

# World Around Us Policy



Agree Date	Review Date	Person Responsible
April 2026	April 2028	Mrs. Murray

## World Around Us Policy

### Policy Statement

At Earlview Primary School and Nursery, The World Around Us (WAU) is central to our curriculum and to our vision for children as curious, confident and responsible learners. Through WAU, pupils are supported to explore, investigate and understand the natural, physical, social and historical world in which they live. We believe that high-quality WAU learning enables children to make sense of their experiences, develop informed opinions and understand their role within their local and global community.

### Introduction

The World Around Us provides a meaningful context for learning by allowing children to engage with real-life experiences and relevant issues to their own world. At Earlview Primary School and Nursery, we place a strong emphasis on curiosity, investigation and active learning, ensuring that pupils are encouraged to ask questions, explore ideas and develop understanding through first-hand experiences.

Learning in WAU supports the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that children require to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Through carefully planned and progressive learning experiences, pupils are supported to develop independence, resilience and a sense of responsibility towards themselves, others and the environment.

This policy outlines Earlview Primary School and Nursery's approach to the teaching, learning and assessment of The World Around Us in line with the Northern Ireland Curriculum. It aims to ensure coherence, progression and continuity in WAU from Nursery through to the end of Key Stage 2.

### What is The World Around Us?

The World Around Us is a statutory Area of Learning within the Northern Ireland Curriculum (2007). It brings together aspects of Geography, History, Science and Technology to help pupils make sense of the world by exploring relationships between people, places, materials, forces, events and the environment.

WAU encourages an integrated approach to learning, enabling children to make connections across topic areas and apply their learning in meaningful contexts. Rather than viewing learning as separate subjects, pupils are supported to see how knowledge and skills interlink and how learning can be applied in a variety of new situations.

At Earlview Primary School and Nursery, WAU is delivered through thematic units which are carefully planned to ensure full coverage of statutory requirements while remaining responsive to children's interests and experiences.

## The World Around Us Strands

Teaching and learning in The World Around Us is structured through four interrelated strands which provide a framework for progression and coherence across all stages.

### Interdependence

Through Interdependence, pupils explore the relationships between living things, people and the environment. Children are supported to develop an understanding of how individuals, communities and environments rely on one another and how actions can have positive or negative consequences. Learning within this strand helps pupils to explore issues such as sustainability, conservation, responsibility and global citizenship.

### Place

The Place strand develops pupils' understanding of their local area and the wider world. Children investigate physical and human features of environments, explore how places are similar and different and develop the geographical skills required to interpret and represent information using maps, plans, globes and digital tools.

### Movement and Energy

Through Movement and Energy, pupils investigate how things move and how energy is used in everyday life. Learning experiences enable children to explore forces, electricity, light, sound and simple technology through practical investigation, experimentation and problem-solving.

### Change over Time

The Change over Time strand enables pupils to develop an understanding of the past and how it has shaped the present. Children explore personal, local and wider history, develop chronological awareness and learn to use a range of historical evidence to investigate change, continuity and cause and consequence.

## Geography, History and Science and Technology

The World Around Us draws on the subject knowledge of Geography, History and Science and Technology. At Earlview Primary School and Nursery, these disciplines are not taught in isolation but are interwoven through integrated learning experiences that reflect the interconnected nature of the real world.

Geography learning supports pupils in developing a sense of place, understanding environmental processes and recognizing how human activity impacts on the world. History learning enables pupils to explore the past, develop chronological understanding and use evidence to form interpretations. Science and Technology learning encourages curiosity about how the world works, supporting pupils to investigate materials, forces and technological processes through practical enquiry.

Through the teaching of The World Around Us, Earlview Primary School and Nursery aims to enable pupils to develop curiosity and a sense of wonder about the world around them. Pupils are supported to explore relationships between people, places and the environment, to understand change over time and to develop scientific, geographical, historical and technological knowledge and skills.

### Thinking Skills in The World Around Us

The development of problem solving and thinking skills is central to learning in The World Around Us. Pupils are supported to develop their own Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities through exploratory learning that encourages them to manage information, think critically and creatively, work collaboratively and reflect on their learning. A strong emphasis is focused on pupil voice, shared communication with peers as well as working as part of a team to enhance collaborative thinking skills.

