking
- explore and evaluate different types of sources and evidence
- learn how to locate, explore and link periods, people and events in time and place
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- engage in activities which encourage enterprising attitudes
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### **Interdisciplinary Learning**

*In best practice, interdisciplinary learning provides a stimulating and self-motivating context for learning and is both enjoyable and relevant.*

CfE Briefing 4: Interdisciplinary Learning, 2012

Interdisciplinary Learning is a planned approach to learning which uses links across different subjects to enhance learning by providing relevant, challenging and enjoyable learning experiences and stimulating contexts. In Meadowburn Primary we have created a 3 year programme of 'Worlds' that provides a framework for Interdisciplinary Learning ensuring that learners experience their entitlement to a broad general education. Through this 'Framework for Interdisciplinary Learning' Social Studies experiences and outcomes and skills are carefully identified and planned for, as well as including planned and progressive opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the history, heritage and culture of Scotland.

### **Additional Information:**

Framework for Interdisciplinary Learning

Interdisciplinary Learning - 'Staff Guidelines' and 'A Guide for Parents/Carers'