Social and Environmental Education:
A Review of Research and Scholarship in Geography, History and Education about Religions and Beliefs in the Context of the Redeveloped Irish Primary School Curriculum

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August 2023

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment for commissioning and supporting this project. We are grateful for the feedback and assistance provided by Dr Derek Grant throughout the drafting of this report.

We wish to acknowledge the contributions of the following peer-reviewers whose support and feedback was incorporated into the final report: Dr Alan McCully, Dr Barbara O'Toole, Professor Graeme Nixon and Dr Christine Winter.

Finally, we wish to thank our Heads of School for their support: Dr Margaret Leahy, Head of School of STEM, Education, Innovation and Global Studies in Dublin City University, Dr Sandra Cullen, Head of School of Human Development in Dublin City University and Professor Carmel O'Sullivan, Head of School of Education in Trinity College Dublin. We would also like to thank the Centre for Human Rights and Citizenship Education (CHRCE) at Dublin City University for their support and advice.

Abbreviations

CnB	Curaclam na Bunscoile
DoE	Department of Education (1924-1997 and since 2020)
DES	Department of Education and Science (1997-2020)
ERB	Education about Religions and Beliefs
GA	Geographical Association (UK)
HA	Historical Association (UK)
INTO	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education (England)
PCF	*Primary Curriculum Framework*
PSCG	Primary School Curriculum - Geography
PSCH	Primary School Curriculum - History
UN	United Nations

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Executive Summary

Literature Review to Inform the Development of Social and Environmental Education (Geography, History and Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERB)) in the *Primary Curriculum Framework*

Aims and Research Questions

This report was commissioned by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) to inform the ongoing development of Ireland's curriculum for primary and special schools. The report is the result of a desk-based literature review, to investigate the research evidence for learning in the subjects that make up SEE in the curriculum, that is geography, history and ERB.

The research questions which guided the report were:

1. Through the lens of the vision and principles of the Draft *Primary Curriculum Framework*, what is the philosophical basis and educational basis for the curriculum area/subjects?

2. What evidence is provided by the literature on children's learning and development for the integrated curriculum area of Social and Environmental Education from junior infants to second class, and the subjects of History and Geography from third to sixth class?

3. In response to curriculum overload, what are the desired curriculum processes and essential curriculum content for children's learning and development in SEE / History and Geography within the broad primary curriculum?

4. What aspects of the curriculum area support integration in stages 1 and 2, and what aspects of the subjects support integration in stages 3 and 4?

Methodology

This report identified, gathered, analysed and represented national and international research on SEE, including literature related to geography, history, ERB and the integration of one or more of these areas. This review incorporated an agreed search strategy, appraisal of available evidence using eligibility criteria, a synthesis of data within the thematic areas and finally, analysis and mapping of key findings. The report draws upon peer-reviewed, empirical research, and published philosophical and position pieces, including papers and book chapters. Overall, 749 studies across geography, history, ERB and integration were drawn upon for this report.

Findings

SEE, geography and history education can build on children's lived experiences and make connections to local, national and global communities, past and present. Signature pedagogies offer inclusive, child-centred and participative real world learning opportunities which can develop key concepts, knowledge and skills. Such pedagogies can also instil values such as empathy, an appreciation for the natural environment, agency, democratic citizenship and a respect for people's ethnic, racial, cultural, religious and social identities.

There is a limited range of empirical research on integration or subject based teaching in history, geography and ERB in the lower half of primary school. The available literature presents contrasting perspectives on the merits of integration over subject-based teaching and vice-versa. The use of imagination, objects, visual sources, story, narratives, drama, oral history and the child's locality, to teach SEE in the junior classes, all lend themselves to being included as part of an integrated teaching approach. In the upper half of primary school, the literature relating to children's learning and development foregrounds key approaches in geography education (such as geographical enquiry, fieldwork, and drawing on children's, real-word and local geographies) and key approaches in history education (such as historical enquiry, story, object based learning and oral history).

Suggested desired curriculum processes and essential content for geography education centre around three concepts- sense of space, sense of place, and environment. For history education, processes and content centre around the six key concepts of historical evidence and the use of sources/objects, historical time and chronology, change and continuity, cause and effect, historical empathy and multiple perspectives. Commonalities are found across the subject areas (history, geography, ERB) in relation to processes, content, skills, values and dispositions. Enquiry-based learning is emphasised in each subject area, and although the nature of enquiry varies per subject, strong common characteristics also exist. Enquiry-based learning can be enhanced by direct experiences such as fieldwork, working with objects and artefacts, and interacting with others within the school, locality and further afield. The suggested processes for the proposed areas and subjects of SEE are engaging and challenging for children and they place an emphasis on experiential and participative pedagogies. The proposed areas and subjects of SEE provide opportunities for children to engage in questioning, think critically, develop empathy and respect, recognise multiple perspectives and to develop intercultural and democratic skills.

Conclusion

It is evident that the subjects of SEE provide opportunities for children to be active and agentic in their learning, with a sense of responsibility to participate in the world. SEE creates spaces for children to be creative and to question both the world around them, and more distant times and places. Within SEE, children have the opportunity to enquire and to think in a variety of ways while discovering patterns, collecting and analysing a range of data and using a range of resources. Through the signature pedagogies and processes within SEE, children also have the opportunity to develop their digital skills. For their current and future lives, SEE enables children to live well through gaining a sense of space, place and time as well as acquiring new knowledge and skills to enable them to negotiate and shape the world around them. The importance of teachers having a strong knowledge of the discipline, expertise in cross-curricular teaching, and subject-specific pedagogical content knowledge is emphasised across the report. The proposed areas and subjects of SEE align with the vision and principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework* and there is significant potential for SEE to make an important contribution to the framework itself.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Caitríona Ní Cassaithe and Susan Pike

1a Social and Environmental Education (SEE) in the *Primary Curriculum Framework*

The last few years have seen considerable curricular reform with the launch of *Aistear*: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework in 2009 (NCCA, 2009) and the new Junior Cycle Framework (DES, 2015). Ongoing review, reform and redevelopment of curricula are essential to ensure that content and methods are reflective of society's collective vision for the future (Walsh, 2016) and in the decades since the launch of the revised primary curriculum of 1999, Ireland has experienced significant social and cultural changes. Advances in technology, increased diversification, new research on children's learning (NCCA, 2008), demands for new areas of learning and curriculum overload have been cited as some of the factors influencing the need to redevelop the current primary curriculum. In light of these concerns, the redeveloped Primary School Curriculum, which will be made available to all Irish primary and special schools from 2025 (DoE, 2023), introduces five new broad areas of learning. These are: 1) Language, 2) Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education, 3) Wellbeing, 4) Arts Education and 5) Social and Environmental Education.

Social and Environmental Education (SEE) includes the subjects of geography and history as well as learning in Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERB). The *Primary Curriculum Framework* defines this new curricular area as follows:

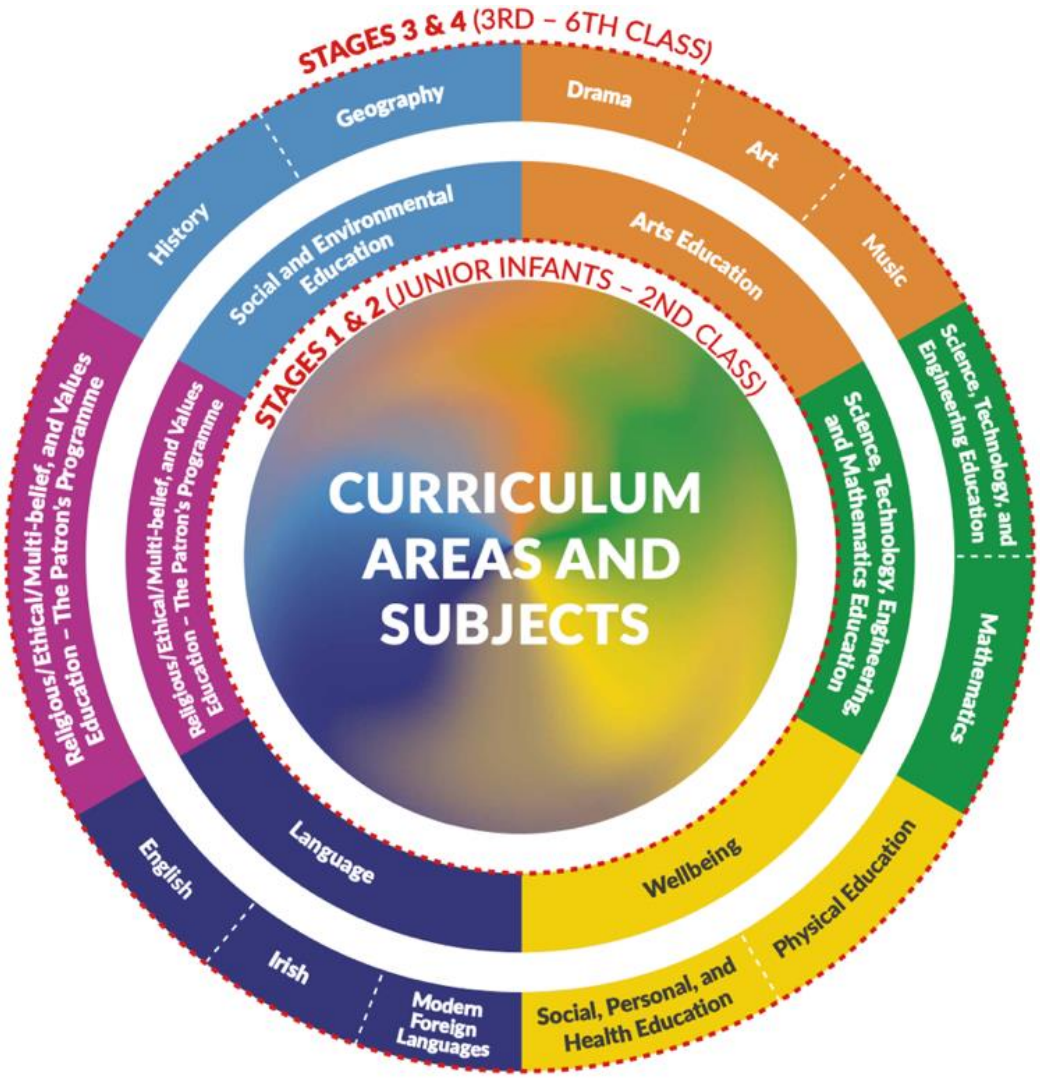
> *Social and Environmental Education contributes to children's understanding and development of the interconnected historical, geographical and societal dimensions and processes of life. It supports children's awareness, appreciation and understanding of the world through learning about the rich diversity of peoples: their experiences, cultures, religions, beliefs and environments in different times, places, and circumstances. It helps children to develop an understanding of the human and natural environments and the relationship between them. Through Social and Environmental Education, children develop the attitudes, concepts, dispositions, knowledge, skills, and values that motivate and empower them to become informed and active citizens who promote a more sustainable future. This is made more meaningful and empowering through children's active identification, exploration, and investigation of local, national, and global*

challenges and opportunities, past and present. Hence, children come to an understanding and appreciation of their inherent rights and responsibilities as custodians of this planet (*Primary Curriculum Framework*, 2023, p. 19).

As shown in Figure 1.1, the *Primary Curriculum Framework* (DoE, 2023) presents SEE as an integrated curriculum area in Stages 1 and 2 (Junior Infants to 2nd Class) but as distinct subjects, with opportunities for integration, in Stages 3 and 4 (3rd to 6th Class).

Throughout this report, we draw on literature to suggest the desired processes and content for SEE. These suggestions are just that, as we recognise it is the work of the Development Group to bring forward the work presented here to a new SEE curriculum.

Figure 1.1: Social and Environmental Education in the *Primary Curriculum Framework*



1b Curriculum change in relation to the subjects of SEE: geography, history and ERB

The *Primary Curriculum Framework* (2023) progresses from the 1999 Primary School Curriculum (GoI, 1999a) where Primary School Curriculum Geography (PSCG) (GoI, 1999c) and Primary School Curriculum History (PSCH) (GoI, 1999d), accompanied by Teacher Guidelines for both subjects (GoI, 1999c; 1999e), were presented as part of Social, Environmental and Scientific Education along with Science. With a focus on the world, its processes and its people, the SESE curriculum advocated for an enquiry approach to learning in these areas. Table 1.1 summarises the purpose of these subject areas in the PSC (GoI, 1999a; 1999c).

Table 1.1: Geography and history in the 1999 Primary School Curriculum

Geography (GoI, 1999b, p. 6) **The study of the Earth, its inhabitants, and the inter-relationships between them in the context of place, space and environment. It is concerned with the nature, distribution and interaction of human and natural features over the Earth's surface, the processes which create, sustain or change these features, and the contribution they make to the distinctive character of places.**
History (GoI, 1999d, p. 6) **History is the interpretation of what are considered to be significant human activities in the past and the process by which these activities are selected, investigated and analysed. History is not the story of the past but rather our attempt to reconstruct and interpret elements of the past which are of interest to us.**

One major change is the removal of science from this curricular grouping and the addition of ERB to the learning area of SEE (DoE, 2023). Education about Religions and Beliefs can help foster cultural understanding and respect which are important objectives in an increasingly diverse population. Learning about various religions, beliefs and worldviews, and their associated histories, can promote empathy, reduce stereotypes and misconceptions and can encourage dialogue and participation. The connections between history, geography, and Education about Religions and Beliefs are intricate and significant and understanding these connections can provide insights into the cultural, social, and political dimensions of societies across time and space. History can provide the historical context through which the development, evolution and influence of religions, beliefs and worldviews can be explored. Likewise, geography provides opportunities for children to

consider and learn from the lives of others, whether in their own community or more distant places. Incorporating these connections into educational curricula can provide children with a holistic understanding of the complex interplay between history, geography, and religions, beliefs and worldviews.

Of interest internationally, and perhaps one of the most noticeable differences in terms of curriculum change is that, from infant classes right through to senior primary, the PSC (GoI, 1999c) views subjects as distinct ways of disciplinary knowing (OHTE, 2022). The PSC (GoI, 1999e) is premised on the idea that each subject offers a distinctive and particular perspective on the world and equips children with a range of domain-specific skills that allow them to understand the world around them. It embraces the idea that children should be introduced to history and geography as discrete subjects, with their own characteristic ways of investigating and making sense of the human experience of the world. Advocating an enquiry-based framework that favours the investigation of places and events, the focus is on engaging the child in working historically and geographically (GoI, 1999a: 1999c). This is particularly evident in how the PSCH defines history education. While Curaclam na Bunscoile (1971) imagined children learning about the past as engaging 'with historical matter but not according to the discipline of the scholar' (DES/An Roinn Oideachais, 1971, p. 87), the PSCH, though still concerned with the learning of 'historical matter' also emphasises the importance of children engaging in historical construction by experiencing 'something of the way in which historians go about their work' which is encapsulated in the Working as an Historian strand of the curriculum (GoI, 1999c, p. 2). While there is no corresponding Working as a Geographer strand to the PSCG, the importance of domain-specific geographical thinking is captured in the Skills and Concepts Development section which includes a sense of place and space, maps, globes and graphical skills and geographical investigation skills. The integration of history, geography and ERB as a curricular area in Stages 1 and 2 of the *Primary Curriculum Framework* (DoE, 2023) therefore represents a significant change.

Curriculum integration can be broadly conceptualised as 'a philosophy of education and set of practices through which content is drawn from several subject areas or disciplines to focus on a particular topic or theme with the aim of seeing the connections between the subject area content and the wider context' (Badley, 2009, p. 113). Curricular integration itself is not a new phenomenon (Beane, 1997), in fact, it has been a feature of the Irish Primary Curriculum since the early seventies (Curaclam na Bunscoile, 1971). Influenced by

the Plowden Report in the UK which recommended the application of 'progressive' teaching approaches, notably cross-curricular 'topic work' and enquiry-based 'projects' (Walsh, 2016), the 1971 curriculum encouraged thematic teaching approaches whilst maintaining disciplinary boundaries. The curriculum handbook stated that the young child is 'not conscious of subject barriers; he views knowledge as a key to life and his questions concerning the world around him range over the whole field of knowledge' (DES, 1971a, p. 19). Similarly, the curriculum of 1999 (GoI, 1999e) provided examples of integrated learning whilst maintaining curriculum statements grouped by area and then subject. As stated in the 'Introduction to the Primary Curriculum'; 'for the young child, the distinctions between subjects are not relevant: what is more important is that he or she experiences a coherent learning process that accommodates a variety of elements. It is important, therefore, to make connections between learning in different subjects' (GoI, 1999e, p. 16).

1c Subjects and integration in the curriculum

In recent decades, the concept of curricular integration has resurfaced as an aspect of twenty-first century future-focused discourses in education. Across all educational levels and across all jurisdictions, integrated curricula are promoted by global institutions such as UNESCO and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as a promising approach to education that can enhance and deepen children's learning and knowledge by combining two or more disciplines (Pountney & McPhail, 2017). However, perspectives on the efficacy of integration are contested and debated, with particular tensions noted around five key areas. These include:

1. **The nature of research:** The literature highlights a range of scholarship and empirical research on each of the subjects of geography, history and ERB. However, research on integration focuses almost exclusively on either theoretical justification and/or descriptions of curricular integration rather than providing robust empirical research findings (Percival, 2018). Furthermore, there is little empirical support for the advantages or disadvantages of integration as they are difficult to substantiate (Percival, 2018). Across a range of studies, increased learning has not been demonstrated and empirical studies present a mixture of both positive and negative effects (Wilschutt & Tills, 2018).
2. **The nature of learning:** Debates regarding subject-specific or integrated curricula have been argued for many years. Advocates contend that the flexible nature of integrated approaches is a better reflection of children's experiences of learning and that it

supports the learning of transferable skills (Laurie, 2011). Opponents maintain integrated approaches deny children 'access to some of the most powerful tools for making sense of the world which human beings have ever devised' (Alexander et al., 1992, p. 21).

3. **The position of subjects:** While the literature highlights possible connections between subject areas that can support integration, it also identifies possible bottlenecks, particularly when one curricular area dominates or overshadows other areas of education in the curriculum. The prioritisation of literacy when an integrated approach linking it to history and geography is pursued is an example (Lintner & Schweder, 2008). However, there is also evidence that integrating social science subjects with curricular areas such as literacy and numeracy has a positive impact on children's attainment in those areas (Hinde et al., 2007).
4. **Subject-specific and pedagogical content knowledge:** Curriculum-making is a challenge for teachers, and for primary teachers in particular, as they teach many subjects to children of varied ages. Likewise, curricular integration is a complex undertaking; it involves a deep understanding of the content and processes of both subjects as well as a deep understanding of how to integrate these subjects effectively (Greenwood, 2015).
5. **Conceptual clarity**: In a recent survey, Scottish primary teachers stated they were unclear about what interdisciplinary learning actually entails despite the centrality of integration in organising the Scottish curriculum (Harvie, 2020). This confusion is due, in part, to the existence of many different forms and levels of subject integration and a lack of consensus on the definition and goals of integrated education (Wilschut & Piljs, 2018). Confusion as to the locus of integration - where integration actually happens (Pountney & McPhail, 2017) and a lack of clarity on the nature of knowing within the disciplines also contributes to this obfuscation (Stein et al., 2008). Additionally, terms that are central to discussions on curricular integration such as subject or discipline, topic or theme lack agreed definitions (Bacon, 2018). The discrepancy in terminology is also suggestive of a corresponding inconsistency in the theoretical underpinnings of the construct and has led to calls for greater conceptual clarity in future research in the field (Badley, 2009).

As is evident throughout this review, there are synergies and tensions relating to both integrated and subject-based curricula. The questions arise then, what form might the

integration of the subject areas of history, geography and ERB take at primary level, and more specifically, what is the empirical basis for such integration?

1d Research questions

This literature review provides an analysis of a range of literature relating to the curriculum areas of SEE and how they can, individually and collectively, contribute to the vision and principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework* in terms of the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions that can enable children and teachers to progress and flourish as active agents in their own learning and teaching. In doing so, it builds upon previously commissioned NCCA research, reports and documentation relating to the development of the primary curriculum (see NCCA, 2005; 2008; 2018b; Darmody & Smith, 2017; Grayson et al., 2014). The research questions that underpin this review were designed by the NCCA and are outlined in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Research questions

1. **Through the lens of the vision and principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework*, what is the philosophical basis and educational basis for the curriculum area/subjects?**
2. **What evidence is provided by the literature on children's learning and development for the integrated curriculum area of Social and Environmental Education from junior infants to second class, and the subjects of history and geography from third to sixth class?**
3. **In response to curriculum overload, what are the desired curriculum processes and essential curriculum content for children's learning and development in SEE / history and geography within the broad primary curriculum?**
4. **What aspects of the curriculum area support integration in Stages 1 and 2, and what aspects of the subjects support integration in Stages 3 and 4?**

1e Outline of the report

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the review, including definitions of SEE, Geography, history and ERB and introduces the research questions. This is followed by Chapter 2 which

outlines the methodology used, including the searches for this literature review, in response to the research questions. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 present a review of literature in geography education, history education and learning about ERB at primary level through the lens of both the *Primary Curriculum Framework* and the research questions guiding the review. These chapters explore the signature pedagogies, knowledge, concepts, skills, values for geography and history education and learning about ERB, and consider how they can support the vision and principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework*. Chapter 6 reviews the available literature relating to integration in the areas and subjects of SEE at primary level while Chapter 7 considers research relating to teacher education in SEE areas and subjects. Chapter 8 addresses the research questions and concludes with recommendations based on the findings of the review.

Chapter 2

Methodology for Review of Literature relating to SEE

Susan Pike

This chapter outlines the methodology used in the creation of the report.

2a Outline of report

As described in the introduction, this review identified, analysed and presented national and international research on SEE, including geography, history and ERB and integration. We identified, explored and mapped relevant research, empirical studies and evidence-based approaches to inform the process of the development of the SEE curriculum over a period of 6 months, as shown in Table 2.1.

2b Research design

Through the process of writing the report, systematic literature review approaches were used (Khan et al., 2009; Siddaway et al., 2019) to identify, explore and map national and international research on children's development and learning in the areas and subjects of SEE. This process was followed as systematic literature review approaches provide robust and reliable summaries of a topic which can be used to inform policy.

i Searching the literature

The scope of the searches were: peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters and scholarly reviews published since the publication of the 1999 Primary School Curriculum (GoI, 1999e). The searches involved three stages, which are outlined in Table 2.1. Appendix A presents the databases which were searched and the search terms that were used. The search terms were developed by considering the research questions as well as the knowledge of the research team on scholarship and research in each of their respective fields.

ii Analysing the literature

A simple analytical framework; Search, Appraisal, Synthesis and Analysis (SASA) (Grant & Booth, 2009), was used to systematically examine relevant national and international literature. This included a search strategy, appraisal of available evidence using eligibility criteria, a synthesis of data within the thematic areas and finally analysis and mapping of key findings.

Table 2.1: Stages, dates and features of the review

Stage and date	Key features
Problem foundation October 2022 – November 2022	● Clarification of research questions ● Inclusion / exclusion criteria set for literature ● Agreement on format of report ● Meetings with key NCCA staff
Data collection December 2022 – March 2023	● Literature searches using databases, libraries, etc. ● Stage 1: University library systems were used to access scholarly research findings and literature ● Stage 2: Google Scholar was used to identify relevant grey literature including book chapters, curriculum policy documents, handbooks and reports ● Stage 3: Relevant citation searches were used for references from prominent authors ● Drafting of introduction and methods chapters of report
Data evaluation December 2022 – March 2023	● Assessment of papers ● Information gathering ● Information coding
Data analysis and interpretation December 2022 – March 2023	● Analysis and interpretation of literature ● Collation of grey literature
Write up March 2023 – May 2023	● Draft write up of report for geography, history, Education about Religions and Beliefs and integration ● Meetings with NCCA staff
Final write up stages February 2022 – July 2023	● Exploration of bias (publication & related) ● Completion of conclusions and recommendations ● Referencing checking

The literature identified was screened by the teams, with at least two researchers involved in screening each piece of literature. Collaborative screening and the evaluation of the literature's relevance was supported by clear inclusion and exclusion criteria (as shown in Table 2.2, and outlined in full in Appendix A). This included screening titles, abstracts (superficial examination) and full texts to determine whether the literature identified was relevant to the key aims of this literature review. The search terms for each theme were

further reviewed and redefined with appropriate Boolean Operators (AND, OR, NOT) adapted to the specification of each database (Booth et al., 2016). All duplicates, commentary, conference presentations and book reviews were removed and the remaining articles were collated for review.

Table 2.2: Criteria for inclusion of research papers in the review

Characteristic	Inclusion
Population	● Research and scholarship on children and teachers ● Studies in English
Interventions	● Reported learning in areas and subjects of SEE ● Variation, integration and groupings of subjects
Outcomes	● Reporting quantitative or qualitative benefits to learning within and between SEE subjects through particular learning experiences: knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes and values.
Study design	● Quantitative study designs such as randomised controlled trials, non-randomised controlled trials, and before and after studies ● Qualitative methods of data collection and analysis from SEE subjects and integrated studies. Examples of data collection methods included are focus groups, individual interviews, etc. Examples of methods of analysis included here are grounded theory, phenomenological analysis and discourse analysis ● Clear statement of the aims of the research or issue being investigated ● Study placed in the context of existing knowledge, theory, policy or professional practice ● Clear description of participants and methods ● Primary evidence, such as interview responses or survey data, in addition to description and analysis of the research findings ● Response rate stated, in the case of surveys and quantitative research

*G = geography; H = history; ERB = Education about Religions and Beliefs; I = Integration

iii Reviewing and writing up the literature

Alignment and inter-rater reliability pertaining to the agreed inclusion and exclusion criteria was ensured through clear communication structures between researchers. Following the systematic application of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, all remaining papers were subject to full-text appraisal by the researchers. In order to ensure consistency across research teams and subject areas within the literature review, meetings were held regularly to discuss and share progress and the application of the search and appraisal strategy. There were a range of reasons why studies were excluded from the literature review. Much of this occurred at the initial review stage but some papers were excluded once the research design became more apparent. Some examples were:

- Studies that were not about SEE areas and subjects; this included studies that were not about geography, history or Education about Religions and Beliefs nor the integration of these subjects with other subjects or areas of learning.
- Papers which reported simple commentary on teaching approaches, with no connection to either empirical or theoretical foundations.
- Studies focused on the process of becoming teachers were not included unless they had a significant focus on children's learning in schools.

As can be seen in Table 2.3, supplementary articles, book chapters, publications and reports were added to the literature for review. Also referenced were NCCA publications such as the Primary Curriculum and Teachers' Guidelines (GoI, 1999a: 1999b; 1999c; 1999d), as well as Junior Cycle Geography (GoI, 2017) and Junior Cycle History (GoI, 2018). Examples of additional book chapters and reports include NCCA publications, publications on SEE areas and books relating to SEE subject areas from Ireland (Dolan, 2020; Kavanagh et. al., 2020; Pike, 2016). Additionally, as is evident throughout the report, some literature predating 1999 was included on the advice of the expert reviewers and with agreement of the team, as these works were viewed as key literature.

Whilst systematic literature reviews are replicable and thorough, there is no guarantee that all papers of relevance are found. However, the use of substantial data bases as well as team reviews of the papers found ensured coverage was as wide as it could be within the time constraints. Once the chapters were complete, they were reviewed by external experts in each area. This ensured there was suitable coverage of all key aspects of the areas and subjects.

Table 2.3: Number of papers produced at each stage of the searches and screening (Incl. = included, Excl. = excluded) Total = 749

Action	**Geography**		**History**		**ERB**		**Integration**	
	Inc.	**Excl.**	**Inc.**	**Excl.**	**Inc.**	**Excl.**	**Inc.**	**Excl.**
Systematic Search	3,688	-	3025	-	1762	-	634	-
Imported to Covidence	2,405	1283*	2090	935			634	209*
Title and Abstract Screening	475	1,930	223	1867	290	1472	425	352
Full Text Review	264	211	95	128	109		70	35
Extraction	264	-	95	-	109	-		-
Additional Papers Included	40	-	106	-	19	-	46	-
Total Papers Included	304		201		128		116	

* Papers excluded at this stage were all duplicates

Chapter 3

Geography

Joe Usher and Benjamin Mallon

This chapter provides a comprehensive review and summary of literature (1999-2023) in the area of geography education. Building on the historical and current context, the chapter explores the signature pedagogies, knowledge, concepts, skills, values for geography education, alongside a critical analysis of the implementation of the PSCG. The chapter concludes with a consideration of how geography education, as subject and integrated area, can support the vision and principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework* (*Primary Curriculum Framework*).

3a Geography in schools

The current Irish primary geography curriculum (PSCG), defines geography as 'the study of the Earth, its inhabitants and the inter-relationships between them in the context of place, space and environment' (GoI, 1999a, p. 2). It is concerned with understanding the relationships between people, places, and the environment, as well as the factors that shape them (Bednarz et al., 2013; Dorling & Lee, 2016), offering children 'new and powerful ways to understand the world and how it works' (Lambert, 2018, p. 357). Bonnett (2008, p. 9) describes geography as 'absurdly vast' and identifies it as fundamental to a good education and humanity's intellectual development. When children learn geography they are extending and reshaping their worldviews (Usher and Burnett, 2022). Dolan (2020, p. 20) describes geography as a 'dynamic, living, contemporary and exciting subject'. Geography's relevance to past, present and future events, issues and opportunities is widely lauded (GA, 2009; 2022; Lambert, 2009; Pike, 2011; 2015). Here, children are encouraged to consider their personal, collective, and spatial futures, with an emphasis on sustainability that connects the natural and human worlds.

3b Geography and the Primary Curriculum

The historical development of educational policy forms a necessary context to the analysis of current and future geography education policy and practice (Usher, 2020). Geography has had an inconsistent position within the Irish primary curriculum (Pike, 2015), being included and excluded as a subject with emphasis fluctuating between a broad menu of content combined with holistic, child-centred, enquiry-based approaches, and narrow, limited content with didactic, rote-learning methodologies (Usher, 2020). Throughout its

history, Geography has been influenced and affected by dominant governmental concerns. For instance, the introduction of 'Payment by Results' directly led to a focus on didactic approaches and increased time spent on literacy and numeracy with less emphasis on Geography (Walsh, 2007; INTO, 1996). The CnB (1971a; 1971b) championed experiential teaching approaches and emphasised investigations in the local environment (Pike, 2006). However research conducted by the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) found the curriculum was not implemented as intended due to the lack of funding, lack of in-service professional learning and lack of support from the inspectorate (INTO, 1996).

The current PSCG (GoI, 1999a) is viewed as progressive and ambitious in recognising and promoting children as active participants in constructing their own learning, connecting new content to their own experiences and knowledge, developing empathy with others, and developing senses of space and place for their locality and the wider world (Usher, 2020; Pike, 2015). No official review has been undertaken pertaining to the teaching and learning of Geography in Irish primary schools since enactment of the PSCG. Pike (2015, p. 193) suggests that this demonstrates that 'Geography is not a priority for decision-makers in education'. However, recent research provides evidence on the extent to which the PSCG has been successfully implemented. Despite the recognised potential of the PSCG, the pattern of failed implementation throughout Irish educational reform was repeated here (Usher, 2020; Usher & Dolan, 2021). This policy-practice misalignment is perpetuated by the lack of quality professional learning, lack of funding and lack of resources and subsequent lack of teacher pedagogical content knowledge (INTO, 2005; Varley et al., 2008; NCCA, 2005; 2008; Walsh, 2016; Usher, 2021a; Usher, 2021b). Thus in the historical development of geography curricula in primary education in Ireland, the 'only one constant has been…implementation failure with context of practice not reflecting the curriculum text' (Usher, 2020, p. 20).

Pike (2006) found a variety of pedagogical approaches but reference to rote-learning and textbook-based teaching, with no references to fieldwork, in children's learning experiences in primary geography. An INTO (2005) large-scale survey found that 88% of primary teachers used textbooks as the core component in the planning and teaching of the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) area of the primary curriculum. Indeed, a large-scale, all-Ireland study of 1,113 student primary teachers' memories of school geography found evidence of didactic, rote-learning and textbook-dependent approaches dominated although again there was evidence of a wide range of experiences (Waldron et

al., 2009; Dolan et al., 2014). Similarly, Waddington (2017) found rote-learning and textbook approaches dominated student teachers' memories of primary school geography.

Usher's (2021a) empirical and generalisable nationwide survey of Irish primary teachers' teaching of geography found a distinct policy-practice gap whereby classroom practice does not reflect the demands of the PSCG and research-informed effective teaching approaches. The extent to which Irish primary teachers use hands-on experiential learning methods in their teaching of geography is limited and inconsistent with the vast majority of teachers not doing geographical fieldwork and not devoting enough time to the local area (Usher, 2021a). This is all despite the emphasis that the PSCG places on learning about and in the locality and conducting fieldwork (GoI, 1999a). Indeed, Usher's (2021a) findings complement the 'Becoming a Teacher' study of student teachers' recollections of learning geography as children which included traditional, didactic, approaches with limited recollections of learning about the local area, or experiential methods (Waldron, et al., 2008). Further details on the teaching and learning of geography in Irish primary schools will be discussed within the following chapters.

3c Processes of geography: Signature pedagogies,

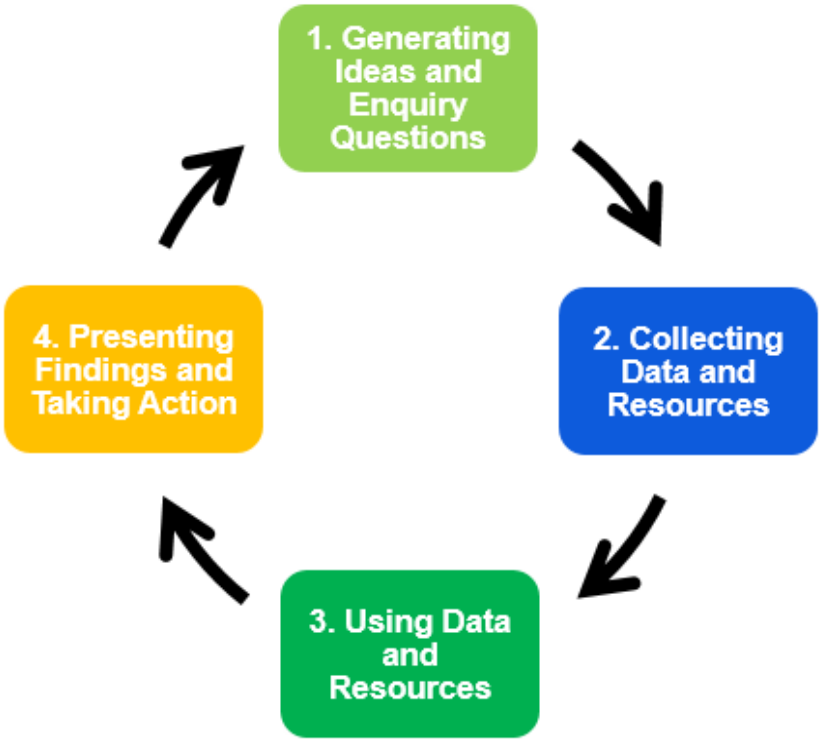
Drawing on Shulman (2005), signature pedagogies in geography education afford children opportunities to work like geographers, think like geographers and make use of geography through applying their learning and skills in appropriate contexts. This chapter outlines the interdependent yet independently significant signature pedagogies for geography education.

i Geographical enquiry

Geographical enquiry draws on children's own sense of curiosity and creativity whereby they actively develop 'descriptions, analysis, evaluations and judgements' through investigation of the world around them (Catling, 2003, p. 192). It comprises a child-centred, experiential, constructivist approach whereby children are active in their learning and participate in the leading of the investigation through posing questions and generating ideas before actively creating and/or gathering data to help develop their understanding and answer their questions (Dolan, 2020; Pike, 2016a, 2016b; Roberts, 2003). Enquiry involves investigations of the local, national and global world and usually progresses in a stepped manner (see Figure 3.1). While there are many frameworks for geographical enquiry (see Roberts, 2003; Dinkele, 2010; Catling & Willy, 2018), the common elements include asking

questions, designing an investigation, collecting data, drawing conclusions, communicating findings and reflecting on the process (Dolan, 2020).

Figure 3.1: Enquiry framework for primary geography education (adapted from Roberts, 2003 © The Geographical Association).



Bednarz et al. (2013) maintain that learning geographically involves asking questions, as evident in the current PSCG whereby the teacher guidelines suggest open-ended investigable questions such as: Where is it? What is it like? Why is it there? What impact does it have? (GoI, 1999b; Haubrich, 1992). In doing so, geography allows children to think, analyse and know the world in ways they cannot through 'everyday' knowledge (Biddulph et al., 2020). Enquiry involves decision-making and/or problem-solving bringing children through a process of investigation which generates geographical thinking (Dolan, 2020). Willy and Catling (2018) detail how primary school children of all ages can engage in geographical enquiry. Children in junior primary classes can make simple tally charts about features passed on their journey to school and consider what this information tells them, while at the senior level of primary school, children can interrogate sophisticated data by comparing weather and climate charts to explain local seasonal variations (Willy & Catling, 2018). Through such rich experiences, geographical enquiry positions children as active participants in their learning, which should be shaped by their own geographical

experiences, the geographies of their lives and in particular, their participation within communities (Catling & Pike, 2022).

Enquiry-based learning child-centred, positioning the teacher as facilitator with the children working across the enquiry process before action and reflection (Roberts, 2013; Aubrey & Riley, 2016). In an Irish context, Pike (2016) found the role of the teacher to be of utmost importance in enquiry-based lessons. It is important that the teacher has a strong sense of overall learning intentions and conceptual frameworks when facilitating the investigations. Similarly, other studies also found the role of the teacher to be a significant factor in educational attainment and in making connections between existing and new learning following geographical enquiries (Leat & Lin, 2003; Van Der Schee et al., 2006). Dolan (2020) maintains that use of textbooks is not conducive to enquiry as they rigidly divide the subject into independent topics where knowledge is fixed. As aforementioned in Chapter 1.3, Irish primary teachers have been found to rely on textbooks as the main source of content and sequencing the delivery of geography education (INTO, 2005; Usher, 2020). Research recognises the potential of digital technology to support deeper geographical enquiry and suggests that in particular Geographical Information Systems (GIS) affords children a wide array of data and information to support the design, implementation and assessment of geographical enquiry (Favier & Van der Schee, 2009; Hammond & Bozdin, 2009; Kerawalla et al., 2013; Wertheim et al., 2013; Csachová, 2020; Pike, 2021a).

