**SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SCIENTIFIC EDUCATION (SESE)**

Introduction

Social, environmental and scientific education (SESE) provides opportunities for the child to explore, investigate and develop an understanding of the natural, human, social and cultural dimensions of local and wider environments, to learn and practise a wide range of skills and to acquire open, critical and responsible attitudes. SESE enables the child to live as an informed and caring member of local, national, European and global communities.

SESE takes place within and contributes to many areas of the curriculum. It thus contributes significantly to many aspects of the child’s development. Within the curriculum, SESE is presented under three subject headings:

1. *History,*
2. *Geography*
3. *Science.*

Each of these areas has a distinctive role to play in enabling the child to explore and understand the natural, human, social and cultural environments in which he/she lives.

“Integration gives children’s learning a broader and richer prospective, emphasises the interconnectedness of knowledge and ideas and reinforces the learning process.” – p. 16 Primary School Curriculum.

In Mol an Óige Steiner NS we have a strong commitment to making SESE truly meaningful and thus bringing it to life e.g. The gardening project. This is done by engaging children in lively, purposeful activity in the classroom and in extensive exploration of the local environment. There is an integrated approach to the teaching of SESE throughout the school e.g. class plays. This develops from a wholly integrated approach in the infant classes to a mix of discrete history, geography and science lessons as well as integrated SESE lessons as the children progress through the middle and upper classes in our school.

The entire SESE curriculum begins with the child’s environment. Our school is set in a rural village setting, with the Inagh river immediately beside it. Ennistymon is a heritage town and it and the local area provide very concrete links to the many strands of the curriculum e.g. the famine memorial and the Burren. Geographically our area boasts a waterfall, a river and a forest. The sea shore is also close by. This local wealth will be used extensively in our SESE curriculum.

Rationale

In our school, our aim is that the children develop their SESE skills in a real and meaningful manner. SESE provides opportunities for the child to explore, investigate, and develop an understanding of the natural, human, social and cultural environment in which he/she lives using a thematic approach appropriate to the children’s stage of development. We place particular emphasis on bringing the children outside the classroom, enabling them to explore the local environment in a hands-on and active way to develop an understanding of the world in which he/she lives.

Vision

In our school the child will be enabled through SESE to be an active agent in his/her own learning.

1. *History* will enable children to explore and critically examine significant events in their own immediate past, the past of their families, communities and the communities of the wider world.
2. In *Geography* children will investigate and explore natural and human features in the immediate and wider environments.
3. *Science* will give children opportunities to observe, question, investigate and understand the biological and physical aspects of the world around them.

Methodologies

*From second class SESE is taught through discrete SESE main lessons. The main lesson is an integrated, in depth study of a particular topic, e.g., ancient Ireland.*

*Lessons are presented in creative ways by the teacher so as to fully involve and develop the creative sensibilities and capabilities of the child. Instead of text books children record the SESE information creatively in their main lesson books.*

* Active Learning
* Collaborative Learning
* Interviews/Surveys
* Investigating the local natural environment
* Investigating the local human environment
* Free exploration of materials
* Observe and discern patterns
* Hypothesise, plan and experiment
* Visual arts
* Library visits
* Photos, artefacts and videos
* Construction of school garden and planting of flower and vegetable garden as a class and whole school exercise
* Projects
* Farming
* Visitors to the class
* Use of practical investigations to enthuse, motivate and excite the children
* Fieldwork – visits to areas of interest both locally and in other areas
* Novels
* Story and Talk and Discussion

Oral language is accorded importance in the SESE curriculum as it is central to the children’s general language ability. Oral language is a crucial factor in the child’s development of cognitive abilities and it facilitates the acquisition of social, communicative and problem solving skills. We use story and the local environment as a spring board to arouse enthusiasm, curiosity and a connection about the past and the world the around us.

* Survey and data recording
* Use of the natural and local environment
* Spiral nature of the curriculum – opportunities to return to earlier learning and to extend and enhance it
* Using oral evidence
* Surveys and data recording

Differentiation

It is important that all children experience a rounded environmental education. SESE plays a pivotal role in this education and so we will do our best to ensure that every child will have opportunities to engage in learning activities appropriate to their abilities.

We have mixed classes in our school and this informs our planning. While teachers' planning reflects their classes, there is equal emphasis on individual abilities. We may differentiate by learning objective, by support, resource, outcome, teaching style, task and by pace.

Assessment and Record Keeping

“Assessment enhances the teacher’s awareness of each individual’s learning, provides accurate information about the child’s understanding and skills, and creates a picture of the child’s holistic development throughout the broad range of curricular areas.”- p. 74 History Curriculum

Assessment in SESE seeks to achieve a balanced picture of the children’s progress in the acquisition of knowledge and skills, and in the development of important positive attitudes. Methods we use:

* Teacher observation and questioning of the children’s learning as the SESE curriculum is implemented
* Teacher-designed tasks, tests and projects
* Work samples e.g. finished projects and investigations.

Flora and fauna that will be learned by the child in their journey through our school

* Wild flowers and plants

Bluebells, wild garlic, daffodils, celandines, primroses, buttercups, dandelions, daisies, nettles, dock leaves, holly, ivy, brambles (blackberries)

* Trees

Willow, sycamore, oak, beech, horse chestnut, ash

* Mini-beasts

Ladybird, worm, spider, fly, caterpillar, butterfly, bee, wasp, snail, slug, earwig, woodlice, ant, beetle

* Birds

Bluetit, rooks (big bird), jackdaws (small, black and shiny), robin, magpie, swallow, heron

* Wild animals

Frog, hare, rabbit, mouse, fox, squirrel, hedgehog, otter

*(These lists form the basis for which flora and fauna the child will learn)*

Suggested SESE Field Trips

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| Juniors / Seniors | Farm (non-commercial) and picnic  Beach and picnic |
| 1st class | Eagles rock and picnic - Story of St Malachy  Burren Walk , rock climbing and picnic |
| 2nd class | Farming / Building / Handcraft blocks provide many opportunities  Farm visit   * milking cow / goat / making cheese * sheep shearing * mixed farm and traditional farmhouse * Seedsavers making apple juice * Horse-ploughing in East Clare   Handcraft – Monica’s weaving workshop  Doolin cave to collect clay  Buildings   * house being built * castles * Cragganown * Aillwee cave |
| 3rd / 4th class | Man and animal – trip to seashore and rock pools  Norse Myths / Viking / Brian Boru – Bunratty Castle / St John’s Castle / East Clare  Our locality geography   * Burren guided walk and rock climbing * Burren Nature Sanctuary * Mount Callan * Kayak down the Inagh river * Inis Oirr (camp overnight) and Doolin cave |
| 5th / 6th class | Greece/Greek myths – Greek Olympics with other Steiner Schools (3 nights)  Geology – Mullaghmore with Eamon Doyle (geologist), Burren Nature Sanctuary    Botany – Burren visit to see flowers  Science – Young Scientist Exhibition  Time line of Irish History – National History Museum  P.E. - U.L. Activity centre  Geography – Foróige Hostel in Killarney and activities |

***-from Class Trip policy***