

## 4. ATTAINMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS

These levels outline eight levels of attainment from Attainment Level 1 to Attainment Level 8 up to Level Descriptor 2 for Geography.

- The Attainment Levels for A1 to A3 are common across all subjects. They outline the types and range of general performance that some students with IEN might characteristically demonstrate. Subject-focused examples are included to illustrate some of the ways in which teachers might identify attainment in different subject contexts.
- From level A4 to A8, it is possible to describe students' performance in a way that indicates the emergence of skills, knowledge and understanding in Geography.
- Level Descriptors 1 and 2 are based directly on the National Minimum Curriculum for Geography.

At the time of publication, the Supplement writing team was aware that the Mainstream school Level Descriptors started to be re designed and new ones were in process of being written. The set of Level Descriptors in this supplement reflect the existing official ones at Level Descriptor 1 and 2. The Levels A1 to A8 are fine. Over the coming year/s the full set of Level Descriptors may be revised in their entirety.

### 4.1 Strand Attainment Levels

There are two main uses of Strand Attainment Levels, one is to inform differentiated learning outcomes and the other is to inform school developmental planning.

#### 4.1.1 Informing differentiated learning outcomes

The attainment levels can be used by teachers to:

- decide which description best fits a students' performance over a period of time and in different contexts
- develop or support more focused day-to-day approaches to ongoing teacher assessment by using the descriptions to refine and develop long- medium- and short-term planning
- track linear progress towards attainment at National Level Descriptor 1
- identify lateral progress by looking for related skills at similar levels across the subjects

#### 4.1.2 Informing school developmental planning

The attainment levels can also be used to inform school developmental planning annually. They will be used to assess groups of students and to evaluate where resources need to be placed in future to improve the quality of the Geography teaching and learning.

### 4.2 Attainment descriptions for Geography

These outline the types and range of general performance that student with individual educational needs might characteristically demonstrate. Subject focused examples are included to illustrate some of the ways in which staff might identify attainment in different subject contexts. The attainment description indicates the emergence of skills, knowledge and understanding in Geography.

#### 4.2.1 Attainment descriptions across subjects

**A1 (i)** Students encounter activities and experiences. They may be passive or resistant. They may show simple reflex responses, *e.g. startling at sudden noises or movements*. Any participation is fully prompted.

**A1 (ii)** Students show emerging awareness of activities and experiences. They may have periods when they appear alert and ready to focus their attention on certain people, events, objects or parts of objects, *e.g. listening to wind howling*. They may give intermittent reactions, *e.g. sometimes responds when moving from a warm/dark space to a cool/lit environment*.

**A2 (i)** Students begin to respond consistently to familiar people, events and objects. They react to new activities and experiences, *e.g. splashing feet in water*. They begin to show interest in people, events and objects, *e.g. looking around in different indoor and outdoor environments*. They accept and engage in coactive exploration, *e.g. feeling the textures of different items of clothing*.

**A2 (ii)** Students begin to be proactive in their interactions. They communicate consistent preferences and affective responses, *e.g. giving distinctive responses in different rooms around the school*. They recognise familiar people, events and objects, *e.g. showing excitement when meeting the horse riding instructor*. They perform actions, often by trial and improvement, and they remember learned responses over short periods of time, *e.g. repeatedly patting aromatic plants in the sensory garden*. They cooperate with shared exploration and supported participation, *e.g. moving over different outdoor surfaces*.

**A3 (i)** Students begin to communicate intentionally. They seek attention through eye contact, gesture or action. They request events or activities, e.g. *show the picture of swings to indicate they want to go to the park*. They participate in shared activities with less support. They sustain concentration for short periods. They explore materials in increasingly complex ways, e.g. *pressing tools in wet or dry soil*. They observe the results of their own actions with interest, e.g. *throwing a stone in the water*. They remember learned responses over more extended periods, e.g. *returning to a favourite location, plant or item of equipment in the school grounds day after day*.

**A3 (ii)** Students use emerging conventional communication. They greet known people and may initiate interactions and activities, e.g. *pull teacher's hand to take them outside to play on the swings*. They can remember learned responses over increasing periods of time and may anticipate known events, e.g. *putting the water can in its place after having watered the plants*. They may respond to options and choices with actions or gestures, e.g. *they choose to turn on heater instead of fan when the weather is cold*. They actively explore objects and events for more extended periods, e.g. *manipulating objects in piles, groups or stacks*. They apply potential solutions systematically to problems, e.g. *pressing the traffic lights button when walking before crossing the road in a familiar street*.