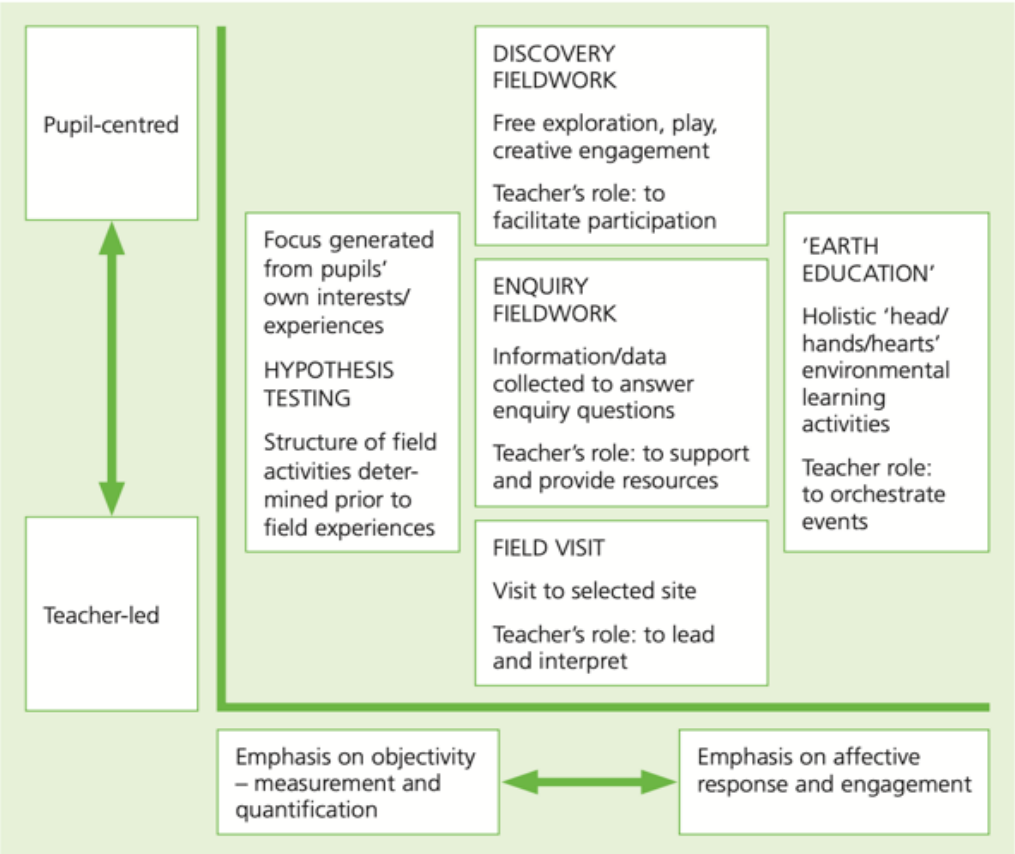
ii Fieldwork

Fieldwork encapsulates the real-world nature of geography and is 'a fundamental pillar of geography education' (Hammond, 2018, p. 181). It is seen as the go-to method of effective practice in geography education (Catling et al., 2007; Lambert & Reiss, 2016; Eaude et al., 2017) and longstanding empirical evidence demonstrates its value in improving children's knowledge, skills and understanding (MacKenzie & White, 1977; Rickinson et al., 2004). Primary teachers recognise both the cognitive and affective benefits of fieldwork (Yang et al., 2014; Pike, 2021b; Svobodová et al., 2020). It appears that geography's pedagogies of enquiry and fieldwork have positive impacts on learning (Nundy, 1998; Pike, 2016a). Dilber-Özer and Baysal described how 'teachers use classrooms, corridors, the workshop room, the schoolyards, trip fields and sport fields as learning spaces' (2022, p. 934). Examples of practice show that a range of learning is experienced by children across the fieldwork styles, as shown in Figure 3.2. Gandy (2006) suggests that fieldwork in urban street contexts can

support learning in relation to urban development and the human environment, and also offers great opportunities for curricular integration.

The literature provides many examples of the power of geography led integration, with enquiry and fieldwork appearing particularly effective. Exploring a case study grounded in the enquiry 'Why does everything hum and buzz around us?' Karvánková and Popjaková (2018) found that geography, when conducted through enquiry-based approaches, can foster cross-curricular links to other subjects. As they note, geography can have a 'multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary reach to support enquiry across science and social studies' (Karvánková and Popjaková, 2018, p. 720). Overall, the role of the teacher, or team of teachers is essential, to plan the learning that the outdoor experiences, including fieldwork will support.

Figure 3.2: Variety of fieldwork styles (Job, 1990; Kinder, 2013)



Fieldwork contextualises the learning in the real-world, providing children with memorable learning experiences (Biddulph et al., 2015; Dolan, 2020) and can provide a relevant stimulus for developing geographical investigation skills through enquiry (Ives-

Dewey, 2009). Kelly (2016) found that young children (aged 4-5) were extremely engaged, imaginative and knowledgeable when they used the local outdoor environment as a basis for fieldwork in geography lessons. Fieldwork in urban contexts can support learning in relation to urban development and the human environment, as well as opportunities for curricular integration (Kruger & Gandy, 2006). It provides opportunities to promote higher-order thinking skills, affording children the opportunity to develop and apply decision-making skills and problem-solving (Lambert & Reiss, 2016). Balci (2010a) found that geographical field trips have a significant impact on attainment levels in geography. Furthermore, fieldwork can provide a bridge to other education approaches, for example, education for sustainability (Dolan, 2016; Yli-Panula et al., 2019). The development of digital technologies has opened up new possibilities for fieldwork. Cho and Lim (2017) found virtual fieldwork investigations were more effective than teacher-directed instruction in developing intrinsic motivation about geography. Of particular note, Jong et al. (2020) proposed an empirically tested framework of Learner-Immersed Virtual Interactive Expedition (LIVIE) to support the meaningful integration of virtual fieldwork throughout a geographical enquiry.

The PSCG emphasises the need for children to carry out local fieldwork investigations to explore patterns and processes and develop key concepts of a sense of place and space (GoI, 1999a). Usher (2021a) found 60% of Irish primary teachers do not do geographical fieldwork in their teaching. Over 24% of Irish teachers had misconceptions of what constituted geographical fieldwork, giving examples such as walking challenges, history trails, maths trails and weekly visits to the local church (Usher, 2021a). Dolan et al. (2014) reported that only 43% of student primary teachers had at least one memory of fieldwork when recalling their experiences of school geography over the proceeding 15 years. Their memories mostly consisted of spending large amounts of time reading textbooks, listening to teachers read textbooks and rote-learning geographical facts and locations of features with very limited experience of experiential methods including fieldwork (Dolan et al., 2014). Pike (2011) found that while children prefer learning through experiential child-centred methods such as fieldwork, they rarely experience such lessons. Reasons given by Irish primary teachers for not carrying out fieldwork included lack of knowledge of the local area and lack of pedagogical knowledge (50.5%), time constraints (21.2%), safety concerns (23.9%), class size (21.8%) (Usher, 2021a). Similar results were found by Yang et al. (2014) in China and Munday (2008) in Australia where fieldwork was not being utilised often due to lack of time, safety concerns, large class sizes and lack of support from school leadership. Yang et al. (2014)

found repetition of fieldwork content and activities to be an issue as children progressed through the years due to lack of teacher pedagogical knowledge and lack of whole-school approaches to planning for fieldwork. Woolhouse's (2016) research in Australia had similar findings.

iii Incorporating children's geographies

Geography is a 'living subject' (Dolan, 2016). Children have geographical skills, knowledge and understanding that are in and from their lived geographies (Martin, 2008a). Martin (2005; 2008a; 2008b) refers to the importance of 'everyday geography', which pertains to our daily lives, understandings, perspectives, decisions and feelings. From a young age children gain geographical experiences and knowledge through their lived experiences and they begin to use and create representations of their environmental experience, albeit crudely (Catling, 2003). Many young children have a 'wealth of experience and a range of awareness, knowledge and understanding about the world about them, local and global in nature and extent' (Catling, 2003, p. 61). These geographical experiences and understandings stem from home environments, their localities and senses of distant places gathered through relationships, trips abroad, and the media. There are often clear differences between children's geographies and geography as constituted as an adult academic subject, even when the same language is being used (Kelly, 2005; Martin, 2008a; Pike, 2011; Schempler, 2018). However, young children's geographies are diverse, multi-layered and evolving. No two children's geographies are identical; family position, ages and relationships affect changes of access to and engagement with place (Hopwood, 2009; Catling & Pike, 2022).

Usher (2020) argues that geography needs to be seen as relevant by children, teachers, policymakers and the public at large, where meaningful geography education with tangible links to the real world can be delivered. Indeed, Usher's (2023) empirical research on Irish children's attitudes towards geography found Irish children scored lowest in their recognition of the importance of geography and its relevance to their everyday lives and the real-world. Pike (2011) found that although children had a range of experiences and knowledge of their localities, these were only sometimes drawn on in geography lessons.

Martin (2008b) recommends the intertwining of children's geographies and school geography, noting how each can enhance the other in geography lessons and help children see the relevance of geography to their own lives. Catling and Martin (2011) hold that

'ethno-geography', should be recognised alongside, and connected to, the academic geographical subject knowledge, which is conceptualised by some as 'powerful knowledge'. These recommendations are further upheld by Hopwood (2009). Usher and Dolan (2021) argue for the incorporation of children's everyday geographies into school geography through their lived experiences and knowledge pertaining to Covid-19 where children can learn about the impacts of Covid-19 in other areas of the globe, enabling them to draw tangible connections to the learning content and the subject as a whole. Other examples of such integration of children's geographies include fieldwork lessons on children's views of their localities, or understanding coastal processes and natural features (Dolan, 2020; Pike, 2016b). Catling and Pike (2022) argue that fieldwork in the immediate localities of schools provides opportunities to recognise and enhance children's geographies and develop their geographical understanding and skills.

iv Real world geography

The word geography derives from the Greek γεωγραφία – geographia, literally meaning writing the earth/world. Geography education helps children to understand the world around them, including people, systems, places, interactions and decisions which affect their lives through a process of collaborative learning whereby concepts and issues are explored, examined and debated (Catling, 2003; Pike, 2016b; Dolan, 2020). Effective geography education comprises hands-on, constructivist, experiential activities linked to authentic, real-world contexts and children's own lived experiences (Catling & Martin, 2011; Martin, 2005; 2008a). Catling et al. (2007) drew on the evidence provided within inspection reports concerning geography education in England to argue that teaching pedagogies should motivate, stimulate and challenge learners, by focusing on real-world issues and contexts, and be explored through practical approaches, including fieldwork. Therefore, geography's relationship to the real-world necessitates the use of experiential, child-centred teaching methods (Ives-Dewey, 2009; Eaude et al., 2017; Richardson, 2010). Teaching geography through current issues and problems is widely accepted as a means of extending knowledge and understanding, supporting personal development (Beneker & Van der Schee, 2015; Weiss, 2017) and to equip children with real-life experiences and skills (Degirmenci & Ilter, 2017).

Weiss (2017) found artificial problems were less motivating for children. This is supported by Usher (2019) and Degirmenci and Ilter (2017, p. 1806) who suggest 'authentic learning experiences' whereby real-world examples, issues and content form the foundation for

geography education. Children are more motivated to engage in a problem or issue that affects them, their area, or people and places familiar to them (Schmidt & Bruysten, 2005). Usher and Dolan (2021) also argued for a problem-oriented approach to teaching geography, citing Covid-19 and its local and global impacts as an appropriate real-world issue. Prior knowledge and experience are important in problem-based learning whereby children are able to connect problems or events to their own experiences (Weiss, 2017). The focus is on meaning-making and geographical understanding rather than the accumulation and memorisation of 'facts', and, as such, children develop skills and strategies which can be applied to other contexts and issues as well as attaining higher levels of academic achievement (Pawson et al., 2006; Miller, 2017). Furthermore, these approaches enable richer educational experiences (Degirmenci & Ilter, 2017) as the geographical skills, understanding and content is developed within an everyday, real-world, experiential context (Usher & Dolan, 2021). Strikingly, Dolan et al. (2014) research into Irish student teachers' experiences of geography as children found only 5% of respondents as useful and relevant to everyday life (Dolan, et al., 2014). Moreover, Usher's (2023) research into children's attitudes towards, and preferred ways of learning geography found children scored lowest in their recognition of the importance of geography and its relevance to their everyday lives and the real-world. Usher (2023) and Kubiatko et al. (2012a) recommend teachers explicitly link content to real-world contexts.

v Local area

The local area is a cornerstone of successful geography education. Children's localities are part of their everyday lives (Chawla, 2002; Catling, 2003; Milner et al., 2010; Pike, 2011a; 2011c). The local area in primary geography education goes beyond identifying a range of features, services, changes and connections, contextualising learning and providing a space for experiential fieldwork. It also aids the development of children's sense of belonging, local community identity, and empowers children's voice and participation (Hayward, 2012; Catling, 2014). The use of local areas and communities is a well-established practice in education, supported by key theorists such as Dewey (1938), Piaget (1956), Bruner (1986) and Vygotsky (1986). Dewey (1938) encouraged teachers to relate children's learning to the real-world and put forward the use of the locality and local communities in achieving this. Sobel (2004) maintains that investigations of the local area through experiential activities such as map making, fieldwork, collaborative group work and hands-on learning increases children's academic achievement, creates stronger links to the local community, enhances their appreciation of the local environment and develops them as active citizens. These

arguments are further upheld both nationally and internationally (Dolan, 2020; Catling & Willy, 2018; Pike, 2016b). In Russia, Petrikovicová et al (2021) found using children's own local environments was much more effective than the abstract nature of textbooks in developing children's understanding of geographical processes and developing skills in the local built and natural environments, relating these skills and knowledge to the wider world.

Significantly, use of the local area is well-emphasised in the current PSCG (GoI, 1999a). In fact, throughout the history of curriculum development in Ireland, the primary curriculum has always referred to the local environment as the main resource and context for learning (GoI, 1971; 1999a). Irish primary teachers recognise the local area as being 'extremely important', ranking it as the second most important element of primary geography (Usher, 2021a, p. 8). However, 60% of Irish primary teachers self-reported to teach only 2-5 geography lessons per year on the local area while 15.5% of teachers teach only 1 lesson on the local area per year and 8.5% teach none at all (Usher, 2021a). Therefore, while teachers are aware of its importance, with 83% of teachers teaching between 0-5 out of 36 geography lessons per year related to the local area, teachers' practice is not reflective of the emphasis placed on the locality in the PSCG. This is supported by Cummins' (2010) research where teaching about non-local places dominated despite the teachers' awareness of the greater emphasis placed on the local area in the PSCG. Usher's (2023) survey of Irish children's experiences and preferred methods of learning geography found that children have extremely limited experience of fieldwork and learning about their local area. Furthermore, Dolan et al.'s (2014) all-Ireland research into student primary teachers' prior experiences of geography education as children across the island of Ireland found fewer than 2% of student teachers viewed geography as having an explicit local focus, thus indicating a distinct lack of experience of any such lessons. Irish teachers identified a lack of resources (74.1%), lack of content knowledge (60.3%), lack of pedagogical knowledge (44.2%) and time constraints due to curriculum overload (8.5%) as the main obstacles to teaching about the local area (Usher, 2021a). Usher (2021a) argues that teachers' identification of lack of resources indicates a lack of pedagogical content knowledge through a failure to recognise the locality as a resource in itself. Older, more experienced teachers are more likely to have higher levels of confidence pertaining to teaching geography and to teaching about the local area. This, together with the 60.3% of teachers who identified a lack of knowledge pertaining to the local area of the school, indicates that the more experienced and familiar teachers are with the locality of the school, the more likely they are to teach about it (Usher, 2021a).

3d Content of geography: Key knowledge - concepts, skills, values and dispositions

Owens (2013) and the Geographical Association (GA) (2011; 2022) identify three kinds of geographical knowledge and that each needs to be taught together: core knowledge, content knowledge and procedural knowledge, all of which are mutually interdependent. Core knowledge can be thought of as extensive world knowledge such as the names of continents, major features and capital cities and being able to locate them using a globe or map. Owens (2013) states that this knowledge can often be deemed as superficial when dependent on rote-learning, however it is also enabling when linked to specific skills. Content knowledge refers to concepts or generalisations which are key to developing understanding such as a sense of space and scale. Procedural knowledge pertains to thinking geographically such as geographical enquiry which includes decision-making and problem-solving. It is important to recognise the roles of teachers as 'curriculum-makers' in providing meaningful geographical experiences for enabling children to learn core knowledge through procedural knowledge (i.e. enquiry and experiential teaching and learning) and content knowledge (i.e. conceptual understanding) (Owens, 2013).

i Knowledge

Pike (2016a; 2017) exemplified how children as young as 5 years understood key physical processes, such as the formation of rocks when in suitable environments, for example beaches and rivers. Mackintosh (2007) found that experiencing rivers first-hand through fieldwork visits is more effective than exploring rivers through pictures and diagrams because children may not have sufficient graphicacy skills to interpret them. Similarly, Inel and Urhan (2020) argue that fieldwork activities and observation approaches can support knowledge of landforms. The importance of active participatory learning is also recognised (Pike, 2016). Johnnson and Gutiérrez (2009) evaluated the teaching of polar science and North and South Poles through a series of active participatory activities, suggesting that this approach can support children's development of knowledge.

Other research highlights how children may bring their own preconceptions and misconceptions regarding geographical content knowledge and hence children's geographies need to be incorporated. Mackintosh (2007) noted that children attempt to fit their observations into their own known constructs and that there are differences in adult concepts and children's misconceptions. Schubert (2015) found that children may hold important preconceptions pertaining to desertification including those in line with and those alternative to scientific explanations. Schubert (2015) also argues that progression is

important to consider, suggesting deserts should be taught before desertification. Shepardson's (2019) large-scale research on children's understanding of land-use concludes with a conceptual framework for teaching about land use, drawing on place-based learning and systems thinking, which can support content knowledge and understanding beginning with children's geographies, building from local to international levels. Similarly, Trend et al. (2000) found teachers should provide the opportunity for children to develop knowledge about mountains through specific examples of mountains which are located within 'well-defined geological, tectonic and spatial contexts' (p. 109). Subsequently, children can learn about orogenesis (mountain-building processes) through constructivist approaches and demonstrations in an age-appropriate manner (Trend et al., 2000). Reinfried et al. (2015) also draw similar conclusions pertaining to mountain springs and the hydrological cycle and propose a model of educational reconstruction (MER) to address intuitive conceptions (which are often difficult to change).

Mitchell et al. (2008) note that teaching about specific hazards (e.g. hurricanes or tsunamis), as integrated physical and social issues, may aid in avoiding the worst of their consequences. They argue that the teaching of hazards should address the 'links between human activities and disaster vis-a-vis risk and exposure' (p. 172) and also consider vulnerability. Chang and Pascua (2016) found that children demonstrated incomplete understanding of the causes of climate change, despite their experiences of climate change education through their geography lessons, thus underlining the need for teachers to consider children's misconceptions more explicitly in their teaching.

ii Concepts

Geography offers a unique perspective to the study of environments and peoples. The PSCG maintains that the discipline of geography is concerned with three major concepts: place, space and environment (GoI, 1999a) . Geographical concepts are high-level geographical ideas representing the overarching ideas of the subject that geographers agree lie behind all the varied content (GA, 2022) as illustrated in Table 3.1. Conceptual understanding helps children understand how the world works, and enables them to engage in geographical enquiry and attain core content knowledge.

Table 3.1: Key concepts of geography education (adapted from GA, 2022)

Key concepts	Organising concepts
Space, for example, lies at the head of a hierarchy of ideas such as location, distribution, pattern, interaction and distance, and these themselves will have been made apparent in the context of a variety of physical and human geographical features, such as landforms, urban areas, political systems **Place** is underpinned by the more specific ideas of character, identity, home, community, landscape, sense of place and diversity, all exemplified in the context of a range of different places of different types, sizes and locations. **Earth Systems** is key to a network of ideas about physical processes and cycles, dynamic biological, chemical and physical changes, exemplified in a range of landforms, landscapes and environments. **Environment** includes physical and human geography, ecosystems, environmental change and impact, resources and sustainability, at micro to macro scales.	**Time** is crucial to geographic study, providing the dimensions of past, present and future, over which processes operate and lives unfold. It includes stability, dynamism, continuity and change. **Scale** refers to the size of an investigation – micro, small, macro, etc. It includes local, regional, national, international and global levels of analysis. **Diversity** is the wide range of characteristics of the physical and human worlds, awareness of other cultures and identities, providing access to feminist geographies, decolonising geographies and young people's geographies. **Interconnection** refers to how people, places, environments and spaces are all connected to each other in a multitude of ways. **Interpretation** is the way in which the world is influenced by changing narratives, different values, a range of viewpoints and interpretations, and contrasting imaginations, including those generated and disseminated through digital networks.

Sense of place

Sense of place is a core concept identified by the current PSCG (GoI, 1999a; 1999b). A sense of place can be defined as an understanding of the unique characteristics of a place and how it was influenced by people and natural processes (Rawlings et al., 2024, forthcoming). Sense of place enables children 'to recognise the unique identity of a place and to appreciate what it would be like to live there' (GoI, 1999a, p. 9). Matthews and Herbert (2004) state that space

and place are integral parts of core geography, the latter evoking and inspiring geographers through a range of personal meanings and attachments that can be made. A considerable emphasis on the development of children's geographical knowledge has focused on the importance of contextualising learning within children's localities.

The benefits of supporting learning through children's regional locality are recognised (Kayali, 2009). In an Irish context, Pike (2011) found that where teachers did not use the locality for fieldwork, children's understanding of local geographical processes was mixed. They had some sense of physical processes, such as the water cycle, but their understanding of human processes, such as why new roads and buildings were being constructed was limited. Similarly, Bosschaart et al. (2015) note errors in children's understandings and misconceptions of geographic events, and argue that local places (i.e. the region of the school) should play a crucial role in helping children understand geographical events and possible impacts. Doering and Veletsianos (2007) found children's sense of place and geographical understanding could be enhanced through engagement with authentic data, peer collaboration and geo-spatial technologies.

The PSCG outlines that sense of place is first developed in the home and locality before extending to national and international contexts (GoI, 1999a). However, research by Hennerdal (2016) suggests that within contemporary globalised society, children develop a sense of place for distant places through personal connections, trips abroad, and consumption of media. Hennerdal (2016) found that while Swedish children's understanding of countries and locations in Europe had decreased when compared to similar research in 1968, they had greater knowledge of continents and oceans. Pike and Clough (2005) also found Irish children gained knowledge about distant places outside of school from a range of sources, such as online, television and radio. Pike and Clough (2005) found that while Irish children knew it was important to learn about their own country, they also felt it was essential to learn about distant places, people and cultures. Beyond simply recognising places, there is also increased understanding of the depth to which primary aged children are able to develop a sense of place regarding distant locations, developing complex and fascinating views and being able to engage in issues of global citizenship in line with the PSCG (Ruane et al., 2010; Oberman et al., 2013; Pike & Beresford, 2013).

Irish research focusing on 3–6 year olds (Ruane et al., 2010) and 7–10 year olds (Oberman et al., 2013) found children were able to demonstrate the ability to think critically about people and places, draw on their previous experiences to identify similarities and differences between places and people, and empathise with people in distant places. Picton (2008) and Usher and Burnett (2022) warn against the use of stereotypes and focusing solely on differences when teaching children about distant places and suggest a process by which children learn about distant places. Taylor (2014) found that learning activities which connect to young people's lives in distant places and provide multiple perspectives on place, can support understanding of diversity within and between places. Indeed research conducted by Disney (2005) and Hauf (2016) found that linking primary schools with schools in distant places such as India significantly improved children's understanding of distant places. In an Irish context, Usher (2021b) developed a framework for Critical Multicultural Geography Education (CMCGE) to evaluate resources pertaining to their capacity in fostering multiple perspectives, appreciation for diversity, development of critical thinking and enquiry, and making connections or to evaluate whether the resources present stereotypical, oversimplified accounts of issues, peoples and places. When applied to Irish primary geography textbooks in order to consider the representation of Africa and African countries, textbooks were largely found to present stereotypical, oversimplified accounts of issues, peoples and places (Usher, 2021b).

Sense of space

The PSCG maintains that a sense of space is children's understanding of where places are and how they are interconnected (GoI, 1999a; 1999b). A sense of space is strongly linked to children's spatial awareness, how places are related and interconnected and fit within other places (nested hierarchy and scale). Significantly, the PSCG specifically warns against the use of 'mere rote memorisation of the names of physical features, towns and countries' as this contributes little to children's conceptual understanding and skills (GoI, 1999a, p. 10). It is worth noting that previously aforementioned research has found rote learning to be in use in Irish classrooms.

Wiegand (1995) found children aged 4-11 were all capable of developing a sense of space, demonstrating significant levels of spatial awareness by producing 'highly detailed and accurate world maps' by the children (p. 27). Wiegand (1995) noted how these maps became more detailed and accurate with age. However, there were misconceptions in the locations and shape of places in all the age groups. Similarly, Harwood and Rawlings (2001) found

children aged 10-11 were able to draw maps of the world but were more accurate in depicting the location and size of continents than their shape. Elsewhere, there is limited and conflicting research pertaining to children's understanding of nested hierarchies (i.e. the notion that places can be embedded with each other). Harwood and McShane (1996) found that conceptual understanding in this regard takes place over time with children not understanding this concept until they are 10 years old. Contrastingly, Storey (2005) suggests that younger children may be able to understand the concept of nested hierarchies, depending on how this concept is introduced to them. More research related to sense of space and children's spatial awareness will be presented in Chapter VII Mapping Skills.

Environment (and sustainability)

Massey (2005) identifies that in addition to space and place, environment and sustainability are core concepts in geography education. Walshe (2008) conducted a small-scale qualitative study on children's understanding of sustainability through concept mapping, interviews and written definitions and found that children associated sustainability under three concepts: environmental, social and economic sustainability, which aligns with the geography curriculum in England. However, children rarely recognised the interconnectedness of these three concepts but rather viewed them as independent elements of sustainability education (Walshe, 2008). Yli-Panula et al. (2019) conducted a qualitative analysis of peer reviewed literature on teaching and learning methods for promoting sustainability in geography. They argue that geography education is the study of the interrelationship between humans and the environment on local and global scales, and, as such, supports sustainability education. Indeed, the potential of geography education to support children's engagement with sustainability is of importance considering Ireland's 2nd National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development - ESD to 2030, which stipulates the importance of an educational response to sustainability challenges. GoI (2022) presents ESD as being underpinned by three interlinked pillars; social (including cultural diversity, citizenship, human rights and democracy), economic (e.g. poverty, social exclusion, production and consumption patterns, migration and fair work) and environmental (e.g. biodiversity, climate change, resource management and disaster risk reduction). Dolan (2022) argues that geography can significantly contribute to understanding and addressing these interconnected issues and respond to the broader challenges of sustainability.

Geography focuses on interdependence and is the bridge between the natural and social sciences (Yli-Panula et al. 2019). Yli-Panula et al. (2019) draw strong connections between geography education and education for sustainability in relation to skills and competencies, learning topics, teaching and learning methods and outdoor learning. Experiential learning, outdoor learning, fieldwork, enquiry based learning, use of digital technologies, group work, collaborative learning, role play, debates, argumentation and discussion were all found to be the methods most suitable for geography and sustainability education (Yli-Panula et al., 2019). Exploring a sustainability themed series of lessons in geography and biology on national parks and assets, Milanković Jovanov and colleagues (2022) found retention of knowledge was higher in an experimental group, where the integrated approach was applied. There was also a correlation between knowledge retention and interpretation activities that involved integrating knowledge.

The PSCG recognises the connections between geography and sustainability education through the strand Environmental Awareness and Care (GoI, 1999a). Irish primary teachers also ranked environmental awareness as being the most important strand of the PSCG (Usher, 2021a). This may explain Usher's (2023) research into Irish children's attitudes toward geography which found children scoring highest in the subscale for 'geography and the environment'. More references to geography education and sustainability are provided in the section on Values and Dispositions.

iii Skills

Certain generic skills are expected across all subject areas (e.g. communication skills), whereas others are specialised (Owens, 2013). Davies and Esling (2020) found that the promotion of 'quality talk' in the classroom, promoting children's voice, can increase critical thinking. Garyfallidou and Ioannidis (2012) found that children require support to develop information literacy skills when conducting web searches in geography. It was beyond the scope of this literature review to combine all literature linking geography to the development of 'generic skills'. Dolan (2020) provides numerous case studies of how geography education develops children's 21st-century skills and competencies including decision-making, problem-solving and critical thinking. The following two sections outline two specialised skills pertaining to geography: mapping skills and visual literacy.

Mapping skills

Mapping skills can be understood to include both map reading and map making. 'Whilst maps are not the whole of geography, there can be no geography without them' (Bednarz et al., 2006, p. 898). Young children (4-7 years) have the ability to interpret spatial representation, with most able to understand aerial photographs and with larger scale images being easier to interpret (the scale effect) (Kim et al., 2012). Likouri's (2017) large-scale study in Greece found children with higher spatial abilities also demonstrated better geographical knowledge. Indeed Catling (2006) suggests that children's knowledge and understanding of environment, place and spatial awareness evolves through their experience of investigating places in person and through spatial aspects. Ekiss et al. (2007) consider the importance of maps and mapping activities in primary classrooms, and provide a review of literature on the area. They consider children's perspectives on mapmaking and their development of spatial awareness, and the activities which can support this progression. They also consider the development of understanding of orientation and scale, the latter using non-standard measurements to explore distance. Finally, the paper considers other map elements, which include symbols and legends. Research referenced in this paper highlights that 4-6 year olds can name conventional symbols, and highlights pedagogical approaches to support the understanding of grids and ultimately longitude and latitude, thus proving that younger children are capable of complex mapping skills (Ekiss et al., 2007).

Kaldybekova et al. (2021) and Gökçe (2015) found that well-pitched specific learning activities can support children's development of mapping skills. Gökçe (2015) argued that further opportunities for map work outside, map comparison and map creation could further enhance children's mapping skills. Anthamatten et al. (2018) found using giant maps improved children's understanding of maps, spatial awareness and also mathematical skills. Reynolds and Vinterek (2016) found that local geographical knowledge influenced children's skills and knowledge, and suggest that maps and in particular globes can support more accurate spatial worldviews. Indeed, Catling (2020) notes the importance of mapping in developing children's sense of local, national and global identity.

Focusing on the use of maps, empirical research from Hemmer et al. (2013) suggests that map-based orientation competence (MBO) is shaped by age, gender, spatial intelligence and (with limited influence) prior knowledge. Indeed the empirical research of Trahorsch et al. (2020) on the usability of maps found significant differences between students in lower and

upper classes pertaining to their comprehension of these maps, underlining the need for differentiated resources and an emphasis on progression of map reading skills. Bugdayci and Selvi's (2021) large-scale survey of children aged 8-10 years found that it is essential to raise the quality of maps and atlases to promote children's use and enjoyment of maps. Palaigeoriou et al. (2018) found that interactive 3D landscapes make geography more easily comprehensive and relevant and offer a participatory experience for children, which can include the creation of interactive landscapes based on geographical areas of interest.

Much of the literature considering the role of digital technology with geography education is focused on digital spatial technologies. Pike (2021a) found that children were able to both use and create digital maps to present geographical data, enhancing their abilities in analysis of geographical data post-fieldwork. Alfatikh et al. (2020) found utilising Google Earth positively influences children's engagement and suggested that GIS could move geography on from memorisation of maps. It is important to note that Usher (2023) found Irish children are still experiencing rote-memorisation of maps such as the locations of rivers, mountains and counties. Elsewhere, Idrizi and Selimi (2021) suggest that smartphones and tablets could support learning about spatial phenomena. Other research is more specific about the potential of technologies to enhance geographical knowledge and mapping skills. Jadallah et al. (2015) explored the effects of a GIS curriculum on the spatial ability and mapping skills of upper primary children. They found that children exposed to GIS (through an integrated, problem-based module focused on the development of conceptual and procedural knowledge and GIS skills) demonstrate greater development of spatial ability and mapping skills compared to a control group.

Digital technology can support the communication of geographical information such as the use of story maps which combine text, visuals and maps to communicate geographical stories (ESRI, 2023). Gleeson and D'Souza (2016, p. 14) contend that story maps can support an integrated approach at primary level (history, Civics, Economics and geography) fostering both 'historical and geospatial thinking' and support investigation into the connections between the local and the global. Robertson et al. (2019) argue that mapping should focus on the development of spatial thinking skills through spatial concepts, which can be supported by new technologies and established approaches. This can include identity and location, distance and direction, relative location, scale, symbols, hierarchies, spatial distribution and patterns, and map projections. Catling (2003) suggests explicitly teaching five elements of mapping (map reading and mapmaking) to children at primary level. These

five elements are perspective (e.g. aerial or bird's-eye perspective), scale (represents size of features/places accurately in relation to each other), symbols (including shapes, lines and colours to show a variety of features and routes on maps), location (identifying where features are positioned in reality on maps and wayfinding using locational language such as 'beside', behind, etc. and more complex latitudinal and longitudinal grid references), and direction (relative directions such as 'left', 'past', 'through', etc. and cardinal directions such as 'north', 'southeast' etc.) (Catling, 2003). Moorman et al. (2021) found that GIS can support children (aged 12-13) to explore layers of authentic data, creating interest and engagement with participants. Xiang and Liu (2017) found that Google Earth was an effective tool for aiding children's progression in spatial reasoning, enabling them to examine features from multiple perspectives and at various spatial scales.

Visual literacy

Mackintosh (2011) asserts that just as children interpret meaning from written word (literacy), spoken word (oracy) and numbers (numeracy), children should be enabled to make meaning from pictorial forms of spatial information (graphicacy) including photographs. Dolan (2020) emphasises the importance of geography in developing children's visual literacy skills, and the ability to understand and produce visual messages. Dolan (2020) and Pike (2016) report on numerous case studies in Irish schools where children collect, work with and respond to photographs, thus developing their visual literacy, investigation and observation skills. Notably, photographs provide opportunities for teachers to provide frameworks for geographical concepts. Pike (2016) found that photographs enhanced children's abilities to think geographically, and develop complex questions. In relation to the production of visual images, Csachová and Kidonová (2021) explore the use of sketch notes in lower secondary geography classrooms finding that whilst they offer creative and independent means of creating text and visual notes, the process requires scaffolding.

iv Values and dispositions

The PSCG makes explicit reference to the role geography education in developing responsibility for environmental care, appreciation of the relationship between living things and their environments, and 'open, questioning attitudes, a respect for various ethnic, cultural, religious and social groups, and an appreciation of human interdependence' (GoI, 1999a, p. 92). Although there is an argument that teaching of values should be carefully considered (Standish, 2009), there is a recognition that children arrive at school with their

own values (Catling & Martin, 2011) and there are numerous examples of how geography education supports the development of values and dispositions. Schell et al. (2013) argue that geography education is imperative to support children's dispositions pertaining to environmental care, global relationships, and democratic participation. Similarly, Yli-Panula et al. (2019) argue that geography helps children to understand the interdependent and globalised world and their own rights and responsibilities towards each other and the environment in this regard. Planinc (2008) draws on an international survey to argue as to the importance of geography in relation to spatial planning and sustainability and desired goals across levels of decision-making. Mills and Thomas (2020) argue that action-oriented and transformative geography education can support learners to develop sustainable attitudes, which recognise the need to live within planetary boundaries and not to compromise the abilities of future generations to meet their needs. They suggest a progression built around geographical enquiry, which begins with children envisaging positive futures in their locality and developing basic actions to realise these futures.

Building on these foundations, children can explore multiple perspectives on issues, and consider the possible actions. Usher and Moynihan (2022) demonstrate examples of using Minecraft Education Edition to help children become active citizens to reimagine and re-design their localities in more sustainable ways and consider the societal needs of all members of the community. However, the pathway from attitude to action is not guaranteed. In an exploration of children's attitudes and practices of sustainable water use and conservation, Amahmid et al. (2019) found gaps between attitudes and behaviours.

Significant research identifies the role of geography education in the development of empathy and appreciation for diversity. Martin (2013) argues that primary geography can provide an important space for learners to encounter and work with difference, with Picton (2008) and Usher (2021b) arguing for teaching about diversity. Indeed the PSCG asserts that geography education aims to develop children's appreciation for cultural inheritance and 'cultivates an atmosphere of equality and opportunity where gender, cultural diversity, minorities and special needs are respected and valued' and 'prejudice and discrimination are challenged while respect and mutual understandings are promoted' (GoI, 1999a, p. 4).

e Children's views on geography

Usher's (2023) empirical research found that Irish children have a relatively neutral attitude towards primary school geography (overall mean score of children's attitudes towards

geography was 2.71 out of a maximum of score of 5) having experienced a mixture of teaching methods including hands-on experiential methods which they enjoy, and didactic rote-learning methods which they do not enjoy. Here 90.5% of respondents described child-centred experiential approaches when explaining what they like about geography and describing a good lesson/learning activity. In contrast, at 95.4%, didactic, rote-learning methods dominated the descriptions of what children dislike about geography. This preference for practical, hands-on, experiential and enquiry-based approaches is reflected in international studies from Germany (Lorenz et al., 2017; Weiss & Gohrbandt, 2018), Netherlands (Bent et al., 2014), UK (Biddulph & Adey, 2004), Czech Republic (Svonodova et al., 2020; Kubiatko et al., 2012a; 2012b) and Turkiye (Sanli et al., 2016; Senyurt, 2014). Similarly, Dolan et al. (2014) found that, as children, student primary teachers valued active, experiential, collaborative and enquiry-based geography teaching, while they held negative memories of traditional didactic textbook-dominated lessons and rote-learning. Usher (2023) found that children experienced minimal geography lessons on the local area with limited fieldwork investigations. Didactic rote-learning methods are particularly prevalent when learning about physical features in geography such as mountains and lakes, as well as the locations of counties (Usher, 2023). Biddulph (2014) describes this as the 'capes and bays' approach. Children questioned the relevance of this rote-learning and the absence of attaining understanding about places, natural features and processes (Usher, 2023; Pike & Clough, 2005).