WAW provides rich opportunities for pupils to develop these skills through planning and carrying out investigations, observing and recording findings, using evidence to support conclusions and communicating ideas using a range of appropriate methods. These skills are developed progressively across all stages and are embedded within meaningful learning contexts.

### Planning for The World Around Us

Planning for WAW at Earlview Primary School and Nursery is designed to ensure breadth, balance and progression. Teachers plan collaboratively using the Northern Ireland Curriculum, whole-school long-term and medium-term plans and the school's agreed Lines of Development for The World Around Us.

The Lines of Development provide a clear framework for progression across Geography, History and Science and Technology from Nursery through to Key Stage 2. They ensure that learning builds upon prior knowledge and experiences and that key concepts and skills are revisited and developed over time.

### Learning and Teaching in The World Around Us

Teaching and learning in WAW is active, enquiry-based and experiential. Pupils are encouraged to learn through first-hand experiences, practical investigation, discussion and reflection. Teachers use a range of approaches, including outdoor learning, educational visits, the use of artefacts and digital technologies, to enhance learning and engagement.

### Digital Learning in The World Around Us

Digital learning is an integral part of teaching and learning in *The World Around Us* at Earlview Primary School and Nursery and is aligned with current Northern Ireland curricular guidance. Digital technologies are used purposefully to enhance learning, support enquiry and develop pupils' digital competence alongside subject knowledge and skills.

Pupils are provided with opportunities to use digital tools to research, investigate, record, present and evaluate information across all four WAW strands. This includes using digital maps and images to explore place, timelines and multimedia sources to investigate change over time, data collection tools to support scientific enquiry and simple digital technologies to explore movement and energy.

Digital learning supports pupils in developing key skills such as managing information, thinking critically, communicating effectively and working collaboratively. Children are encouraged to evaluate

digital sources, make informed choices about how technology can support learning and use digital tools safely and responsibly.

At Earlview Primary School and Nursery, digital learning within WAU is carefully planned to be age-appropriate and progressive, ensuring that pupils build confidence and independence in their use of technology from Nursery through to Key Stage 2. Digital learning is integrated meaningfully within WAU rather than taught in isolation, enabling pupils to apply digital skills in relevant, real-world contexts.

### Assessment in The World Around Us

Assessment in WAU is ongoing and formative. Teachers use observation, questioning, discussion and analysis of pupils' work to assess progress and inform future planning. Assessment supports pupils in understanding their own learning and identifying next steps.

### Learning in the Outdoors

At Earlview Primary School and Nursery, outdoor learning is recognized as a valued and purposeful component of The World Around Us and is planned as an integral part of teaching and learning rather than as an occasional or add-on activity. Learning outdoors provides rich, authentic contexts for children to engage with their environment, deepen their understanding of curriculum content and develop a wide range of skills, including enquiry, problem-solving, collaboration, resilience and independence.

Outdoor learning supports learning across all four WAU strands. Through Interdependence, pupils explore relationships between living things and their environment and develop an understanding of sustainability and care for the natural world. Through Place, children develop a sense of location and place by investigating their school grounds, local area and wider environments. Through Movement and Energy, pupils engage in practical exploration of forces, materials and natural phenomena in real-life contexts. Through Change over Time, outdoor learning enables pupils to observe seasonal change, investigate environmental change and explore how places and communities have evolved.

At Earlview Primary School and Nursery, outdoor learning is planned across all stages and includes both structured learning experiences and meaningful play-based opportunities, particularly within the early years. The school grounds, local community and wider local environment are used as dynamic learning spaces that support investigation, observation and first-hand experience. Outdoor contexts are particularly effective for fieldwork in geography, scientific enquiry, environmental studies and the exploration of local history.

Outdoor learning experiences are carefully planned with clear learning intentions and success criteria, ensuring that they contribute directly to curriculum outcomes. Teachers consider progression, inclusion and accessibility so that all pupils can participate fully and benefit from learning outdoors. Health and safety procedures, including appropriate supervision and risk assessment, are embedded in planning and practice to ensure that outdoor learning is safe, purposeful and well-managed.

Through regular and meaningful outdoor learning opportunities, pupils at Earlview Primary School and Nursery develop confidence, independence, environmental awareness and respect for the world around them. By embedding outdoor learning within the WAU curriculum, we ensure that pupils

experience the cognitive, physical, social and emotional benefits that learning beyond the classroom provides.

