



Riversdale Primary School

"A nurturing, ambitious and values led school."

Geography Policy

Date: 2nd September 2025

Review Date: 1st September 2028



LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2013) 'National curriculum in England: geography programmes of study'
- DfE (2017) 'Statutory framework for the early year's foundation stage'

INTENT

At Riversdale, the geography curriculum aims to equip pupils with a rich understanding of physical and human geography, fostering curiosity about the world and its people. Through the study of diverse environments and communities, pupils will explore their local area and compare it with other regions in the UK and across the globe. They will build knowledge of geographical processes and develop key skills, such as interpreting maps, digital tools, and conducting fieldwork.

The curriculum nurtures cultural awareness, environmental responsibility, and global citizenship, preparing pupils to engage with an interconnected world. Pupils will be encouraged to think critically, ask questions, and solve problems through challenging tasks designed to develop their geographical knowledge and skills systematically. Building on the foundation of Understanding the World in EYFS, pupils' learning progresses through concepts, including locational knowledge, place knowledge and source interpretation. This progression ensures pupils deepen their understanding as they move through the school.

An inclusive approach ensures that all pupils, regardless of ability or background, receive the support they need to succeed. Our high expectations encourage every child to reach their full potential, fostering confidence and preparing them to be responsible, informed citizens of the world.

IMPLEMENTATION

According to our Geography Progression document, there are three core approaches pupils engage with in Geography:

- **Developing knowledge** of places, environments and geographical processes.
- **Applying skills**, such as mapwork, fieldwork, and interpreting sources of information, to better understand aspects of the world.
- **Enquiry and investigation**, where pupils apply their knowledge and skills to answer key geographical questions.

These approaches are combined in sequence to create meaningful units of study that build pupils' understanding of the world and their place within it.

CURRICULUM PROGRESSION

At Riversdale Primary School, we believe in the importance of all children developing a deep understanding of geography and in embedding substantive knowledge and disciplinary skills into their long-term memory. The progression of geography has been carefully mapped, with clear links between subject matter and opportunities to revisit and deepen specific concepts over time. For example, in Year 1 pupils begin by studying their immediate environment and local area, while in later years they expand this understanding by comparing regions of the UK with contrasting regions across the world, developing their knowledge of place, scale and interconnections.

Based on the National Curriculum, senior and subject leaders have constructed a curriculum progression map which identifies how geographical knowledge and skills develop throughout a pupil's time at the school. This progression ensures that pupils build increasingly rich schemata, revisiting and strengthening their understanding of key concepts such as locational knowledge, place knowledge, human and physical geography, fieldwork, enquiry and investigation, and mapwork as they move through the primary years. Each year group's objectives are carefully sequenced, growing in complexity and independence to foster mastery and ensure alignment with National Curriculum expectations.

To ensure comprehensive coverage of the National Curriculum for geography, the curriculum progression map specifies when and where each concept is introduced and revisited across the academic year and in each year group. This provides a clear long-term plan, enabling staff to ensure all National Curriculum expectations are met while offering opportunities for retrieval and reinforcement of key knowledge and skills. Teachers use this progression map to plan lessons and enquiries that allow pupils to apply and deepen their understanding, while also providing opportunities for adaptive teaching and ongoing assessment.

TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE DOMAINS

The eight disciplinary concepts are introduced in a way that builds complexity as pupils advance through the school. These concepts underpin pupils' understanding of how geographers investigate the world and are revisited regularly to ensure secure progression.

Locational Knowledge

Pupils begin by identifying their immediate environment and their place within it, locating their school, town and country on a map. As they progress, they learn to name continents, oceans, countries and capital cities, and to use maps and globes with increasing accuracy. By upper key stage 2, pupils can locate a wide range of countries across the world using latitude, longitude, and time zones, and describe their positions in relation to hemispheres, the Equator, and the Tropics.

Place Knowledge

Early work focuses on recognising simple similarities and differences between their own locality and contrasting environments. As they move through the school, pupils compare regions of the UK with European and non-European locations, considering both physical and human features. By the end of primary school, pupils can explain reasons for geographical similarities and differences between countries and evaluate the impact of these differences on people and communities.