There are clear connections between pedagogical approaches of teaching and learning and children's attitudes towards geography both in the Irish context (Usher, 2023; Green et al., 2013) and further afield (Biddulph & Adey, 2004; Korkmaz & Karakus, 2009). Kubiatko et al. (2012a) and Schubert (2021) also found that pedagogical approaches and methods had a direct influence on the children's attitudes towards geography - group work, using digital technology and child-centred experiential approaches such as fieldwork all enhanced children's enjoyment of their geography lessons across a range of topics. Similarly, Sanli et al. (2016) found both teachers' and children's attitudes towards geography improve when child-centred, experiential approaches connected to real-world matters are used. It is imperative that teachers incorporate hands-on experiential teaching methods in their teaching of geography to foster positive attitudes amongst children towards the subject and better enable children to recognise its importance and its relevance to their everyday lives (Usher, 2023).

3e Conclusion: Geography through the lens of the vision and principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework*

This chapter has explored some of the most pertinent literature concerning teaching and learning in geography education, drawing on theoretical and empirical research from the Irish and international context. In doing so, this chapter provides a response to the partial research question 'What evidence is provided by the literature on children's learning and development for geography from third to sixth class?' In part, the chapter also offers a review of existing literature concerning geography teaching and learning in Stage 1 (Junior Infants to Second Class) which may underpin the integrated curriculum area of Social and Environmental Education from junior infants to second class.

Within the context of curricular reform, the chapter has explored the philosophical and educational basis for geography education, firstly through the signature pedagogies of enquiry, fieldwork, using the local area, and linking learning to the real-world; and secondly through the key content, knowledge, skills, values and dispositions. Each of the signature pedagogies are defined below in Table 3.2.

These discussions of learning and development across the primary phase support consideration of areas of synergy with integrated curricula, and this particular review has also included a focus on literature concerning the integration of geography education (e.g. Greenwood, 2007; Willy & Catling, 2018) which will be addressed in chapter 6.
Analysing this review of geography education through the lens of the *Primary Curriculum Framework*, we can reflect on the role of geography education, as a subject or integrated curricular area, in supporting the principles of the framework, as shown in Table 3.3, which is consolidated for SEE in Appendix D. This table provides a response to the research question 'Through the lens of the vision and principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework*, what is the philosophical basis and educational basis for the curriculum area/subjects?', with a particular focus on geography education.

Table 3.2: Approaches to primary geography

Approaches to primary geography education				
Geographical Enquiry	*Fieldwork*	*Incorporating children's geographies*	*Real-world geography*	*Using the local area*
Children participate in a collaborative geographical investigation, posing questions, generating ideas, creating and/or gathering data to develop understanding, and answering the enquiry questions. Concluding a geographical enquiry involves children drawing conclusions, communicating findings, reflecting on the process, and taking action where possible.	Children undertake practical investigations in the environment. This can include observing patterns, behaviours and features, collecting data through interviewing, recording observations (through sketching, mapping, photographing, video) and so on. Fieldwork can take place in school grounds, immediate locality of the school, the broader local area, as well as other places. Virtual fieldwork through digital technologies such as VR and digital mapping, satellite imagery and Streetview functions are also important for enhancing children's sense of place and sense of space during investigations.	Children's geographies include experiences and understandings accrued from home environments, their localities and senses of distant places gathered through relationships, trips abroad, and the media. Children gain geographical knowledge, understandings and conceptions through these experiences which can then be built upon and indeed challenged in their primary geography lessons.	Geography helps children to understand the real-world including people, systems, places, interactions and decisions which affect their lives. Relating geography to the real-world can aid children in recognising the importance and usefulness of the subject. Real-world geography includes teaching through current issues and problems such as the management of the bogs, deforestation, land-use, provision of transport routes, etc. Children can investigate a real-world problem, explore different perspectives, examine the issues, identify solutions and participate in resolutions to these problems where possible.	The local area in primary geography education goes beyond identifying a range of features, services, changes and connections. It includes the local community and helps to contextualise learning and provide a space for experiential fieldwork. Using the local area aids the development of children's sense of belonging, local community and identity and provides tangible links to the real-world and builds upon children's geographies. Investigations of the local area involve experiential activities such as map reading and mapmaking, fieldwork and collaborative group work involving members of the wider community.

Returning to the vision of the *Primary Curriculum Framework*, geography education can provide the opportunity for all children to thrive and flourish through the experiences it can generate, and the knowledge, skills and values that it can foster. Transformative primary geography recognises children as agentic individuals with their own identities, experiences and perspectives, but also as members of diverse communities, shaped by and shaping human and natural environments across the earth. This review has identified a number of barriers to the provision of high quality geography education, but most importantly recognises how skilful and committed teaching of primary geography, incorporating key pedagogies, can support all children's enjoyment and learning.

The final consideration for this chapter concerns the desired curriculum process and essential curriculum content for children's learning and development in geography. By way of a further conclusion, and drawing on this review of literature, the existing Irish Primary Curriculum: Geography (1999), and the Irish Curriculum Framework (2023), Appendix E provides an overview of suggested content, skills and values for the new primary curriculum. In doing so, Appendix E provides a response to the partial research question 'In response to curriculum overload, what are the desired curriculum processes and essential curriculum content for children's learning and development in geography within the broad primary curriculum. Within this appendix, the key concepts, suggested content, key skills, underpinning values are made explicit. This suggested content is also viewed in light of the review of literature in relation to ERB, and the opportunities with regard to geography education.

Table 3.3: Principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework* and geography

Principles	**Geography**
Partnership	Through an engagement with children's geographies, children have the opportunity to build on skills, knowledge and understanding from their lived experiences. Primary geography makes deep connections to children's lives, families and communities locally, nationally and globally.
Pedagogy	Signature pedagogies for geography education are experiential, enquiry-based, child-centred and real-world oriented, with strong links to the local environment. These pedagogies provide opportunities to interest, excite and challenge children, and to foster their learning.

Relationships	Primary geography education supports children to develop values of care, respect, empathy and appreciation for the natural environment and for diversity of people in their classrooms, schools, communities and across the world.
Transitions and continuity	A focus on children's geographies fosters engagement with children's prior geographical learning and recognises their identities and everyday experiences as a foundation for learning in geography education. Hands-on, experiential, enquiry-based approaches can foster positive attitudes towards geography education and provide the basis for further learning and engagement with geography in children's everyday lives.
Learning environments	Primary geography supports children to develop both a sense of place and sense of space which deepen children's understanding of, and engagement with, their learning environments. As a signature pedagogy for geography education, fieldwork fosters engagement with children's diverse environments (including those outdoors) and promotes skills, knowledge and understanding, while also nurturing holistic development. It connects learning to other subject areas. Geographical enquiry can develop children's understanding of their learning environments, but can also serve as a framework through which children can positively transform these spaces and collaborate with school and wider communities.
Inclusive education and diversity	Primary geography education supports children's understanding of diversity within and between places, and serve as a space for children to encounter and work with difference. Through a critical multicultural geography education framework, children can develop an understanding of multiple perspectives and an appreciation for diversity. Child-centred approaches to primary geography education, facilitated through inclusive frameworks and differentiated resources can support the learning and participation of all children.
Engagement & participation	Primary geography education can support children's agency both in their learning and as members of local, national and global communities. Enquiry-based approaches to geography education can support children's collaboration, decision-making and creativity in relation to real-world issues. Through the development of geographical skills, conceptual understanding and knowledge attainment, geography education can enable children to act and participate in solutions to issues.
Assessment and progression	Signature pedagogies for primary geography education provide opportunities for collaborative assessment in relation to the underpinning knowledge, skills and attitudes, e.g. multiple opportunities for rich assessment throughout each phase of the geographical enquiry process.

From this review of literature, geography education is recognised as a vehicle for supporting children's understanding of the world and the systems and processes which shape it (Lambert, 2018). Through the active, participatory approaches to geography education explored in this chapter, children can develop the knowledge, skills and values to engage with, and where appropriate take action to address the social and environmental issues which influence their day-to-day lives, their communities, and the wider world.

Chapter 4

History

Caitríona Ní Cassaithe and Peter Whelan

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of literature (1999-2023) in the area of history education. Building on the historical and current context, it provides the contextual background needed to address the research questions this report is premised on. In particular, it explores the philosophical and educational basis for history as a school subject and the pedagogies, knowledge, concepts, skills and values necessary to support a history curriculum that is reflective of the visions and principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework*.

4a History in schools

Awareness of history is an important feature of any education system because it helps children to understand the world today through the people, forces and events that have shaped it and in an era of unprecedented and intersecting social, economic and environmental challenges, it is acknowledged that history education has a role to play in equipping children with the skills, values, attitudes and dispositions to navigate uncertain and unsettling times (Council of Europe, 2018; Waldron, 2021; Nordgren, 2021). History helps us navigate the complexity of time by providing a lens through which we can analyse the past, relate it to the present, and anticipate potential trajectories for the future. If, as Rusen (2004) argues, the purpose of history is to enable us to orient ourselves in time, then history educators need to consider how that can be achieved and the capacities that are needed by young people to meet growing existential threats, adapt to ever-changing environments and achieve their potential as competent and caring members of society. This conceptualisation of the purpose of school history imbues it with the potential to transform children's understanding of themselves and others, and in doing so, can transform how they view the world and their place within it (Barton & Ho, 2022; Waldron, 2021; McGregor et al., 2021; Nordgren, 2021).

A history education that is transformative must be underpinned by a curriculum that is equally transformative. This calls for a curriculum that is flexible but also reflective of the nature of the discipline and the construction of historical knowledge. In this regard, the epistemological underpinnings of school history are important because they underpin both how history is taught and how it is learned (VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016). While the

terms ‘history’ and ‘the past’ are related concepts, they are not synonymous with each other. Many children (and some teachers) operate under the assumption that they are the same and this conflation can lead to massive misunderstandings about the nature of history and the purpose of history education (Ní Cassaithe et al., 2021, VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016; Chapman, 2011). The past itself can be considered as the sum of all that has ever happened and comprises every thought, action and event that has ever occurred. In contrast, history is the ***study*** of selected events from the past. As the past no longer exists, historical knowledge is constructed based on the analysis of evidence derived from the traces that remain of it (Collingwood, 1946). Events from the past are fixed and can never be changed, but history, unlike the past, is an ongoing dialogue with, and interpretation of those events that is open to change or revision because new evidence and new questions constantly push for re-examinations and re-evaluations (Chapman, 2011).

Beliefs around the purpose of history, some of which originate in 19th century iterations of school history as a subject, can contribute to confusion regarding the nature of history which in turn can impact on teaching and learning. In this regard, the emergence of both school history and academic history can be traced back to the rise of the nation state (Carretero & Bermudez, 2012) where, as Wilschut argues, 'history entered the school curricula of European states with very specific purposes' (2010, p. 693). These purposes were principally nation-building ones and history teaching was concerned with the objectives of both creating and maintaining national identity through the learning of the national story (Carretero & Bermudez, 2012). This form of history has traditionally been used to legitimise the nation state through the dissemination of narratives promoting identity and values through uncritical studies of national events, and figures. To achieve these aims, history education tended to focus on teaching children to memorise the important events, dates and people that shaped the national story and was often delivered through sanctioned textbooks (Bourdillon, 1993).

In recent decades, the teaching of history has been shaped less by the defining features of the national story and increasingly by the defining features and methods of academic history. In its present conceptualisation, this approach draws from the historical methods used in academic history, allowing children to understand the past in an increasingly complex manner, particularly through historical enquiries that explore multiple perspectives and encourage the development of historical thinking skills (Carretero & Bermudez, 2012).

4b History and the Irish primary curriculum

From the establishment of the National School System in Ireland in 1831, the teaching of Irish history was viewed as problematic and due recognition was given to the potential of history to promote Irish nationalism and undermine allegiance to the British crown (McCully & Waldron, 2013; Waldron, 2004). History was not considered a core subject of the Programme for Instruction until 1900 when, alongside geography, it was delivered through the use of strictly sanctioned textbooks (Walsh, 2016) and taught by the 'simultaneous' or 'class instruction' method of direct teaching, rote learning and lectures (INTO, 1996). This method of instruction continued following the establishment of the Irish Free State in December 1922, where primary history education in particular, given that second level education was limited to a very small number of children, provided the space to promote an intensely Gaelic national identity which was echoed strongly in history textbooks (McCully & Waldron, 2013).

Driven by advances in the 'cognitive revolution' and supported by the work of theorists such as Dewey, Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner, international research in the last seven decades has provided educators with a comprehensive understanding of children's capacities for critical engagement with complex historical concepts and ideas. Across the globe, history curricula have been reshaped to reflect this (Seixas, 1993). A prime example of this was Curaclam na Bunscoile (CnB) (GoI, 1971a; 1971b) which was explicitly child-centred and constructivist in nature; promoting a thematic approach to teaching and learning with a strong focus on locality. The revised PSCH (GoI, 1999c), while similar to CnB, marked a new departure for history education. Influenced by the 'New History' movement in the United Kingdom, with its emphasis on disciplinary enquiry and historical thinking concepts, and informed by pioneering work in history education research, the PSCH embraces the idea that children should be introduced to history as a discipline with its own characteristic ways of investigating and making sense of the human experience of the past.

Despite a significant shift in emphasis, a number of international studies have found that teachers often resort to didactic, teacher-led history lessons focused on traditional methods of instruction. According to Sears (2014), many history teachers regard history as a collection of facts and see their own role as transmitting these facts through history textbooks. This view of history as 'facts about the past' may be, in part, due to the tendency of many teachers to use the textbook as a de facto curriculum despite the fact that

researchers have long noted that textbooks are often filled with disconnected content and lack any notion of scholarly debate (VanSledright 2002a; Waldron & McCully, 2016). Although there has been no systematic review of history as practised in Irish primary classrooms, anecdotal evidence and small-scale studies suggest that despite the curriculum's emphasis on children working as historians, transmission based, textbook-led teaching still dominates and determines practice at both primary and secondary level (INTO, 2005; 2008b). Encouragingly, the recent thematic report commissioned by the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe (2022) indicates a small swing towards historical enquiry as a pedagogical approach at primary level and it was noted that teachers in Ireland appear to be moving away from the primacy of textbook-based instruction and towards more student-centred and constructivist pedagogical approaches such as historical enquiry when teaching about historical pandemics and natural disasters.

4c Processes of history: Pedagogical approaches & methodologies

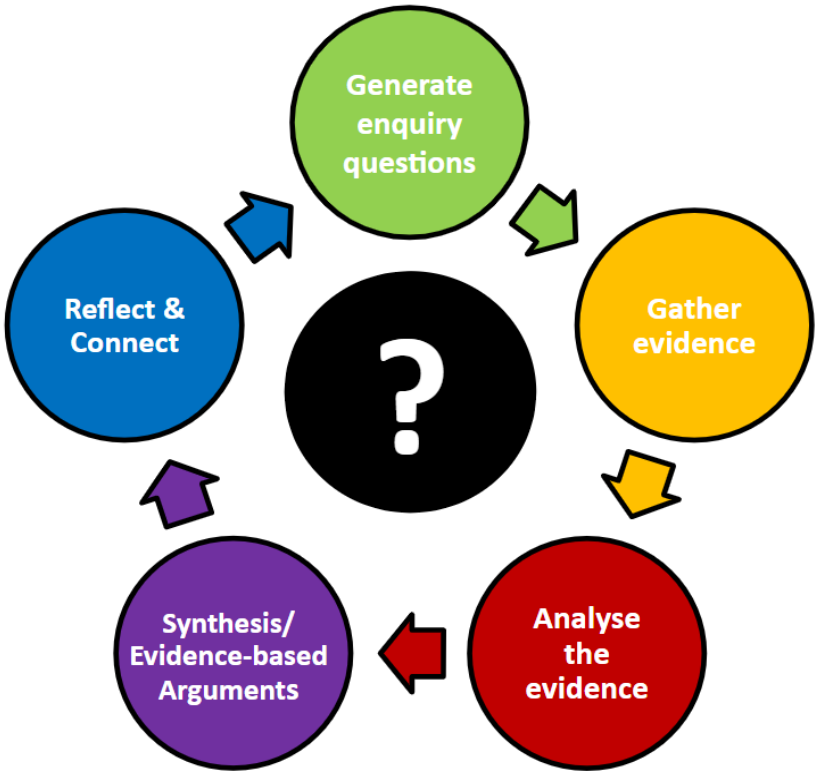
i Historical enquiry

Historical enquiry as a pedagogical approach reflects many of the aims of the *Primary Curriculum Framework* (DoE, 2023) in that it is a child-centred, participative pedagogy that draws on children's prior knowledge and agency. It is based on the premise that the teacher acts as a facilitator of learning which should be grounded in student's questions, problems and needs. Drawing from the methods used in academic history, it promotes a teaching of history that supports children working like historians. Historical enquiry enables students 'to ask authentic questions, to select and examine historical evidence, to appreciate historical context, to evaluate divergent perspectives, and to reach, albeit tentatively, logical conclusions' (Foster & Paggett, 1999, p. 358) and as various studies (e.g. Hartnett & Whitehouse, 2012; Ní Cassaithe, 2020; VanSledright, 2002b) show, historical enquiry provides children with a broader and more interpretative understanding of history and the role of evidence in its construction.

While historical enquiry is viewed as a signature pedagogy for teaching history, little attention is given to how it can be planned and executed in the primary classroom. The Historical Enquiry Framework (HEF) developed and empirically tested by Ní Cassaithe (2020) for use with primary children (see Figure 4.1) provides a useful framework for both planning and teaching. The framework itself has five main stages and each of these are colour-coded to enable the teacher to differentiate between the stages of the enquiry. All historical enquiries, whether lasting a single lesson or spanning a number of lessons, begin

with an overarching historical question which should be answered by the end of the process. Given the centrality of this main question to the enquiry itself, it needs to be carefully planned, open rather than closed and of interest or relevance to the children. Additional questions can be developed to bring in multiple perspectives or to develop historical thinking concepts such as causality, time and chronology etc. or to engage with larger themes such as human rights, agency, social justice (Waldron et. al., 2021). Teachers can initially generate historical questions and identify sources in the planning phase; however, as part of a child-centred pedagogy, it is equally important to give children ownership of the enquiry by allowing them to generate their own questions and consider the kinds of sources they could consult to answer these questions. A stimulus, such as a photo, object or document can be used to encourage children to generate questions to be sorted into categories to form part of the enquiry.

Figure 4.1: Historical Enquiry Framework (developed by Ní Cassaithe, 2020)



Suitable sources are then gathered to allow children to answer the questions. These should include a variety of sources (e.g. visual evidence, documentary evidence, oral evidence and physical evidence). The next stage of the enquiry is particularly important as it allows the teacher to plan activities that allow children to engage constructively in analysing the sources while also developing their historical thinking skills. Historical thinking skills can

be considered as a historian's conceptual toolkit which includes, among others, concepts such as using evidence, time and chronology, cause and effect, historical empathy, significance, perspective, change and continuity and interpretation. To ensure a balance of content and skills, teacher-designed activities are carefully developed to scaffold children's engagement with the sources. This could include: sources of evidence (e.g. photo, documents), timelines, card sorts or enquiry frames to assist children in analysing the sources and an enquiry question to frame their engagement. Without such planning, historical enquiries can easily become 'fact-gathering' exercises in which children use the sources to simply extract information (Ní Cassaithe, 2020).

Following this, children are encouraged to gather their findings and synthesise their analysis in order to create evidence-based responses to the main enquiry question. This may include creating artefacts to communicate their work (e.g. posters, presentations, essays etc.). To allow children explore how history provides a contextual understanding of the present, children can reflect on their learning and make connections to current events (e.g. following a study of the transatlantic slave trade, children may explore the impact of modern day slavery today).

ii Object-based learning and the use of artefacts

Object-based learning is a pedagogical approach involving the use of objects and artefacts. Historical objects provide tangible, concrete evidence from the past and when used effectively, provide an authentic understanding of historical events, people, and cultures (Lubar & Kingery, 2013; Rigby, 2022). Various primary level studies (e.g. Arias et al., 2016; Egea & Arias, 2015; Epinosa & Ferrer, 2021; Johnansson, 2019a; 2019b; Torrez & Waring, 2009; Vella, 2001; 2010) show that object-based learning helps children to understand historical processes, think abstractly, make inferences and engage in historical reasoning. In the primary classroom, 'doing history' through a process of enquiry using topics and objects that are relevant to children's lives can stimulate curiosity and wonder about the past. A sandpit containing a range of objects relating to a child's birthday party can provide a wealth of information to allow even very young children to think historically. A birthday badge and a burst balloon, both with a large number six, can allow young children to corroborate the evidence thus building up their picture of the event. A skilled teacher, with strong understanding of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and understanding of the kinds of misconceptions young children hold about the nature of history and historical evidence, can have children hypothesise as to why there are only three candles in the pit

and not six, highlighting the partial nature of historical evidence or can ask probing questions such as 'why is there no cake among the evidence?'

With older primary children, the concept of a spiral curriculum (Bruner, 1960) allows children to revisit these kinds of experiences in increasing complexity using a range of evidence to explore other topics and events whilst also developing disciplinary knowledge. For Arias-Ferrer and Egea-Vivancos (2017), object-based learning provides a dialogic, active and hands-on learning experience that works to develop children's understanding of history through the development of their observational, analytical and interpretative skills.

iii Place-based learning (heritage sites, local area and trails)

Teaching local history helps children to make sense of their immediate surroundings and is an effective approach to developing children's historical skills, understanding and knowledge. The use of historic sites and the child's locality are powerful tools that provide authentic educational settings to deepen student engagement with historical thinking (e.g. Cooper, 1995; Dixon & Hales, 2014; Demers et al., 2015; Grever et al., 2012; Levstik et al., 2014; Pinto, 2013; Townsend, 2022). They also provide children with opportunities to make meaningful connections between their locality and national and international events (Cooper, 2017; Townsend, 2022; Wood, 2012) and can strengthen children's chronological understanding as well as their understanding of change and continuity. By investigating local people, communities and places, a curiosity and interest for the past and for heritage conservation can also be fostered and developed.

Despite numerous recommendations for the teaching of local, personal and community history (Dixon & Hales, 2014; Cooper, 2017; Hales, 2018), research in this area is limited. From the empirical research that exists at primary level, the use of historical sites and historical trails were found to have a positive impact on student attitudes and motivation towards history as a school subject (e.g. Cooper, 1995; Hales, 2018; Harris & Bilton, 2019). Different studies at primary level (e.g. Hales, 2018; Harris & Bilton, 2019; Ludvigsson et al., 2022) show that historical sites and trails positively impact on student learning by providing material, physical and sensory experiences as well as generating emotional connections. For Yesilbursa and Barton (2011), this emotional (affective) connection helps generate a curiosity for the past while the material, physical and sensory experiences create an intellectual (cognitive) connection that acts as a gateway for children to undertake further investigations into local people, places and events.

Incorporating museum visits into teaching provides children with a 'first hand' account of history thus activating both cognitive and affective dimensions of learning (Savenje & de Bruijn, 2018). This is evident in Martinko and Luke's (2018) study involving 29 children aged 8-12, where children were observed using primary evidence at the museum to complete investigations and consider the feelings of historical actors under investigation. Dunn and Wyver's (2019) study, involving 24 children aged 3-7, indicates that museum experiences help develop young children's foundational concepts of historical consciousness. Additionally, studies by Marcus et al. (2012) and Noel and Colopy (2006) found that teachers reflect positively towards the use of museums to support history teaching.

A reluctance to move beyond traditional teaching approaches; lack of time for planning and resourcing as well as subject and pedagogical knowledge have all been identified as barriers towards the teaching of local history (e.g. Baron, 2013; Baron et al., 2019; Jiménez Pérez et al., 2010; Stolare et al., 2021). These studies express the need for professional development in relation to the use of historic buildings, field trips and heritage sites.

iv Oral history

The use of oral history is considered a powerful pedagogical tool in developing both children's historical understanding and skills of learning (Busby & Hubbard, 2007). It entails the collection and analysis of historical information about individuals, families, events, or everyday experiences. As Dutt-Doner et al. (2016) identify, this pedagogical approach can bring history alive for children by connecting them to people, personally and historically. By capturing the personal stories of people, children gain a deeper understanding of these individuals' perspectives, points of view and past experiences. Jenks (2010) argues that oral history provides children with an excellent means to engage in the process of creating historical records themselves by gathering information and producing historical records that are relevant to their lives.

Research strongly supports the use of oral history as a pedagogical approach within the classroom. Dutt-Doner et al. (2012) identified, in their studies involving K-12 students in the U.S., that the use of oral history projects resulted in more active student engagement during the learning process. Undertaking background research, developing interview questions, conducting interviews and synthesising what they learned were all found to have contributed to the development of the children's knowledge, critical thinking and historical empathy. Furthermore, having to consider multiple points of view and personal

connections to first-hand accounts of historical events illustrated to children the complexities of historical understanding. McCully's (2010) oral history project, examining life during the 1969–1998 Northern Ireland conflict with second level students in Northern Ireland highlights the power of oral history, as through encountering individual testimony genuinely told, the students involved in this project were able to develop a deeper interest, care and curiosity for these peoples' historical experiences and perspectives.

v Story

Story is recognised as an essential pedagogy in developing children's understanding of history (Bage, 1999). As Harnett (2007) observes, stories allow children to engage with concepts and ideas beyond their own immediate experience and to see connections between the past and the present. Stories activate children's imaginations and allow them to visualise and create mental maps of past situations. They enable children to understand and make sense of human situations and the human condition. By including stories that represent the histories of a range of cultures and societies, teachers can develop children's awareness of diversity, alternative viewpoints and introduce them to beliefs and values different to their own.

Research by Cooper (2002) investigating young children's response to stories found that the use of story developed complexity in the children's thinking and in their ability to draw inferences. Cooper (2002) noted that stories provided children with opportunities to sequence and explain events, to question motives and ask why certain things happened as well as identify reasons for events occurring and the consequences of them. In relation to teaching controversial, emotive and sensitive history, Barton and McCully's (2012) study involving 253 students from grammar, comprehensive and secondary schools in Northern Ireland further illustrates the importance of story and the use of narratives as a pedagogical tool. As Barton and McCully (2012) identify, by encountering the stories of others, a genuine curiosity and emotional engagement can develop which acts as a powerful motivation to try and better understand interpretations of history from the perspective of others.

vi Drama and role play

The use of drama and role-play in the teaching of history provides experiential learning opportunities that have the potential to enhance children's conceptual and factual knowledge of history as well as their enjoyment of the subject (Dodwell, 2012; Heathcote, 2008; Mattson, 2008). Through drama, children can step into imagined situations to develop

a better understanding of the motivations, behaviours and historical contexts that people in the past experienced. Approaches such as the mantle of the expert, thought tracking, hot seating, teacher-in-role and freeze frames enable teachers to stimulate children's interest to explore, question, debate and reflect upon the lives and experiences of people in the past using creative and child-centred activities.

Research at primary level (Goalen & Hendy, 1993; Kosti & Papaioannou, 2020), indicates that the use of drama and role-play has a positive impact on children's historical thinking, understanding and empathy. Goalen and Hendy's (1993) research study involving U.K. children from Years 5-8 identified increased levels of attainment and increased levels of historical thinking on the part of children when drama approaches were incorporated into the children's historical investigations. More recently, Kosti and Papaioannou's (2020) case study involving 43 Greek primary school children similarly found that the use of drama-in-education techniques positively impacted children's critical thinking in relation to past events. They also recorded high levels of engagement and interest in what was being taught. Verrier's (2008) small scale case study involving 6–7-year-olds in the U.K. indicates that drama approaches and role play also help develop a range of thinking, communication and social skills in tandem with developing children's historical thinking skills.

4d Content of history: Key knowledge - concepts, skills, values and dispositions

Originally introduced by Shulman (1987), pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) refers to 'the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organised, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction' (p. 8). The two main elements in Shulman's model are (1) instructional strategies and (2) knowledge of students' understanding. Much of the research on teachers' PCK in history has found that a strong understanding of the epistemological and interpretative nature of disciplinary history is a prerequisite for quality teaching (Tuithof et al., 2019; Baron, 2013; Burn, 2007; Fehn & Koeppen, 1998; McCrum, 2013). This involves an understanding of student capacity to 'think historically' which involves awareness of the role of both substantive and disciplinary knowledge. In the 1970s and 80s, British researchers empirically studied how children (7 to 14) understood history and historical concepts (Lee, 2005; Lee & Ashby, 2000; Lee, Dickenson & Ashby, 1996), and based on this work, organised historical knowledge into 'first-order' or substantive concepts and 'second-order' or disciplinary concepts.

i Substantive knowledge (first order knowledge) and understanding

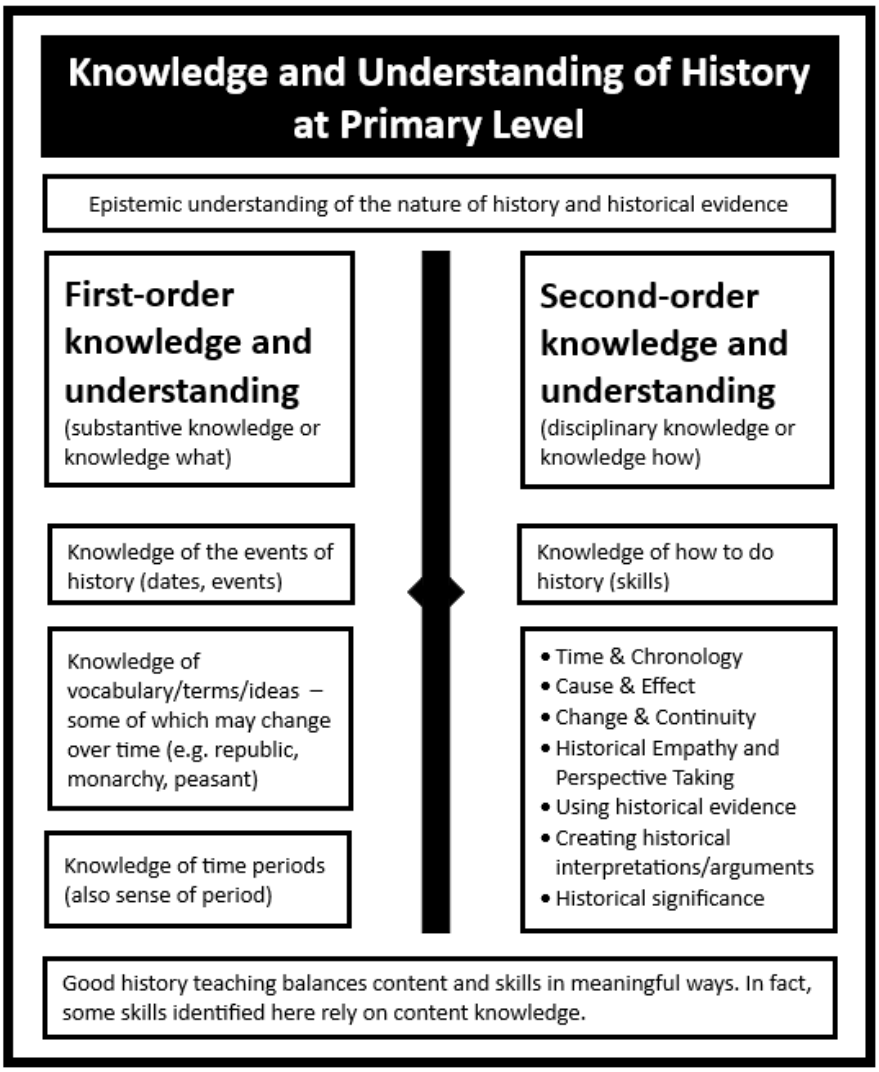
First-order concepts are focused on the content of history and include an understanding of historical terms such as 'revolution' or 'democracy' and how the meanings of these may change over time (see Figure 4.2). First-order concepts also include material such as epochs and history-specific vocabulary. This includes knowledge of events, people, context-specific vocabulary and movements, as well as an understanding of the broader trends and patterns that have shaped historical developments and defined historical time periods (Lee & Ashby, 2000). Substantive knowledge is an important component of historical understanding as it provides a foundation upon which more complex and nuanced interpretations of history can be built. Without an understanding of the events that have shaped the past, it is difficult to develop meaningful and informed perspectives on historical developments.

ii Procedural knowledge (second order knowledge) and understanding

Second-order disciplinary concepts (such as those identified in the Working as a Historian strand of the Irish Primary History Curriculum) relate to the procedural aspects of historical investigation (as shown in Figure 4.2). They include concepts such as using evidence, cause and effect, historical empathy, continuity and change and time and chronology. Procedural knowledge also includes the ability to describe or explain historical events and to analyse and evaluate the reliability of sources. This form of knowledge allows children to construct historical interpretations through using historical enquiries. By engaging with historical evidence, children are encouraged to ask questions, collect and analyse evidence, examine the varied perspectives and experiences of people in the past and create evidence-based historical accounts and interpretations (Barton & Levstik, 2004).

There is consensus amongst pedagogical experts (e.g. Lee, 2005; Levstik & Barton, 2011; VanSledright, 2011) that these two forms of knowledge should be planned together to enable deeper historical understanding (Counsell, 2011a; Donovan & Bransford, 2005; Wineburg, 2000). As Lee (2004) argues, it is impossible for children to understand or make use of procedural knowledge if they have no knowledge of the substance of the past. Although widely recognised as important, international research would suggest that the integration of both remains difficult for teachers and children (Levstik & Barton, 2011; VanSledright, 2002a; Wineburg, 2000).

Figure 4.2: Knowledge and understanding of history (developed by Caitríona Ní Cassaithe)



iii Historical content

Given history's perceived potential to influence how individuals and groups understand themselves and others (Burn & Harris, 2016), the content of any new history curriculum is always open to contest and debate as it opens questions around whose story should be told and what events should be covered (Grever & Stuurman, 2007; Taylor & Guyver, 2012). In the selection of these stories, perspectives and events, omissions, whether purposeful or not, will occur; however, rather than specifying particular content, an effective entry point for the teaching of history in primary schools, as advocated in the *Primary Curriculum Framework* (2023), is to build on the children's prior and personal knowledge and experiences, to radiate outwards to local, national and global ones.

Personal, local, national and global histories: Personal, family and social histories, the story of who they are, based on their everyday experiences of life and their family stories as told by family photographs, artefacts and stories are relevant and central to children's lives (Cooper, 2017). These 'little stories', which are grounded in the children's own personal and local histories, create a natural interest and curiosity about the past. Additionally, by connecting these personal and local histories to national and global histories, children are presented with opportunities to see and make meaningful connections to what is taught in the history classroom.

Oral histories: Using oral histories can help to develop children's historical skills of interpretation and enquiry through inter- and intra-generational learning. The use of oral history to tell local histories in classrooms with diverse migration histories and patterns of settlement was found particularly powerful in bringing to light the hidden histories of women, working classes and migrant groups for 102 students aged 11-14 from seven different schools across the U.K. (Alexander & Weekes-Bernard, 2017). Opportunities for both inter- and intra-generations conversations with women migrants, in some cases, the children's own mothers, grandmothers and aunts, revealed to children the untold histories of their communities. This use of oral history enabled children to make emotional connections and to find their own place within a broader national and international context, impacting positively on both their sense of identity and belonging.

Story: As well as being a pedagogical approach, story can also act as a teaching resource and as content within the classroom. Stories including myths, legends and nursery rhymes, often provide children with their first encounters of times past (Temple, 2016), playing a crucial role in allowing them 'to move from the present into other worlds, to explore emotion, intention, behaviour, conflicts, loves, hatreds, loyalties and complex motives beyond their experience' (Cooper, 2014, p. 6). Stories help advance children's social, emotional and cognitive development; content knowledge and historical thinking skills by providing age-appropriate ways of learning to 'put events in order, to clarify thinking and ask questions in order to explain why things happened' (Cooper, 2007, p. 27). Lunn and Bishop (2005) highlight the importance of stories in developing children's skills of 'sequencing (chronology), interpretation, enquiry, organisation and communication' (p. 60).

Bage (2013) observes that 'simple storytelling' is insufficient in developing children's historical thinking because 'historical stories only become educational historical stories,

when actively questioned' (p. 30). Activities such as role play and artefacts, historical photos and documents (Cooper, 2017; Bage, 2013) are needed alongside story to contribute towards developing children's historical skills and knowledge to provide meaningful opportunities for them to 'experience the past' (Skjæveland, 2017, p. 17). Additionally, Zapata et al. (2019) highlight the importance of children asking questions of storybooks. These questions could include: Whose perspectives narrate the text? Whose voices and experiences are absent from the text? Additionally, teachers can have children interrogate the moral values and socio-political messages embedded in the story.

Hidden/silenced histories and narratives: Despite growing calls for the inclusion of diverse and marginalised voices (e.g. indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities), little diversity appears to have made its way into school curricula globally and where it does, is oftentimes critiqued as tokenistic, reductionist or framed by Eurowestern worldviews (Chapman & Ní Cassaithe, 2022). Studies in the U.K. (e.g. Hawkey & Prior, 2011) support this perspective, highlighting how children from ethnic minority backgrounds can feel a disconnect between school history and their own family and community history. Harris and Reynolds' (2014) study involving 102 students aged 12-14 showed overwhelming support in the U.K. for including more diverse histories with varied geographical spread and historical perspectives. For Kavanagh and Ní Cassaithe (2022), addressing content imbalances in the Irish Primary History Curriculum is a matter of clear concern, particularly when the history presented in schools and elsewhere only represents some of the students who are taught it. They advocate for the inclusion of the oral histories and storytelling of indigenous people and ethnic minorities (e.g. Irish Travellers) in classrooms to help un-silence these voices and challenge any deficit understandings of indigenous pedagogies, knowledge systems and ways of being that some children may hold.

