



Safer Messages in Geography at Gwladys Street CP & Nursery School



Opening Worlds is a highly structured primary humanities curriculum. It integrates Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, British Values, and safeguarding messages directly into its geography lessons. Rather than teaching these concepts as isolated topics, the curriculum uses factual, rigorous geography to help pupils build ethical frameworks and civic understanding.

How does Opening Worlds deliver these elements within primary school geography?

1. Promotion of British Values

Opening Worlds uses geographical narrative and factual depth to cultivate a sophisticated understanding of British Values:

- **Mutual Respect and Tolerance:** Pupils study diverse cultures, global regions, and varying socioeconomic landscapes. By exploring the lived experiences of people worldwide, the curriculum moves beyond superficial stereotypes. It builds genuine respect for different traditions, faiths, and ways of life.
- **The Rule of Law and Individual Liberty:** Human geography units explore trade, resource distribution, and governance. Pupils examine how societies establish laws to manage environments, resolve resource conflicts, and protect individual liberties and human rights globally.
- **Democracy:** Through the study of global communities, migration, and geopolitical boundaries, pupils learn how different societies organise themselves. They discover how democratic decision-making impacts environmental conservation and urban planning.

2. Integration of PSHE Links

The curriculum naturally aligns with PSHE goals by connecting global issues to personal and social responsibility:

- **Health and Wellbeing:** Lessons exploring climate, biomes, and natural hazards help pupils understand the relationship between physical environments and human wellbeing. They examine how access to clean water, food security, and safe shelter shapes human life.
- **Relationships:** By studying interconnected global supply chains and migration patterns, pupils learn about interdependence. This fosters a sense of global citizenship and teaches the importance of collaboration and community cohesion.



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- **Living in the Wider World:** Geography units focus heavily on economic literacy, sustainable development, and environmental stewardship. Pupils are encouraged to think critically about their own impact on the planet, encouraging responsible consumer choices and ecological awareness.

3. Delivery of Safe Messages

Opening Worlds provides a secure and structured framework for navigating complex, sensitive, or potentially distressing global topics:

- **Factual Grounding:** Sensitive subjects such as poverty, natural disasters, climate displacement, and unequal resource distribution are taught through objective, high-quality prose. This factual approach prevents sensationalism and lowers anxiety for pupils.
- **A Safe Environment for Critical Thinking:** The highly inclusive, vocabulary-rich design ensures all pupils can articulate their thoughts clearly. It creates a classroom culture where complex global issues can be discussed safely, rationally, and without judgment.
- **Empowerment Over Fear:** By focusing on geographical solutions, human resilience, and international cooperation, the curriculum ensures that pupils do not feel helpless when learning about global challenges. Instead, it builds agency, critical thinking, and a balanced worldview.

The **Jigsaw PSHE scheme** creates safe messages for geography by providing an **emotional framework, mindfulness practices, and a standard group agreement (the Jigsaw Charter)**. While *Opening Worlds* relies on factual, objective prose to lower pupil anxiety, *Jigsaw* builds a child's internal emotional resilience. This prepares them to process potentially distressing global themes like climate change, poverty, and natural disasters safely.

How does the Jigsaw scheme ensure safe messaging when confronting geographical realities?

1. Establishing the Jigsaw Charter for Safe Discussion

Before engaging with complex world topics, Jigsaw relies on a strict set of classroom rules known as the **Jigsaw Charter**.



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- **The Right to Pass:** Children are explicitly taught they have the right to opt out of speaking if a geographic topic—such as a devastating earthquake or a refugee crisis—triggers personal distress.
- **No Personal Hurt:** The charter establishes a secure environment where children can discuss varied global living conditions or cultures without fear of judgment, bias, or xenophobia.

2. Emotional Regulation via Mindfulness

Jigsaw integrates mindfulness activities, such as "**Calm Me**" time using chime bars and deep breathing exercises.

- **De-escalating Climate Anxiety:** When geography lessons touch on eco-anxiety or environmental destruction, teachers use these mindfulness practices to help children ground themselves and self-regulate.
- **Cognitive Readiness:** Calming the nervous system prevents children from entering a state of fear, allowing them to view global challenges as problems to solve rather than existential threats.

3. Layering Global Issues through a Spiral Curriculum

Jigsaw uses a **spiral curriculum structure** where the same themes are revisited with increasing depth as children mature. This protects younger minds from overwhelming data while preparing older pupils for complex realities:

- **Early Years / KS1:** Focuses on the immediate world, local community safety, and appreciating basic natural beauty.
- **Key Stage 2:** Gradually introduces global interdependence, inequalities in trade, and environmental changes. Because the emotional vocabulary has been layered year-on-year, children possess the resilience to process these concepts without feeling unsafe or helpless.

4. Distancing Techniques using Mascots

To keep messages safe and prevent personal distress, Jigsaw lessons utilize age-appropriate **Mascots** (such as Jigsaw Jerrie or Jigsaw Jack) and fictional scenarios.

- **Objective Detachment:** If a geography unit explores difficult living conditions, the teacher can frame the emotional exploration through the perspective of the mascot visiting a place.



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- **Preventing Personalization:** This externalizes the problem. It allows children to evaluate hardship and develop empathy safely from a distance, rather than internalizing the trauma as an immediate threat to their own household.

5. Transitioning from Awareness to Agency

A core component of Jigsaw is the "**Dreams and Goals**" puzzle piece. When linked to geography, this module explicitly pivots away from fear-based messaging toward empowerment.

- **Action-Oriented Thinking:** Instead of leaving pupils anxious about deforestation or pollution, the scheme guides them to design collaborative community projects or global fundraising goals.
- **Persistent Help-Seeking:** It reinforces the safeguarding message that if global issues make a child feel unsafe, they should reach out to their "**inner circle**" of **trusted adults** until they get support.