

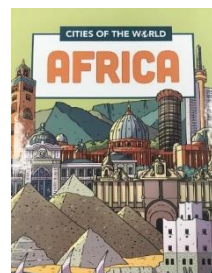
Geography Week at Talavera Junior School

We are a 3-form entry junior school in Aldershot, who are passionate about teaching and learning. Aldershot is a military town and we have many children who come from military families. As a result, many of our pupils are from and/or have lived in different countries. Consequently, at Talavera Junior School, we wanted to promote Geography and celebrate the different cultures and nationalities of our pupils.



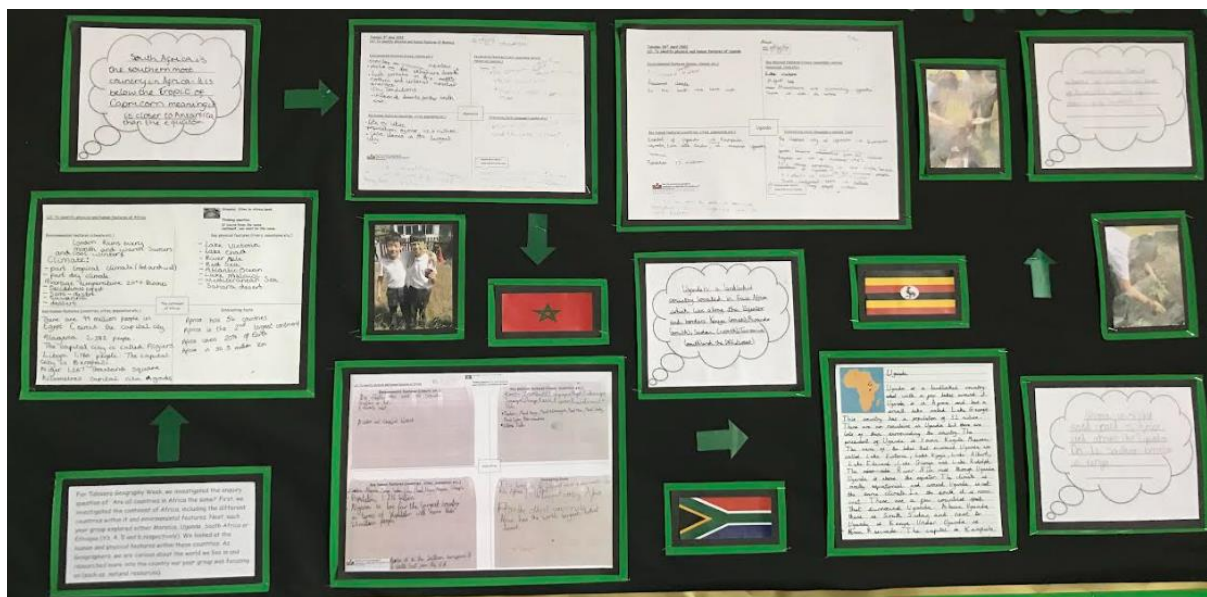
To promote a fascination and love for the world around us, we have a Geography week each year in addition to our curriculum units. This year, our Geography week focused on the continent of Africa. We believe it is important to facilitate opportunities for our children to develop enthusiasm and curiosity about our world. Therefore, we started with a hook - a selection of houseplants mysteriously appeared overnight in each classroom (all originating from Africa). Once pupils had made the connection that all of the plants were native to Africa, they explored a selection of diverse photographs from different countries in Africa. The children were able to explain the different human and physical features that they could see, as well as conjecturing where the photograph could have been taken using geographical reasoning (e.g. I can see a beach so this photograph was most likely taken in a country where there is a coastline). After discussing this in depth, we introduced our whole school enquiry question was 'Are all countries in Africa the same?'

At this point, we introduced the text driver: *Cities Around The World: Africa*. Each year group (Years 3-6) focused on a different country (Morocco, Uganda, South Africa and Ethiopia respectively). We did this through a 'We're going on a journey' atlas activity, whereby key geographical vocabulary could be practised. For example, we're going on a journey to



the continent of Africa and the country is in the northern hemisphere. The activity continues using more geographical vocabulary such as: the 8-points of a compass, longitude and latitude, location in relation to the equator, Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn. This activity is easily adapted for each unit and children can play against each other to try and name and locate different countries, counties, cities, etc.