### Health and Safety

Health and safety is paramount in the teaching of The World Around Us. Teachers ensure that appropriate risk assessments are carried out for practical activities and educational visits and that pupils are taught to work safely and responsibly.

### Monitoring and Review

The teaching and learning of The World Around Us is monitored and evaluated regularly to ensure high standards and continuous improvement. This includes review of planning, pupils' work, classroom practice and pupil voice. This policy will be reviewed in line with the school's policy review cycle.

### Resources

A range of resources is available to support the teaching and learning of The World Around Us, including maps, atlases, artefacts, scientific equipment, digital resources and the local environment.

### Appendices

Appendix 1: Lines of Development for The World Around Us – Earlview Primary School and Nursery

The following *Lines of Development for The World Around Us* form an integral part of this policy and underpin planning, teaching, learning and assessment in WAU across all stages. The content below is included **verbatim**, exactly as agreed by the school, and outlines progression in Geography, History and Science and Technology from Foundation Stage through to Key Stage 2.

## Lines of Development for The World Around Us

## Earlview Primary School and Nursery

Stage	Geography	History	Science and Technology
<b>Foundation Stage are learning:</b>	To identify the main features of home and school. (P)	To identify how we change at different ages. (I/COT)	The names and functions of external body parts. (I)
	To recognise the variety of local buildings and what they are used for (P/I/COT)	To find out about ourselves and our families now and in the past. (I/COT)	That different seasons affect us in a variety of ways. (I/COT)
	To recognise jobs carried out by people in the local community. (M&E/I)	To find out about what happened in the past through stories and memories. (I)	To recognise that there is a wide variety of animals and plants. (I/P) About animals and their young. (I)
	To use language to identify position relative to other objects or places. (P)	To recognise that local buildings have changed over time. (COT/P)	To recognise the variety of and properties of materials including how they look, feel, taste, sound and smell. (P/I)
	To follow and give simple directions to places in the immediate environment. (P)	Investigate how journeys to school have changed over time. (M&E)	To recognise changes happening in everyday life. (COT/I)
	To use distance vocabulary. (P)	To use simple vocabulary in relation to the passage of time. (COT)	To respect and care for the world we live in. (I/P) To be aware of the range of wasted materials in and around our own localities. (I/P/COT)
	To design and make models of places real or imaginary. (P)	To recognise and record the sequence of events in simple stories and in personal history e.g. photos and artefacts. (COT)	To identify push and pull (M&E) That pushes are and pulls including air and water, can make things move. (M&E)
	To recognise different viewpoints e.g. from above, below, the side. (P)	To find out about their own and other people's history. (COT)	That sounds come from a wide variety of sources and that people and other

			<p>animals hear sounds with ears. (P/M&amp;E)</p> <p>That we can make sounds in a variety of ways and these sounds can be loud or quiet. (M&amp;E)</p>
	To observe and record weather daily using simple symbols (COT)		<p>That light comes from a variety of sources. (M&amp;E/P)</p> <p>That colour and light are used in road safety. (M&amp;E/I)</p>
	That different seasons bring different weather. (COT)		That electricity can be dangerous and makes many home and school appliances work. (M&E/ I)
	How weather conditions affect people and animals. E.g winter/summer coats/clothing. (COT/M&E/P)		<p>That the sun gives us light and heat and that we should never look at the sun. (M&amp;E/P)</p> <p>That the moon and stars can be seen in the sky. (P)</p>
	That other places can be hotter or colder, wetter or drier. (COT/M&E/P)		