Controversial and sensitive histories: As defined by the T.E.A.C.H. Report (2007), controversial or emotive history incorporates the investigation of actual or perceived unfairness to people by another individual or group in the past. The controversial or sensitive element can also emerge where disparities exist between what is taught in school history and the children's family, community or other histories. Various international studies at primary and secondary level (e.g. Brauch et al., 2019; Goldberg et al., 2019; Kello, 2016; McCully, 2006; Zembylas & Kambani, 2012) all indicate that teachers see the value of teaching controversial, emotive and sensitive histories within the classroom. However, noted in these studies was the teachers' own emotional discomfort or positionality, limited

access to specific training and suitable resources, a perceived lack of maturity on the part of very young children, a lack of teacher subject knowledge and a fear of causing offence or insensitivity.

Numerous educators argue that teachers should not avoid teaching controversial, emotive or sensitive history in the classroom (Barton & McCully, 2005; T.E.A.C.H Report, 2007). For Kitson and McCully (2005) teachers need to move from being 'risk avoiders' to 'risk takers' who embrace the utility of history teaching, who consciously link past and present, who seize opportunities to tackle controversial issues and are not afraid to push boundaries. By engaging with controversial and sensitive history, children are provided with opportunities to explore multiple narratives of the past from different perspectives. It also allows children to engage with history at a personal level and identify the complexity of issues that are relevant to, and connect with, their own lives or family or community history. It opens children to political concepts such as democracy, rights, citizenship and equality, provides opportunities for them to study diversity, challenge stereotypes and allows them to reflect upon their own identity and perceptions of the past as well as understand the motives of different individuals and groups.

Clare's (2002) U.K. study involving Year 2 children aged 6-7 shows that young children are highly capable of engaging with topics considered controversial or sensitive when suitable teaching approaches and supports are put place by the class teacher. In this study, the children over a six-week period examined the stories of three individuals from the past whose actions contributed to changing discriminatory institutional structures and attitudes. By the end of the six weeks, Clare (2002) noted that the children recognised, and were able to discuss, a range of emotive and controversial issues such as discrimination, resistance, injustice, slavery and racism.

Frameworks of knowledge and 'Big Picture' learning: In the U.K., Ofsted (2011b) noted that a fundamental weakness in the teaching of history in primary schools was where teachers failed to establish clear mental maps of the past for children. Failure to help children locate events, people and periods in a broader historical context was perceived as impacting negatively on children's knowledge and understanding. 'Big Picture' history is concerned with enabling children to see specific events or periods within a broadly based chronological and spatial context (Bracey, 2014), allowing for different perspectives about the past to emerge. To engage in Big Picture learning, children need to develop chronological

frames of reference (e.g. Howson, 2007; Lee, 2004; Lee & Howson, 2009; van Boxtel & van Drie, 2012). Developing chronological frames can assist children in contextualising, organising and analysing events over broad temporal and spatial scales. As Gibson (2018) observes, the development of these frameworks can address gaps and distortions in student's historical knowledge and assist them in turning random historical information into coherent narratives.

At primary level, Bracey (2014) argues that historical periods and events cannot be taught in isolation if Big Picture learning is to be achieved. Instead, children need to see how periods and events fit into a broad map of the past, identifying not only when they took place but also identifying the links between them and what made them similar or different to other times. The consistent and active use of timelines, the use of maps to provide a visual awareness of space and distance, the teaching of thematic stories (e.g., technology, education, civil rights) and the examining of events from local, national and global perspectives have all been identified as approaches to support Big Picture learning (Doull & Townsend, 2018). Shemilt's (2019) study involving 11–17-year-old students suggest that these type approaches have the potential to accelerate students' formation of usable 'bigger pictures' of the past.

Big History: In response to contemporary issues and crises such as climate change, Hawkey (2014) proposes that schools give greater focus to teaching 'Big History'. For Hawkey (2014) this involves a shift away from teaching traditional, local micro and national human-centric narratives towards narratives that are more global and macro. Nordgren (2021) also argues for a turn towards themes such as nature, migration and cultural encounters.

This interpretation of Big History is concerned with providing children with large timescales over extensive periods of time and place, intended to support them in making connections, identifying patterns and trends in relation to both natural and human history. As Hawkey (2015) argues, embracing and implementing a Big History frame will support children in developing their 'scale-hopping muscles' (p. 42) and will assist them in understanding the past as a continuum, rather than fragments, periods or events. For Barry et al. (forthcoming, 2023), taking a Big History approach is advantageous in that it enables children to explore the past thematically and allows children to map and analyse concepts such as climate change over large temporal periods, moving from specific units of study to a

wider framework onto which they can orientate both themselves, their communities and contemporary issues and crisis in time.

iv Concepts and skills

Current research in history education has centred around fundamental questions relating to the nature of history, how children learn and understand the subject and the conceptual ideas they employ when engaged in historical activities. This research reveals primary children to be more than capable of engaging with abstract concepts and reasoning and demonstrates that they have a multifaceted capacity for historical understanding. When given proper supports, young children can use and engage with evidence critically to consider the role this plays in constructing historical accounts (Foster & Yeager, 1999; Lee et al., 1996, Barton, 1997; Ní Cassaithe, 2020), can identify and analyse historical sources (Barton, 1997; VanSledright & Kelly, 1998; Wineburg, 1991) and when equipped with what Lee and Ashby (2000) describe as 'an intellectual toolkit' can make sense of conflicting accounts about past. At the centre of this concept of an 'intellectual toolkit' are the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions that contribute towards an understanding of the interpretative nature of history itself as a discipline. This growing body of evidence endorses young children's ability to think critically about the complexity of the past and highlights what Waldron et al. describe as an emergent understanding of the nature of historical knowledge itself (2021).

Historical thinking: Educators can enrich children's historical knowledge, interest and understanding of the interpretative nature of history by developing their historical thinking skills. Gibson (2020) defines historical thinking as the cognitive process of analysing and interpreting historical evidence to construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct historical narratives about the past. Cooper (2002) describes young children's historical thinking as 'embryonic' (p. 39) and identifies open-ended questions, dialogue, sharing ideas and interactive strategies as pivotal in developing young children's understanding of historical thinking skills such as using evidence, time and chronology, change and continuity, cause and effect, and historical empathy, while also promoting deductive reasoning in the construction of evidence-based interpretations.

Historical evidence and the use of sources: As Barton (2005) observes, sources should be the centrepiece of the history classroom because they are the foundation of historical knowledge. Establishing opportunities to analyse sources supports the development of

children's higher-order thinking skills as they engage in processes such as sourcing, contextualisation, close reading and corroboration (Wineburg, 1991). Various studies (e.g. Ashby, 2005; Barton, 2001; Copper, 1995; Salinas et al., 2006; Solé, 2013; Stolare, 2017; VanSledright 2002a; 2002b; 2002c) all indicate that primary level aged children are capable of sophisticated reasoning when supported in their analysis of historical evidence (e.g. documentary and visual sources). Foster and Yeager's (1999) study provides evidence that twelve-year-old children are capable of critiquing sources, detecting bias and ambiguity, and identifying flaws in presented evidence. Similarly, Barton's (1997) study shows that 4th and 5th grade U.S. children have the ability to identify historical sources, evaluate evidence and reconcile contradictory accounts.

However, these studies also noted weaknesses in the children's understanding of evidence. Foster and Yeager (1999) observed a belief on the part of children that they could yield a definitive truth by 'mixing sources' (p. 311) while Barton (1997) observed that when asked to create historical narratives, children did not make connections with previously evaluated evidence. Furthermore, Ní Cassaithe's (2018) study identifies that primary aged children can falsely believe visual sources to provide a completely accurate snapshot of past events. Her findings identify the need for teachers to develop children's visual literacy skills by showing them how to pose questions about the purpose, audience and potential impact of visual images. For Ní Cassaithe (2018), this will help deepen student understanding of the content and the meaning behind visual images.

As Sáiz (2013) observes, the mere presence of historical sources does not imply a cognitive enrichment of children's learning. Ní Cassaithe's (2020) design-based intervention study with 46 Irish primary children (9-11) illustrates the importance of explicitly teaching children about the nature of historical evidence and using sourcing heuristics to enable them to interrogate a wide range of sources and construct evidence-based interpretations of the past. However, different studies (e.g. Barton & Levstik, 2003; Levstik & Barton, 2011; Voet and De Wever, 2016) show that teachers' misconceptions regarding the enquiry approach and the interpretative nature of historical evidence impact upon and limit how sources are used in the classroom.

Historical time and chronology: Understanding historical time (which is broader than objective mathematical time) is considered a key component to learning history. It enables children to place historical people, and events in time and is an essential first step to

building big picture understanding. Through examining historical time periods children can also be supported in developing 'a sense of period' (Dawson, 2004; Wilkinson, 2011). This entails moving beyond a knowledge of dates and period labels to being able to visualise the period in question by recognising the material culture and key characteristics of the time. A strong understanding of historical time also helps children to connect the past to the present (Grever, 2009; Seixas, 2006) and strengthens their conceptual understanding of cause and effect and change and continuity as children identify similarities and differences within and between time periods (Barton, 2011; Cooper, 2011; de Groot-Reuvekamp et al., 2017). Research suggests that despite being an intricate concept, young children have the capacity to engage with historical time and can be supported in their understanding of this concept. Barton and Levstik's (1996) study involving 58 children aged between 5-12 years shows that children as young as five were capable of understanding historical time. In sequencing images identifying various periods of American history, they noted that children could successfully order these using cultural references (architecture, transport and clothing).

Hodkinson's (2004) research involving 120 children aged 8-10 found that the consistent use of timelines impacts positively on developing children's chronological understanding. Similarly, a study by de Groot-Reuvekamp et al. (2018) involving 16 teachers and 788 primary children, showed that using timelines as part of all history lessons resulted in higher outcomes on children's understanding of historical time. By comparing an experiential group (N=396) to a control group (N=392), de Groot-Reuvekamp et al. (2018) found this understanding was also significantly enhanced through: activities on vocabulary related to time; placing and sequencing objects, situations, events and persons in historical eras; and comparing and contrasting historical eras through the consistent use of timelines. Sole's (2019) longitudinal study involving 49 Portuguese children aged 6-9 noted that children's understanding of historical time is deepened through specific teaching strategies which integrate timelines, pictures, artefacts, storytelling, legends, narratives and genealogies.

Change and continuity: As Seixas and Morton (2013) note, continuity and change are interwoven and pervade all aspects of history and of life. By investigating continuity and change, children see that change is a process that can occur at different rates with some changes moving quickly and others taking place over longer periods. They can also see that some significant or dramatic changes can be considered as turning points in history. Furthermore, through active exploration of these concepts, children understand that

change can bring about both positive and negative outcomes. In some cases, change may bring about progress for one group of people but result in decline for others (Seixas & Morton, 2013).

When engaging with continuity and change, children need to examine the extent, nature, direction and pace of the change under investigation and consider how different groups in the past might have experienced this change. Education researchers (e.g. Foster, 2008; Jarman, 2009; Counsell, 2011b; Fordham, 2012) highlight the importance of using analytic timelines and graphs in conjunction with narratives, metaphors, change related vocabulary and enquiry questions specifically focused on change and continuity to progress children's understanding of this concept. Young children are capable of investigating change and continuity by examining objects or photographs of familiar settings such as school or local streetscapes. The use of picture books in the classroom was also found to have a positive impact on children's developing understanding of change and continuity (Cooper, 1995).

Cause and effect: As Woodcock (2005) observes, history is a tangled web of cause and effect. Through examining causes, children learn that historical events have a variety of both broad-underlying and immediate causes which are usually interrelated and vary in their influence. Through examining effects, children learn that these can result in immediate and long-term consequences, some of which may be unintended (e.g. outbreak of war). In asking children to identify the chain of events and developments over time, teachers can involve children in answering the 'why' questions of history (Chapman, 2017).

Various studies at primary and second level (e.g. Chapman, 2003; Chapman & Woodcock, 2006; Lee, 2005; Lee & Shemilt, 2009) show that children often struggle with the concept of cause and effect and that they hold a number of misconceptions that act as barriers to developing this historical understanding. These findings indicate that children predominantly treat causes as being discrete and view the occurrence of events in the past as inevitable. By doing so, they fail to recognise that the shape of these events could easily have been altered by people, groups, institutes or other contributing factors.

To develop children's understanding of causation at primary level, Counsell (2012) emphasises the need for teachers to identify suitable enquiry questions that shape children's investigations by focusing on examining causation. Counsell (2012) notes the effectiveness of engaging children in card sorts activities connected to the question posed

with children asked to rank, order, prioritise, discuss and debate the relevancy of the cards to answering these questions. These card sort activities can act as a springboard to interrogating additional sources analytically to develop their causal explanations.

Historical empathy: Historical empathy can be defined as a cognitive and affective engagement with historical figures to 'better understand and contextualise their lived experiences, decisions, or actions,' (Endacott & Brooks, 2013, p. 41). The cognitive component entails children looking at the experiences, decisions, perspectives and actions of people from the past and examining the historical context in which they lived. The affective component (Barton & Levstik, 2004) involves children showing an interest in and care for the people in the past, recognising and respecting their human emotions and connecting the experiences of the historical figures with their own. Perikleous' (2019) study involving 68 Cyprian children between the ages of 8-12 found they expressed sophisticated ideas about people and societies in the past. However, some studies (e.g. Berti et al., 2009; Huijgen et al. 2014; Lee & Ashby, 2001) indicate that children at primary level, to varying degrees, view the past as culturally homogenous with the present and have a tendency to interpret the past in deficit terms and through a present day lens.

Although the concept itself has been contested - some argue that it is impossible to fully empathise with people from a past very different to the present, these studies indicate that with explicit teaching, children can understand and contextualise the experiences, decisions and actions of people in the past. As Endacott and Brooks (2013) observe, contextualisation is a requisite for historical empathy and involves providing children with an 'understanding of the social, political, and cultural norms of the time period under investigation as well as knowledge of the events leading up to the historical situation and other relevant events that are happening concurrently' (p. 43). Berti et al.'s (2009) study involving 150 Italian children at all levels found children's levels of engagement in historical empathy correlated with the amount of contextual knowledge they possessed.

Multiple perspectives: In an increasingly diverse world, acknowledging the existence of multiple perspectives is both valuable and necessary (Council of Europe, 2011). A multi-perspectival approach to historical narratives gives voice to the histories of marginalised groups and helps develop student appreciation for difference and diversity (Stradling, 2003). In the context of history education, multi-perspectivity refers to the epistemic idea that history is both interpretational and subjective and that multiple coexisting narratives or

conflicting viewpoints and perspectives about particular historical events and topics exist (e.g. Barton & McCully, 2010; 2012; Wansink et al., 2018). Rather than being objectively represented by one 'closed' narrative, a multi-perspectival approach to history education goes beyond relativism by teaching children to judge and compare the validity of different narratives using disciplinary criteria (Seixas, 2015; VanSledright, 2011).

However, multi-perspectivity, in historical terms, is complex. It requires distinctions to be made between the historical actor and the evidence itself. This requires a consideration of the stances, values and attitudes of individuals from the past, the perspectives of those who interpreted them at the time and also of those who wrote about them later (Ní Cassaithe, 2020) and research has shown that teachers often wrestle with this complexity and find it difficult to address different perspectives (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Martell, 2013). To teach history from multiple perspectives requires pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987). Wansink et al. (2018) identify three areas of expertise that need to be integrated to teach history from multiple perspectives: classroom management expertise, content knowledge of existing perspectives and pedagogical expertise.

As well as providing children with sources from differing perspectives, teachers must also incorporate opportunities for meaningful discussion in order to help children gain insights into the past (Barton & Levstik, 2011). To teach in this way, teachers need an epistemic understanding of the nature of history themselves as well as pedagogical expertise on how to achieve such understanding among children (Wansink et al., 2018; Barton & Levstik, 2003; James, 2008).

Ní Cassaithe's (2020) study of children's epistemic beliefs about the nature of history explored Irish primary children's understanding of multiple perspectives. She found that the majority of the children displayed an Absolutist stance in regard to historical knowledge. Such a stance is often characterised by a view of knowledge claims as being either right or wrong (Kuhn & Weinstock, 2002) and building on from this belief, many of the children believed multiple perspectives in history were impossible as there could be only one version of history because, based on the children's observations of their own personal pasts, events can only happen one way. She also found that activities designed to specifically address children's misconceptions about history and historical perspectives allowed them to see that there can be multiple interpretations of the same event which in turn allowed them to engage in constructing evidence-based historical arguments..

Other studies also suggest that children as young as seven can hold complex understandings of the nature of knowledge and can understand that people can have multiple interpretations of the same information (Chandler et al., 2002). Cooper (2007), found that much younger children can be encouraged to look for alternative viewpoints, particularly through the use of story. However, as these studies show, this will not be achieved without strong teacher guidance and scaffolding.

iiii Historical values and dispositions

History teaching, particularly the kind of history teaching needed in current times, requires a set of values and dispositions that can facilitate effective and engaging instruction and learning.

Democratic citizenship: Various history educator researchers (e.g. Barton & Levstik, 2004; McCully, 2012; Nokes, 2013) argue that the dispositions relevant to democratic citizenship can be fostered through the development of children's historical thinking. By involving children in historical enquiries that take into account multiple perspectives and promote a critical analysis of multiple sources, it is believed that children will be equipped with the necessary skills to make reasoned judgements and to take part in collaborative discourses about public issues. These enquiries help children to see the importance of giving consideration to and evaluating different perspectives, arguments and evidence before formulating their own viewpoints. These dispositions are particularly important given that Ireland is a divided island which in the last 100 or so years has seen the War of Independence, the Civil War and over 30 years of bitter conflict in the lifetime of the children's parents and grandparents. That conflicted past still resonates, at least periodically in the present.

Historical agency: Historical agency, according to Barton (2012) has three dimensions: (1) agency and the subjects of history, (2) agency and the acts of history and 3) agency and moral judgements in history. Studies (e.g. Barton, 1997; den Heyer, 2003; Lee et al., 1997) show that children at primary level age tend to understand historical agency as limited to the actions of heroic individuals engaged in individual power struggles. Teachers also tend to teach history from this perspective, focusing on heroic individuals, large-scale institutions or abstract entities to explain change, oftentimes at the expense of the social groups who also contributed to these events (den Heyer, 2003). As Barton (2012) and Seixas (2012) observe, where these groups are included they are often depicted as 'victims' meaning

that historical agency often goes unexamined in what is taught. Diverse histories recognising the agency of women, minorities and others enable children to develop a better awareness of how groups have influenced and shaped history. Montgomery et al. (2014) examined how a focus on historical agency can foster children's present day agency with a 4th grade elementary class in the U.S. who were inspired to write to local women leaders, record public service announcements and create digital books following their study about women's roles in the community, historically and in the present. By exploring how historical actions involve the collective efforts of many people, children can recognise the possibilities open to them to demonstrate their own agency in today's society.

Historical consciousness: Broadly speaking, historical consciousness refers to an individual's awareness and understanding of the past and how it impacts on the present (Rüsen, 2004). It includes the ability to analyse historical events and their causes and consequences, as well as the ability to connect the past to the present and future. It also includes an awareness of one's own historical context and the role memory (both public and personal) can play in shaping perceptions and interpretations of the past (Zanazanian, 2019). As Martineau and Laville (1998) argue, historical consciousness uniquely contributes to a range of civic competencies for democracy which are not addressed in other disciplines. These include the development of multiple perspectives, a sense of historical empathy and the capacity to understand the historical roots of present problems, all of which are essential to the growth of the democratically minded citizen.

Over the last few decades, research has been conducted on children's historical consciousness but this is predominantly at second-level and few studies have focused on primary-aged children. Due to deficit hypotheses regarding children's capacity to engage with concepts relating to time and historical narrative, some researchers question their ability to engage with their historical consciousness (see Schulz-Hageleit, 2006); however, Dunn and Wyver's (2019) recent study on the historical consciousness of 3-7 year olds found that young children possess an emergent understanding of time and socio-historical belonging which begins before formal schooling and indeed, continues long after it. They also found that family and community influences appear to be more influential for early understanding of the past and awareness of history. Similarly, Létourneau (2001) emphasises the child's own life story as formative in the development of a sense of chronology and argues emerging historical consciousness can be observed in children as young as five or six years old. Skjæveland (2017) found that physical and bodily experiences

(exploring artefacts, tasting foods, meeting members of the community), along with teachers' storytelling, stimulated an interest in and understanding of history.
These studies indicate that although historical understanding in early childhood might be considered emergent, the teaching of history in the early years can lay the foundation for enriching children's historical consciousness for future life. Children's experiences and interactions with the world around them contribute to their historical consciousness. Through personal and family history, community history, and national history, through nursery rhymes, stories, photos, artefacts, buildings, books, media and conversations with family members, teachers, and other adults, children can develop a sense of continuity and change and begin to understand that the world has not always been the way it is now (Cooper, 1995).

e Children's views of history

Despite a shift in both the purpose and nature of history education, an association between the recall of facts and being 'good at history' persists and this contributes to a number of misunderstandings that children possess about the nature of historical knowledge (Epstein, 2010). Cognitive research on historical thinking shows that students often hold preconceptions about history, some of which can act as 'bottlenecks' (Middendorf & Pace, 2004, Ní Cassaithe et al., 2022) to impede conceptual understanding. Many of these relate to children's ideas about knowledge and knowing and are epistemic in nature. These 'epistemic bottlenecks' (Ní Cassaithe, 2020), just like a bottleneck on the road, slow down children's ability to think historically which, in turn, impacts on their ability to 'do history'. Ní Cassaithe's study of the epistemic bottlenecks Irish primary children hold about the nature of history and historical evidence identified a number of preconceptions that underpin children's conceptualisations of the discipline (see Table 4.1). These findings correlate with studies conducted with older students (Chapman, 2011; Lee & Ashby, 2000; Wineburg, 2001) indicating that, unless actively challenged, such ideas remain consistent throughout a student's education (Ní Cassaithe et al., 2022). Challenging these ideas requires strong pedagogical content knowledge.

Table 4.1: Preconceptions that underpin children's conceptualisations of history

Beliefs about the nature of history	History is the past
	History is finding about out what's true and false or right and wrong
	There is only one version of how things happened in history
	If there are differences in historical accounts, one must be wrong
	Differences in accounts can be resolved by going with the majority
	Historical knowledge is passed on by parents and grandparents
	History, like the past, cannot change
	Historians make guesses if they don't know the answer
	No one can really know what happened because we weren't there
Beliefs about 'doing history'	Doing history is about putting facts together
	Learning history is reading from the textbook
	Learning history is gathering information about the past
	Being good at history needs a good memory to remember facts
	The history textbook is the best way to learn history
	The textbook or the teacher has the correct answers
	Historical evidence helps you gather facts

4f Conclusion: History through the lens of the vision and principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework*

In times of multifaceted crises, fuelled by exponential population growth, energy consumption, systemic inequalities and the effects of climate change, a transformative vision of history education is needed. A transformative history education goes beyond an emphasis on factual recall and involves a commitment to the development of active, critical citizens in order to realise a more just, equal and inclusive society (Wood & Sheehan, 2022). The *Primary Curriculum Framework* (GoI, 2023) supports this vision by advocating for a high-quality and inclusive education that aims to provide a strong foundation for children to achieve their potential as individuals and as agentic members of their communities.

Content-wise, Nordgren (2021) argues that as well as covering local, national and international histories, themes such as nature, migration and cultural encounters must be the central point around which narratives of school history are communicated. Building on this, Hawkey (2014) proposes Big History rather than human-centric national narratives while Barry, Ní Cassaithe, Whelan and Oberman (forthcoming) advocate for Big Picture history involving engaging with longer time spans of human and non-human histories in order to identify patterns, changes and continuities over time. Kavanagh and Ní Cassaithe (2023) propose storytelling (with an emphasis on Indigenous and ethnic minority stories and knowledge systems) as an age-appropriate approach for a place-based and inclusive approach that challenges the Euro-western knowledge and narratives that have traditionally dominated history classes.

Pedagogically, Waldron et al. (2020) call for critical historical enquiry approaches which take account of both cognitive and affective responses to issues such as global sustainability, human rights, democracy and social justice in order to develop the kinds of capacities needed to engage with current and future circumstances. These capacities could include: the ability to critically engage with difficult knowledge, the ability to question and critique humanity's relationships across place and time and the ability to celebrate diversity through the sharing of stories and cultures (Waldron, 2021). Drawing on the existing PSCH (GoI, 1999c), the *Primary Curriculum Framework* (GoI, 2023) and this literature review, Table 4.2 provides an overview of additional suggested approaches and pedagogies that could underpin a transformative history curriculum.

Both Table 4.2 and Appendix F make explicit the key concepts, suggested content, key skills and underpinning values and dispositions needed to enact a transformative history curriculum that is in line with the principles and vision of the *Primary Curriculum Framework* (2023). In doing so, they provide a partial response to the Research Question "In response to curriculum overload, what are the desired curriculum processes and essential curriculum content for children's learning and development in SEE / history and geography within the broad primary curriculum?" with a particular focus on history education.

Table 4.4 provides a response to the partial Research Question: 'Through the lens of the vision and principles of the Primary Curriculum Framework, what is the philosophical basis and educational basis for the curriculum area/subjects?' focusing specifically on how history education can contribute to the vision of the Framework while Appendix D

provides a response to the partial Research Question: What are the desired curriculum processes and essential curriculum content for children's learning and development in SEE/ history and geography within the broad primary curriculum?

Appendix F summarises the findings of this review of history teaching and learning and provides the contextual background to the research question 'In response to curriculum overload, what are the desired curriculum processes and essential curriculum content for children's learning and development in history within the broad primary curriculum?' This content is also viewed in light of the review of literature in relation to ERB and the opportunities it affords with regard to history education.

Table 4.2: Approaches to primary history education

Approaches to primary history education					
Historical enquiry	**Object based learning & artefacts**	**Place based learning (heritage sites, local area & trails)**	**Oral history**	**Story**	**Drama & role play**
Children participate in a collaborative historical investigation. Through the use of a stimulus, the teacher facilitates children generating their own questions and considering sources to answer these questions. Suitable sources are gathered to allow children to answer the questions. These should include a variety of sources (e.g. visual evidence, documentary evidence, oral evidence and physical evidence). Children engage in teacher-designed activities to analyse the sources. Children gather their findings and synthesise their analysis to create evidence-based responses to	Historical investigations using objects and artefacts provide children with dialogic, active and hands-on learning experiences. They also provide children with tangible, concrete evidence from the past. Children gain authentic understanding of historical events, people and cultures through asking questions of, analysing, making inferences and interpreting objects and artefacts. Children should be encouraged to observe, describe and draw the	The use of historic sites and the child's local area in primary history education provide children with authentic educational settings that deepen their engagement with historical thinking. The use of local historical sites helps contextualise learning, allows children to make connections between their locality and national and international events and provides a space for undertaking fieldwork. Using the local area strengthens the development of children's sense of belonging, local community, identity and provides tangible links to the past. It fosters an interest for the past and for heritage conservation. Investigations of the local area involve experiential activities such as the use of historical sites, trails, maps and other historical sources. Children are engaged in fieldwork and collaborative group work that can potentially involve members of the wider community. Place-based learning provides children with material, physical and sensory experiences as well as generating emotional connections that encourage children to undertake further investigations into local people,	The use of oral history provides children with a vivid historical source that shares with them a collection and analysis of historical information about individuals, families, events, or everyday experiences. The use of oral history in the classroom makes incidents, events and people from the past feel more real to children and provides them with access to memories and information	The use of story (e.g. nursery rhymes, folk stories, historical songs and poems, myths and legends, historical stories and historical fiction) as a methodology, alongside a range of other primary and secondary sources, can enhance and develop children's understanding of a person, topic or event by providing a visualisation of a past situation. Children should	The use of drama and role-play provides children with opportunities to experience the past symbolically and develop their historical thinking, communication and social skills as well as developing conceptual and factual historical knowledge and understanding. Techniques such as freeze frames, mantle of the expert, thought tracking, teacher in role and hot seating provide stimulating and experiential learning

enquiry questions. Concluding a historical enquiry involves children drawing conclusions, communicating findings, reflecting on their learning and making possible connections to current events.	object/artefact being investigated in detail and to ask what, where, how, when and why questions about the object/artefact.	places and events. Incorporating visits to historical sites and places e.g. museums provides children with a 'first hand' account of history that activates both cognitive and affective dimensions of learning.	that may not be possible to retrieve from examining other sources.	be encouraged to treat these stories like any other historical source through asking questions of, analysing, making inferences and interpreting the stories presented.	opportunities where the teacher and children draw upon evidence to create enactive representations of past events, lives and situations.

Table 4.3: Principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework* and history

Principles	History
Partnership	Connections to families, community and other local partnerships strengthen children's understanding of the past.
Pedagogy	Signature pedagogies for history education include: historical enquiry, object based teaching, place-based outdoor education & field trips, oral history, drama and story. These ensure dynamic and active-learning that motivates and engages.
Relationships	History education supports children to develop values of care, respect, empathy and appreciation for the diversity of people in their classrooms, schools, communities and across the world. Inclusion of personal histories, local histories, national histories, global histories and topics relevant to the children's lives can develop a sense of identity that can be enriched throughout their schooling.
Transitions and continuity	History education continues the groundwork built in earlier programmes such as *Aistear*. Connections between *Aistear* and history are particularly appropriate in the following ways: Identity and Belonging - concepts of history can be explored through stories and discussions about family history, cultural traditions, and local history. Exploring and Thinking - incorporating historical elements into children's play and exploration to allow them to think historically. Communicating - using stories, discussions, and visual aids to introduce basic historical concepts and encourage children to express their thoughts and questions. History topics such as Myself, My Family and My Local Area draw on children's own experiences of change and continuity and enrich their sense of historical consciousness and self-identity. These are also topics that can be revisited with increasing depth over time. The Junior Cycle History Curriculum continues children's historical journey and builds upon the foundation laid in primary history education. It aims to deepen students' historical understanding and analytical skills and enrich their historical consciousness. The Junior Cycle History specification provides multiple opportunities to progress the related learning that has taken place at primary level.
Learning environments	Access to high quality resources (artefacts, maps, photographs, documents, oral evidence) can support children's learning across the curriculum and increase an understanding of the nature of history. School grounds, school museums and school events can also provide interesting contexts for historical study. The local environment, in particular, can provide children with opportunities for the development of historical thinking and provide continuity for the child as they engage with increasingly complex content and concepts throughout their educational journey.

Inclusive education and diversity	Inclusion and diversity can be supported through the choice of topics, stories and sources selected and also by the questions asked. When selecting material, teachers should consider the backgrounds of the children in their class and community but also consider the perspectives and stories of those who have been traditionally excluded from mainstream discourses. Inclusion can also be supported through enquiry-based pedagogies which are grounded in children's questions and active and object-based learning.
Engagement & participation	Historical enquiry, as a child-centred, collaborative and activity-based methodology provides children with hands-on opportunities to engage with people and events from the past. Through enquiry, children work together to pose their own questions and analyse sources to create their own interpretation of past events that are grounded in evidence. Furthermore, locally-based outdoor education (trails, field trips and walks) provide pedagogically sound opportunities for children to experience their environment in creative and meaningful ways.
Assessment and progression	Through a disciplinary/enquiry-based approach to history, assessment focuses on both content knowledge and children's ability to think historically, providing a more holistic picture of the child's development. Through this approach, assessment may happen during the process of enquiry (development of historical thinking skills) and at the end point of the enquiry in more meaningful and creative contexts.

Within the context of curricular reform, this chapter has explored the philosophical and educational basis for history as a school subject and the pedagogies, knowledge, concepts, skills and values necessary to support a history curriculum that is reflective of the visions and principles of the Primary Curriculum Framework. As articulated in this chapter, the justification for including history in a primary school curriculum lies rooted in its role as a tool for shaping informed, engaged, and empathetic citizens. History offers children a connection to the past, providing a rich insight into human experiences and the values and ideas that have shaped the world over time. History also imparts unique and invaluable thinking skills to primary children such as historical significance, using evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, time and chronology, historical perspective taking and historical empathy. These historical thinking skills cultivate their ability to think critically and analytically as they evaluate historical sources, discern between fact and opinion, and draw reasoned conclusions grounded in evidence. History also fosters a sense of empathy and perspective, as children are exposed to diverse experiences and viewpoints, encouraging them to appreciate and respect different cultures and ideas. Engagement with history can transcend classroom boundaries and can influence decisions, personal choices, attitudes and values and also develop important dispositions such as empathy, respect for

different perspectives and the ability to make informed, evidence-based judgements, dispositions that are valued, not just in the history classroom but throughout life.

Chapter 5

Education about Religions and Beliefs

Niamh McGuirk

This chapter provides a comprehensive review and summary of literature (1999-2023) in the area of Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERB). Like the previous chapters, the review builds on the historical and current context and it explores the signature pedagogies, knowledge, concepts, skills, values for ERB education within SEE and the *Primary Curriculum Framework* (PCF).

5a Education about Religions and Beliefs

The inclusion of ERB in the proposed national curriculum as an integrated yet discrete component of SEE is an important curricular response to represent and to educate about the religious and belief identities in Irish society. This review draws on literature related to non-confessional, multi-belief, religious and non-religious philosophical worldviews education[1]. The review is guided by the following definition;

Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERB): ERB helps pupils to know about and to understand the cultural heritage of the major forms of religion, belief traditions and world views which have been embraced by humankind. It is not focussed on nurturing a belief or practice system of any one religion, instead it focuses on fostering an informed awareness of the main theist, non-theist, and secular beliefs including key aspects of their cultural manifestations. ERB aims to foster a respect, understanding and empathy for members of such religions, beliefs and world views (NCCA, 2015, p. 7-8).

Drawing on a range of research, evidence, reports and other literature, this chapter of the SEE literature review provides relevant information in relation to ERB's philosophical and educational conceptualisations and approaches. It will outline the curricular processes most suited to teaching and learning in this area and will detail how the literature conceptualises key ERB knowledge in relation to concepts, skills, values and dispositions.

[1] Although religious education and ERB is a topic of much consideration and debate and has a wide literature base, it is beyond the scope of this literature review to specifically address issues that may arise due to school patronage or ethos.

5b Education about Religions and Beliefs and the curriculum

Before the development of ERB-related learning outcomes as part of the SEE curriculum, it is pertinent to acknowledge that there are diverse understandings relating to this educational discourse. Religions, belief systems and worldviews cannot be neatly boxed into categories. Rather, they are complex social realities with fuzzy edges, permeable boundaries and, due to the complexity of cultural expression, the nature of traditions and practices can be contested (Jackson, 2019). As such, we are reminded to be critical of our use of the terms 'religion' and 'world religions' as depending on how the words are used and in which context, they have the potential to reify, objectify, essentialise and to 'other' (Benoit, 2021; Bleisch & Schwab, 2021; Jackson, 2019).

In certain countries, when it comes to teaching and talking about religions and beliefs in school contexts, there are two main types of approaches; confessional and religious studies/education (non-confessional) (Cush, 2007; Faas et al., 2016; Garreta-Bochaca et al., 2019; Latif, 2019). Firstly, a confessional or denominational approach focuses primarily on one specific religion or worldview and has the aim of religious instruction and faith-formation (Latif, 2019; Coolahan et al., 2012). In some contexts, including Ireland[2], a confessional approach can also be referred to as religious education (Faas et al., 2016). Secondly, a religious studies approach is non-confessional has a general goal of promoting knowledge and understanding of different religions, beliefs and worldviews[3] (Cush, 2007; Franken, 2017; Freathy et al., 2017; Garreta-Bochaca et al., 2019; Ndlovu, 2014).

Recommendations from the Council of Europe and from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)/ Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) advocate teaching religious education in public schools in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner and if this approach does not underpin the curriculum, that an opt-out must be available for parents, guardians and caregivers[4] (Jackson, 2014; OSCE/ODIHR,

[2] Due to the historical context in Ireland, the overwhelming majority (96%) of primary schools have a denominational ethos and approximately 90% of schools provide confessional religious education (Darmody & Smith, 2017; Fischer, 2016; Kieran & Mullally, 2021).

[3] A worldview can be understood as 'an individual's frame of reference, held consciously and subconsciously, that evolves due to life experiences, enabling them to make sense of the world' (Flanagan, 2021, p. 320).

[4] Research highlights the complex nature of opting out for children and their families and identifies a risk of marginalisation for those who chose to opt-out (Temperman, 2010). Research in the Scottish context reports minimal requests for opt out (Nixon, 2013) while research in Irish and Northern Irish schools outline that the process can prove problematic and at times, ineffective (Darmody et al., 2016; Mawhinney, 2007; Richardson Niens et al., 2013; Stapleton, 2020).

2007). In the Irish context wherein primary schools are primarily managed by patron bodies, provision for religious education (referred to as the Patron's Programme in the *Primary Curriculum Framework*) is the responsibility of the patron[5].

The *Primary Curriculum Framework* (PCF) includes learning in ERB within the curriculum area of Social and Environmental Education (SEE) that 'supports children's awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the world through learning about the rich diversity of peoples: their experiences, cultures, religions, beliefs, and environments in different times, places, and circumstances' (DoE, 2023, p. 19). Through the lens and principles of the PCF and within the context of SEE, this chapter details pertinent educational philosophies and approaches to be considered when engaging in teaching relating to Education about Religions and Beliefs.

5c Educational philosophies

When considering curricula design, implementation and operationalisation, there are a number of educational philosophies to be taken into account. This Chapter aims to provide a concise yet comprehensive overview of two of the most commonly employed; phenomenology and constructivism.

i Phenomenology: Learning about religions, beliefs and worldviews

A phenomenological approach attempts to present different religious and non-religious perspectives from the insider's point of view with the aim of fostering, in an academically impartial way, an understanding of and an empathy towards an individual's experience (Jackson, 2014; 2019; Teece, 2010). It employs descriptive and thematic approaches such as feasts and festivals, places of worship, and naming ceremonies, to support children to *learn about* religions, beliefs and worldviews, and it is aligned with a 'world religions' approach (Barnes, 2011; Ipgrave, 2013; Vallerand, 2018; Teece, 2010).

In a range of international contexts over the previous decades, forms of ERB have tended to draw on a 'world religions paradigm' or a 'world religions' approach which focuses on the study of discrete religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and

[5] "There are a number of patrons' programmes in the Irish primary school system, reflecting the diversity of patronage. Some are denominational or religious, emphasising the place of children's faith, spiritual, and moral development in their lives. Some are ethical or multi-belief and values-based, and emphasise children's understanding of ethics and values and their application in the life of the child" (DoE, 2023, p. 19).