#### **4.2.2 Attainment descriptions for Geography**

**A4** Students extend the skills to help them explore the world. Learners become aware of weather conditions. They experience the concept of hot and cold through everyday items e.g. *ice cubes and hot water bottle*. Also the concept is generalised to hot and cold weather by means of different situations, e.g. *students experience the event of being in a heated room as compared with a cool room*. Students associate dressing up clothes for the different weather types e.g. *raincoat and cardigan in cold weather as compared to swimsuit and shorts on a sunny day*. They handle artifacts and materials given to them, e.g. *looking at different plants found in the Maltese Islands*. They know that certain actions produce predictable results, e.g. *when a switch is pressed the mat underneath starts to vibrate and it feels like an earthquake*. They know familiar places and people and what they are there for and participate in geographical enquiry through observation inside the classroom e.g. *by taking photographs of classroom staff and friends as well as specific areas in the classroom* and eventually extend their knowledge to *park, locality and people outside their immediate environment such as the policeman*, and use gestures, signs, symbols or single words to show that they know them.

**A5** Students consolidate their awareness of weather changes and associate this to seasonal variation. They show some understanding of environmental awareness e.g. *leaves are dry and fall in autumn; new leaves on trees and grass begin to grow in spring*. They relate seasonal change to their own lives e.g. *holidays in summer, school in winter*. Students respond to options and choices with actions or gestures regarding different clothing related to the changing weather. Students consolidate a sense of place and direction following verbal prompts and hand instruction. They follow track - routes connecting features on simple sketch maps e.g. *following a pre-drawn plan of classroom or school to locate areas with different activities or go to multi-sensory room or assembly hall on their own*. Students encounter different environments within the school to consolidate their awareness of human and physical features in their daily surroundings e.g. *walking around the school and identifying the use of different areas such as yard, office, and hall or noise in a factory and silence in an office*. They can answer simple questions about places and people, e.g. *'Whom do we go to when we are sick?'* They start to sort and classify objects in terms of simple features or properties, e.g. *identifying cars and vans in the school car park*. Learners consolidate their awareness about the relationship between human activities and environment care. Students start to associate quality of life with causes and consequences of environmental issues e.g. *at school a student will have a better lifestyle in a clean environment*.

**A6** Students recognise and make observations about weather elements. They experience and identify rain, wind and temperature changes e.g. *put up umbrella when using watering can to simulate rain, using a rubber glove filled with cold water and then filled with warm water to indicate temperature difference*. Students understand the differences between the physical/natural and human/made features of places. They use pictures or symbols to show familiar places and what they are for, e.g. *from a school plan, through symbols they identify the chapel, classrooms, car park, and swings*. They show what they think about different people and environments and answer simple questions about places and people, e.g. *'What can you buy from the green grocer?'*

**A7** Students communicate their preferences about the physical/natural and human/made features of places e.g. *when asked what they prefer they point to a particular activity*. They begin to use symbols to represent direction, and can represent and record key features of a place using models or symbols e.g. *in a treasure hunt at school they can follow arrows to find the hidden treasure* They are aware of their role in caring for their own environment. They consolidate their awareness about the relationship between human activities and environment care. Students associate quality of life with causes and consequences of environmental issues e.g. *the importance of waste separation, and prevention of water and electricity waste*.

**A8** Students recognise the physical/natural and human/made features of places, e.g. *identifying buildings and their uses*. They use simple geographical language to communicate their ideas about various locations, functions and roles. They use resources given to them and their own observations to respond to simple questions about places and people. They recognise simple symbols or representations on maps and plans. They show some understanding of environmental awareness and how it relates to their own lives and they express their views on features of the environment which they find attractive or unattractive.

**LD1** Students start showing their knowledge, skills and understanding on a local scale. They demonstrate recognition through oral expression or through pictures about physical and human features of localities e.g. *when visiting an urban area such as Hamrun and a rural area such as Buskett Gardens*. They understand that weather elements can be measured and recorded. They communicate their daily weather recordings using symbols e.g. *picture of rain, sun and clouds*. Students co-operate in exploration of weather instruments e.g. *using a thermometer to measure temperature, rain gauge to record rainfall*. They recognise local weather features that characterise the Maltese climate. They understand what an island is and identify some characteristics e.g. *Malta and Gozo are separate islands surrounded by sea*. They make observations and participate in natural cycles from everyday life e.g. *night and day or sunny and rainy*. They also participate actively in classroom activity designed to promote awareness of small number of local and human features in the immediate surroundings. Students consolidate a sense of place and direction by following set routes around familiar places e.g. *looking at different places and discussing how one can get there by using public or private transport*. With adult support, they use resources that are given to them and together with their own observations, ask and respond to questions about places and environments e.g. *use pictures or symbols to show familiar places and what they are for such as making simple plans and maps of familiar areas such as identifying where they live on the map of Malta*.

