**CARRYING OUT THE RESEARCH**

**Notes for teachers**

The Meaningful Maps project links to curriculum aspects across the UK and in the Republic of Ireland. Hence this forms part of valid classroom practice. As the activity is open- ended it is also accessible to pupils of varying ability. The activity may also be useful in assessing how well children:

* know their local area and can describe it using appropriate terminology for features and processes
* can articulate views and ideas (links to the curriculum for English)
* can use and apply relevant map skills

**Getting started**

Introduce the task and key question and discuss.

Task: Draw a map of your local area explaining what it is like and how you feel about it.

Key Question: Which places in the local area have special meaning for you and why?

**Drawing the map**

Here are some things to consider as you engage the children.

* How well do pupils know their local area? Ask children to think about places they go to either regularly or occasionally in their *local area* and, about places they know about even if they haven’t gone there.
* Discuss ‘local’ and how one person’s idea of local might be different to another’s: it may for example, be to do with how well you know an area or the range of travel. Even two children living in the same street might have different ideas of ‘local’ and different ideas about what a place is like. Stress that this is *not a test* but a chance for children to describe and explain what they know and feel about the place where they live.
* Explain that children will be asked to convey their ideas and thoughts using a map and that it is quite likely that responses will be different. Children shouldn’t worry about leaving off information that someone else has included as it is about places that are meaningful *to them. But they should try and include as much information as possible using the map and a key, annotations, symbols etc.*
* *Don’t be too rigid about the term ‘map’ as these can take many forms.*

Some other questions to consider or prompts for discussion are given below.

* What kind of a place is it? *What kinds of feature are there? How can it be described? Are there any important landmarks (these could be landmarks with significance to everyone such as a statue in the town centre or they may just have significance for a child and their peers e.g. a corner of a local recreation ground.*
* How do you *feel* about this place? *Which places in the locality do children like and why? Are some places good for certain things and why? Are some places scary or do they have a bad reputation?*

**Guidance**

The children’s maps can be A3 or A4 but drawn on paper please. Pen’s pencils and other colouring media are all acceptable as are collage and fabric.

Each map will need to include a short explanation saying what it shows and why it is significant to the pupil. This statement is additional to the any labels and notes on the map itself. Younger children may simply add a sentence written with adult support. We wouldn’t normally expect the statement to exceed 100-150 words.

Please ask children not to write their names on the map as there is an accompanying information sheet for this. Please attach the information sheet behind the map.

**Checklist**

1. *Do you have all the maps drawn by the children?*
2. *Have the children said what the maps show?*
3. *Is there a completed information sheet for each child and have these been signed?*