Sikhism (Jackson, 2019). Jackson (2019) highlights concerns about the potentially reductive impact of teaching in this way without first interrogating understandings and conceptualisations of religion(s). The phenomenological approach has been critiqued for being unable to truly offer an insiders' perspective, for failing to convey depth of religious commitment, for essentialising religious (and non-religious) beliefs and practices and for resulting in the potential to other (Barnes, 2011; Berglund, 2014; Jackson, 2014; 2019; Vallerand, 2018). In the classroom, this can lead to misrepresentation and to incorrect and ill-informed assumptions and discussions about religions, beliefs and worldviews and the role they play in peoples' lives and in society (Benoit, 2021; Revell & Christopher, 2021).

Thus, religions or belief systems 'should not be taken as referring to bounded and incontestable systems, but to the various constructions of each religious tradition made by different insiders and outsiders' (Jackson, 2019, p. 115). Although the approach has been critiqued, a variety of phenomenological methods are integrated into a range of other approaches.

ii Constructivism: Learning about and from religions, beliefs and worldviews

Although it has been argued that this approach has been distorted from its original philosophical basis in human development, the approach suggests that it is possible, in an objective and descriptive way, for children to derive personal understanding and meaning from learning about the beliefs and worldviews of others (Grimmitt, 1987; 1994; 2000; Hull, 2000; Teece, 2010). This involves learners being presented with (primarily) religious material and artefacts, hearing about their significance for particular individuals and groups, and then engaging in personal reflection on the material itself and how it relates to their own experience(s). As such, learners gain knowledge about a religion, belief or worldview, are supported to gain insight(s) into the meaning(s) behind such knowledge and are encouraged to reflect on the meaning(s) for the people for whom it is important and from a personal perspective.

Critiques of this particular form of *learning from* religions, beliefs and worldviews relate to the supposed inherent spirituality, sacredness or positive attribute(s) of the material, and to discrepancies in interpretations of the purpose of reflection; that is to say, whether it is to have a (spiritually) nurturing function for the learner or whether it is solely to enrich understanding of others' religions, beliefs and worldviews (Erricker et al., 2011; Jackson, 2019; Teece, 2010). Additionally, some learners may find no valuable or relevant learning in

their reflections on the experiences of others or some may disagree with the potential influence of another (religious or non-religious) worldview on individual perspectives (Teece, 2010; Jackson 2014). Notably, the original rationale for the approach was to create a 'synergetic relationship' between the worldview of the learner and the human experiences of those from a range of perspectives (Teece, 2010, p. 96).

The following Chapter details forms of educational and pedagogical approaches that are commonly employed in primary classrooms. It first outlines the conceptual enquiry approach and the interpretive approach, and then provides information about the pedagogies the literature foregrounds as most appropriate for ERB-related teaching.

5d Processes of ERB: Pedagogical approaches

In some contexts such as Norway, due in part to some of the aforementioned concerns, there has been a move away from the *learning from* approach in order to respect and reflect human rights standards (Bråten, 2009; Skeie, 2012). In other contexts such as England, Scotland and Ireland, *learning about* and *learning from* is a common educational approach to ERB (Bråten, 2009; Faas et al., 2020; Robertson et al., 2017). Furthermore, this approach is endorsed by the Council of Europe[6]. Research has highlighted that children want and enjoy opportunities to learn and talk about religions, beliefs and worldviews in school and that this form of ERB gives them an opportunity to learn about individual worldview(s) and to also learn from peers in relation to their own worldview(s)[7] (Åhs et al., 2016; 2019; Darmody et al., 2016; Jackson, 2012).

The interpretive approach and the conceptual enquiry approach are two widely used educational approaches that offer possibilities for ERB teaching in primary classrooms.

i The conceptual enquiry approach

In order to make sense of and give meaning to our world and the human experience, this pedagogical approach adopts the stance that learners' focus of enquiry ought to be

[6] A guide exists to support educational professionals to understand and implement the recommendations from Signposts: policy and practice for teaching about religions and non-religious world views in intercultural education (Jackson, 2014). The guide aims to help teachers deepen their knowledge, skills and attitudes and to consider how ERB can be implemented in an appropriate and respectful way; *Signposts Teacher Training Module- Teaching about religions and non-religious world views in intercultural education* (Council of Europe, 2020)

[7] From a critical realist perspective, this approach does not go far enough in creating educational opportunities for learners to question the nature of reality and of the truth claims being presented about religious and non-religious beliefs and worldviews (Wright, 2000; 2001; 2008).

constructivist and focus on key concepts from religions, beliefs and worldviews (Erricker et al., 2011). The conceptual enquiry approach contends that there are three types of concepts, a) those that are common to all experiences, regardless of religion, belief or worldview (e.g. celebration, belonging, remembering), b) those that are common to many religions and some beliefs and worldviews (e.g. worship, symbolism, ritual), and c) those that are distinctive to particular religions (e.g. Ummah/Islam, Trinity/Christianity, Rationalism/Humanism) (Teece, 2010). The approach is supported by a five-stage pedagogical methodology that has been implemented in ERB curricula (Erricker et al., 2011; Wedell; 2010). Learners share personal understandings and perspectives on the concept, relate it to their own and others' lives, and consider the value the concept may have for individuals who hold the concept in high esteem in their own religion, belief or worldview. Concerns about this approach relate to the risks of descriptive and explanatory reductionism as curricula are designed and implemented (Teece, 2010; Wedell, 2010). Educators are reminded to foreground the relationship between the concept under focus, its associated values and how it contributes to understanding the human experience for those in the associated religion, belief or worldview (Teece, 2010; Wedell, 2010).

ii The interpretive approach

As Jackson's (2019) interpretive approach involves learning new concepts and content and also requires thought and reflection from learners, he acknowledges that it shares some similarities with the *about* and *from* approaches. However, he contends that it is different. First, Jackson's conceptualisation is broader, more flexible and he considers religions, beliefs and worldviews not 'straightforwardly definable' (Jackson, 2019, p. 199). Second, more attention and consideration is given to the internal diversity of religions, beliefs and worldviews. Third, the interpretive approach takes into account the positionality and worldview of the learner in relation to the ERB material and acknowledges that it is not always possible to impose universal learning outcomes or to assume the same educational goals are achievable or appropriate for all learners. Lastly, the interpretive approach takes a less structured consideration of the place and process of reflection. Although this form of ERB does require thought and reflection from children, it acknowledges that how or when a learner will respond reflectively and reflexively cannot be anticipated (Jackson, 2019).
The approach has three key principles; representation, interpretation and reflexivity (Jackson, 2011; 2019). Representation reflects the reality that religions, beliefs and worldviews are embedded in actions, behaviours and life-world practice(s). It acknowledges the complexity, internal diversity and varying ways in which religions, beliefs and

worldviews manifest in the lives of individuals, groups and in the religious or non-religious system(s) of belief themselves (Jackson, 2011; 2019). The principle of interpretation implies comparing and contrasting as a meaning-making process. While acknowledging the existing positionality and worldview of the learner, material is presented and the learner attempts to understand and empathise through an interplay of contrast and comparison between their own worldview concepts and experiences and those of the worldview under focus (Jackson, 2019). The third principle, reflexivity, relates to the impact of the new learning on the learner's previous understandings and values (Jackson, 2011; 2019). It is important to note that the goal is not for the learner to adopt new concepts or values from a different worldview to their own, rather for the learner 'to raise self-awareness and a critical examination of one's own assumptions' and for them to have 'opportunities for distanced, constructive criticism of the material' (Jackson, 2014, p. 28). Jackson contends that reflexivity activities can focus on a range of areas including self-awareness, similarities and differences, or can focus on how particular (personal or social) values may contribute positively to citizenship and intercultural understanding (Jackson, 2014).

To support a deeper consideration and exploration of the concept of religions and belief systems and the different ways they play out in people's daily lives, Jackson (2019) presents a three-level model comprising the relationship(s) between the individual, the group(s) they belong to and the wider (non)religious tradition. This allows space to connect individual experiences to social experiences, resist categorising and essentialising belief concepts and practices, and enhances the potential to reflect the internal diversity of religions and beliefs, within and beyond 'major world religions' and other secular philosophical worldviews (Jackson, 2019).

It is important to note that the aforementioned philosophical and educational approaches are not mutually exclusive and may draw from a range of methodologies. There are instances (in curricula, practices and contexts) wherein a range of pedagogies reflect a mix of approaches (Koukounaras-Liagkis, 2020).

iii Pedagogical approaches

While there is a place for teacher-centred teaching in ERB, the literature foregrounds the importance of student-centred pedagogies (Grimmitt, 2000; Jackson, 2014; Koukounaras-Liagkis, 2020; OSCE/ODIHR, 2007, Sierra-Huedo et al., 2020, Skrefsrud, 2022).

Experiential learning: In contrast with a focus on 'world religions' or 'knowledge acquisition', a student-centred focus to learning highlights the importance of the real-life experiences and perspectives of children (Ipgrave, 2004; Moulin, 2011; Skrefund, 2022; Thanissaro, 2012). Rather than presenting static curricular representation of religions, beliefs and worldviews that run the risk of reinforcing stereotypes and generalisations; creating a space for children to name and share their realities in relation to the new learning enhances the potential for a more authentic learning experience in ERB (Benoit, 2021; Ipgrave, 2004; Moulin, 2011). In line with culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2021), an experiential approach acknowledges and includes children's own backgrounds and identities. According to Jackson, an experiential approach to ERB employs pedagogies that 'should 'transcend the informative', engaging student attitudes by being affective as well as cognitive, providing opportunities for reflective exercises, creative expression and engaged action' (2019, p. 222). Research reports that learners like this approach. However, it should be noted that some children might be reluctant to name or share the religious, belief or worldview aspect(s) of their identities in school contexts (Isik-Ercan, 2015, Malone et al., 2021; Moulin, 2011). Furthermore, some report a dislike for the potential of being treated as a spokesperson for their (or their family's) religion, belief or worldview, for being labelled into categories that do not reflect their lived experiences, and for the potential to be on the receiving end of prejudicial attitudes from their peers (Åhs et al., 2016; Isik-Ercan, 2015; Jackson, 2014; Moulin, 2011). Bearing that in mind, and pending a 'safe(r)' and respectful space (see below), ERB can consider children as active learners, presenting knowledge and concepts that are enhanced with personal elements that offer deeper insights into religions, beliefs and worldviews and that can also challenge the idea that they are monolithic, homogeneous systems (Berglund, 2014; Jackson, 2014; Skrefund, 2022).

Dialogical and participative pedagogies: For ERB, it is argued that a plurality of methodologies and pedagogies is necessary and that, at times, some of these will be in tension (Freathy et al., 2019). Dialogical and participative pedagogies feature as well-suited to creating an active-learning environment that enables experiential and reflective learning and that fosters an understanding of and respect for diverse religions, beliefs and worldviews (Alberts, 2010; Cush, 2010; Geikina, 2013; Jackson, 2014; Lundie & O'Siochru, 2021, Mavroudis & Kondoyianni, 2022; Osbeck, 2019; OSCE/ODIHR, 2007; O'Grady, 2010; Smith et al., 2018). Dialogical and participative pedagogies can build knowledge through listening and interacting with people from different religious and secular convictions and

can foster skills such as empathy, multi-perspectivity, and reflection on personal beliefs and prejudices (Bråten et al., 2020; Jackson, 2014; Santoro, 2008). Some teachers and learners express a preference for dialogical approaches in the classroom (Morris et al., 2010; O'Grady, 2010). In creating a dialogical space, educators are reminded to keep a focus on the goal of the dialogue and that teacher instructions, activity type and the strategies used play an important role (O'Grady, 2010; Vrikki et al., 2019).

Teaching strategies and methodologies conducive to dialogical and participative pedagogies include story, texts, case studies, artefacts, visual images, virtual tours, videos, field-trips (to places of worship for example), visiting speakers, debate, dilemmas, scenarios, circle time, drama, questioning, Philosophy for Children (P4C) and community of enquiry (Cush, 2007; Faas et al., 2020; Freathy et al., 2019; Goodman, 2018; Lundie et al., 2021; 2022; Mavroudis & Kondoyianni, 2022; Osbeck, 2019; OSCE/ODIHR, 2007; Riegel & Kindermann, 2016; Robertson et al., 2017; Valk, 2007; Wintersgill, 2015; 2019).

5e Content of ERB: Key knowledge - concepts, skills, values and dispositions

This chapter outlines information relating to key ERB knowledge and concepts. It applies to teaching and learning in ERB, regardless of the philosophical or educational approach that underpins that teaching and learning.

i Moving beyond knowledge acquisition

In the literature associated with ERB, questions abound about both the nature and meaning of knowledge and central concepts, and about how they are conceptualised in relation to curricula. There is a move away from content knowledge acquisition and towards broader understandings of related concepts, ideas and key elements. Literature on the 'big ideas' in ERB corresponds with similar foci in a variety of curricular areas internationally, including geography and history (Cush, 2019). In research and related discussions, terminology such as 'deep learning' 'powerful knowledge', 'big ideas' and 'core elements' is commonplace (Bråten & Skeie, 2020; Cush, 2019; Freathy & John, 2019; Whitworth, 2020). This chapter outlines some of the key literature in this area and identifies some commonalities in the various conceptualisations of central 'knowledge' and 'content' related to ERB.

On the back of years-long collaborative research and deliberation, Wintersgill's (2017) *Big Ideas for Religious Education*[8] presents six 'big ideas' considered crucial to understanding and situating concepts and content when educating about religions, beliefs and worldviews; 1) Continuity, Change and Diversity 2) Words and Beyond 3) A Good Life 4) Making Sense of Life's Experiences 5) Influence and Power 6) The Big Picture (see Appendix B for an overview). While recognising the value of Wintersgill's model, (2017) to support children 'to gain a holistic appreciation of interconnected, overarching, core ideas' within ERB, rather than 'engaging with an atomised (and necessarily exclusionary) body of content identified by either religion or theme', concerns remain. These include risks of reductionism, over-simplification and essentialism should *Big Ideas* be applied universally to religions, beliefs and worldviews (Freathy et al., 2019, p. 37).

Freathy et al. (2019) argue that *Big Ideas* can be augmented by including a consideration of and reflection on ERB's epistemological and methodological principles and issues, referring to this work as *Four Big Ideas about the Study of Religion(s) and Worldview(s) [SORW].* They propose that ERB incorporates learning that i) acknowledges and explores the contested nature of religions, beliefs and worldviews, ii) includes reflective and reflexive engagement with learner identity and positionality and how it impacts an encounter with differing perspectives and worldviews, iii) recognises that the types of ERB methodologies and methods that are (and are not) used in the classroom have an impact on how the learner might engage (or not) in independent and creative thinking, iv) ERB can equip learners with the knowledge, critical thinking skills, and rights-respecting dispositions necessary for their life in the 'real world' (Freathy et al., 2019). In ERB, it is argued that it is necessary to foreground 'the relationship between the knowledge and the knower' (Freathy et al., 2019, p. 36). In other words, it is important to consider how children and teachers relate to new learning and also, which methods are used is significant and can impact the learning that takes place.

Following international educational policy trends, the recently re-developed ERB[9] curriculum in Norway includes five 'core elements'; knowledge of religions and worldviews,

[8] Documentation (including exemplars) exists to support teachers implementing Big Ideas into classroom contents in age appropriate ways. See Putting Big Ideas into Practice in Religious Education (Wintersgill et al., 2019).

[9] The non-confessional curriculum, named 'Christianity, Religion, Worldviews and Ethics', is for a discrete compulsory subject at primary and lower secondary education. In the curriculum, Christianity receives a greater emphasis in order to recognise the Norwegian national heritage and this emphasis has been the subject of some academic critique (Bråten et al., 2020).

exploring religions and worldviews using different methods, exploring existential questions and answers, ability to adopt the perspectives of others, and ethical reflection (Bråten et al., 2020, p. 6). Within its conceptualisation of 'religions and worldviews', explicit reference is made to 'Christianity, indigenous religion, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, new religions, and secular humanism as a worldview' (Bråten et al., 2020, p. 4).

Commonalities exist with this curriculum and Wintersgill's *Six Big Ideas* and Freathy et al.'s *Four Big Ideas* in relation to broad understandings of the complex and contested nature of religions, beliefs and worldviews, the variety of ways people and communities conceptualise and practice belief(s), the need for multi-perspectivity, and the impact of ERB methods such as inquiry and reflection on learning processes. Additionally, in England, the proposed *National Entitlement to the Study of Religions and Worldviews* is aligned with Wintersgill's *Big Ideas* and also includes reference to the significance of methodology to ERB (Commission on Religious Education, 2018; Cush, 2019; Wintersgill et al., 2019).

ii Breadth, depth and balance

The literature reflects common concerns in relation to how content and knowledge is conceptualised, considered, chosen and subsequently taught in the classroom. There is consensus on the need for breadth, depth and balance in relation to what is presented to children in curricula so that it reflects local and global, historical and contemporary, and religious and secular worldviews. There is agreement that it must include personal, school and societal contexts, teachers' and learners' interests and concerns, sensitive and controversial issues and also, that it allows for progression in learning (Cush, 2007; Freathy et al., 2019; Robertson et al., 2017; Valk, 2007). Geikina argues that the 'most challenging task is to collect the most relevant texts, narratives and phenomena which would reveal the minimum of [ERB] content that can widely promote the development of religious competence' (2019, p. 85).

Rather than striving for engaging teaching methods and techniques to impart content knowledge (about rituals, feasts and festivals for example), in order to facilitate deeper learning, educators are reminded to focus on understanding, questioning, reflection, empathy, respect and on what is important and meaningful within the new learning (Cush, 2007; Cush, 2019; Koukounaras-Liagkis, 2020; Ofsted, 2013; Robertson et al., 2017). ERB provides key opportunities to support learners to explore the reasons why adherents to particular religions, beliefs and worldviews 'believe and do what they do', what that means

to them, and to explore 'how each learner might respond to this in their own lives' (Robertson et al., 2017, p. 326).

iii Skills, values and dispositions

While breadth, depth and balance of learning in ERB is important for children, it is just as important that this knowledge is accompanied by the skills, values and dispositions they will need to live as active citizens.

Valuing Human Rights: To foster understanding of and respect for peoples' right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, it is first necessary to understand the beliefs, religions and values of our friends, neighbours and fellow citizens (Cush, 2007). It is argued that ERB can foster positive dispositions to difference and reduce harmful misunderstandings and stereotypes when it is rooted in and advocates values such as human rights, democracy, respect (for self and others), justice and equality (Alberts, 2010; Jackson, 2019; Loobuyck et al., 2011; OSCE/ODIHR 2007, Santoro, 2008; Sooniste & Schihalejev, 2022; Valk, 2007; Zilliacus et al., 2016). Human rights education linked to ERB includes skills such as critical thinking, conflict resolution and empathy (Freathy et al., 2019; Skrefund, 2022; Waldron et al., 2011). Jackson (2019) argues that human rights should not be the sole justification for the inclusion of ERB in public schools.

Theoretical and empirical research emphasizes the role ERB can play in different yet related areas such as integration, citizenship, community values, social cohesion and solidarity, and intercultural understanding and competence (Åhs et al., 2019; Geikina, 2013; Latif, 2019; Giorda et al., 2014; Levitt & Muir, 2014; Moore, 2005; Sierra-Huedo & Fernandez-Romero, 2020; Valk, 2007; Zilliacus et al., 2016). In an appropriate respectful and 'safe space'[10], the inclusion of ERB focused learning outcomes provides opportunities for children to share their perspectives on and experiences of religions, beliefs, worldviews, culture, society and life (Åhs et al., 2019; Loobuyck et al., 2011; Sierra-Huedo et al., 2020). Opportunities can be created to share accurate knowledge, to identify and correct misinformation and misconceptions, to challenge prejudices, and to develop respectful attitudes towards religious and non-religious worldviews (Cush, 2007; Loobuyck et al., 2011; Jackson, 2019).

[10] The literature recognises that, due to the nature of some discussions, it may not be possible for the classroom to be entirely safe for all learners. Therefore, teachers are advised to strive for the creation of a safe(r) space with guidelines on what is considered acceptable and unacceptable in lessons, discussions and debate (Jackson, 2014; Iverson, 2019).

Religious [ERB] literacy skills: Research highlights the potential for ERB to support children to develop religious literacy skills or religious competence skills. Like the concept of religion itself, the notion of a form of literacy or competence in ERB is contested and there is no overarching consensus of what it might comprise (Smith et al., 2018). Moore's (2014) oft drawn-upon definition suggests that learners would have; 'a basic understanding of the history, central texts (where applicable), beliefs, practices and contemporary manifestations of several of the world's religious traditions as they arose out of and continue to be shaped by particular social, historical and cultural contexts; and the ability to discern and explore the religious dimensions of political, social and cultural expressions across time and place' (2014, p. 380).

Alongside an awareness of one's own and others' religions, beliefs and worldviews, literacy and competence in ERB entails the dispositions, skills and willingness to reflect on, communicate with and act towards people with different religious and non-religious convictions in sensitive and respectful ways (Geikina, 2013; 2019; Koukounaras-Liagkis, 2020; Moore, 2010; 2014; Smith et al., 2018; Sooniste et al., 2022; vom Brömssen et al., 2020). How ERB literacy is conceptualised can depend on school ethos and educational philosophies, and as such, ERB literacy is 'variously configured and reconfigured in terms of the context out of which they are prescribed in the curriculum' (vom Brömssen et al., 2020, p. 145).

Multi-perspectivity: One of the key intercultural and democratic skills involved in ERB is multi-perspectivity, which can be defined as 'the ability to decentre from one's own perspective and to take other people's perspectives into consideration in addition to one's own' (Barrett et al., 2013, p. 20). Fostering the children's capacity to recognise, understand and respect multiple perspectives is 'a cornerstone for democratic living' (Marks et al., 2014, p. 255). As such, teachers need the skills to create a safe(r) classroom environment wherein children feel comfortable sharing perspectives. Teachers also need skills to scaffold dialogue and debate in a fair and balanced way so that children think and engage critically without criticising their peers' religious and non-religious perspectives (OSCE/ODIHR, 2007).

The role of the teacher Preparation, sensitivity and reflection are needed on the part of the teacher to consider the internal diversity of religions, beliefs and worldviews so that no assumptions are made about how children (or their parents) conceptualise and practise their beliefs (Jackson, 2019; Hannam & Panjwani, 2020). Educators may hold stereotypical views

or unexamined biases about particular religions, beliefs and worldviews or they may not have sufficient knowledge (about religions, beliefs and worldviews or about the children's identities) to recognise or challenge stereotypes when they arise (Aronson et al., 2016; Jackson & Everington, 2017; Subedi, 2006). There is a call for teachers to reflect on their own religious or non-religious belief identity/ies and to consider any potential influence their positionality may have on their teaching (Estivalèzes, 2017; Flanagan, 2021; Nixon et al., 2021; Jackson et al., 2017). The inclusion of children's religious and non-religious identities into formal and informal discussions and lessons can have a positive impact on their sense of belonging in a class or school. On the contrary, children who come from a minority religious background or who identify as agnostic or atheist may experience marginalisation should their identities remain unnamed or misrepresented (Aronson et al., 2016; Bryan & Bracken, 2011; Latif, 2019; Malone et al., 2021; Strhan & Shillitoe, 2022).

A safe(r) space: The research highlights the potential complexity of teaching and learning in ERB and suggests, for a range of reasons, that an 'absolutely objective, neutral and value-free' form of ERB is not possible (Freathy et al., 2019, p. 435; Åhs et al., 2019; Lundie et al., 2021). Educators are advised to minimize the risks of essentialising, sanitising and misrepresenting religions, beliefs and worldviews in order to avoid fostering misunderstandings (Smith et al., 2018). To support this, teachers are recommended to select reputable non-biased resources and content that is based on reason, that is accurate, bias-free, up to date, and that does not over-simplify complex issues (OSCE/ODIHR, 2007). In order to create a rights-respecting, 'safe(r) space' in the classroom that supports dialogue, the sharing of perspectives, listening, openness and respect, the teacher can, in collaboration with learners, devise a set of agreements or a charter that can be revisited each time ERB lessons and discussions are taking place (Åhs et al., 2019; Jackson, 2014; 2019; Iprave, 2004; Malone et al., 2021). A goal of a safe(r) space is for children to feel comfortable to openly share ERB-related views and perspectives without feeling that they might be ridiculed or marginalised (Jackson, 2014; Zilliacus et al., 2016). Research reports that learners 'appreciate skilful teachers who can both provide accurate information and manage discussions, which include significant differences in viewpoint, including secular humanism and other non-religious philosophies' (Darmody et al., 2017, p. 5).

5f Conclusion

This chapter has provided a review of the literature relevant to the inclusion of ERB learning outcomes in a SEE curriculum for primary schools in Ireland. It provided an

exposition of related educational philosophies and approaches pertinent to ERB and the curriculum. As Table 5.1 shows, ERB aligns strongly with the principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework*. This chapter also outlined the curricular processes most suited to teaching and learning in this area and how the research conceptualises key ERB knowledge in relation to concepts, skills, values and dispositions. This chapter also detailed important considerations relating to the role of the teacher when engaged in formal and informal ERB in primary classrooms. It emphasizes a need for comprehensive pre-service, in-service and continuing professional development to address practitioner knowledge, skills and confidence in this complex and often sensitive area (Eaude et al., 2017; Loobuyck et al., 2011; OSCE/ODIHR, 2007; Nixon et al., 2021; Robertson et al., 2017).

The ERB academic discourse is varied and complex. As such, when moving into 'the terrain of curriculum development, what emerges is a contested space where trust, risk, participation, voice and engagement are important elements for collective curriculum development' (Sullivan, 2018, p. 71)[11].

Table 5.1: Principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework* and Education about Religions and Beliefs

Principles	**ERB**
Partnership	In ERB, making connections with families and communities from all religious, belief and worldview backgrounds creates possibilities to reflect real-life experiences, understandings and practices. Such partnerships foster dialogue, connection and belonging, and can help challenge false information, stereotypes and negative perceptions.
Pedagogy	Appropriate student-centred pedagogies in ERB are active, experiential, dialogic and participative. These pedagogies, carried out in a 'safe' space, allow children to share and to listen to stories, experiences, perspectives and opinions. They are linked to people's lived realities and help foster respect, empathy, multi-perspectivity and reflection.
Relationships	Underpinned by human rights, ERB fosters respect for religions, beliefs and worldviews through affirming the identity(ies) of the child, their family and those in the local and wider community. Positive and quality relationships (school-child-home-community) impacts positively on engagement and builds a sense of belonging.

[11] The *Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions in Public Schools* provides a comprehensive set of ten principles to be considered when developing an ERB curriculum in public schools (see Appendix A).

Transitions and continuity	ERB builds on the *Aistear* theme of identity and belonging. It supports children to develop a positive sense of who they are and to feel valued and respected as part of a primary school community. ERB supports new and developing understandings of the religions, beliefs and worldviews of self and others. ERB also builds on the other *Aistear* themes of well-being, communicating and exploring and thinking. It does so by enabling children to develop the capacity to engage and respond with respect as they interact with others and as they make sense of the world around them. ERB enables children to name and share experiences, thoughts and opinions, and to express changing perspectives and understandings as they progress through primary school. This prepares children for the inclusive, engaging and participative principles of the Junior Cycle in post-primary school. ERB can provide a foundation for Junior Cycle Religious Education in relation to Statements of Learning 5, 6, 7, 8 and 11.
Learning environments	Children can become more engaged in learning when they see religious, belief and worldview identities affirmed and reflected in their environments. In ERB, field-trips and virtual tours to places of importance can further enhance understandings of the differences and similarities in how people make sense of and give meaning to our world and the human experience.
Inclusive education and diversity	ERB acknowledges and affirms children's individual identities and creates a space for them to learn about the religious, belief and worldview identities of their peers, and of those in Irish society and beyond. ERB is underpinned by human rights, fosters respect, understanding and empathy and makes real-world connections to the children's lives and experiences. ERB recognises that religions, beliefs and worldviews are internally diverse, context-dependent, and that there are multiple ways of having and expressing religious and non-religious beliefs.
Engagement & participation	ERB pedagogies are experiential and enquiry-based and as such, they encourage dialogue and participation. Through discussion and collaboration with their peers, children develop the intercultural and democratic skills of decision-making, critical thinking and conflict resolution.
Assessment and progression	In ERB, progression involves increasing levels of detail and understanding (from simple to complex topics), expanding awareness from individual to group, community, national and global contexts, and recognising links and connections across religions, beliefs and worldviews. Throughout primary school, children are developing and progressing their capacity to express and communicate stories, ideas and perspectives relating to religions, beliefs and worldviews.

Chapter 6

Literature review for integration in Social and Environmental Education

Susan Pike, Caitríona Ní Cassaithe and Peter Whelan

This chapter of the report focuses on the philosophical, educational and research basis for integration and provides a review of literature relating to integration with a focus on children's learning and development in history, geography and ERB. Whilst there are many forms and levels of subject integration, there is a lack of consensus on the definition and goals of integrated education (Wilschut & Piljs, 2018), the locus of integration (Pountney & McPhail, 2017) and a lack of conceptual clarity on the epistemic nature of knowing within the disciplines (Stein et al., 2008). Furthermore, as Bacon (2018) notes, with regard to research on integration, there is not yet an agreed understanding of terms such as subjects, disciplines, topics or themes, concepts that are central to any discussions on curricular integration. Additionally, the many combinations and types of integration mean that comparisons and generalisations are difficult to substantiate as each study differs from the next in terms of type of integration, subjects integrated, age groups and populations studied, intervention designs and purpose of the studies (Wilschut & Piljs, 2018). Therefore what follows within this chapter is a review of the literature most relevant to the context of moving from a subject-based curriculum to an integrated one in Ireland.

6a Definitions and types of integration

i Definitions of integration

Before reviewing the literature on integration, it is essential to consider definitions of integration as they relate to geography, history and ERB. Integrated curricula refer to educational programs that integrate multiple subjects or disciplines, rather than teaching them in isolation. Parker (2005), describing integration as 'a curriculum approach that purposefully draws together knowledge, perspectives, and methods of inquiry from more than one discipline to develop a more powerful understanding of a central idea, issue, person, or event' (p. 452-453), also argues that the purpose of curricular integration is not to eliminate the individual disciplines but rather to use them in combination with each other to further children's learning.

Like subject-based scholarship, research and practice in integration derives from various domains including: educational psychology, developmental psychology, disciplinary education and the learning sciences. As a result of these distinct approaches, there are a

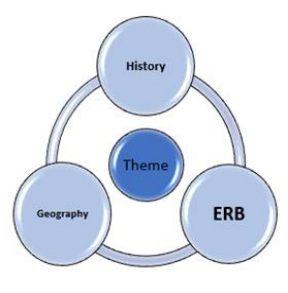
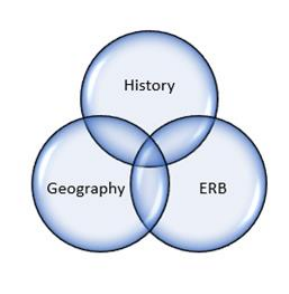
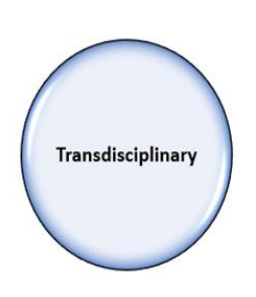
variety of terms used to describe evolving conceptions of integration, highlighting 'the slipperiness' of defining it (Badley, 2009, p. 115). Some of the multitude of terms relating to integration include: interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary, integrated, thematic, connected, sequenced, nested, shared, webbed, threaded, immersed, networked, blended, unified, coordinated and fused learning (Czerniak et al., 1999) and as Lederman and Niess (1997) argue, many practitioners and researchers use these terms interchangeably.

ii Types of integration

There are a variety of ways in which curricula may be integrated but three main forms have been identified in the literature: multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary (Drake & Burns, 2004).

- Multidisciplinary integration 'draws on a comprehension of many disciplines yet stays within disciplines boundaries' (Bacon, 2018, p. 8). This approach relates to teaching different subjects around a common theme with the aim of making the connections between the subject area content and the wider context visible (McBrien & Brandt, 1997). In this form of integration, the theme is the unifying aspect while content, instruction and assessment remain specific to each discipline (Drake & Reid, 2020).
- Interdisciplinary integration occurs when the boundaries between the disciplines are somewhat distinct but blurred. Teachers organise the curriculum around common learnings, skills or concepts across disciplines (Bacon, 2018). They bring together common learnings that are embedded in the disciplines to emphasise interdisciplinary skills and concepts (Drake & Reid, 2020).
- Transdisciplinary integration is the most integrated model where children begin with a real-world issue rather than with a particular discipline. Teachers organise the curriculum around themes and issues rather than subjects. It is argued that this form of integration enables children to develop life skills as they apply interdisciplinary and disciplinary skills in real-life contexts. Project-based learning (PBL) units often fall into the transdisciplinary category (Drake & Reid, 2020). An overview of these approaches is provided in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Types of integration (adapted from McBrien & Brandt, 1997; Drake & Burns, 2004; Bacon, 2018)

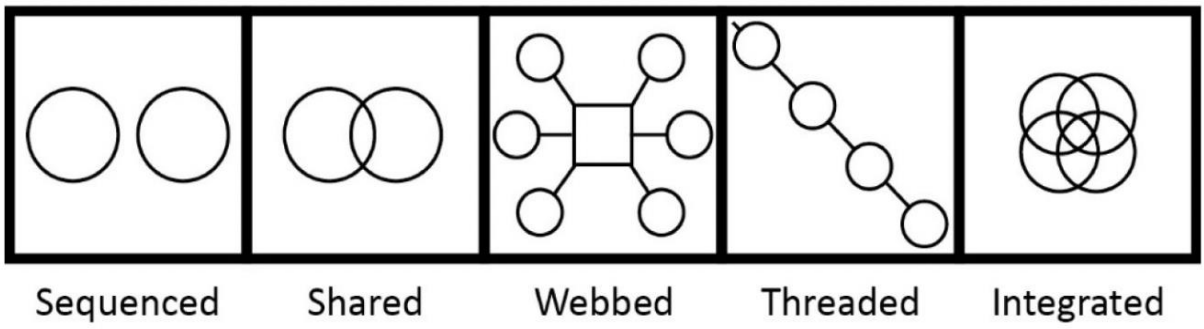
Type	Multidisciplinary	Interdisciplinary	Transdisciplinary
Representation			
Subject boundaries	Focused on subjects	Evident, but blurred	Intersect so information can be reassembled and recombined
Theme	Often led by one subject	Common learnings across subjects	Real world contexts, big ideas and themes
Connections	Between subject content and wider context	Embedded in the subjects to emphasise interdisciplinary skills and concepts	Not related to subjects
Content and assessment	Specific to subject	May be disciplinary or interdisciplinary	New perspectives or new knowledge

Choi and Pak (2006) use analogies to describe the differences between the three approaches 'multi-disciplinarity is like a salad bowl, interdisciplinary is like a melting pot, and trans-disciplinarity is like a cake, in which the ingredients are no longer distinguishable, and the final product is of a different kind from the initial ingredients' [p. 360].

In relation to how a curriculum may be integrated, the literature offers five models to consider, as illustrated in Figure 6.1. Firstly, a sequenced model subject classification with only a small degree of integration, where lessons are subject led. Secondly, a shared model,

where knowledge of two or more subjects is clearly linked and organised together. Thirdly, a webbed model, when a theme or issue is addressed across the whole curriculum. Fourthly, a threaded model focuses on 'big ideas', which supersede all subject matter content. And finally, an integrated model which blends the disciplines by identifying overlapping skills, concepts and attitudes.

Figure 6.1: Five models of curriculum integration across several disciplines (Bouwmans & Béneker, 2018, after Fogarty, 1991)



6b Philosophical and educational basis for integration

The philosophical basis of integration can be traced back to the work of key theorists. Dewey claimed that learning could be more meaningful if it was integrated, but also stated the significance of the subjects of geography and history (1938). It has also been noted that integrated learning provides opportunities for activities that allow children to actively construct their knowledge (Piaget, 1972). It can also ensure learning occurs as knowledge is constructed through social interaction and conversations with peers and adults within children's social worlds (Vygotsky, 1986). Today, social-constructivist learning theory is used as the basis for integration of learning, providing opportunities for learners to create knowledge, understanding and skills to be constructed by asking questions of the world around them (Palincsar, 1998). SEE, as an area of learning similar to humanities and social sciences, holds holistic and reiterative knowledge that does not typically draw on a single agreed body of theory or a prescribed set of validity measures (Yates et al., 2017).

Pedagogically speaking, the integration of subjects has been cogently argued for because the approach appears to generate motivation and interest by situating student learning in issues and problems that are grounded in 'real-world' issues (Barnes, 2015; Springer, 2006). As Krajcik and Czernick note, children can be engaged and motivated through the stimulation of problem-solving and critical thinking about topics they can relate to (2007).

Conversely, social realist theorists argue that subjects are the basis of learning, as subjects have specific structure and that one concept within the subject is related to another, and higher levels of understanding occur when these are built up (Rata, 2016; Young, 2009). Subjects have knowledge, theories, methods, and practices that are used to understand and explain the world in different ways. Bernstein (2000) describes such knowledge as vertical discourse with 'a coherent, explicit and systematically principled structure' (p. 157). He compares this to horizontal discourse which is every-day knowledge. Curriculum scholars outline that subject based teaching ensures that substantive knowledge is valued, ensuring there is specification of contents and skills (Priestley & Sinnema, 2014). From an epistemological point of view, it is argued that subjects are coherent in meaning, which have arisen from disciplines for a reason. Professional knowledge can be carefully built up in a well-organised curriculum via coherent concepts and thinking steps that lead to an ever-higher level of understanding. As outlined within this report, drawing on the research evidence, the subjects of SEE also provide numerous opportunities for children to think creatively and critically about real world issues.

More recent scholarship provides a key thinking about the significance of integrating the areas and subjects of SEE, whilst noting the differences in subjects and terms as outlined in Table 6.1. Whether referred to as Humanities or Social Studies, the areas and subjects of SEE certainly involve key approaches and content. As Catling (2017), referring to humanities, notes the 'distinctive types of knowledge and procedures are manifested in their shared focus on the human dimension through people in places and environments, in time, and with beliefs and moral values' (p. 362). Eaude described how integration in Humanities enables children to learn different types of knowledge in enabling learning environments (2020).

