

Geography Curriculum Statement

Vision for geography at Foxhills

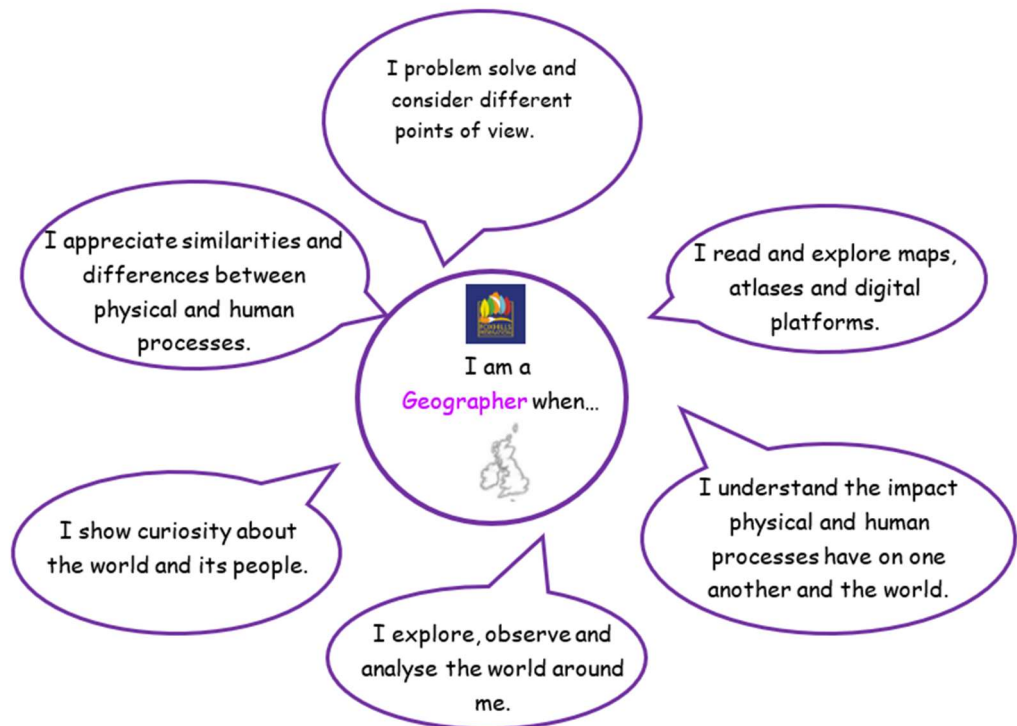


"Our geography curriculum enables children to make sense of the world and consider the relationships between its people, places and environments."

Geography is a subject that enables children to make sense of the world and consider the relationships between its people, places and environments. The geography curriculum at Foxhills allows children to understand their role within the world and the responsibilities that come with it, in addition to gaining an appreciation for how people live in other parts of the world. Our curriculum approach draws upon children's personal exposure to the world around them, however it has been designed to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their experiences, build an increasingly extensive knowledge of different countries, regions and features. At Foxhills, we ensure the learning is both stimulating and fascinating by enabling children to encounter geographical concepts first-hand through fieldwork, which is the vehicle for providing formal education, outside of the classroom.

"The study of geography is about more than just memorising places on a map. It's about understanding the complexity of our world, appreciating the diversity of cultures that exist across continents. And in the end, it's about using all that knowledge to help bridge divides and bring people together" Barack Obama, 44th US President.

The disciplinary knowledge for geography at Foxhills is defined below:



Sequencing of the geography curriculum

How is the geography curriculum organised?

At Foxhills, the key substantive concepts are spread across autumn, spring and summer so children continuously revisit *location, human and physical processes and place* through a different geographical perspective each year.

Early years-

In the early years of primary school geography, children embark on an exciting journey of exploration, discovering the natural world and their place within it. This foundational stage introduces them to the marvels of their immediate environment, encouraging curiosity about both familiar and contrasting surroundings.

Young learners are encouraged to observe and appreciate the natural world around them. This includes recognizing the features of their local outdoor spaces, such as school playgrounds, parks, and nearby fields. Children are guided to notice trees, flowers, animals, and weather patterns, fostering an early connection to nature. They also explore their indoor spaces, understanding how human-made environments support their daily lives.