**LD2** Students communicate their knowledge through oral and artistic expression about how our place is connected to other foreign countries e.g. *look at maps on a globe*. They identify different modes of transport e.g. *going to school with the car, going to Gozo with the ferry*. Students learn that geographical features such as land and sea can be used for specific purposes e.g. *farming and building industry on land and fishing in the sea*. Students explore similarities, differences, patterns and changes in weather features of the Maltese climate. Students understand their role in caring for their own environment e.g. *throwing bottles in the sea cause sea pollution, too many cars in the roads cause air pollution; participate in waste separation by throwing paper, metal, plastic, glass in the appropriate container*. Students explore similarities, differences, patterns and changes in weather features of the Maltese climate as compared with foreign climates e.g. *cold wet weather in England, hot, dry, and sunny weather in the Maltese Islands*. Students recognise the complex range of factors that contribute to the quality of life in different areas e.g. *there is less pollution in rural zones leading to a healthier lifestyle*. With support students explore human activities across the world leading to differences between developed and less developed world. They describe orally and artistically in a simple manner some natural cycles from everyday life e.g. *winter and summer, windy and calm* and carry out simple fields tasks using simple resources. They carry out simple tasks and select information and their own observations to help them ask and respond to questions about places and environments. They begin to use appropriate geographical vocabulary.

## 5. OPPORTUNITIES AND ACTIVITIES

### 5.1 Opportunities at Primary Level

The focus of teaching Geography at Primary Level should be to give students opportunities to:

- communicate with other people through pictures, photos, words or gestures
- experience and investigate the school premises and the nearby environment by observing buildings and gardens
- experience and investigate localities with different characteristics such as coastline areas.

Given these opportunities in Geography at Primary level:

All students with IEN (including those with the most profound disabilities)
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ are able to explore the familiar environment;</li><li>■ have the opportunity to meet different people and experience nearby places and environments, <i>e.g. places close to the school</i>;</li><li>■ have the chance to become aware of places frequented by them and recognise the people whom they meet regularly.</li></ul> |
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Most students with IEN (including those with severe difficulties in learning) who will develop further skills, knowledge and understanding in most aspects of the subjects
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ are able to learn geographical vocabulary and start understanding some characteristics about various locations;</li><li>■ can investigate how people can affect the environment and how people are then influenced by this environment;</li><li>■ use various resources including maps, photographs, computer and answer geographical questions;</li><li>■ distinguish between similarities and differences of various places;</li></ul> |
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A Few students with IEN who will develop further aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ develop the skills to interpret resources such as maps, symbols and photographs;</li><li>■ are able to use the right vocabulary to express themselves about people, places and different environments;</li></ul> |
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## 5.2 Opportunities at Secondary Level

Much of the geography syllabus is relevant to students with IEN. With modification, it can provide stimulating and challenging learning opportunities.

The focus of teaching geography at the Secondary Level may be on giving students opportunities to:

- experience, explore and investigate a range of localities comparing them to their own environment
- through experience, appreciate the differences between two areas, *e.g. the Maltese Islands and a foreign country*
- obtain knowledge about issues of topical significance, *e.g. a flood, an earthquake.*

Given these opportunities in Geography at Secondary Level:

<b>All students with IEN (including those with the most profound disabilities)</b>
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ explore and experience at a local scale, a wide range of people and places;</li><li>■ explore and experience environments in different parts of the world using ICT;</li><li>■ are encouraged to participate in geographical enquiry inside and outside the classroom and access some geographical sources.</li></ul> |
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<b>Most students with IEN (including those with severe difficulties in learning) who will develop further skills, knowledge and understanding in most aspects of the subject.</b>
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ recognise some patterns and processes of physical/natural and human/made features;</li><li>■ are aware of a range of geographical vocabulary, skills and resources to explain the geography of maps, atlases and ICT to support and develop their learning;</li><li>■ identify similarities and differences between contrasting places.</li></ul> |
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<b>A Few students with IEN who will develop further aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject.</b>
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Study at a range of scales (local, national or global);</li><li>■ become aware of some geographical issues that affect them and others;</li><li>■ identify geographical questions, collect, analyse and present evidence to help them draw conclusions and develop their own opinions.</li></ul> |
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