Whether integrated or not, Eaude, et al. (2017) outline the pressing need for humanities education in an increasingly complex world and to argue the case for humanities for the development of the 'whole child' (2017). The comprehensive Alexander report in England noted the importance of involving children in decisions about curriculum, noting they are agents in making sense of their lives, taking action and shaping other people's understanding (2010). Eaude et al. note that the knowledge and qualities in Humanities then provide a foundation for how children become active and engaged citizens in a democratic society. As Barton and Levstik (2004, p. 259) note 'integrative thinking aligns with content-area goals of empowering children as active and introspective contributors within a

participatory, pluralistic democracy'. Overall, within philosophy and research, there are a range of positions, statements and proposals that promote both integration and subject based teaching.

6c Research findings on integration in SEE

As is evident in the methodology chapter of this report, there is a limited research basis in relation to integration and the subjects and areas relating to SEE. As Catling has noted, within the literature there are 'too many intentions and expectations for primary geography, based on hope, not evidence' (2013a, p. 178). This is also the case for integration and as Boche et al. highlight, while some research has been carried out on integrated teaching, there are few empirical studies supporting integration (2021). This is very evident in early childhood education, where work has focused on exemplifying good practice rather than evidence for practice (Bilton, 2020). Particularly of note is that:

- Research tends to focus on children and teachers' motivations, attitudes and experiences of integration.
- Research on the impact of integration on learning is extremely limited.
- Where integration of SEE subjects is with language, mathematics or science, the measurement of impact tends to focus on these subjects.

Abricot et al. (2022) noted that research tended to focus on interventions related to disciplines, and then mostly history. There was more focus on skills, such as contextualization and historical thinking, with less content and attitudes. He noted that few studies had an interdisciplinary perspective, and all of these aspects were evidence of a significant research gap in social sciences (Abricot et al., 2022).

To ensure coverage of research in integration in SEE, within this chapter we draw on a range of literature:

- Theoretical and position pieces on integrated curricular.
- Empirical peer reviewed papers, based on large but mainly small-scale studies (e.g. papers in academic journals).
- Papers that are reviewed by a community of editors, written on small scale research projects (e.g. articles in Primary Geography, Primary History, etc.).
- Reviews of integrated curricular development and practice in schools (e.g. reviews of curriculum change, inspection reports).

6d Research basis for integration

Within this chapter, the overall impact of integrating curriculum at primary school level is considered. Across this range of literature, it appears that an integrated approach to SEE teaching can effectively develop children's understanding as well contributing to effective learning in other subject areas. However, as discussed below there are caveats associated with this assertion.

i Research focused on learning

As found with subject based teaching, the literature outlines how integrated learning can be positive for children. There is some evidence that children appear to develop positive attitudes towards learning. These studies show that through early years writing (Edwards & Willis, 2000), the arts (Trent & Riley, 2009) and social and emotional learning (Durlak et al., 2011), young children can be more motivated and connected to the material they learn. Some studies indicate that the teaching of history as part of a multi-disciplinary approach can improve teacher and student motivation towards history (Mård, 2021) and has the potential to strengthen young children's historical enquiry skills. (Maginn, 2013) Furthermore, some evidence indicates that integrated curricula and practice can lead to increased student engagement, improved critical thinking skills, and an increased retention of information (Mustafa, 2011); however, it should be noted that the vast majority of these are small-scale or single case studies.

There is limited evidence that integration has an impact on children's attainment in SEE. Little and colleagues studied the impact of integrated curriculum and teaching on 1,200 children across nine schools. In assessing the educational gains of teaching advanced history content, higher level processes and abstract concepts, they found that these were as 'strong as or stronger than a more direct, knowledge-based structure for teaching' (Little et al., 2007, p. 272). With children aged 8-13 years, Applebee et al. (2007) found teachers had varied ways of planning for study and concluded that interdisciplinary coursework did not decrease or increase student achievement. Some small scale studies have claimed a rise in achievement, but these are not large scale, repeatable studies. For example, Kakas found using art across social studies with 12 year olds increased children's grades but she did not state the scale of the increases (2010).

Integrating geography and history with other curricular areas, such as language and mathematics, however, has been demonstrated to have a positive impact on children

learning and this appears particularly true for language. In a large-scale study in the United States, Hinde et al. (2007) found a significant gain in reading comprehension achievement for children who received additional GeoLiteracy-enhanced lessons for 10-13 year olds. Additionally, the research team concluded that when teachers are knowledgeable about content areas and integrate them effectively, student achievement increases. In Iran, a project that included geography and integrating sustainable development education with English language found that the group taking part outperformed the control group in reading tests. The researchers concluded that such integration raised 10 year old children's personal and academic achievements (Rafiee Moghadam et al., 2022).

Dorn et al. (2007) found that an integrated mathematics and geography education resource (GeoMath curriculum package) provided increases in mathematical skills and geographical understanding for children in pilot classrooms, with a quarter of surveyed teachers reporting increases in comfort in the teaching of maths when using the resource. In the We are Wyoming two day project across all schools in the state, Trent and Moran (2018) found integrating arts, social science and language for 10 year olds led to increased student engagement and learning. Although the study reported that children demonstrated skills and understandings at or above expected levels of proficiency, the statistics on these results were not stated in the report.

Overall, the research base suggests that integrated learning in geography and history can lead to increased attitudinal results such as motivation and engagement but the evidence base for increased educational attainment is somewhat mixed. Some studies suggest that these subjects can help contextualise learning in other subject areas; however, an issue with these reports is that they are often with older primary children and that children's attainment in geography or history was either not measured or not the focus of the investigations.

ii Research focused on teaching

In relation to teaching, the research evidence is more mixed and covers a range of findings. Firstly, integration can be a positive experience; the literature shows that when time for high-quality professional development in subjects and in integration is provided, this is more likely to occur. For example, within a review of the schools who were awarded the Geographical Association's Primary Geography Quality Mark (PGQM), Catling et al. (2022) found that the strongest schools had well-planned, meaningful cross-curricular links with

focused geographical outcomes and teachers had time to develop their own knowledge and expertise on both subjects and integration and had well planned and resourced lessons. This aligns with Ofsted's reviews, as they noted that whilst many schools were working toward more integrated planning, this required professional development (2022). However, they also noted there was poor progress in children's geographical learning where the subject was at the periphery of a topic. So although geography appeared in planning, the evidence in children's books was described as thin and their geographical experiences as fragmented (2011). These types of larger scale surveys are important to consider when reviewing research into integration in the lower years of primary schools.

Integration is often associated with the lower years of primary school, and findings of the 100 Days of School Project in 10 schools in the USA found that the use of technology across subjects promoted increased student motivation, enhanced learning in areas such as literacy, mathematics and social studies, as it fostered social interaction, and built student confidence level (Mouza, 2005). There is also evidence that this is the case when topics may not be so obviously linked to children's lives. Blanck (2021) found that children's understanding of the concepts related to migration was good when rich resources, such as stories, pictures, examples and artefacts enhanced both cognitive and affective dimensions in the understanding of refugees or migrants. Blanck also found that the development of children's values, attitudes, and feelings could help them address social issues and engage with the lifeworld of others (2021). Güç et al. (2017) found multidisciplinary learning about air pollution had an impact that addressed fundamental concepts such as causes-effects, future situation and precautions.

It appears that teachers are also positive about developing their subject and pedagogical knowledge, which is essential to teach in an integrated way. As Blanck noted, teachers in his study developed an expanded concept of migration and this understanding then allowed them to relate the concept of migration to different areas (Blanck, 2021). Teachers noted high levels of student engagement which they viewed as beneficial to the children's learning. The teachers also believed integration created authentic contexts in which the children could learn, particularly in relation to developing children's literacy and numeracy skills. Numerous studies have also found that an interdisciplinary approach to teaching history led to increased engagement, motivation and holistic development (Skjæveland, 2017; Ager, 2009). Ollila and Macy found effective integration, when social studies concepts were used in classroom activity, noting the positive effects of instilling civic competence

among children. However, they also noted that sufficient time is required for teachers to plan to do this effectively (Ollila & Macy, 2019).

iii Reviews of integration

Whilst not peer reviewed empirical research pieces, reviews of integrated curriculum provide useful evidence of the realities of integrated curricula. Therefore we have drawn on such reviews from England and Wales. Jones and Whitehouse (2017), in their review of the teaching of humanities at primary level in Wales, found that subject integration was most successful where teachers demonstrated a strong knowledge of the subject and subject-specific approaches to teaching. In evaluating the early years in Wales, Taylor et al. (2015) found that children were more actively engaged and creative when taught through areas of learning as opposed to through discrete subject disciplines. However, this report also noted that 34% of respondents believed that subjects like history were being lost as a consequence of this approach. In response, Taylor et al. (2015) highlighted the need for support to be provided to teachers to show how 'traditional subject disciplines such as history and geography, can be embedded within existing Areas of Learning' (p. 119).

In England, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) provides reviews of practices in schools across all subjects. Their 2011 'History for All' report reviewed the voiced warning in relation to the teaching of history at primary level through a cross-curricular approach (Ofsted, 2011b). Where history was taught as part of a predominantly cross-curricular approach, opportunities for progression in 'historical knowledge and thinking was limited' (p. 6) and historical context became fragmented and compromised resulting in children having confused perceptions about history. The reports on primary geography (Ofsted, 2008; 2011b), have similar findings noting poor progress in children's geographical learning in schools, as geography was often peripheral within a topic and / or there was too great a focus on skills, rather than on knowledge and understanding. They also noted the impact of weak subject knowledge in geography, because teachers did not experience geography in professional development, or sometimes in their initial teacher education programmes (2008). Conversely, where provision was improving, it was because the principals acknowledged the value of geography, invested in subject-specific training and monitored the curriculum effectively to ensure coverage of and progression through the programme of study (Ofsted, 2011b). Similar findings are evident in the USA, where social studies under the guise of language creates learning environments in which literacy overshadows social studies content objectives (Hinde, 2009). In the context of reduced time for the subjects,

Eaude et al. (2017) recommend an integrated approach for junior classes with greater specialisation in later primary years. This connects with the early years and lower primary focus on processes of learning through discovery, exploration, and play. And that there is less attention to disciplinary forms of knowledge around which curricula outcomes are constructed (Wood & Hedges, 2016).

Drawing on the research. both history education commentators and geographers (e.g. Cooper & Rowley, 2009; Dixon & Hales, 2014; Grainer, 2005; Nuffield Primary History Project, 2009; Catling, 2003; Pike, 2016) argue that the pedagogical approaches to teaching geography and history in the junior primary classes are suitable to supporting integrated teaching, as the subjects provide time for children to think creatively and across subjects. Hinde (2009), drawing on large scale research (Hinde, et al., 2007) describes 'healthy' integration which ensures there are explicit connections to other subjects and to the children's lives, avoiding fractured and / or shallow integration. She also warns against 'stealthy' integration, where subjects may only be a conduit for other subjects, notably literacy. With high quality professional development in both subjects and integration, in terms of pedagogies and knowledge, it appears children will learn and progress where SEE is integrated once their learning in subjects is carefully considered. The evidence shows that teachers need to be provided with opportunities to develop their expertise in both subject knowledge, pedagogies as well as planning and resourcing. As Furner and Kumar note, integration may reduce a tendency to fracture learning, if progression is planned carefully (Furner & Kumar, 2007). From the literature it is clear key pedagogies such as enquiry and fieldwork and subject specific pedagogies focused on concepts not experiences (Swift, 2017), to teach SEE in the junior classes all lend themselves naturally to being included as part of an integrated teaching approach. As explored more fully in chapter 8, teachers also need time to plan for the use of high-quality resources such as objects, visual sources, photographs, story and the children's locality to teach areas of SEE in the junior classes (Catling & Willy, 2018). This will ensure the integrated teaching approach to develop overarching concepts within SEE concepts and themes.

6e Research evidence of subject integration

As outlined, this chapter draws on empirical and case study evidence of integration from geography, history and ERB. Whilst each subject area tends to have a different research base in relation to integration, together they provide evidence of what integration can achieve as well as the issues that need to be addressed when planning to teach an integrated

curriculum. At the end of this chapter, the impact learning in geography, history and ERB can have on other areas of the curriculum is considered.

i Geography

Geography is also referred to as the 'umbrella' subject capacity to make tangible and effective connections across subjects (Willy & Catling, 2018). Geography is integrated to differing degrees by teachers (Greenwood, 2013; 2015), depending on their experiences, professional development and the curriculum. Within this chapter, the strengths geography brings to an integrated curriculum from the literature, namely geography's signature pedagogies of enquiry and fieldwork as well as geographical thinking, through spatial thinking is considered. The chapter then draws on the literature to outline the impact high quality geography has on other areas of learning, notably language and mathematics.

Studies have also explored the impact of spatial learning, using technology and the impact of integration across subjects of such activity. Mitchell et al. (2017) explored the integration of science, mathematics and geography through a technology (GIS) infused enquiry approach, the team recognised the potential of this approach in relation to the development of cross-curricular links and geographical knowledge, whilst noting the need for professional development of teachers. Seagara et al. (2018) found a map literacy learning model with a sequence of activities structured around map use and the development of spatial skills supported integrated teaching of social sciences. Gleeson and D'Souza (2016) also contended that from their experiences of practice, the development of digital story maps supported primary integrated approaches in history, civics, economics and geography. They found it fostered both historical and geospatial thinking and supported investigation into the connections between the local and the global. Across such integrated studies and those within the subjects, especially geography, it is clear there is a range of learning developed through the use of maps, including geospatial technologies.

Using geography as a starting point, as well as using geographical content and skills has a positive impact on children's learning. Walshe et al. (2023) integrated art with geography, concluding the use of local places enabled them to become sites of wonder and curiosity, through which they developed agency to belong and protect, as individuals and groups. Brown found that children valued integration where it involved critical thinking, decision making, researching, problem solving, and socialisation skills. They felt these were developed better than if they had experienced a traditional curricular class. However, it

appeared their motivation was also due to the choice they had in determining curricula (2011). Such findings resonate with Tay's work on human flourishing through the arts and humanities (2018), as well as work on the concept of place as palimpsest (Powell, 2008; Marvell et al., 2023).

Within the report on high quality in geography, Catling et al. (2022) found many creative examples of geography leading integration such as a habitat study which included elements of art, dance, geography, science and digital learning. There was artwork linked to the children's study of the River Thames in London. In a rainforest themed topic, children debated whether indigenous Amazonian tribes should be contacted in English, as well as producing graphs and tables comparing the climates of their locations with the Amazon. Other examples included technology lessons on food production linked to seasonality through the use of maps, an archaeological dig activity involving liaising with school management, mapping, justifying and practical elements.

ii History

To discover whether multidisciplinary approaches to curriculum preserve the integrity of history as a discipline, Percival (2014) conducted a multiple case study in four primary schools in England. Data collection included formal observations, documentation analysis (including children's work), semi-structured interviews with key members of staff and fieldwork days in which informal observations, conversations, photographs and other forms of data were collected. He found that multidisciplinary education has the potential for developing meaningful historical understandings combined with effective learning in other subjects. Based on his findings, Percival identified a number of factors that contribute to effective multidisciplinary education in history teaching. These include: teacher expertise, inspired and informed leadership, parity (curriculum balance), reference to historical concepts, justifiable and strong subject links, engagement and enjoyment and curriculum coverage and efficiency.

Percival (2014) also identified three models of integration: the model of disciplined thematic integration, in which historical knowledge and content is learned in tandem with concrete and relevant links to a range of relevant subject disciplines linking into the theme, the model of extended thematic integration (or ribbon curriculum), in which the overarching theme stands above subject disciplines and in which subject knowledge is used to support thematic studies. While similar to the model of disciplined thematic integration, this model

differed in time span, sometimes stretching out to a full term and finally, the model of controlled immersion in which other subjects are integrated into the lead subject of history. Of the three models of integration he observed, he found that optimal historical learning occurred in the third model.

Mård (2020) conducted a case study in a rural Finnish-Swedish primary school that had adopted a multidisciplinary education to investigate how history teaching is perceived and implemented by teachers within a multidisciplinary module. Data consisted of interviews and observations which were analysed using a thematic analysis approach. Multidisciplinary approaches were found to heighten the relevance of history as a school subject, increase student and teacher motivation and to contribute favourably to teacher flexibility. None of the interviewees mentioned any drawbacks of multidisciplinary history teaching. In terms of the relevance of history, teachers indicated a belief that thematic multidisciplinary teaching enhanced multiple perspectives, improved student understanding of the nature of historical knowledge and linkage between the past and present. With regard to motivation, teachers indicated that both themselves and the children in their classes were increasingly motivated and engaged when creating multidisciplinary links to other subject areas. Similar to Percival (2018), Mård also found that history can also provide a base for developing competences and skills related to other subjects.

Greenwood (2013), though primarily concerned with the subject of geography, reported on the results of a teacher survey and a series of interviews conducted with primary teachers in Northern Ireland on their experiences of cross-curricular teaching in the Area of Learning called 'The World Around Us' which includes history, geography, science and technology. Extrapolating the data on history education from the study gives an insight into teachers' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of integration on history teaching. The questionnaire respondents were asked if they thought the grouping of science, history and geography into one Area of Learning was a good idea and the majority indicated that they were positive or very positive about this grouping. Some teachers made reference to integration being natural, meaningful and relevant and that teaching through topics provided depth, variety and a better learning experience. In the interviews, participants indicated that they believed cross-curricular learning in these areas led to increased skills development, and similar to Mård's findings (2020), they believed motivation increased for both themselves and children. Greenwood's analysis found that

effective cross-curricular teaching involved flexibility, a range of high-quality resources and classroom organisation strategies and most importantly, a deep conceptual knowledge of the disciplines.

A number of disadvantages and concerns were also highlighted, primarily around issues such as artificial and superficial integration links and fears that discipline-specific content and skills were being diluted. Some indicated that subject identity was being eroded as children frequently were unaware of what subject they were studying. Concerns were also raised in regard to assessment in that student progression was harder to monitor when using a cross-curricular approach. Interestingly, teachers appeared to take a pragmatic approach to deciding which topics to teach through cross-curricular integration with one teacher stating 'It is important not to forget about the science, history and geography areas that do not lend themselves to connected learning.' (P4/5 teacher), indicating the need for teacher autonomy to decide on the most suitable approach for teaching.

As part of the Michigan Geography and History Project, McArthur Harris et al. (2015) investigated the use of high-quality resources (such as laminated maps) to integrate world geography and world history with 37 middle school teachers teaching children from ages 11- 13. Drawing on data collected from teacher resource logs, teacher ranking forms, and classroom observations, they found that many teachers used the resources to integrate history and geography, although the extent to which they did so meaningfully and effectively varied. Topics that involved the movement of people, ideas, disease, and/or goods and civilisations such as ancient river valley civilisations and civilisations in the Americas featured strongly in the teacher logs and observations. Lessons that demonstrated successful integration included mapping the Silk Roads, early human migration, the Black Death, and the Crusades.

Overall, it appears history works well to integrate a range of subjects, however successful integration is dependent on a number of factors. These include: an understanding of the nature of the disciplines being integrated, strong subject knowledge and PCK, informed leadership, curricular parity, quality resources and adequate time for planning for the development of historical concepts and meaningful subject links.

iii Education about Religions and Beliefs

There exists some pertinent literature relating to the philosophical and educational basis for ERB subject based learning and for integrated learning; SEE and ERB. As religions, beliefs, worldviews can influence and impact all aspects of life, knowledge of religions and beliefs is intertwined with knowledge of people, history, countries, society, art, literature, and how identity is formed amongst others (Jensen, 2008). As such, bearing in mind the necessity to ensure curricular space for ERB is explicit and discrete, an interdisciplinary approach can also be considered appropriate. Robertson et al. (2017) argues that there are two central issues to be considered; ERB 'may become, in some contexts, too compartmentalised, so that it becomes isolated from wider learning; or in other contexts not compartmentalised enough, so that its uniqueness is lost' (p. 327). In some contexts, ERB does not appear as a discrete curricular area, rather, ERB related content is integrated into subjects such as humanities, social studies, history, geography, moral education, ethical education (Marks et al., 2014).

As mentioned previously, in certain countries, ERB is a discrete curricular subject area with discrete time allocation. It is argued that, in order for ERB to fully achieve its aims, it merits designation as a (non-confessional, rights-respecting) compulsory curricular subject in line with other subjects (Alberts, 2010; Cush, 2007; Filipsone, 2005; Jensen, 2008). Should ERB not be explicitly named, its content runs the risk of being side-lined for the content in other subject areas that is explicitly named and Cush (2007) argues that integrating ERB in this way means that it will always be second best. One of the challenges is to 'ensure that the distinctive nature of [ERB] does not become lost in the delivery.' (Robertson et al., 2017, p. 328).

Despite many years of humanities (comprising geography, history and confessional and non-confessional religious education) there is a lack of evidence of how it is taught, and on what is considered good practice in the UK (Eaude et al., 2017). They argue that of the three subject areas, due to the potential for ERB to cover topics that might be considered 'controversial' or 'sensitive', ERB in particular requires teachers to be equipped with nuanced and accurate information and knowledge, especially for senior classes (Eaude et al., 2017). Research supports the likelihood for humanities (and thus potentially SEE), to explore and learn about human culture(s), personal and collective identity/ies and it highlights the potential for integrating ERB with other subjects in order to develop skills relating to intercultural and citizenship education.

Marks et al. (2014) argue that naming the religious dimensions and contexts to historical conflicts is necessary to understand them in a comprehensive way. How some world history has transpired and how certain aspects of human life and culture manifests currently cannot be fully comprehended without considering the role and impact of religions, beliefs and worldviews on social, cultural, and political discourses and developments (Cush, 2007; Jensen, 2008; Moore, 2005). Relatedly, a small study with second and fifth class children in Italian primary schools placed a focus on citizenship and intercultural education (Giorda et al., 2013). It aimed to enhance children's religious literacy and historical, social and civic skills through experiential, dialogical and participative workshops with a focus on a range of religious customs and the historical and geographic development of religions. Aims also included a focus on critical thinking, contemporary social issues and conflict resolution through dialogue. Alongside varying stimuli and content, the workshops included some learning resources that were generated by or personal to the children (e.g. photos) and Giorda et al. (2013) highlight the importance of keeping content clear and accessible. Findings showed that children were interested and curious about differing realities and perspectives and were capable of understanding and discussing them with respect during dialogical and participative pedagogies.

Case-study research with 21 children (10-12 years old) in the Greek primary school context emphasises the potential for drama education (programmes, methods and techniques) to foster an acceptance of religious diversity (Mavroudis & Kondoyianni, 2022). A safe, respectful, non-competitive, participatory space allowed the children to engage in emotional, discursive, experiential, empathetic, interactive work with peers of similar and differing religious and non-religious backgrounds and perspectives and encouraged mutual understanding and respect (Mavroudis & Kondoyianni, 2022). The literature suggests a general consensus about the potential to integrate ERB successfully into citizenship education (and associated subjects such as history and geography) due to similar and shared values. Despite this, policy makers, curriculum developers and educators ought to be mindful of the contextual tensions and political constraints and dilemmas that may arise in differing classes, schools and settings (Jackson, 2015; Zembylas & Loukaidis, 2018).

6f Conclusion

The areas and subjects of SEE emphasise the role of human identity and activity and include a broad aim to understand ourselves and others. They all acknowledge the views,

perspectives and experiences of others and appreciate the rich diversity and interconnectedness of society. An anticipated outcome of an education in these subjects, therefore, is that these subjects provide opportunities to participate in and contribute to a democratic society by enabling them to understand the world in which they live and have the knowledge and skills to make an effective contribution to that world. Reviewing the available literature, it is evident that subjects of geography, history and ERB do provide meaningful, challenging and enjoyable experiences for children in primary school. Although there are warnings about using the subjects of SEE as a conduit for other subjects, there is also evidence that SEE can enhance learning in other subject areas such as language and mathematics (Hinde et al., 2007). Evidence of increased attainment as a result of curricular integration within SEE subject areas is less evident as there is a limited research pool available. Across the philosophical, educational and empirical literature, it is clear that a focus on concepts in planning the areas and subjects of SEE is best. As Lonnong and DeFranco note, the key issue in planning should not be to ask how concepts best be taught, rather how they can be integrated (1997). Perhaps one of our dilemmas concerns conceptual knowledge and the experiential. Swift noted, in relation to early years the focus on experiences and knowledge as similar, when structurally they were quite different, but were as she described 'transactional resources in relation to each other' (Swift, 2017, p. 372). This significance of concept based teaching is, therefore evident across the previous chapters on geography, history and ERB as well as here in relation to integration. As Moss and Godinho note from their work with teachers, the importance of a concept-based curriculum framework including the learning goals, assessment tasks and planned learning experiences helped teachers' focus: it was 'critical for generating the professional dialogue pivotal to planning and enacting integrated curriculum' (2019, p. 24). Overall, the connections between all three are many and varied, and an integrated approach that brings together knowledge and skills from all three subjects can provide a rich and comprehensive understanding of human societies and their development through place, space and time.

Chapter 7

Teacher Education

Susan Pike and Caitríona Ní Cassaithe

This review focuses primarily on children's learning across the areas and subjects of SEE. However, within the research there are frequent references to the thoughts, actions and opinions of teachers. Curriculum change has many implications for teachers. This chapter outlines some of the literature that refers to teachers implementing curriculum change in areas and subjects aligned with SEE.

7a Curriculum and teachers' work

As stated across the literature and in the newly developed *Primary Curriculum Framework* (DoE, 2023), teachers are crucial in mediating the curriculum (Biesta et al., 2015). The role of agency in teachers' work is essential in the delivery of an effective curriculum, and Biesta et al. note that given 'the complexities of situated educational practices, teacher agency is an indispensable element of good and meaningful education' (2015, p. 624). Teacher agency refers to the autonomy of teachers to make decisions, exercise professional judgement and take intentional actions in their classrooms and schools to enrich the learning experiences of children. It emphasises the idea that teachers do not simply deliver curricula and policies but are active participants in shaping the educational environment (Biesta et al., 2015). How teachers engage in this work is subject to a range of cultural (e.g. values in a school or a larger school system); structural (e.g. the nature of the relationships within schools) and material (e.g. availability of resources) influences and dimensions of teacher agency (Priestley et al., 2015).

An integrated curriculum which values teacher agency involves allowing teachers the autonomy to collaboratively design and implement an interdisciplinary curriculum that aligns with the needs and interests of children (Haapaniemi et al., 2021) and such an approach is dependent on teacher expertise. It has been noted that the teacher must have clear 'educational aims and purposes and to balance attention to 'children's' experiences; the subject; teaching choices' (Lambert, 2009, p. 124), especially when there is work to be done in reworking subject knowledge so it can be taught effectively (Lambert, 2009; Martin, 2008b; Nixon et al., 2021).

7b Teacher professional development

Overall, the literature notes the importance of continuing professional development, particularly the provision of time and space to develop relevant expertise. The provision for professional development in the subjects and area of SEE in Ireland has, to date, been limited and the impact of this is evident. For example, 60% of Irish primary teachers have never engaged in professional learning in geography since qualifying (Usher, 2021a) and so there is a recognised need to provide greater opportunities for teachers in this regard (Dolan et al. 2014; Usher, 2020; Clarke & Pike, 2023). Without continuing professional development, teachers may draw on outdated or wrong information. For example, Mackintosh (2005) found that, rather than facilitating more effective experiential learning activities and fieldwork, primary teachers were relying on what they learned about rivers from secondary school when teaching this content.

i Teacher knowledge of subjects

Teachers need to know what they are teaching, and the links between their own content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge (Catling, 2017; Martin, 2008a; 2008b), an appreciation of the nature of the different subjects, how they organise knowledge and an understanding of how they operate as disciplines (Harris et al., 2011). This understanding ensures teachers can make decisions about how and what to integrate in relation to the school and the children within it (Pike, 2015). Teachers are conscious of this. For example, Thompson et al. (2012) noted that teachers believed children's learning would be 'better' if they could understand the ways in which subject knowledges relate to each other. However, in both England and Ireland, studies found that student primary teachers had a limited, fact-based, encyclopaedic view of the subject that was at odds with the curriculum (Catling, 2004; Morley, 2015; Dolan et al., 2014; Waldron et al., 2009). In relation to geography, Jackson (2006, p. 92) referred to this as a 'trivial pursuit' view of geography whereby it is fact-based rather than a conceptual discipline.

Similarly, Sears (2014) found that many history teachers tend to regard history as a collection of facts to be transmitted, and this may partially explain why many teachers use the history textbook as the de facto curriculum (Waldron & McCully, 2016). As Barton and Levstik (2004) argue, if teachers fail to understand the nature of the discipline of history, they will struggle with discipline-specific and interpretive principles and approaches and will therefore struggle to design meaningful learning experiences for children. Such

understandings, they argue, need to be initiated during initial teacher education as a deep knowledge of the nature of the discipline is a prerequisite for teaching history.

ii Teacher knowledge of integration

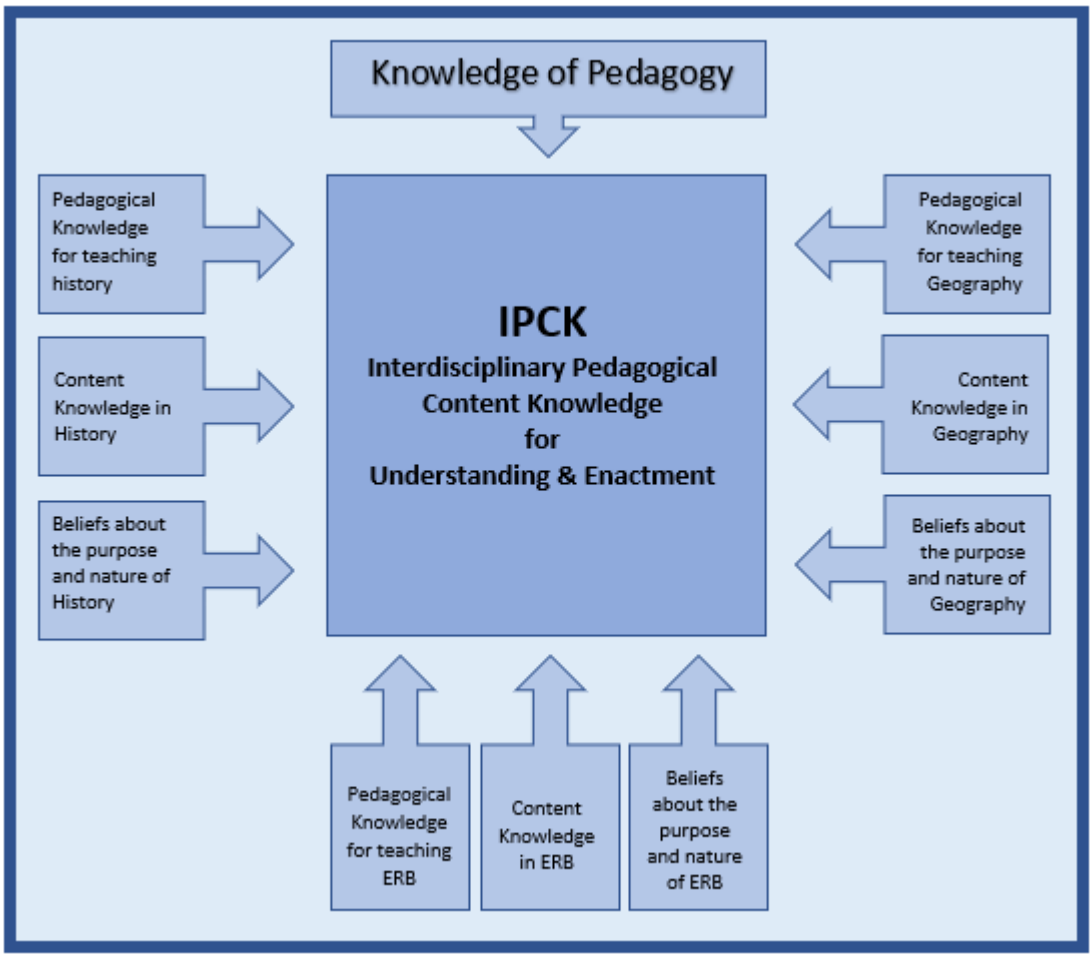
As various studies on integration highlight, teachers need content knowledge of subjects, knowledge of pedagogies and knowledge of the subjects to teach. They also need knowledge of the theories, models and possibilities of integration and Figure 7.1 demonstrates how each of these forms of knowledge combine to create effective integration of history, geography and ERB in the primary classroom. As Parker notes, on the one hand, 'knowing how and when to separate topics to clarify them and knowing, on the other hand, when to integrate them is a major achievement of skilful teaching'(2005, p. 453). High levels of expertise in terms of both curriculum knowledge and teaching methods are needed in order to successfully adopt an integrated approach to teaching (Burgess, 2004; Greenwood, 2015). Without this conceptual and pedagogical understanding, planning for integration and teaching an integrated unit of work can be vague. Research shows that this can be a barrier towards the successful implementation of integrated curricula. Thompson, for example, found that some schools did not have well-worked pedagogical principles for moving to integrated learning, with learning being based on a 'fuzzy set of vaguely progressive humanist values' (2012, p. 14). Research by Harvie (2020) found that primary teachers were unclear about what interdisciplinary learning entails despite the centrality of it in the Scottish curriculum. Thus, it is not just the principles of integration that must be clear but also the rationale for integration itself.

iii Teacher confidence

The link between the above issues and teacher confidence are well researched. Waldron et al. (2009) found student teachers perceived both attributes and deficits in their own content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge pertaining to their teaching of history, geography and science when on placement. Usher's (2021a) research found that Irish teachers identified a lack of pedagogical and content knowledge when delivering some aspects of the PSCG, particularly relating to the use of the locality. In this study, teachers self-reported as being between 'somewhat confident' and 'fairly confident' in their teaching of geography, but closer to the latter, ranking geography as joint 5th alongside physical education and Gaeilge with regard to how relatively confident they felt teaching the subject (Usher, 2021a). Clarke and Pike (2023) found that creating a community of practice for professional

development in primary geography can have a positive impact on teacher attitudes to and practices in geography.

Figure 7.1 Teachers' knowledge for SEE (developed by Caitríona Ní Cassaithe)



Overall, the evidence indicates that low confidence leads to low expectations of children's geographical learning. This can mean that when pedagogical and content knowledge is low, limited didactic textbook-based teaching methods can dominate as teachers resort to what is simple and safe (Catling, 2017; Gocke, 2009; Simola, 2005). Overall, care must be taken that the basis for learning is a good grounding in specialist subject knowledge rather than teacher professional experience (Young, 2014).

7c Conclusion

As Biesta et al note, with an 'absence of opportunities for systematic sense-making in schools, teachers are regularly left confused about their role' (2015, p. 636). For SEE, subject and area leaders / posts are essential. Such teachers should have the opportunity and responsibility to support colleagues to access and develop their knowledge (Owens, 2019)

and to support their needs in teaching, whether subject focused or in inter-subject topics (Barlow & Whitehouse, 2019). While not all teachers in primary schools are experts in the subjects of SEE, it is significant to see their potential as curriculum makers (Martin, 2005). In an Irish context, teachers are aware of the effective ways of teaching geography but often lack the confidence and pedagogical content knowledge to implement these approaches.

The literature reveals that where professional development does occur, teachers develop enhanced understandings and an appreciation of subject content and processes (Alleman & Brophy, 2010; Clarke & Pike, 2023). Shifflet and Hunt found opportunities for CPD ensured subject knowledge, pedagogy and integration worked well and that teachers 'developed an understanding of the purposes of integration and an appreciation for how the concepts and disciplinary literacy skills learned in social studies prepares students to be active citizens in the world' (2019, p. 248). Harrell (2010) also found that teachers faced difficulties in coordinating different subject areas and creating lesson plans that effectively integrated the curriculum. They highlight that teachers needed more training and support in order to effectively implement an integrated curriculum. While Ollila and Macy (2019) found that after teachers received professional development, they observed an improvement in children's understanding of the social studies and its concepts, they also became aware of the adequate time and planning that was necessary to integrate the subject. For example, when working relationally in exploring and teaching argumentation, science teachers developed an appreciation of student voice in the learning process and of the role of argumentation in fostering children's scientific reasoning (Chan & Erduran, 2023).

Overall, it is clear from the literature that to ensure teacher agency and high quality provision for children in the areas and subjects of SEE, teacher development in initial and continuing professional development is essential. Moreover, it can yield positive impacts on children's attitudes to and experiences of learning across areas and subjects.

Chapter 8

Conclusions and Recommendations

Susan Pike, Caitríona Ní Cassaithe, Peter Whelan, Niamh McGuirk, Joe Usher and Benjamin Mallon

In this chapter, the findings of the literature review in relation to the research questions are drawn together. The next section provides conclusions to this report by answering research questions 1 and 2, relating the philosophical, educational and research basis for the curriculum. The following section will provide recommendations for research question 3, curriculum processes and curriculum content. The last section will address research question 4, in relation to integration.

a Concluding response to Research Question 1:
Through the lens of the vision and principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework*, what is the philosophical basis and educational basis for the curriculum area/subjects?

Drawing on the review of literature in Chapters 3 and 4, it is evident that geography and history education can build on children's lived experiences and make connections to local, national and global communities past and present. The signature pedagogies in each subject offer inclusive, child-centred and participative real world learning opportunities which develop key concepts, knowledge and skills, but also instil values such as empathy, an appreciation for the natural environment, agency, democratic citizenship and a respect for diversity. Geographical enquiry enables children to act and participate in identifying solutions to local and global issues. Historical enquiry can support such enquiries by affording children the opportunity to examine and investigate the historical roots to these local and global issues.

Geography, history and ERB and the appropriate integration of these subjects can make significant contributions to the vision of the Primary Curriculum, as evidenced within Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6. From these reviews on geography, history, ERB and integration, it is evident that learning in the integrated areas and subjects of SEE in Stage 1 can provide 'a strong foundation for every child to thrive and flourish, supporting them in realising their full potential as individuals and as members of communities and society during childhood' (DoE, 2023, p. 3). Geography supports this, as it empowers children by fostering their natural curiosity, spatial awareness, concern for our world and environments, appreciation of

global interconnectedness and by being engaged critically, creatively and positively (Owens et al., 2021, p. 5). Similarly, a transformative history education goes beyond an emphasis on factual recall and involves a commitment to the development of active, critical citizens in order to realise a more just, equal and inclusive society. Relatedly, ERB acknowledges and affirms children's individual identities and creates a space for them to learn about the religious and belief identities of their peers, and of those in Irish society and beyond. ERB is underpinned by human rights, fosters respect, understanding and empathy and makes real-world connections to the children's lives and experiences.