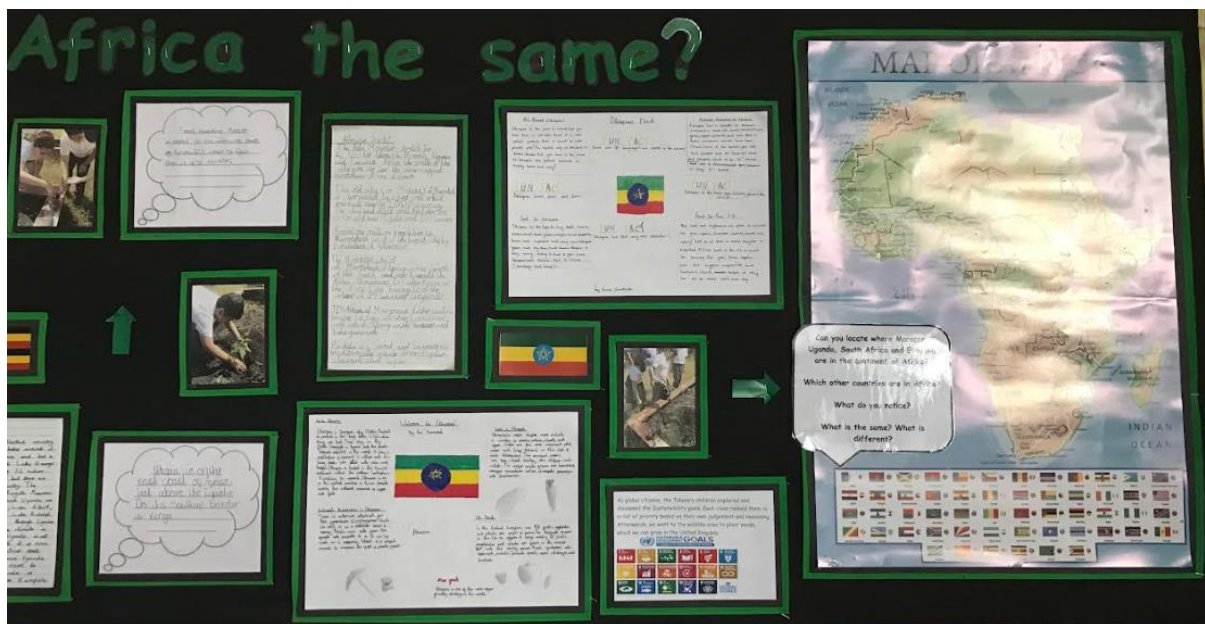
Geographical skills are fundamental. Understanding different types of maps is one way which Geographers can collect information about a place. We used atlases and satellite maps, as well as images, of the chosen countries and used this to help identify human and physical features. Technology also played a crucial role. As we couldn't go on a fieldtrip to each country, as Geographers, the children had to use a variety of sources to help them to gain a deeper understanding. Ipad research was used to answer child-led questions and the importance of e-safety was revised (websites were checked prior to lessons to mitigate e-safety risks). Two particular areas children wanted to focus on were economic activity and the natural resources the country had.



I often ask my pupils a few simple questions after a lesson or concept: so what? Why do I need to know this information and/or skill? At Talavera, we pride ourselves in helping develop our pupils into well-rounded individuals, who are global citizens and have an understanding of what this means. We are part of the Eco-Schools and therefore, we then explored the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The children ranked them in order of what they thought the world should prioritise. Interestingly, the children made comparisons between different countries' environments and lives of their people. However, some

pupils were also able to analyse that people's lives and environments can differ within a country - it is not a blanket fit!

As Geographers, it is important not to assume that because one area in a country has one feature, that the rest of the country would be the same. This comparison and evaluation are a key part of our learning sequence. By understanding this, pupils can gain a greater understanding of the causes and consequences of our actions as global citizens. With this greater understanding, comes greater responsibility. Children want to help. They want to make the world a better place to live.



The way our children wanted to help was to make small changes around school. Each year group chose a different fruit or vegetable to plant in the Wildlife area on our school grounds. This process helped children to understand that food is not made instantly (despite the illusion that fast food restaurants portray). Again, comparisons were made between food we can grow in the UK compared to the countries investigated.

To conclude our week of Geography, the children were encouraged to investigate a question which they came up with previously in the learning journey, which had not yet been answered. Children then presented and reported their findings in their own creative ways to the class.

This week was designed to inspire children's fascination and curiosity of the world and its people. We aimed for children to understand the physical processes that form the world around them, as well as how they can play a responsible part in how human geography affects our planet.

Amy Wright

Talavera Junior School