Human and Physical Geography Knowledge

Pupils start by distinguishing between human features (such as towns and shops) and physical features (such as rivers and mountains). Over time, they learn about processes such as weather, climate, rivers and the water cycle, and the relationship between the natural environment and human activity. By upper key stage 2, pupils can explain the links between tectonic activity and earthquakes, describe how physical features influence settlement and land use, and evaluate the global impact of human activity such as trade and resource distribution.

Fieldwork

In the early years, pupils use simple observational skills to explore their school and local environment. As they progress, they record and present features of their local area using sketches, tallies and simple graphs. By upper key stage 2, pupils undertake more complex fieldwork, measuring, recording and presenting data using digital technologies, and applying sampling techniques to investigate geographical questions.

Enquiry and Investigation

Pupils begin by asking simple questions about their surroundings, such as "Why is this place like this?". They then develop the ability to collect and interpret data to answer geographical enquiries. By the end of primary school, pupils can frame their own questions, select appropriate methods of investigation, and draw conclusions that are supported by evidence.

Interpreting a Range of Sources

Early work involves using photographs and simple maps to describe their environment. As pupils move through the school, they learn to interpret aerial photographs, topological maps, and digital representations of places. By upper key stage 2, pupils critically evaluate the effectiveness of different geographical representations and judge the validity of the questions posed, the methods used, and the conclusions drawn.

Communicating Geographical Information

Pupils first express their ideas about places through drawings, talk and simple pictograms. Over time, they use reports, posters and presentations to explain their findings. By the end of primary school, they can present geographical data and arguments clearly in a range of formats, using subject-specific vocabulary with accuracy and confidence.

Mapwork

Pupils begin by drawing simple maps of familiar places and using basic positional language. They then learn to use symbols, keys and compass directions to navigate and describe locations. By upper key stage 2, pupils can use four- and six-figure grid references, Ordnance Survey maps and digital mapping tools, and can plan journeys, considering factors such as scale, time zones and distance.

CURRICULUM PLANNING

Each year group studies three geography units across the school year (apart from Year 6 in which pupils undertake a longer depth study), following the progression of substantive knowledge and disciplinary skills outlined in the school's Geography Progression document. To ensure that pupils develop a secure understanding of geographical concepts, each unit is planned around an overarching enquiry question that encourages pupils to think critically, investigate evidence, and draw informed conclusions about the world around them.

Within each unit, pupils will be taught and apply the school's identified disciplinary concepts:

- Locational Knowledge
- Place Knowledge
- Human and Physical Geography Knowledge
- Fieldwork
- Enquiry and Investigation
- Interpreting a Range of Sources
- Communicating Geographical Information
- Mapwork

Teachers plan sequences of lessons that build knowledge step-by-step, enabling pupils to revisit and deepen their understanding of these concepts over time. Substantive content is drawn from local, national, and world geography and is taught in line with the National Curriculum requirements for each key stage.

To support teachers in ensuring curriculum coverage and progression, Teacher Knowledge Organisers are provided for each unit. These outline:

- The substantive knowledge and disciplinary skills to be taught in each lesson.
- Appropriate retrieval questions to support pupils in securing knowledge in their long-term memory.
- Opportunities for formative assessment to check understanding and address misconceptions.

At the start of each unit, pupils are provided with a Pupil Knowledge Organiser that:

- Summarises prior learning that will be built upon.
- Lists the sequence of lessons so pupils know what they are studying and when.
- Identifies the most significant knowledge and concepts for the unit.
- Includes visual references (maps, diagrams, images, or geographical data) to provide additional context.
- Defines the subject-specific vocabulary pupils are expected to learn and use accurately.

Knowledge Organisers are referred to throughout the unit to reinforce key knowledge, ensure accurate use of geographical vocabulary, and support pupils in making connections across different places, scales, and themes in geography.

LESSON STRUCTURE

Geography is taught through discrete, meaningful lessons that take place fortnightly. We structure the timetable in such a way as to ensure pupils are building on knowledge and skills throughout the year, rather than in blocks, and use retrieval practices to move knowledge from pupils' working memory to their long-term memory. Occasionally, units of learning may have a cross-curricular link if this is genuine and does not detract from the core Geography knowledge and skills.

All children are taught by their class teacher, in dedicated lessons that take place fortnightly (alternating with history). We structure the timetable to ensure pupils are continually building their geographical knowledge and skills across

the year. To support pupils in distinguishing between geography and history each week, the school has implemented a colour-coded system and incorporated clear lesson symbols, providing pupils with a consistent visual prompt.

Pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 follow the school's lesson structure, which has been developed in reference to Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction:

- Retrieval (daily, weekly and monthly review)
- New Learning (in small steps)
- Modelling (including questioning)
- Guided Practice (with checking for understanding and scaffolds where needed)
- Independent Practice (with sufficient challenge/support to achieve at least an 80% success rate)

Pupils are given opportunities to work as a class, as part of a group, or as an individual. The choice of class organisation is determined by the learning task or activity, the nature of the theme, and the resources being used.

ASSESSMENT

To ensure that pupils are progressing in their geography learning, assessment is integrated throughout the curriculum. Teachers use both formative and summative assessment methods to monitor pupils' understanding and development of geographical skills. Formative assessments, such as questioning, discussion, and observational notes, help track individual progress and inform future lesson planning. Summative assessments, including end-of-unit knowledge checks and evaluations of enquiry outcomes, ensure that pupils are meeting the expected learning objectives by the end of each academic year. The curriculum also emphasises self-assessment and reflection, encouraging pupils to evaluate their learning and identify areas for improvement.

THE EARLY YEARS AND FOUNDATION STAGE

In EYFS, geography is taught as part of Understanding the World through a combination of continuous provision, play-based exploration and discrete adult-led sessions. Children explore key themes such as seasons, weather, the local environment and journeys, developing curiosity and language to support progression into Key Stage 1 geography. Experiences are carefully planned to encourage observation, questioning and the use of simple geographical vocabulary, as well as introducing early mapping skills where applicable.

The curriculum theme of conservation influences provision, with activities such as junk modelling helping children to understand why reusing resources is preferable to buying new materials. This is closely linked to the school's values of respect, entrust and love, encouraging children to care for their environment, act responsibly with resources and develop positive attitudes towards the world around them.

INCLUSION

The school is committed to ensuring pupils of all backgrounds and abilities can access the curriculum. The subject leader will review the content of the curriculum and any relevant assessment or teaching practices, and make sure any necessary reasonable adjustments are arranged, so that all pupils can access the learning.

- Tasks are adapted to ensure pupils of all abilities are challenged.
- Reasonable adjustments are made by the class teacher and subject leader in collaboration with the SENCo and other relevant members of staff.
- The SENCo will review reasonable adjustments on a termly basis to ensure they remain suitable for pupils.
- Reasonable adjustments are carried out in accordance with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, SEND Policy and EAL Policy.

IMPACT

- Each pupil's performance in geography will be assessed by the teacher against the progression expectations set out in the Geography Progression document.
- Pupil progress will be reported to parents through the end-of-year report and orally during parent-consultation evenings, where requested.

- Children are given opportunities to reflect on and self-assess their own learning and progress in geography throughout the year.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governors

- Ensuring a broad and balanced geography curriculum is implemented in the school.
- Ensuring the school's geography curriculum is accessible to all pupils.

Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher (Quality of Education)

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring the school's geography curriculum is implemented consistently.
- Ensuring appropriate resources are allocated to the geography curriculum.
- Ensuring all pupils are appropriately supported in geography.
- Appointing a member of staff to lead on the school's approach to teaching geography.

Subject Leader

- Preparing policy documents, curriculum plans, and schemes of work for geography.
- Reviewing changes to the national curriculum and advising on their implementation.
- Monitoring the learning and teaching of geography, providing support for staff where necessary.
- Organising the sourcing of and deployment of resources and carrying out an annual audit of all geography resources.
- Advising on the contribution of geography to other curriculum areas.
- Keeping up to date with developments in geography education, passing this on to other members of staff. This could include leading staff meetings and providing training, working alongside colleagues, etc.
- Monitoring and evaluating progress in geography and liaising with senior leadership on any action necessary.
- Liaising with appropriate bodies (e.g., other primary schools, secondary schools, governors, the LA) concerning matters relating to geography.

Teacher

- Acting in accordance with this policy.
- Liaising with the geography lead about key topics, resources, and supporting individual pupils.
- Ensuring that all relevant statutory content is covered within the school year.
- Monitoring the progress of pupils in their class and reporting this on an annual basis to parents.
- Reporting any concerns regarding the teaching of geography to the geography lead or a member of the SLT.
- Undertaking any training that is necessary to teach the subject effectively.

MONITORING & REVIEW

This policy is monitored and reviewed by the geography subject leader.

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.