The research carried out for this review provides examples of how the philosophical and educational basis of the areas and subjects of SEE align with the key principles. Accordingly, there is significant potential for SEE to make an important contribution to the principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework*:

Transitions and continuity: Children enter primary school with prior learning from home and early years settings (Catling, 2006; Cooper, 1995; Dewey, 1938). Within philosophy, it is often stated that such experiences should be recognised and built on (hooks, 1995), and this is essential within SEE with its focus on people and places. The literature provides evidence of how, through SEE, children's prior learning and identities are built upon through interactions with others in their school and community as they learn about people, places and processes across time and space (Hayward, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2021; Schempler et al., 2018).

Relationships: SEE areas and subjects build on aspects of children's existing relationships, factors in quality of learning (Dewey, 1938). The literature provides evidence of how these can be developed through SEE experiences and make connections with others in their community lives (Catling & Willy, 2018; Cooper, 2017; Dolan, 2020; Jackson, 2014; 2019; Pike, 2016a). SEE also provides opportunities to connect with people and places across time and space, something that children value (Pike & Clough, 2005) and are capable of (Oberman et al., 2013; Ruane et al., 2010).

Pedagogy: SEE areas and subjects are inspired by a range of theories, notably the work of Dewey (1938) and Bruner (1986) in relation to pedagogies. The literature provides a range of interventions and examples of appropriate, evidence-based pedagogical approaches and strategies in SEE. Enquiry stances ensure this occurs and means children's engagement and

ownership of learning provides the basis of challenge (Barton & Levstik, 2011). There is evidence that teachers need further support to instil enquiry and other key pedagogies in SEE (Usher, 2021a).

Partnerships: The literature reveals the positive impact that partnerships and collaboration between schools, families, and communities have on children's learning in SEE (Schempler et al., 2018; Petrikovicová, 2021). Both children and teachers can develop relationships to enrich and extend learning through making connections, creating collaborations and visiting people and places locally and further afield (Dolan, 2020; Jackson, 2014; 2019; Yesilbursa & Barton, 2011).

Learning environments: The use of local areas and communities is a well-established practice in education, supported by key theorists such as Dewey (1938), Piaget (1956), Bruner (1986) and Vygotsky (1986). There is research evidence that in SEE learning is enhanced when learning occurs in a range of places including classrooms, corridors, schoolyards, fields and sport fields (Dilber-Özer & Baysal, 2022; Nundy, 1998; Pike, 2011). The literature in SEE and outdoor learning provides evidence for the impact of learning in local communities (Beames & Ross, 2010; Hales, 2018; Harris & Bilton, 2019; Lundie et al., 2022).

For each of these principles, this research evidence provides ways that a well-designed curriculum will ensure that learning in SEE aligns with the principles. The opportunities for such are outlined in this chapter. Whilst this table does not provide every way this is possible, it provides clear alignment. Overall, the vision and principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework* aligns with the range of philosophical basis and educational research and scholarship in the areas and subjects in SEE.

b Concluding response to Research Question 2:
What evidence is provided by the literature on children's learning and development for:
i integrated curriculum area of Social and Environmental Education from Junior Infants to Second Class

There is a limited range of empirical research on integration or subject based teaching in history, geography and ERB in the lower half of primary school and the research that does exist tends to be based on small numbers of teachers or children. Additionally, research that does report on the impact of integration in geography, history or ERB in the early years does not tend to assess the learning in these subjects or areas, instead, it often focuses on teacher

or children's attitudes to learning. Finally, even where learning is assessed, the results tend to focus on other subjects. This is particularly evident where subjects have been integrated with areas such as language or mathematics, as it is these subjects that tend to be measured. For these reasons, the findings of this report should be viewed with caution, especially when considering how geography, history and ERB are integrated. This chapter draws on peer reviewed and general literature to answer the research question.

Some education researchers (e.g. Rantala & Ahonon, 2015; Stolare, 2011; Vella, 2015) have voiced concerns regarding the use of an integrated approach to teach history at primary level, believing that such an approach may diminish subject integrity, fail to adequately develop children's historical thinking and meta-knowledge or develop their understanding of key historical skills. However, while research in this area is limited, some small-scale studies counter these concerns suggesting that an integrated approach to history teaching in the junior classes can effectively develop children's historical understanding as well contributing to effective learning in other subject areas.

Percival's case study research (2014) investigating the teaching of history through cross-curricular approaches in four primary schools, support Cooper and Rowley's (2009) assertions that history can act as a suitable lead or umbrella subject in thematic and cross-curricular teaching where meaningful historical understanding can be combined with effective learning in other subjects such as literacy, art, mathematics and geography. Percival's (2014) findings also indicate that, with careful planning and a sound knowledge of subjects and integration, various forms of cross-curricular and thematic teaching can succeed in developing key disciplinary concepts and skills linked to history at a junior level. Such findings are also true of geography (see Pike, 2016a), suggesting the power of these subjects to provide a context for children's learning.

Temple and MacGregor (2009) week-long project with children aged 5-7 years in a small UK primary school further illustrates the potential of cross-curricular teaching. Adopting a history-focused cross-curricular planning approach, the children investigated the life of the historical figure Noor Inayat Khan. For this project, history was used as the umbrella discipline with cross-curricular teaching of the topic taking place in other subject areas, most notably religious education. At the end of the project, it was observed that both the children and teachers responded positively towards the use of the cross-curricular approach, resulting in high levels of student engagement that was viewed by the teachers

as beneficial to the children's learning. Notably, teachers highlighted how the carefully planned cross-curricular approach created authentic contexts in which the children could learn, particularly in relation to developing children's literacy and numeracy skills. Similarly, Harrison (2008) found in a geography-led project for children aged 10-11 years on visual literacy, that the children gained confidence and enjoyment in their writing. For the teachers involved, they reported that these lessons proved engaging and afforded them opportunities to revise and cover all aspects of writing.

Ager's (2009) cross-curricular history-focused project with children aged 5-7 years highlighted how learning across a range of different subject areas (including geography, literacy, mathematics, science, art, design and technology) enriched and supported the children's investigations into Tudor exploration. Maginn (2013) found that a thematic approach to history teaching with Year One children (5-6 year olds) helped teaching and learning in history by placing the learning in a more purposeful context for children and provided them with a multi-perspectival view of the past which, in turn, strengthened their historical enquiry skills. Skjæveland's (2017) small scale study involving eight Norwegian early childhood education and care teachers found teachers viewed the combining of history with other learning activities (such as outdoor learning, music, drama, art and literature) as beneficial to children's learning.

In relation to geography education, Christie (2018) identified that using the SDGs (sustainable development goals) provided meaningful integration across the school, including geography in junior classes. Dockerty and Gleisinger found that children aged 7-11 developed higher-level problem-solving skills and collaborated closely on a common goal when studying sustainability and water (2022). Jones et al. (2021) carried out research with teachers to understand the mechanisms they used to enable a whole-school approach to the integration of food. Their research showed the importance of linking education to the local community, connecting food, health and sustainability as well as food experiences in terms of eating at mealtimes. This research also highlights the importance of a whole-school approach to integration. These small-scale studies support an interdisciplinary approach to teaching geography with an emphasis on the all-round development and holistic learning of the child.

The teaching of integrated approach in the junior years is evident in other curricula internationally. As referenced within this report, in Northern Ireland, geography and

history is taught in the junior primary classes as part of a cross-curricular approach. Greenwood (2015) tentatively notes that the majority of Northern Ireland primary teachers appear to support the grouping of history, science and geography into one area of learning. In analysing the questionnaire responses of 221 primary teachers, he found that 63.4% of respondents favoured an integrated approach with many indicating that these subjects allowed for natural, meaningful and relevant integration. Furthermore, many respondents believed topic teaching provided children with more depth and variety and a better learning experience in contrast to discrete subject teaching. Many indicated that children were more interested, involved and excited by this form of teaching.

Jones and Whitehouse (2017), in their review of the teaching of humanities at primary level in Wales, highlighted the importance of developing teachers' subject knowledge and subject-specific pedagogies to ensure that an integrated approach can be successfully implemented. As they noted, 'thinking as a historian' or 'thinking geographically' requires teachers having a secure grounding in subject-specific pedagogy. While these findings do not dismiss the use of a cross-curricular model, they emphasise that effective subject integration will only succeed where teachers have strong expertise in cross-curricular teaching as well as a strong knowledge of the discipline itself.

As the majority of these studies observe, the pedagogical approaches to teaching history and geography in the junior primary classes are suitable to support integrated teaching, particularly if these subjects take a lead role. For Cooper (2002), history is integral to a 'broad and balanced curriculum for all 5-to 8-year olds' (p. 1) and for Catling and Willy (2019) a similar claim is made for geography. When these subjects are taught as part of an integrated curriculum, it can provide younger children with creative ways to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding while also motivating them to learn through stimulating, interconnected topics. The use of imagination, objects, visual sources, story, narratives, drama, oral history and the child's locality to teach history and geography in the junior classes all lend themselves naturally to being included as part of an integrated teaching approach to develop an overarching theme or concept. However, it has also been noted that successful implementation of cross-curricular planning and teaching is dependent on high levels of expertise in terms of both curriculum knowledge and teaching methods (Burgess, 2004; Greenwood, 2015).

ii The subjects of history and geography from Third to Sixth class?

There is significant evidence of effective learning and development in the subjects of geography, as evidenced in Chapters 3 and history, as evidenced in Chapter 4. Regarding geography, primarily, this learning is supported by key approaches to geography education, in Table 3.2, including geographical enquiry, fieldwork, and drawing on children's, real-word and local geographies. Drawing on the literature in Chapter 3, and as illustrated in greater depth in Appendix E, effective geography education can be seen to support the development of key geographical concepts (primarily sense of place, sense of space and environment), deepens geographical knowledge, nurtures geographical skills and fosters social and environmental values and dispositions.

In relation to history education, the incorporation of key approaches, in Table 4.2, including historical enquiry, story, object-based learning and the use of artefacts all contribute towards effective learning. Drawing on the literature in Chapter 4, and illustrated in further detail in Appendix E, effective history teaching allows for the development of key historical concepts (e.g., historical time and chronology, historical empathy and multi-perspectivity), deepens historical knowledge, develops historical skills and nurtures children's values and dispositions. History education has the potential to contribute to the holistic development of the child and help them to see and understand their place in the world.

c Concluding response to Research Question 3:

In response to curriculum overload, what are the desired curriculum processes and essential curriculum content for children's learning and development in SEE / history and geography within the broad primary curriculum?

Evidence indicates that curriculum overload is very keenly felt by Irish teachers and reasons for this have been attributed to the daunting physical face of the 1999 Primary School Curriculum books and guidelines, a constantly expanding curriculum and hurried schools and hurried classrooms (NCCA, 2010). Indeed, upon first glance, the 1999 geography and history curricula can appear to be content-heavy; however, focusing on the physical face of the curriculum may not be an accurate assessment of its value. As a menu-based curricula, focused on the development of geographical and historical skills and concepts, it presents teachers and schools with opportunities to be selective in creating a course that suits the needs of their particular local context. However, as noted in numerous reports (NCCA, 2005; DES, 2005; Waldron et al., 2009), the role accorded to history and geography textbooks and workbooks in determining what counts as curriculum and the way in which

it is conceptualised, can give power to textbooks as the de facto curricula in terms of planning, teaching and implementation. With these caveats in mind, the following sections outline the curriculum processes and curriculum content for children's learning and development in an education that can reflect the vision and principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework*.

Appendix E and F provide a detailed overview of the desired curriculum processes and essential curriculum content for children's learning and development in geography and history. These Appendices consider the review of literature in geography and history education, through the prism of both the existing PSCH (GoI, 1999) and the *Primary Curriculum Framework* (2023). In doing so, they provide a reference point for the processes and content which could serve to underpin children's learning and development in SEE. Emanating from the three key concepts of sense of space, sense of place, and environment, Appendix E details the key knowledge for geography education, before identifying the key geographical skills and finishing with an explanation of the values and dispositions. Appendix E also includes suggested ERB-related content. Building upon the six key concepts of historical evidence and the use of sources/objects, historical time and chronology, change and continuity, cause and effect, historical empathy and multiple perspectives, Appendix F details the key knowledge for history education, before identifying the key historical skills and finishing with an explanation of the intended values and dispositions. Appendix F provides a detailed overview of the desired curriculum processes and essential curriculum content for children's learning and development in history education with suggested ERB-related content.

d Concluding response to Research Question 4:
What aspects of the curriculum area support integration in Stages 1 and 2, and what aspects of the subjects support integration in Stages 3 and 4?
The literature review highlighted a number of desired curriculum processes for the areas and subjects of SEE, these are sometimes known as signature pedagogies in geography, history and ERB. Essentially, these processes are child centred and engaging.

i Enquiry-based learning: Learning through enquiry enables children to generate ideas, ask questions and investigate in a range of ways (Short, 2011). Enquiry can be considered both a stance within the classroom (Short, 2011; Roberts, 2013; Pike, 2016a) as well as a process of learning (Roberts, 2013). For this reason, suggestions for the use of enquiry as an overall

approach across SEE are outlined here. Arising from the literature it is evident that both enquiry stances and pedagogies have a positive impact on children in SEE areas and subjects. As shown in Table 8.1, enquiry can consist of investigating through asking and answering questions about their homes, communities, and the wider world, through time and space for all class levels.

Table 8.1: Desired Curriculum Processes 1: Overarching pedagogy - enquiry

Stages 1 and 2	**Stages 3 and 4**		
SEE	**Geography**	**History**	**ERB**
Enquiry: Investigating through asking and answering questions about their homes, communities and the wider world, through time and space.	Geographical Enquiry: Carrying out geographical enquiry, supported by teachers, investigating key geographical places and processes.	Historical Enquiry: Historical investigations through the use of evidence, experiencing the constructed nature of historical knowledge and how historians draw conclusions based on evidence.	ERB enquiry: Enquiry into ERB concepts/artefacts/ content that provide a framework to interpret, understand and reflect on the human experience.
All: Investigating through asking and answering questions about their homes, communities and the wider world, through time and space.			

In the junior classes, enquiry builds on the many questions young children ask. The 'Time Detective' model of enquiry (Harnett & Whitehouse, 2012; Ní Cassaithe, 2020) is often used with young primary children to introduce them to the process of historical enquiry. Drawing on Collingwood's (1946) metaphor of a 'detective' when working with primary children to develop historical thinking skills, VanSledright (2002c) used this model to shift the way children understood the study of history away from 'simply memorising other people's facts to investigating, interpreting and arguing about the situation themselves' and children were asked to solve the mysteries of the past through clues found in historical documents. Torrez and Waring (2009) found in their study of primary children's initial engagement with enquiry-based practices that the use of sources made history 'come alive' for the children (p. 84) and increased motivation. Furthermore, Demers et al. (2015) study

showed that historical enquiry in local areas provided primary children with a deeper understanding of historical thinking and historical agency. Ní Cassaithe's research with primary children (2020) identified that teacher pedagogical choices matter. In her study, children who had been introduced to child-centred and constructivist pedagogies such as historical enquiry tended to have a broader and more interpretative understanding of the nature of history and the role evidence plays in the construction of historical accounts. This highlights the importance of the teacher's own understanding of subject-specific pedagogical content knowledge.

Within geography, an enquiry stance can transform children's experiences of lessons (Greenwood et al., 2020) as it stems from children's geographies, as they speculate and ask questions they are curious about (Pike, 2016a). For example, Pike (2016a) found that children in younger classes were experts at enquiry as they simply asked questions without thinking too much about it. These questions also indicated that children were thinking beyond the expectations of the curriculum at that stage (Pike, 2020). In the senior classes, children also speculate and ask questions, but can also carry out aspects from all parts of an enquiry cycle including full independent geographical enquiries, supported by teachers, investigating key geographical places and processes. There is evidence of the positive impact of enquiry pedagogies during fieldwork activity (Nundy, 1999; Pike, 2016a). Within their historical investigations, children can examine evidence, experience the constructed nature of historical knowledge and replicate the processes historians use to draw evidence based conclusions. Additionally, both the subjects of geography and history present opportunities for enquiry into ERB concepts, artefacts and content that provide a framework to interpret and understand the human experience across space, place and time.

As outlined in the literature, enquiry has key stages, although these can be visited several times during the process of an enquiry (Pike, 2016a). Examples include general enquiry models by Short (2009), geographical models by Roberts (2003; 2013) and Catling and Willy (2018), and the Historical Enquiry Framework (HEF) by Ní Cassaithe (2020) and these provide a useful framework for both planning and teaching (see Figure 3.1). As is evidenced in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, the nature of enquiry varies across the subjects of SEE. However, they have some common characteristics. In history, enquiries are characterised by an overarching question which should be answered by the end of the process. Additional questions can be developed to bring in multiple perspectives or to develop historical thinking concepts such as causality, time and chronology etc. (Ní Cassaithe, 2020). In

geography there may be an overarching question or a series of questions (Pike, 2016a). They can address issues such as difference, development or contrast (Roberts, 2013). ERB- related questions can encourage reflection and reflexivity (Jackson, 2014; 2019). Teachers can also decide how the lessons engage with larger themes such as human rights, agency, social justice (Waldron et al., 2021). Within both geography and history, the questions children create may vary from the teacher's initial thoughts (Pike, 2016a). Teacher-designed activities are carefully developed to scaffold children's engagement with the sources. Following this, children are encouraged to gather their findings and synthesise their analysis in order to create evidence-based responses to the main enquiry question. This may include creating artefacts to communicate their work (posters, presentations, essays etc.). Within the enquiry stance, a range of other signature pedagogies, or curriculum processes are also possible, as outlined in Table 8.2. One of the most significant of these is direct experiences, such as fieldwork, working with artefacts and interacting with others, within the school, locality and further afield. All areas and subjects of SEE provide opportunities for children to enhance their learning in real places, interacting with people.

Place-based learning and fieldwork processes: As shown in Table 8.2, learning through, in and about place is also a desired process for SEE, as the numerous ways it benefits children can be realised. For geography, a key process, or signature pedagogy is fieldwork, as it provides children opportunities to understand geographical processes and features (Dolan, 2016). Fieldwork and place-based learning is also evident in the literature in history (Barton & Levstik, 2004), but less so in ERB. The literature on fieldwork makes clear the cognitive and affective benefits of learning outside (Nundy, 1998). Such learning can occur as short, incidental experiences; as longer experiences, lasting for part of a day or for longer periods of time (Tanner, 2021). As various commentators (e.g. Cooper, 1995; Grever et al., 2012; Levstik et al., 2014; Pinto, 2011) note, the use of fieldwork at historic sites should be considered as a powerful tool in the teaching of history because it provides an authentic educational setting which deepens engagement in historical thinking. Visiting a physical site in the locality can make history real for children (Ludvigsson, 2022) and can activate sensory experiences, which in turn, positively impacts on learning (Stolare et al., 2019). The opportunities afforded to the children to gain material, physical and sensory experiences from historic sites, as well as the feelings and emotions generated from their engagement with the sites, have been identified by teachers as essential to the process of historical and geographical learning.

All are worthwhile if carefully planned by teachers. Examples of local places for fieldwork include the school grounds, fields, streams, places of historical interest, places of worship, commercial premises, such as shops and other places near schools, as outlined in the PSCG and PSCH (GoI, 1999c; 1999d). Opportunities for virtual fieldwork can also be incorporated into learning, using technologies such as Geographical Information Systems and Virtual Reality. As learning occurs before, during and after fieldwork, it is essential it is embedded as a key process across SEE areas and subjects.

Table 8.2: Suggested desired curriculum processes 2: Pedagogies

Stages 1 and 2	**Stages 3 and 4**		
SEE	**Geography**	**History**	**ERB**
Place-based learning, fieldwork, participative and dialogical pedagogies	Geographical Enquiry, Fieldwork, Incorporating Children's Geographies, Real-world geography, Using the Local Area	Historical Enquiry, Object based learning and the use of Artefacts, Place-based Learning including heritage sites, local area and trails, Oral history, Story, Drama and Role-Play	Interpretive approach, experiential learning, dialogical and participative pedagogies
All: Place-based learning, fieldwork, participative and dialogical pedagogies			

Resource enhanced processes: Across the areas and subjects of SEE, using resources, objects and artefacts is considered central to the learning process. Although textbooks may have their place, it is the use of high quality resources that engage children across the subjects and areas of SEE. As the literature (e.g. Arias-Ferrer & Egea-Vivancos, 2017; Johnansson, 2019a; Vella, 2001) illustrates, the use of sources, objects and artefacts provide dialogic, active and hands-on learning experiences that help to develop children's observational, analytical and interpretative skills. From a historical perspective, objects and artefacts afford children fascinating insights into the past and deepen their understanding of historical people, events and places and can provide younger primary school children with a tactile experience which can aid their investigative learning. Once the necessary structures

and supports are put in place by the teacher, children as young as 5-7 years of age are capable of making complex deductions when investigating a historical object (Vella, 2001).

From a geographical perspective, the use of objects and artefacts help children to gain a better understanding of the world around them, including people, systems, and places. Key resources are spatial, including digital and paper maps and aerial images (Pike, 2016a; Dolan, 2020). Through examining objects and artefacts, abstract historical and geographical concepts such as place, continuity and change and empathy are also made more accessible to children. As children experience these pedagogies, they are taking part in the practice of being geographers and historians. These provide children with the opportunities to 'build knowledge, construct propositions and make claims' (GA, 2022, p. 4).

The use of ERB-related artefacts (e.g. objects, photos, statues, important/sacred/holy texts etc.) can be used to explore and understand the beliefs, rituals, guiding principles, rites of passage, and practices of individuals, groups and communities. Naming the meaning behind an artefact is significant, as is identifying its importance to members of a belief identity (Lundie et al., 2022). In primary classrooms, guidelines can ensure that religious artefacts are handled and engaged with in a respectful manner.

Overall, the desired processes for the areas and subjects of SEE are engaging and exciting for children to take part in. They do however, require teachers with expertise to plan for children's learning effectively. This also involves teachers being willing to adapt and change plans, where appropriate. Appendix E and F outline the full suggestions for curriculum content and approaches for geography and history with ERB. These are a suggestion of the content and approaches that children will encounter across their primary school years.

ii Essential curriculum content

There are a number of aspects of desired curriculum content for the areas and subjects of SEE, these are commonly known as knowledge in geography, history and ERB. Knowledge incorporates concepts which in turn incorporates understanding, skills and attitudes and values. Table 8.3, outlines the essential curriculum, content in terms of knowledge and concepts for SEE within the *Primary Curriculum Framework*.

Table 8.3: Suggested essential curriculum content 1: Concepts and knowledge across SEE

Stages 1 and 2	**Stages 3 and 4**		
SEE	**Geography**	**History**	**ERB**
Time and space Place and Environment Society, peoples and community Time, Place & Space Environment and Sustainability Identity and identities Community and citizenship Difference and similarity Change and continuity Human rights, social justice	Concepts: Sense of Place; Sense of Space; Environment Knowledge: The uniqueness of places, and the relationships and interactions between people, processes and environments, such as settlements, rivers, coasts, etc.	Concepts: Historical Evidence & the use of Sources Historical Time & Chronology Change & Continuity Cause & Effect Historical Empathy & Multiple Perspectives Knowledge: Personal, Local, Family and Social histories, Oral histories, Hidden/Silenced histories and narratives, Controversial and Sensitive histories, Frameworks of Knowledge and 'Big Picture' learning, Story Big History	Understanding that religions, beliefs and worldviews interact with and influence individuals, communities and society and are underpinned and protected by human rights.
All: Time, place & space, identity and identities, community and citizenship, difference & similarity, change and continuity, human rights, sustainability, social justice			

Knowledge and concepts: SEE should be structured around key knowledge. As noted in Chapter 3 and 4, it is essential that curriculum provides opportunities for children to gain disciplinary and substantive knowledge. Although these terms are not common in classrooms, they are significant:

Disciplinary knowledge includes concepts/ideas, practice and application of learning within the subjects. Within this review it is clear that developing disciplinary knowledge is impactful for children as they value learning and working as geographers and historians. Therefore, all three aspects of disciplinary knowledge - concepts/ideas, practice and application - should appear within the SEE curriculum. Substantive knowledge includes a

full range of contextual and specific knowledge, which has to be selected. Within this review, specific substantive knowledge is not specifically named as it is best provided as a menu within the curriculum to allow for teacher choice. However, possible selections of this must be shown very clearly, and importantly exemplified, in order to support teachers.

As noted in Table 8.3, geography provides opportunities for children to understand and explain the spatial distribution and interrelationships of human and physical phenomena on Earth. This includes knowledge of natural and human-made landscapes, processes that shape them as well as the use of maps, satellite imagery and other spatial data to understand patterns and relationships in human and physical phenomena. In history, the curriculum can ensure children understand and explain past events and historical processes (outlined in Table 8.4). This includes content knowledge of past events and people, as well as the social, political, economic, and cultural contexts in which they were created. Children can use procedural knowledge to handle a variety of sources such as written records, oral histories, artefacts, and visual representations that allow them to piece together the past and create historical narratives or accounts.

Within ERB, due to risks of essentialism, generalisations and stereotypes, there is a move away from knowledge acquisition being a significant goal. Rather, an emphasis is placed on understanding, questioning, reflection, empathy and respect. However, ERB does include teaching that fosters an awareness and understanding of one's own and others' religions, beliefs and worldviews. This might comprise content relating to what is often considered 'major world religions' and to secular philosophical worldviews. What is important is that any knowledge about religions, beliefs and worldviews is accompanied by an understanding of its associated meaning for individuals, groups and society. Religions, beliefs and worldviews are embedded in actions, behaviours and life-world practice(s). As such, ERB knowledge is situated and contextualised with the goal of 'understanding and explaining people's lives, societies, places, environments, values, attitudes, beliefs, the past, the present, and in relation to the future' (Catling, 2017, p. 355).

Key concepts are also known as 'big concepts and ideas' and emerge from the discipline as a means of ordering and clarifying to clarify the distinctiveness of geographical or historical thought (GA, 2022). Defined by Naish in terms of geography, as 'an abstraction from events, situations, objects or ideas of the attributes they have in common' (1982, p. 35), concepts are at the core of learning. They include hierarchical concepts, focusing on the subject, as

containing content (Gregory & Lewin, 2018) and organisational, focusing on pedagogies, linking ideas, experiences and processes. Organisational concepts include substantive or first order concepts, as well as second order concepts (Schwab, 1978). In geography, Taylor (2008) divides these into first order or substantive concepts that are part of the substance of a subject, such as trade, city, etc. and second order concepts which help organise the subject, such as similarity, difference or interdependence. Overall, key concepts are essential across SEE areas and subjects, as is evident from the research reviewed in this literature. The planning, sequencing and progression of knowledge in SEE requires teachers who have had the opportunity to develop their own subject and professional knowledge across the subjects and areas.

Skills and aptitudes: Signature pedagogies and the knowledge of the areas and subjects of SEE provide opportunities for children to use and develop a range of skills and aptitudes. As the PSC notes (GoI, 1999a, p. 7), 'it endeavours to equip children with the knowledge and skills that will serve them not only in their lives as children but later as adults; it is concerned to develop their capacity for creative expression and response. Table 8.4 outlines the essential skills and aptitudes for SEE within the *Primary Curriculum Framework*.

These knowledge and skills develop through children's thinking, which are highly valued in the SEE areas and subjects. All the areas and subjects of SEE provide opportunities for children to participate in learning processes, by thinking critically, through questioning, analysing, interpreting, evaluating and making judgements about sources that are read, heard, spoken. As the *Primary Curriculum Framework* notes, this activity often arises from being creative, which involves 'enjoyment, effort, risk-taking, critical thinking, and reflection' (DoE, 2023, p. 9). As the research evidence in this report identifies, such activity has a positive impact on children's learning across areas and subjects of SEE as well as in other areas, notably language.

Table 8.4: Essential curriculum content 2: Skills and aptitudes

Stages 1 and 2	**Stages 3 and 4**		
SEE	**Geography**	**History**	**ERB**
Enquiry skills (questioning, inferring, observing, analysing, recording and communicating, reflecting) Using a range of evidence (from artefacts, sources, people, the environment, etc.) Critical and creative thinking Participation, Dialogue. Working collaboratively	Geographical Investigation Skills (questioning, inferring, observing, analysing, recording and communicating), Mapping Skills (including map reading and map making). Visual Literacy Skills (including collecting, working with, creating and responding to pictorial representations of different environments such as photographs). Critical thinking and informed decision making through discussion, consideration of multiple perspectives, debate and argumentation. Digital Skills (including working with/creating digital maps and other artefacts). Working collaboratively.	Historical Thinking Skills (interpreting historical evidence to construct and reconstruct historical narratives about the past). Informed decision making through discussion, interpretation of evidence, consideration of multiple perspectives, debate and argumentation. Sourcing, contextualisation, close reading and corroboration of sources. Creating evidence-based arguments/interpretations about the past. Chronological thinking skills including placing historical people, events and periods within a broad historical sequence. Working collaboratively.	Enquiry skills (analysing, interpreting, reflecting) Critical thinking Respectful dialogue and participation Multiple perspectives
All: Critical and creative thinking, enquiry, participation, dialogue			

Within geography, the literature makes evidence that these skills and aptitudes involve interacting with geographic information such as a range of images, writing in a variety of

genres and spatial data, such as maps and satellite images. Such resources ensure that thinking in geography is geographical in nature (Roberts, 2013). In history, by using a suitable source, children can ask and answer historical questions, in doing so they engage in historical thinking, including perspective taking, argument, interpretation. All of these enable children to develop a deep sense of the period of history they are learning about. In ERB, developing skills to listen to and reflect on different religious and non-religious experiences through respectful dialogue fosters empathy and multi-perspectivity. Within the areas and subjects of SEE, opportunities for children to think critically and respectfully about themselves and others can be embedded. The embedding of these skills and aptitudes in SEE require teachers who have had the opportunity to develop their own professional knowledge and skills across the subjects and areas.

Values and dispositions: Signature pedagogies to develop children's knowledge, skills and aptitudes always involve the development of their values and dispositions. Table 8.5 outlines the essential curriculum content relating to values and dispositions for SEE within the *Primary Curriculum Framework*.

The *Primary Curriculum Framework* seeks to support children 'to develop the attitudes, concepts, dispositions, knowledge, skills, and values that motivate and empower them to become informed and active citizens who promote a more sustainable future' (DoE, 2023, p. 19). The areas and subjects of SEE can provide a range of opportunities for children to develop their values and dispositions, which they will draw on as children and adults. These include values related to developing empathy, responsibility towards others and an appreciation of human and environmental interdependence. The SEE curriculum can provide opportunities for open, questioning attitudes, and a respect for people's ethnic, racial, cultural, religious and social identities.

Across the areas and subjects of SEE, children should develop values and dispositions in relation to their community and the environment. They should have opportunities to consider and respect multiple perspectives, to find evidence and to develop arguments. Their democratic values will enable them to use reason to identify facts and to recognise and challenge misperceptions, stereotypes and hearsay. Thus, they can develop their own perspectives and viewpoints as they engage in democratic citizenship.

Table 8.5: Essential curriculum content 3: Values and dispositions

Stages 1 and 2	**Stages 3 and 4**		
SEE	**Geography**	**History**	**ERB**
Identity, Multiple perspectives, Democratic citizenship, Empathy	Develop a personal attachment to place(s) Develop appreciation for natural and built environments and recognise and realise their rights and responsibilities as beings within, and custodians of, this planet. Develop a sense of identity Value democratic participation Appreciate interconnection, interrelationships and interdependence Develop individual and collective agency in the promotion of sustainable environments Developing empathy and appreciation for diversity including multi-perspectivity.	Value democratic citizenship and give consideration to and evaluate multiple perspectives, arguments and evidence. Develop individual and collective agency by examining diverse histories and recognising the agency of past people. Appreciate the interrelationships between humans and their environments over time. Develop a sense of identity Develop a personal attachment to a place and a sense of belonging to local, national and local communities. Develop historical consciousness Recognise the nature of history and historical evidence	Multi-perspectivity Empathy Interpretation/ reflexivity Intercultural/ ERB competence
All: Multiple perspectives, democratic citizenship, empathy			

Geography provides opportunities to develop children's empathy and appreciation for difference and diversity (Martin, 2013; Usher, 2021b). Within lessons on issues and events, children can analyse evidence, and examine reasons for positions, before clarifying the values of others and themselves. This enables them to appreciate different points of view about people, processes and places. Through such learning children can develop values of understanding that contribute towards their role as citizens and enable them to make values-based decisions around actions, supported by teachers (Fien and Slater, 1981; Pike, 2016a). History engages children with multiple perspectives and promotes a critical analysis

of multiple sources which all contribute to potentially nurturing children's values and dispositions. History also provides opportunities to develop values and dispositions relevant to democratic citizenship that can be fostered through the development of children's historical thinking (Barton & Levstik, 2004; McCully, 2012). Children have opportunities to recognise that historical actions involve the collective efforts of many people, and so they can recognise the possibilities open to them to demonstrate their own agency in today's society. In ERB, multi-perspectivity is also an important value as it enables children to react to and to reflect on new learning material and on their peer's experiences. Within ERB, the emphasis on reflection, empathy and respect fosters an awareness and understanding of children's own and others' religions, beliefs and worldviews.

Like the other dimensions of children's learning, recognising and embedding opportunities for children to develop their values and dispositions in SEE requires teachers who have had the opportunity to develop their own professional knowledge of values and dispositions across the SEE and other subjects and areas.

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Appendix A

Searches for the literature review

Geography	History	ERB	Integration
Academic Search Complete, PsycInfo, Web of Science	Academic Search Complete PsycInfo Web of Science	Academic Search Complete, Psycinfo, Web of Science	Academic Search Complete, Psycinfo,, British Education Index
(Geography Education AND primary) (Geography Education AND elementary) (Geography Education AND lower secondary)	(History education or History curriculum or History teaching or teaching History AND primary) (History Education or History curriculum or History teaching or teaching History AND elementary) (History Education or History curriculum or History teaching or teaching History AND lower secondary or middle school)	(Religious Education AND primary) (Religious Education AND elementary) (Religious Education AND lower secondary) (belief systems AND primary) (belief systems AND elementary) (belief systems AND lower secondary) (worldviews AND primary) (worldviews AND elementary) (worldviews AND lower secondary) (World religions AND primary) (World religions AND elementary) (World religions AND lower secondary) Focus: non-confessional (excluded confessional, interreligious)	primary* AND integration AND humanities AB primary* AND AB integration AND AB social studies AB primary* AND AB integration AND AB Geography* AB primary* AND AB integration AND AB histor* - AB primary* AND AB integration AND AB religious education – 10 s5 AB primary* AND AB integration AND AB world views AB primary* AND AB interdisciplinary AND AB social studies AB primary* AND AB interdisciplinary AND AB geograph* - AB primary* AND AB interdisciplinary AND AB histor* AB primary* AND AB interdisciplinary AND AB religious education AB primary* AND AB interdisciplinary AND AB world views AB primary* AND AB multidisciplinary AND AB social studies AB primary* AND AB multidisciplinary AND AB geograph* AB primary* AND AB multidisciplinary AND AB histor* AB primary* AND AB multidisciplinary AND AB religious education AB primary* AND AB multidisciplinary AND AB world views AB primary* AND AB cross-curr* AND AB humanities AB primary* AND AB cross-curr* AND AB social studies AB primary* AND AB cross-curr* AND AB geograph* - AB primary* AND AB cross-curr* AND AB histor* AB primary* AND AB cross-curr* AND AB religious education AB primary* AND AB cross-curr* AND world views

Appendix B

Toledo Guiding Principles

Key Guiding Principles

1. Teaching about religions and beliefs must be provided in ways that are fair, accurate and based on sound scholarship. Students should learn about religions and beliefs in an environment respectful of human rights, fundamental freedoms and civic values.
2. Those who teach about religions and beliefs should have a commitment to religious freedom that contributes to a school environment and practices that foster protection of the rights of others in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding among members of the school community.
3. Teaching about religions and beliefs is a major responsibility of schools, but the manner in which this teaching takes place should not undermine or ignore the role of families and religious or belief organizations in transmitting values to successive generations.
4. Efforts should be made to establish advisory bodies at different levels that take an inclusive approach to involving different stakeholders in the preparation and implementation of curricula and in the training of teachers.
5. Where a compulsory programme involving teaching about religions and beliefs is not sufficiently objective, efforts should be made to revise it to make it more balanced and impartial, but where this is not possible, or cannot be accomplished immediately, recognizing opt-out rights may be a satisfactory solution for parents and children, provided that the opt-out arrangements are structured in a sensitive and non-discriminatory way.
6. Those who teach about religions and beliefs should be adequately educated to do so. Such teachers need to have the knowledge, attitude and skills to teach about religions and beliefs in a fair and balanced way. Teachers need not only subject-matter competence but pedagogical skills so that they can interact with students and help students interact with each other in sensitive and respectful ways.
7. Preparation of curricula, textbooks and educational materials for teaching about religions and beliefs should take into account religious and non-religious views in a way that is inclusive, fair, and respectful. Care should be taken to avoid inaccurate or prejudicial material, particularly when this reinforces negative stereotypes.
8. Curricula should be developed in accordance with recognized professional standards in order to ensure a balanced approach to study about religions and beliefs. Development and implementation of curricula should also include open and fair

procedures that give all interested parties appropriate opportunities to offer comments and advice.

9. Quality curricula in the area of teaching about religions and beliefs can only contribute effectively to the educational aims of the Toledo Guiding Principles if teachers are professionally trained to use the curricula and receive ongoing training to further develop their knowledge and competences regarding this subject matter. Any basic teacher preparation should be framed and developed according to democratic and human rights principles and include insight into cultural and religious diversity in society.
10. Curricula focusing on teaching about religions and beliefs should give attention to key historical and contemporary developments pertaining to religion and belief, and reflect global and local issues. They should be sensitive to different local manifestations of religious and secular plurality found in schools and the communities they serve. Such sensitivities will help address the concerns of students, parents and other stakeholders in education.