## Lines of Development for The World Around Us

## Earlview Primary School and Nursery

Stage	Geography	History	Science and Technology
<b>Key Stage One are learning:</b>	<u>Locality</u> To recognise the main natural features of the local landscape. (P)	<u>A Sense of the Past</u> To identify obvious differences between the past and present. (COT)	<u>Living things</u> That we are living humans and living things with stages of growth. (I/COT)
	To recognise the main built features of the local landscape. (P)	To find out about famous people past and present. (COT)	That there are similarities and differences between ourselves and other children. (I)
	To recognise that town and countryside have different features. (P/I)	Listen to and read stories about people in the past. (COT)	That food, exercise, rest and personal hygiene are important to keep healthy. (I) That we have senses and that these help us to understand the world. (I)
	That there are different means of transport for the movement of people and goods. (M&E/P/I)	Find out about the impact of different people coming into a locality in the past and describing how they felt e.g. wartime evacuees/locals. (I/M&E)	To recognise and name the main parts of a flowering plant including root, stem, leaf and flower. (I) To sort living things using observable features. (I) About some animals including how they grow, move and use their senses. (I)
	That there are goods and services which are important to our locality. (I/P)	Compare the ways in which different people helped each other in the past compared with today. (I/COT)	<u>Materials-Properties</u> To recognise some differences between materials including colour, shape, texture and behaviour. (P)
	That we can damage our locality e.g. litter (COT/I/P)	Investigate the impact of an invention on peoples' lives e.g. the wheel/bicycle/the motor/car/electricity. (M&E/COT)	That people use materials in different ways and that the properties of a material help to decide how we use it. (I) That familiar objects/structures can be made using more than one material. (I/P/COT)

	<u>Mapwork</u> To understand the use of directions in simple journeys including N, S, W, E. (P)	<u>An awareness of time</u> To identify some things which changed and some things which remained the same within a specific time period. (COT)	<u>Materials – change</u> That heating and cooling changes everyday materials. (COT)
	To use non-standard measurements for distance. (P)	To place events on a timeline. (COT)	<u>Materials – Environment</u> That we are responsible for looking after our world. (I/P) About the variety of ways in which humans create waste. I/P)
	To represent objects in position on a plan. (P)	Identify changes that have occurred over time. (COT)	<u>Forces and energy</u> That a stronger/more gentle push or pull will make a moving object speed up/slow down. (M&E) That a push or pull can stop a moving object. (M&E)
	To represent simple journeys on a map e.g. to and from destinations both local and further afield. (P)	To use words and phrases relating to the passing of time e.g. months of the year/modern/old/grandmother’s time and be able to place dates and events on a simple timeline e.g. My school year. (COT)	<u>Sound</u> That we can make sounds by plucking, striking, scraping, blowing or vocalising. (M&E)
	To make and use a simple key. (P)	<u>An awareness of evidence</u> To examine written pictorial evidence to find out how the community has changed over time. (P/COT)	To recognise the importance of sound in road/sea safety. (I/P)
	That a world map and globe can be used to locate places. (P)	Find out about the past from the memories of older people. (I/COT)	<u>Light</u> About the importance of light and reflectors in road, sea or air safety. (M&E/P/I)
	<u>Weather</u> To observe and record weather using standard symbols. (COT)	Examine the importance of historical sites/buildings and events in the locality to our lives today. (P)	<u>Electricity</u> That electricity comes from both mains and batteries. (M&E)

			About the safe use of mains electricity in class and at home. (I/P/M&E)
	To observe seasonal changes in the landscape e.g. trees or animals. (COT)	Find out about the past from artefacts and objects from the past. (P/COT)	<u>Earth in Space</u> That the moon appears to change shape over time. (M&E/P)
	How the weather in other places differs from that in our own area and can affect the lives of the people. E.g. homes. (P)		That people have travelled to the moon and walked on it. (M&E/P/I)

## Lines of Development for The World Around Us

## Earlview Primary School and Nursery

Stage	Geography	History	Science and Technology
<b>Key Stage Two are learning:</b>	<u>Locality</u> About the locality, size, shape and use of common landscape features. (P/I)	<u>Range and Depth of historical knowledge</u> To identify characteristics of a specific time period e.g. changes in transport, communications and inventions. (I/COT)	<u>Living things</u> The name, position and brief function of the major body organs and that the function of the skeleton is to protect the organs and give the body support. (I) How diet, exercise, rest and personal hygiene contribute to a healthy lifestyle. (I) About the harmful effects of alcohol, tobacco and other substances on the body and about the safe use of medicines. (I)
	To recognise the importance of sustaining, conserving and regenerating our natural resources and biodiversity in Northern Ireland. (COT/I/P)	To explain how a local community influences its environment over time. (I/COT)	About similarities and differences among animals and plants. (I) To recognise ways in which seasonal change influences animals and plant behaviour including hibernation, migration, camouflage and plant/animal lifecycles. (I/P) To explore and survey local habitats. (I/P/COT)

