

The World Around Us: Frequently Asked Questions

How do I, as a curriculum leader, ensure progression?

Careful planning at the long, medium and short term stages will ensure progression. CCEA has produced non-statutory progression grids in the form of learning intentions which will support schools with this process. In addition, the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities Framework has been contextualised for The World Around Us and is also available on this site and is intended to support the planning process at Key Stages 1 and 2.

Do I have to make links between all three contributory elements in each topic?

Schools should not attempt to contrive links for the sake of ensuring all three contributory elements are reflected in each topic. Rather, taking a holistic view at the long term planning stage, teachers should ensure that children are provided with balance across the three contributory elements within the year, key stage and school.

How much time do I need to spend on each of the contributory elements of The World Around Us?

Due to the thematic approach taken in schools, it would not be practical to set specific time requirements. Schools should endeavour to ensure, through long and medium term planning, that children are provided with balance and breadth and that all three contributory elements are explored or reflected in the learning throughout each year and key stage as well as throughout the school.

How do I choose topics?

Schools have flexibility to choose topics that meet the interests and needs of the children in the school. This allows teachers to look at peoples, places and / or events in the locality and to design their curriculum to take advantage of the learning potential within it. CCEA has produced non-statutory support materials, 'Ideas for Connected Learning' and 'Thematic Units' which schools might use in helping them to choose topics. Shared topical events in the media may provide the stimulus for work. CCEA has produced Ideas for Connected Learning (ICLs) for Key Stages 1 and 2 to give ideas for a theme based on a number of Areas of Learning. CCEA has further illustrated the themes by producing Thematic Units based on ICLs that demonstrate a series of lessons that cover a number of Areas of Learning.

How should we manage The World Around Us (TWAU) in school? Should we have a TWAU co-ordinator, or should we have a team?

The issue of a single co-ordinator or a team to co-ordinate the World Around Us relates to the circumstances of each individual school. Whilst a team may bring specialist advice to The World Around Us, a single co-ordinator may have an overall responsibility for leading and managing how a school implements The World Around Us.

Where in the Statutory Requirements (yellow book) does it say I have to teach fair testing?

The Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities framework is statutory and all areas of learning need to contribute to it. The non-statutory guidance contextualizes this and in the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities Progression Framework fair testing is listed under Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision Making in the context of Science and Technology.

How should I record children's work in The World Around Us?

As with other Areas of Learning, a variety of methods should be used. Examples include:

- verbal records noted or recorded;
- photographs;
- written work etc.