(OSCE/ODIHR, 2007, p16-17)

Appendix C

Big ideas for religious education (Wintersgill, 2017)

Due to the depth of theorization of the '*Big Ideas*', there is a risk that it would be reductive to condense the work. Thus, the following aims to provide a non-comprehensive overview:

1. Continuity, Change and Diversity: a multitude of diverse religions, beliefs and worldviews exist with interconnected patterns of beliefs, practices and values. As they interact and respond to new situations and challenges, changes and continuities manifest within and across those religions, beliefs and worldviews, through different times and contexts.
2. Words and Beyond: the beliefs, emotions, values, experiences and identities of individuals and communities can be communicated and expressed in a multitude of literal and figurative, and verbal and non-verbal ways.
3. A Good Life: different religions, beliefs and worldviews have differing (and at times similar) conceptualisations of what it means to live a good life or to be a good person. How individuals and communities interpret, provide guidance on and actualise those conceptualisations may differ within and across religions, beliefs and worldviews.
4. Making Sense of Life's Experiences: the experiences of individuals and communities are key in how religions, beliefs and worldviews are conceptualised and practiced. Religions, beliefs and worldviews can enable individuals and communities to understand life experiences, and can foster a sense of identity and belonging.
5. Influence and Power: religions, beliefs and worldviews interact with and influence a range of societal realms including the educational, cultural and the political. The scale of interaction and influence may vary over time and in different contexts and can have positive and negative impact(s) on individuals and communities.
6. The Big Picture: in order to have an overall understanding of reality, life and how and why the world is as it is, religions, beliefs and worldviews provide comprehensive accounts, sometimes referred to as 'grand narratives', that can come in the form of frameworks, key texts, life approaches, and traditions that are understood to be authoritative. Individuals and communities may interpret and actualise the accounts in a variety of ways.

   Source: Cush, 2019, p. 98; Wintersgill, 2017, p. 15

Appendix D Principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework* and learning in geography, history and Education about Religions and Beliefs

Principles	History	Geography	ERB
Partnership *Partnerships and collaboration between schools, families, and communities enrich and extend children's learning by acknowledging and supporting their lives in and out of school.*	School grounds, school museums and school events can provide interesting contexts for historical study. Connections to families, community and other local partnerships strengthen children's understanding of the past.	Through an engagement with children's geographies, children have the opportunity to build on skills, knowledge and understanding from their lived experiences. Primary geography makes deep connections to children's lives, families and communities locally, nationally and globally.	In ERB, making connections with families and communities from all religious, belief and worldview backgrounds creates possibilities to reflect real-life experiences, understandings and practices. Such partnerships foster dialogue, connection and belonging, and can help challenge false information, stereotypes and negative perceptions.
Pedagogy *Teachers use appropriate and evidence-based pedagogical approaches and strategies to foster children's engagement, ownership, and challenge. Such pedagogical approaches and strategies connect with children's life experience, circumstances, strengths, and interests.*	Signature pedagogies for history education are historical enquiry, object based teaching, place-based outdoor education & field trips and story. These pedagogies ensure a dynamic and active-learning that motivates and engages children.	Signature pedagogies for geography education are experiential, enquiry-based, child-centred and real-world oriented. These pedagogies provide opportunities to interest, excite and challenge children, and to foster their learning.	Appropriate child-centred pedagogies in ERB are active, experiential, dialogic and participative. These pedagogies, carried out in a 'safe' space, allow children to share and to listen to stories, experiences, perspectives and opinions. They are linked to people's lived realities and help foster respect, empathy, multi-perspectivity and reflection.
Relationships *Caring relationships within the school community support and impact positively on children's*	History education supports children to develop values of care, respect, empathy and appreciation for the diversity of people in their classrooms, schools, communities	Geography education supports children to develop values of care, respect, empathy and appreciation for the natural environment and for diversity of people in their	Underpinned by human rights, ERB fosters respect for religions, beliefs and worldviews through affirming the identity(ies) of the child, their family and

engagement, motivation, and learning.	and across the world. Inclusion of personal histories, local histories, national histories, global histories and topics relevant to the children's lives can develop a sense of identity that can be enriched throughout their schooling.	classrooms, schools, communities and across the world.	those in the local and wider community. Positive and quality relationships (school-child-home-community) impacts positively on engagement and builds a sense of belonging.
Transitions and continuity *Children's prior learning, self-worth, and identity are built upon as they move from home to preschool and on to junior infants, and as they progress through primary school. This provides important foundations for learning as they move to post-primary school.*	History topics such as Myself, My Family and My Local Area draw on children's own experiences of change and continuity and enrich their sense of historical consciousness and self-identity. These are also topics that can be revisited with increasing depth and additional lenses over time.	A focus on children's geographies fosters engagement with children's prior geographical learning and recognises their identities and everyday experiences as a foundation for learning in geography education. Hands-on experiential, enquiry-based approaches can foster positive attitudes towards geography education and provide the basis for further learning and engagement with geography in children's everyday lives.	ERB builds on the *Aistear* theme of identity and belonging. It supports children to develop a positive sense of who they are and to feel valued and respected as part of a primary school community. ERB supports new and developing understandings of the religions, beliefs and worldviews of self and others. ERB also builds on the other *Aistear* themes of well-being, communicating and exploring and thinking. It does so by enabling children to develop the capacity to engage and respond with respect as they interact with others and as they make sense of the world around them. ERB enables children to name and share experiences, thoughts and opinions, and to express changing perspectives and understandings as they progress through primary school. This prepares children for

			the inclusive, engaging and participative principles of the Junior Cycle in post-primary school. ERB can provide a foundation for Junior Cycle Religious Education in relation to Statements of Learning 5, 6, 7, 8 and 11.
Learning environments *Children's learning is shaped and nurtured by the physical environment, indoors and outdoors. These diverse environments encourage children's independence, and stimulate and support their learning across the curriculum.*	Access to high quality resources (artefacts, maps, photographs, documents, oral evidence) can support children's learning across the SEE curriculum and increase children's understanding of the nature of history. The local environment (both inside and outside the classroom) can provide children. Consistent use of pedagogies and methodologies suitable for historical learning can develop historical thinking skills and provide continuity for the child as they engage with increasingly complex content and concepts throughout their educational journey.	Primary geography supports children to develop both a sense of place and sense of space which deepen children's understanding of, and engagement with, their learning environments. As a signature geography education pedagogy, fieldwork fosters engagement with children's diverse environments (including those outdoors) and promotes skills, knowledge and understanding, while also nurturing holistic development. It connects learning to other subject areas. Geographical enquiry can develop children's understanding of their learning environments, but can also serve as a framework through which children can positively transform these spaces and collaborate with school and wider communities.	Children can become more engaged in learning when they see religious, belief and worldview identities affirmed and reflected in their environments. In ERB, field-trips and virtual tours to places of importance can further enhance understandings of the differences and similarities in how people make sense of and give meaning to our world and the human experience.

Inclusive education and diversity *Inclusive education provides for equity of opportunity and participation in children's learning. Inclusive education celebrates diversity and responds to the uniqueness of every child.*	Inclusion and diversity can be supported through the choice of topics, stories and sources selected by the teacher and also the questions asked. When selecting material, teachers should consider the backgrounds of the children in their class and community but also consider the perspectives and stories of those who have been traditionally excluded from mainstream discourses (e.g. ethnic minority groups, disability stories, non-human histories, indigenous stories). Inclusion can also be supported through enquiry-based pedagogies and active and object-based learning.	Primary geography education supports children's understanding of diversity within and between places, and serves as a space for children to encounter and work with differences. Through a critical multicultural geography education framework, children can develop an understanding of multiple perspectives and an appreciation for diversity. Child-centred approaches to primary geography education, facilitated through inclusive frameworks and differentiated resources can support the learning and participation of all children.	ERB acknowledges and affirms children's individual identities and creates a space for them to learn about the religious, belief and worldview identities of their peers, and of those in Irish society and beyond. ERB is underpinned by human rights, fosters respect, understanding and empathy and makes real-world connections to the children's lives and experiences. ERB recognises that religions, beliefs and worldviews are internally diverse, context-dependent, and that there are multiple ways of having and expressing religious and non-religious beliefs.
Engagement & participation *Children are active and demonstrate agency as the capacity to act independently and to make choices about and in their learning. Curriculum experiences provide them with opportunities for decision-making, creativity, and collaboration.*	Historical enquiry, as a child-centred, collaborative and activity-based methodology provides children with hands-on opportunities to engage with people and events from the past. Through the process of enquiry, children work together to pose their own questions and analyse sources to create their own interpretation of past events that are grounded in evidence. Furthermore, locally-based outdoor education (trails, field trips and walks)	Primary geography education can support children's agency both in their learning and as members of local, national and global communities. Enquiry-based approaches to geography education can support children's collaboration, decision-making and creativity in relation to real-world issues. Through the development of geographical skills, conceptual understanding and knowledge attainment, geography education can enable children to act and participate in	ERB pedagogies are experiential and enquiry-based and as such, they encourage dialogue and participation. Through discussion and collaboration with their peers, children develop the intercultural and democratic skills of decision-making, critical thinking and conflict resolution.

	provide pedagogically sound opportunities for children to experience their environment in creative and meaningful ways.	solutions to local and global issues.	
Assessment and progression *Meaningful assessment is collaborative and integral to high-quality learning and teaching. Involving children, teachers, parents, and others, it provides information which enhances teaching and informs and supports progression in children's learning across the curriculum.*	Through a disciplinary/enquiry based approach to history, assessment focuses on both content knowledge and children's ability to think historically, providing a more holistic picture of the child's development. Through this approach, assessment may happen during the process of enquiry (development of historical thinking skills) and at the end point of the enquiry in more meaningful and creative contexts.	Signature geography education pedagogies provide opportunities for collaborative assessment in relation to the underpinning knowledge, skills and attitudes. For example, there are multiple opportunities for rich assessment throughout each phase of the geographical enquiry process.	In ERB, progression involves increasing levels of detail and understanding (from simple to complex topics), expanding awareness from individual to group, community, national and global contexts, and recognising links and connections across religions, beliefs and worldviews. Throughout primary school, children are developing and progressing their capacity to express and communicate stories, ideas and perspectives relating to religions, beliefs and worldviews.

Appendix E: Suggested content for primary geography education

Approaches to primary geography education				
Geographical enquiry	*Fieldwork*	*Incorporating children's geographies*	*Real-world geography*	*Using the local area*
Children participate in a collaborative geographical investigation, posing questions, generating ideas, creating and/or gathering data to develop understanding, and answering the enquiry questions. Concluding a geographical enquiry involves children drawing conclusions, communicating findings, reflecting on the process, and taking action where possible.	Children undertake practical investigations in the environment. This can include observing patterns, behaviours and features, collecting data through interviewing, recording observations (through sketching, mapping, photographing, video) and so on. Fieldwork can take place in school grounds, immediate locality of the school, the broader local area, as well as other places. Virtual fieldwork through digital technologies such as VR and digital mapping, satellite imagery and Streetview functions are also important for enhancing children's sense of place and sense of space during investigations.	Children's geographies include experiences and understandings accrued from home environments, their localities and senses of distant places gathered through relationships, trips abroad, and the media. Children gain geographical knowledge, understandings and conceptions through these experiences which can then be built upon and indeed challenged in their primary geography lessons.	Geography helps children to understand the real-world including people, systems, places, interactions and decisions which affect their lives. Relating geography to the real-world can aid children in recognising the importance and usefulness of the subject. Real-world geography includes teaching through current issues and problems such as the management of the bogs, deforestation, land-use, provision of transport routes, etc. Children can investigate a real-world problem, explore different perspectives, examine the issues, identify solutions and participate in resolutions to these problems where possible.	The local area in primary Geography education goes beyond identifying a range of features, services, changes and connections. It includes the local community and helps to contextualise learning and provide a space for experiential fieldwork. Using the local area aids the development of children's sense of belonging, local community and identity and provides tangible links to the real-world and builds upon children's geographies. Investigations of the local area involve experiential activities such as map reading and mapmaking, fieldwork and collaborative group work involving members of the wider community.
ERB: Enquiry into ERB concepts, materials and content that provide a framework to interpret and understand the human experience. Involves enquiry, analysis, interpretation and reflection.	ERB: Field-trips and virtual tours to explore the exterior and interior of places of importance can support in understanding the differences and similarities in how people make sense of and give meaning to our world and the human experience.	ERB: Children can share the meaning behind symbols, artefacts and items of importance from home and abroad that may be representative of the religions, beliefs and worldviews they are familiar with. Some symbols and artefacts, although similar in appearance, may hold different relevance and meaning to different children.	ERB: Religions, beliefs and worldviews influence how people make sense of and give meaning to our world and the human experience. They interact with and influence individuals, communities and societies. Link to relevant census results in Ireland and other places.	ERB: When using the local area as an approach, including the religious, belief and worldview identities of the children and their families builds a sense of belonging and community.

Suggested content for primary geography education			
	Sense of place	**Sense of space**	**Environment (and sustainability)**
Concepts and Description	Sense of Place is an understanding of the unique characteristics of a place and how it was, is and could be influenced and shaped by people and natural processes.	Sense of Space is children's understanding of where places are and how they are interconnected. Sense of Space develops through children's spatial awareness, how places are related and interconnected and fit within other places.	Environment is the surroundings and conditions within which humans or other living things interact. Sustainability means living in a manner that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
	ERB: The presence and absence of characteristics/artefacts representative of religions, beliefs and worldviews is an aspect of the story of a place.	ERB: Connections can be made with important spaces locally and in other places (e.g. pilgrimage sites)	ERB: Care and stewardship of the environment is an integral aspect of some religions, beliefs and worldviews
Knowledge	Natural Environment and its Features: (such as mountains, rivers, forests, plains, bogs/peatlands, hedgerows, hills, etc.). How these features contribute to the unique character of a place. How they are formed, sustained or changed. How these features impact how and where people live. How people impact these features (both positively and negatively) in the past, present and future. Built Environment and its Features: which contribute to the unique character of a place. This includes significant buildings (e.g. for employment, heritage, community), infrastructure (such as cycle lanes, footpaths, bridges, roads, canals, railways, airports) and other features (such as stone walls, statues and sculptures). ERB: Include places of worship, gathering and remembering, sites and artefacts of importance, and place/street names.	Natural Environment and its Features: location and distribution of significant natural features (such as mountains, rivers, forests, plains, boglands, hedgerows, hills) in the local area and across the world. How and why these natural features relate to each other. Identify and describe the relative locations of familiar built and natural features locally and globally using directional and locational language (e.g. near, in front of, at the corner, east of, southwest of). Record the location, size and orientation of these features using simple drawings, plans, maps, globes, models and digital technology. ERB: Include places of worship, gathering and remembering, sites and artefacts of importance.	Natural Environment and its Features: (such as rainforests, peatlands, shores). How these environments are shaped by interaction of physical features and physical forces and processes (e.g. heating, cooling, erosion, deposition). How human activities impact these physical processes. How different regions, interactions or specific places are characterised (e.g. biomes, ecosystems and habitats). How air, soil, water and living things shape and are shaped by these environments. How these natural environments contribute to balanced ecosystems. Recognising planetary boundaries. Interactions. The interactions between people and their environments at a local and global scales. How environments have been, are, and will be influenced by human action and activity (such as land use, farming, fishing, resource extraction, construction of infrastructure and buildings). How environments are shaped by natural hazards (e.g. hurricanes, tsunamis). How social and cultural activities shape environments. ERB: Include places of worship, gathering and remembering, identify artistic and cultural sites and artefacts relevant to religions, beliefs and worldviews.

Knowledge	Communities: how people influence the unique character of a place. This includes diverse communities who live in and share a place and how these groups interact with one another. Connections made by people between places (e.g. through trade, migration and tourism). Similarities and differences between places, including local and distant places. ERB: Name key figures (including. religious leaders) in the community and further afield. Include services and providers that meet the religious needs of members of the community e.g. bookshops, butchers, food shops. Weather and Climate: how weather and climate influences the unique character of a place. This includes how weather and climate may influence the natural features of a place (e.g. flooding of rivers), the built environment (e.g. types of housing) and the lives of people and communities in a place. How natural features such as mountains and oceans influence weather and climate. Understanding how different land use practices influence the unique character of a place (such as flower beds in public parks, peat extraction from bogs, sheep farming, forestry, residential areas). Identifying and exploring unique issues and opportunities in a place (e.g. lack of people cycling to work and school). Identifying potential solutions and improvements and taking part in appropriate actions where possible (e.g. raising awareness, individual behavioural changes, collective class, school and community actions).	Identify and record journeys to and from places in the immediate local environment and other places (e.g. home, school, shops and other significant buildings, other towns, holiday locations, different counties, countries, continents) through maps, globes, digital technology and pictorial representations. Give and follow directions (using locational and directional language) to various features and/or places. Acquire an understanding of Nested Hierarchies whereby smaller places fit within other larger places (e.g. a town within a county, within a province, within a country). Understand the relative size of places in relation to each other. Develop understanding of the borders of places, and how borders define and confine places, movement of people, living things and economic goods (e.g. different areas of the school grounds, county borders, international borders within/outside of the EU). ERB: Appreciate that some country/imagined borders can also imply differences in religions, beliefs and worldviews. Identify and record different forms of Land Use within the school grounds, the local area and further afield (using maps and digital technology such as Google Earth). Develop understanding for how various land use practices and patterns impact sustainability, biodiversity, living/working conditions and public facilities. Investigate issues/opportunities for land use and identify possible improvements in this regard. ERB: Include places of worship, gathering and remembering, sites of importance, and representative symbols Develop an appropriate cognitive map of places such as the local area and distant places through drawing on children's own geographies and their lived experiences, as well as virtual and outdoor fieldwork. Develop an understanding for the spatial distribution of living things and their habitats in the local environment and further afield such as distribution of living things in the school grounds (e.g. habitats of insects), or at a national and global scale (e.g. distribution of tropical rainforests). Identity and represent migratory patterns of living things on maps and globes (e.g. swallows). Identifying patterns of spatial distribution (such as location of urban centres on rivers), particular habitats within climate zones (such coral reefs) ERB: Make associations with the historical and contemporary movement and spread of religion(s). Include the movement of people undertaking pilgrimage. Weather and Climate: identify and investigate different climate regions on maps and globes and develop understanding for how natural features such as mountains and oceans influence weather and climate.	Built environments. How built environments shape and are shaped by natural environments, and the features and processes within (such as locations of buildings, sourcing of building materials, structural design of buildings for specific environmental conditions). ERB: Some places of worship, gathering and remembering are built into and connected to the natural environment. Identify and investigate different climate regions and biomes on maps and globes. Develop understanding for life in these environments. Investigate the changing nature of biomes and the consequences for human and other life in these environments. Identify and explore causes, effects and possible solutions to environmental issues at local and global scales and their connections to global challenges, particularly climate change and biodiversity loss (e.g. pollution, construction of a new building or piece of infrastructure such as a motorway, changes in land use practices such as farming and fishing, habitat destruction, resource extraction such as turf cutting and deforestation, the sourcing, storage, distribution and usage of energy including renewable and non-renewable energy). ERB: Identify that care and stewardship of the environment is an integral aspect of some religions, beliefs and worldviews. Identify and investigate challenges to, and opportunities for, living in the local environment (e.g. wheelchair accessibility, cycle lane provision, public park design, homelessness, employment, community facilities). ERB: Include the absence or presence of appropriate cultural/meeting spaces for groups from different religious, belief and worldview backgrounds. Applying knowledge by taking part in appropriate actions linked to issues in the local and wider global environments where possible (e.g. raising awareness, individual behavioural changes, collective class, school and community actions).

Skills	Mapping Skills including map reading and mapmaking, working with globes, understanding size and scale of places, location of places. Using and making digital maps of places. ERB: Include places of worship, gathering and remembering, sites of importance, and representative symbols. Visual Literacy Skills including collecting, working with and responding to pictorial representations of a place (e.g. photographs, videos, drawings and maps). ERB: Include streetscapes with varying buildings/places of worship. Enquiry Skills including Investigating, Questioning, Observing, Analysing, Interpreting, Recording and Communicating. ERB: Enquiry, analysis, interpretation and reflection. Critical thinking and informed decision making through discussion, consideration of multiple perspectives, debate and argumentation. ERB: critical thinking, respectful dialogue, participation, and multiple perspectives. Working collaboratively to imagine places in the future and create potential solutions to local and global challenges linked to a place. ERB: Include appropriate cultural/meeting spaces for groups from different religious, belief and worldview backgrounds.	Mapping Skills including map reading and mapmaking, working with globes. Using and making digital maps. Understanding and applying the five elements of mapping (location, scale, symbols, perspective and direction). Using directional and locational language to describe routes taken, directions (including cardinal directions) and locations (e.g. through, opposite, beside, East of, northwest of). Developing mathematical skills through measuring and mapping places and features to accurate and appropriate scales (e.g. using trundle wheels and rulers) Identifying and applying coordinates in map reading and mapmaking (such as latitude and longitude at large scale and small scale maps). Visual Literacy Skills: including creating visual representations of features and places through drawings, maps and models. Enquiry Skills including Investigating, Questioning, Observing, Analysing, Interpreting, Recording and Communicating.	Mapping skills including map reading and mapmaking regarding natural and built environments. ERB: Identify symbols for religions, beliefs and worldviews where appropriate. Use of digital technology to interpret and communicate geographical information in relation to different environments. Visual Literacy Skills including collecting, working with, creating and responding to pictorial representations of different environments (e.g. photographs, videos, drawings, sketches and maps). ERB: Include places of worship, gathering and remembering, sites of importance, and representative symbols. Enquiry Skills including Investigating, Questioning, Observing, Analysing, Interpreting, Recording and Communicating. ERB: Enquiry, analysis, interpretation and reflection. Critical thinking and informed decision making through discussion, consideration of multiple perspectives, debate and argumentation. ERB: critical thinking, respectful dialogue, participation, and multiple perspectives. Working collaboratively to imagine future environments and create potential solutions to local and global challenges. ERB: critical thinking, respectful dialogue, participation, and multiple perspectives.
Values and Dispositions	Developing an attribution of meaning and personal attachment to a place and a sense of belonging to local, national and global communities. ERB: Recognise and understand the importance of religions, beliefs and worldviews in some people's lives and how this might relate to place and a sense of belonging. Develop empathy and multi-perspectivity. Developing appreciation for natural and built features that influence the unique character	Consider how the real world is represented on maps and globes. Appreciate globes and different map projections (e.g. Mercator and Peters projections) and recognise differences in how places are represented (distortion of sizes). ERB: Make associations with the historical and contemporary movement and spread of religion(s). Recognise how different perspectives shape representations of space (such as Eurocentric world maps) and how different places such as Africa are portrayed. Developing appreciation for the interconnections between places and at local, national and global scales.	Develop appreciation of interrelationships between living things (including humans) and their environments. ERB: Include the role of religions, beliefs and worldviews on the ways people understand and engage with the world. Make connections to, and develop a value of, a diversity of natural environments, in local and global places. Understanding their rights and responsibilities as beings within, and custodians of, this planet. ERB: Identify that care and stewardship of the environment is an integral aspect of some religions, beliefs and worldviews.

	of a place and the need to protect and conserve these. Appreciating diversity within and between places. Developing empathy for a range of diverse perspectives within a place and between places. Understanding their own rights and responsibilities towards each other and the environment in an interdependent and globalised world. ERB: Identify religions, beliefs and worldviews as an influence on people's perspectives and as an aspect of identity protected by human rights. Developing empathy, multi-perspectivity and intercultural/ERB competence. Understanding and acknowledging unique issues and opportunities in a place (e.g. lack of people cycling to work and school). Identifying potential solutions and improvements and taking part in appropriate actions where possible. Value democratic participation in local and global decision making, and the importance of just and equitable solutions to ensure sustainable futures. ERB: Recognise the importance of including all voices, including those from underrepresented or minority religions, beliefs and worldviews. Developing intercultural/ERB competence.	ERB: Include the role and significance of sites of importance from a range of religions, beliefs and worldviews. Develop an appreciation for the interrelationships between humans, living things and the environment. ERB: Recognise that some rituals and practices relate to the integral role of living things and the environment in some religions, beliefs and worldviews.	Appreciate the impact of human activity on the past, present and future of natural and built environments, and develop their own individual and collective agency in the promotion of sustainable environments. Consider how decisions may impact natural and built environments, humans and other living things in the future. Consider and make fair and equitable decisions and take action to address problems and challenges related to natural and built environments. ERB: Recognise the importance of including all voices, including those from underrepresented or minority religions, beliefs and worldviews. Value democratic participation in local and global decision making, and the importance of just and equitable solutions to ensure sustainable futures. ERB: Recognise the importance of including all voices, including those from underrepresented or minority religions, beliefs and worldviews. Developing intercultural/ERB competence.

It is important to recognise that religions, beliefs and worldviews are diverse. While there are common beliefs, rituals and perspectives within and across religions, beliefs and worldviews, they are also context-dependent and can differ from person to person, from group to group and so on. There are multiple religions, beliefs and worldviews that can be chosen to integrate into SEE, Geography and History. The literature names the following as those commonly taught about in primary school; (in no particular order) Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism, indigenous religions, new religions, Humanism, secularism, atheism, agnosticism, as well as any other that might be common in a local community. Content might include key beliefs and teachings, guiding principles, important texts/writings, places of worship/importance, major festivals, key leaders, sites of pilgrimage, rites of passage and main countries where the religion, belief or worldview might be significant to the majority of the population. Regular revision of plans and taught content is advisable to ensure there is breath, depth and progression in the religious and non-religious perspectives represented.

Appendix F: Suggested content for primary history education (with suggested ERB content)

Suggested content for primary history education						
Concepts and description	**Historical evidence & the use of sources/objects**	**Historical time & chronology**	**Change & continuity**	**Cause & effect**	**Historical empathy**	**Multiple perspectives**
	Understanding that our knowledge of the past is based on the use of historical evidence and the analysis and interpretation of sources.	Understanding how to move beyond a knowledge of dates and period labels to visualise and place historical people, objects and events in time.	Understanding the extent, nature, direction and pace of change and continuity by examining similarities and differences between the past and present and between different periods in the past.	Understanding that events in the past can have multiple causes and effects, that these causes and effects can be related, and that the consequences of these events can range from the immediate to short and long term.	Understanding and contextualising the experiences, decisions, perspectives and actions of people from the past. It also entails showing an interest in and care about the people in the past, recognising and respecting their human emotions and connecting the experiences of historical figures to their own.	Understanding the interpretational and subjective nature of history and that multiple coexisting narratives or conflicting viewpoints and perspectives about particular historical events and topics can and do exist.
	ERB: The use of artefacts (e.g. objects, photos, statues, important/ sacred/ holy texts etc.) can be used to explore and understand beliefs, rituals, guiding principles, rites of passage, and practices. Naming the meaning behind an artefact is significant, as is identifying its importance to members of a belief identity. Religious artefacts are handled and engaged with respectfully.	ERB: Name associated religions, beliefs and worldviews. Situate them in historical and contemporary contexts. Make connections to their impact on people, objects and events in time.	ERB: Include the changing practices and influences of religions, beliefs and worldview over time.	ERB: Acknowledge the role of religion(s) and beliefs in historical events and recognise related impact(s) on contemporary society.	ERB: Recognise that some historical figures were motivated by their religion, belief or worldview.	ERB: Interpretations, understandings and perspectives of past and contemporary events can be shaped and influenced by religions, beliefs and worldviews.

Knowledge	**Personal, local, family and social histories**	**Oral histories**	**Hidden/silenced histories and narratives**	**Controversial and sensitive histories**	**Frameworks of knowledge and 'Big Picture' learning**	**Story**	**Big History**
	Identify and investigate histories that are relevant to and grounded in the everyday	Identify and examine the histories of local, national and international communities (e.g. stories of migration,	Identify and understand the perspectives and experiences of traditionally marginalised and	Understand and investigate histories that are considered controversial and/or sensitive in nature (e.g. where disparities	Develop Big Picture learning through the consistent and active use of timelines, the use of maps to provide a visual awareness of	Understand and explore the emotions, intentions, behaviours and complex motives of	Identify and understand macro and global narratives (e.g. climate change) by mapping and analysing these narratives over large temporal periods. By moving from specific units of

	experiences, the personal, family and local stories of the children. Children examine sources such as photographs, artefacts and family stories to investigate and reveal these histories. ERB: Name and affirm the religious, belief and worldview identities of the children, their families, and of those in the community. Children can share the meaning behind symbols, artefacts and items of importance from home and abroad that may be representative of the religions, beliefs and worldviews they are familiar with.	marginalisation, living and working conditions in the past, experiences of events and time periods) by listening to oral stories and involving children in inter- and intra-generational conversations with members of the local and wider community. ERB: Include the identities and experiences of religions, beliefs and worldviews that may be or may have been in the minority in the community.	diverse voices (e.g. indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities) through examining and discussing a range of sources (e.g. written accounts, oral stories and images) that incorporate these perspectives and hidden voices. ERB: Include the identities and experiences of religions, beliefs and worldviews that may be or may have been in the minority.	between school history, family/community history and other histories may exist) by reflecting upon and exploring the different perspectives and beliefs involved. ERB: Actions, experiences, interpretations, understandings and perspectives of past and contemporary events can be shaped and influenced by religions, beliefs and worldviews.	space and distance, the teaching of thematic stories (e.g. technology, education, civil rights) and the examination of events from local, national and global perspectives. ERB: Include the positive influence of individuals and groups from underrepresented religions, beliefs and worldviews. Include reference to how religious and non-religious thinking interacts with, shapes and influences culture, politics and society.	people in the past by examining stories about these people e.g. myths and legends, historical fiction, nursery rhymes. Incorporate activities such as role plays, artefacts, historical photos and documents in conjunction with the use of story to contribute towards developing children's knowledge of these people and their past experiences. ERB: Where relevant, include religions, beliefs, worldviews. Ensure there is a broad representation of identities in content taught.	study to wider big picture frameworks, children are enabled to orient themselves, their communities and contemporary issues and crises in time. ERB: Make associations with the historical and contemporary movement and spread of religion(s).

Skills	• Enquiry skills including investigating, questioning, observing, analysing, interpreting, recording and communicating. ERB: Enquiry, analysis, interpretation and reflection. • Historical thinking and informed decision making through discussion, interpretation of evidence, consideration of multiple perspectives, debate and argumentation. ERB: critical thinking, respectful dialogue, participation, and multiple perspectives. • Working collaboratively to imagine possible futures and create potential solutions to local, national and global challenges by examining the historical roots of these challenges. ERB: critical thinking, respectful dialogue, participation, and multiple perspectives. • Questioning, analysing and interpreting historical evidence (e.g. visual evidence, documentary evidence, oral evidence and physical evidence) to construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct historical narratives about the past. ERB: critical thinking, respectful dialogue, participation, and multiple perspectives. • Sourcing, contextualisation, close reading and corroboration of sources. • Chronological thinking skills including placing historical people, events and periods within a broad historical sequence.

Values and dispositions	Democratic citizenship	Historical agency	Historical consciousness
	Make reasoned judgements and to take part in collaborative discourses about public issues after engaging in critical analysis of multiple sources and taking multiple perspectives into account. ERB: Identify religions, beliefs and worldviews as an influence on people's decisions, actions and perspectives. Recognise that this may change over time. Give consideration to and evaluate different perspectives, arguments and evidence before formulating their own viewpoints. ERB: Recognise that religions, beliefs and worldviews influence people's perspectives. Show respect for peer's perspectives and identities.	Develop an awareness of how different groups have influenced and shaped history by examining diverse histories and recognising the agency of women, minorities and other marginalised groups. ERB: Include the influence and role of religions, beliefs and worldviews on the ways people experience, understand and engage with the world. Recognise the possibilities open to children to demonstrate their own agency in today's world by recognising that historical action involves the collective efforts of many people. ERB: Identify that sometimes action is motivated by the religion, belief or worldview of an individual or group. Appreciate the impact of human activity on the past, present and future of the environment, and develop their own individual and collective agency in the promotion of better futures. ERB: Identify that care and stewardship of the environment is an integral aspect of some religions, beliefs and worldviews. Developing an attribution of meaning and personal attachment to a place and a sense of belonging to local, national and global communities. ERB: Recognise that this may be influenced by a person or group's religion, belief or worldview. Develop appreciation of interrelationships between humans and their environments over the course of time. ERB: Understand how and why particular religions, beliefs and worldviews have become the majority in particular places or have changed status over time.	Develop children's ability to analyse historical events and their causes and consequences, as well as the ability to connect the past to the present and future. ERB: Include the role and influence of religions, beliefs and worldviews where appropriate. Develop children's capacity to understand the historical roots of present problems, essential to the growth of democratically minded citizens. ERB: Recognise the role of religions, beliefs and worldviews in conflict and reconciliation locally, nationally and globally. Acknowledge that a person/group's belief identity can shape perspectives and attitudes towards others, both positively and negatively.

	Approaches to primary history education					
	Historical enquiry	*Object based learning and the use of artefacts*	*Place-based learning (heritage sites, local area & trails)*	*Oral history*	*Story*	*Drama & role play*

Description	Children participate in a collaborative historical investigation. Through the use of a stimulus, the teacher facilitates children generating their own questions and considering sources to answer these questions. Suitable sources are gathered to allow children to answer the questions. These should include a variety of sources (e.g. visual evidence, documentary evidence, oral evidence and physical evidence). Children engage in teacher-designed activities to analyse the sources. Children gather their findings and synthesise their analysis to create evidence-based responses to enquiry questions. Concluding a historical enquiry involves children drawing conclusions, communicating findings, reflecting on their learning and making possible connections to current events.	Historical investigations using objects and artefacts provide children with dialogic, active and hands-on learning experiences. They also provide children with tangible, concrete evidence from the past. Children gain authentic understanding of historical events, people and cultures through asking questions of, analysing, making inferences and interpreting objects and artefacts. Children should be encouraged to observe, describe and draw the object/artefact being investigated in detail and to ask what, where, how, when and why questions about the object/artefact.	The use of historic sites and the child's local area in primary history education provide children with authentic educational settings that deepen their engagement with historical thinking. The use of local historical sites helps contextualise learning, allows children to make connections between their locality and national and international events and provides a space for undertaking fieldwork. Using the local area strengthens the development of children's sense of belonging, local community, identity and provides tangible links to the past. It fosters an interest for the past and for heritage conservation. Investigations of the local area involve experiential activities such as the use of historical sites, trails, maps and other historical sources. Children are engaged in fieldwork and collaborative group work that can potentially involve members of the wider community. Place-based learning provides children with material, physical and sensory experiences as well as generating emotional connections that encourage children to undertake further investigations into local people, places and events. Incorporating visits to historical sites and places e.g. museums provides children with a 'first hand' account of history that activates both cognitive and affective dimensions of learning.	The use of oral history provides children with a vivid historical source that shares with them a collection and analysis of historical information about individuals, families, events, or everyday experiences. The use of oral history in the classroom makes incidents, events and people from the past feel more real to children and provides them with access to memories and information that may not be possible to retrieve from examining other sources.	The use of story (e.g. nursery rhymes, folk stories, historical songs and poems, myths and legends, historical stories and historical fiction) as a methodology alongside a range of other primary and secondary sources can enhance and develop children's understanding of a person, topic or event by providing a visualisation of a past situation. Children should be encouraged to treat these stories like any other historical source through asking questions of, analysing, making inferences and interpreting the stories presented.	The use of drama and role-play provides children with opportunities to experience the past symbolically and develop their historical thinking, communication and social skills as well as developing conceptual and factual historical knowledge and understanding. Techniques such as freeze frames, mantle of the expert, thought tracking, teacher in role and hot seating provide stimulating and experiential learning opportunities where the teacher and children draw upon evidence to create enactive representations of past events, lives and situations.

	ERB: Enquiry into ERB concepts, materials and content that provide a framework to interpret and understand the human experience. Involves enquiry, analysis, interpretation and reflection.	ERB: The use of artefacts (e.g. objects, photos, statues, important/sacred/holy texts etc.) can form part of ERB-related enquiry. Naming the meaning behind an artefact is significant, as is identifying its importance to members of a belief identity. Religious artefacts are handled and engaged with respectfully.	ERB: Place-based learning (including field-trips and virtual tours) to sites of importance can support children to understand the differences and similarities in how people make sense of and give meaning to our world and the human experience. Recognise the importance of including all identities, including those from underrepresented or minority religions, beliefs and worldviews.	ERB: Oral history can enable experiential and reflective learning and can foster an understanding of and respect for diverse religions, beliefs and worldviews. Children can listen to and share stories, experiences, perspectives and opinions. Relating to people's lived realities can help foster respect, empathy, multi-perspectivity and reflection.	ERB: Many religions, beliefs and worldviews relay stories about key figures, key teachings and guiding principles.. Some stories impart messages about some of the mysteries of life. Stories can be relayed orally, in song, poems, dance and other forms of art. Sometimes, traditional or significant stories are gathered in important, sacred or holy books and play an important role in how people make sense of and give meaning to our world and the human experience. Some stories relay beliefs about the relationship of the world to a god, gods, goddesses. Other stories relay the belief that there is/are no god, gods, or goddesses. Ensure there is a broad representation of identities in content taught.	ERB: While drama and role-play are effective pedagogies, a respectful and monitored space is needed that protects both the religion, belief or worldview that is being taught about and the religion, belief or worldview of the children in the class.

It is important to recognise that religions, beliefs and worldviews are diverse. While there are common beliefs, rituals and perspectives within and across religions, beliefs and worldviews, they are also context-dependent and can differ from person to person, from group to group and so on. There are multiple religions, beliefs and worldviews that can be chosen to integrate into SEE, Geography and History. The literature names the following as those commonly taught about in primary school; (in no particular order) Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism, indigenous religions, new religions, Humanism, secularism, atheism, agnosticism, as well as any other that might be common in a local community. Content might include key beliefs and teachings, guiding principles, important texts/writings, places of worship/importance, major festivals, key leaders, sites of pilgrimage, rites of passage and main countries where the religion, belief or worldview might be significant to the majority of the population. Regular revision of plans and taught content is advisable to ensure there is breath, depth and progression in the religious and non-religious perspectives represented.