	To recognise that we are interdependent with other parts of the world for some of our goods and services. (I/P)	To investigate how people used to live, including roles and responsibilities in society and how these have changed. (I/COT)	<u>Materials - properties</u> To recognise properties of materials including strength, flexibility, transparency, waterproofing, hardness/softness, conductor/insulator, magnetism and how these affect their use. (I/P) That some materials are found in the natural world, others are made by people. (I/P)
	That people have positive and negative effects on their environment e.g. conservation, pollution, recycling, traffic congestion, climate change. (COT/I/P)	To investigate issues associated with the conservation, preservation and regeneration of the local environment. (I/P)	That materials can be solid, liquid or gas. (M&E/COT) That some materials will dissolve in water, others will not. (COT) That cooling/heating/freezing/boiling and melting change some everyday materials. (COT) To understand melting, evaporation and condensation in the context of water. (COT)
	That natural disasters can have negative and positive consequences locally and globally. (P/M&E/COT)	To recognise that local and global events in the past have helped shape who we are and how we live today. (I/P)	That some changes are reversible or irreversible, desirable or undesirable. (COT)
	<u>Mapwork</u> To recognise places and features, local and global, on a plan, map or photograph. (P)	To understand why people in the past moved from one place to another and to consider how they might have felt e.g. Mesolithic hunters. (M&E/P/COT)	That human activities create a variety of waste products, that these should be disposed of correctly and that the consequences of incorrect disposal are pollution of air, water and land. (I/P/COT)

	To construct a plan or map e.g. of classroom, school or journey to school. (P)	To make links between main events and changes within a period studied and comment on their impact on people. (COT)	That some materials decay naturally while other do not; that some should be re-used and/or recycled to benefit the environment and the economy. (I/P) That it is important to conserve energy and not waste electricity, water or light. (I/M&E)
	To use the 8-point compass. (P)	Investigate some of the major changes in the past which have affected our lifestyles e.g. the invention of electricity. (COT)	That a push or a pull is known as a force. (M&E) That friction is a push or a pull that can prevent movement, slow down and/or stop a moving object. (M&E) That a push or a pull can change the direction or shape of an object. (M&E)
	To use 4-figure co-ordinates. (P)	To identify continuity and change across a period of time. (COT)	<u>Sound</u> That sounds are caused when objects vibrate and that these vibrations are not always visible. (M&E) That sound travels through a variety of materials. (M&E)
	To use recognised Ordnance Survey symbols to identify familiar features. (P)	To investigate how different people may have different points of view on the same event in the past. (COT)	<u>Light</u> That an absence of light gives darkness and that we need light in order to see. (M&E)
	To represent more complex journeys on maps of different	<u>Chronological awareness</u> To use words phrases and conventions relating to the	That light passes through some materials and not others; and to understand transparent, translucent and opaque. (M&E)

	scales e.g. road, ferry, rail maps and route planners. (P)	divisions of time e.g. early to late Victorian times and use a more sophisticated time vocabulary related to a period of time. (COT)	How shadows are formed and changed. (M&E) That light and colour are important in road/air/sea safety. (M&E)
	To use standard references e.g. Globe, Atlas. (P)	To create and make use of more complex timelines using decades. (COT)	<u>Electricity</u> That a circuit is needed for electricity to travel. (M&E) To identify conductors and insulators. (M&E) That a switch operates an on or off system by completing or breaking a circuit. (M&E) To understand the dangers of electricity both in the home and in the external environment (rural and urban). (M&E)
	<u>Weather patterns</u> To observe local weather patterns using standard measurements over a period of time. (P/COT)	<u>Historical evidence</u> Identify some buildings which have been used for different purposes in the past. (P/COT)	<u>Earth and Space</u> That we live on the surface of a planet called Earth which spins round once on its own axis every 24 hours. (M&E/P) That the earth travels around the sun following a pathway called an orbit and it takes a year to orbit the sun. (M&E/P)
	That there are different climates: hot, hot and wet, cool, cold etc. (P)	To use different types of evidence to find out about the past e.g. oral, written, visual and physical evidence.	That our earth belongs in a solar system which has the sun at the centre. (M&E/P) That we use rockets, probes and satellites to find out about our universe. (M&E)

	<p>That extreme weather can have positive and negative consequences locally and globally. (I/M&amp;E/P)</p>		<p>That when the earth's surface spins into the sun's light we have daylight and when it spins away from the sun's light we have darkness. (M&amp;E) That as the earth spins the sun appears to move across the sky. (M&amp;E)</p>
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