The curriculum introduces contrasting environments to broaden their understanding. In inner-city schools, children explore the busy, urban surroundings of their own school and compare it to more rural or suburban settings. Discussions focus on differences in space, noise levels, buildings, and greenery, helping young learners to develop a sense of place and perspective.

Through observation and storytelling, children are introduced to the changing seasons and their effects on the world around them. They learn how trees shed leaves in autumn, flowers bloom in spring, and days lengthen or shorten

throughout the year. These natural cycles are linked to activities in their daily lives, such as dressing warmly in winter or playing outdoors in summer.

As their curiosity extends beyond their immediate surroundings, children are introduced to life in other countries, such as those in Africa. Through stories, pictures, and interactive activities, they explore similarities and differences between their own lives and those of children in Africa. This includes comparing clothing, homes, schools, and the natural landscapes. These lessons foster empathy and a sense of global connection, highlighting that while people live differently, there are shared experiences that unite us.

The early years of geography serve to instil a love for exploration and a respect for the diversity of the world. Whether marvelling at the patterns of frost on a window or learning about a savannah in Africa, children begin to see themselves as part of a vast, interconnected world. These foundational lessons lay the groundwork for a deeper understanding of geography in the years to come.

Year 1- Children continue to understand the world around them, starting with their immediate environment and gradually expanding their horizons to global concepts. They begin by exploring their school environment, observing its layout, and identifying key features such as buildings, playgrounds, and gardens. This helps them develop an awareness of their surroundings and introduces them to the foundational idea of geography as the study of places and spaces.

As they venture further, children are introduced to the difference between human and physical features. They learn that human features, such as roads, houses, and schools, are man-made, while physical features, like hills, rivers, and forests, occur naturally. These distinctions are often brought to life through engaging discussions and observations in their local area, fostering curiosity about how humans interact with and shape the environment.

The curriculum then expands to a global perspective, introducing students to the seven continents and five oceans. These broad concepts are made tangible through colourful maps, globe exploration, and storytelling. Children also learn about the North and South Poles, discovering the icy landscapes of Antarctica and its unique wildlife. To make this remote and extreme environment relatable, comparisons are drawn to the New Forest, a natural area closer to home. This helps children appreciate the diversity of environments on Earth, from frozen landscapes to lush woodlands.

Simple map work plays a central role in Year 1 geography. Children are taught basic map features such as keys, symbols, and compass directions (e.g., North, South, East, and West). They practice interpreting maps and creating their own simple versions, marking key features like rivers, forests, and roads. By using symbols to represent these features, they begin to understand the practical value of maps as tools for navigation and understanding places.

Through these activities, Year 1 geography nurtures a sense of wonder about the world, laying the groundwork for future learning. By exploring their school environment, distinguishing between human and physical features, studying continents and oceans, and mastering basic map skills, children develop both a local and global perspective, starting their geographical journey with excitement and curiosity.

Year 2- Children begin by exploring their own country before venturing further afield. They deepen their understanding of the United Kingdom, its characteristics, and learn foundational skills in using compass directions and directional language. They also compare contrasting locations, explore weather patterns, and continue to investigate human and physical features of the environment, building on from their year 1 knowledge.

Children are introduced to the four main compass directions: North, South, East, and West. They practice using directional language such as "to the north of," "next to," and "far from" to describe locations and navigate maps. These skills are reinforced with activities such as creating simple maps and using a compass to determine directions in real-world settings.

The curriculum builds on prior knowledge of distinguishing between human features (such as buildings, roads, and bridges) and physical features (like mountains, rivers, and forests) They will deepen this understanding to consider how both interact within an environment.

Year 2 students explore weather patterns both locally and globally, learning to identify and describe common weather conditions. They discuss how weather impacts daily life, such as clothing choices and activities, and explore how climate varies between different regions of the world.

A key focus of the summer term is comparing the local town of Lyndhurst in the New Forest, UK, with Melrose, a town in New South Wales, Australia. This comparison allows children to consider how location, climate, and culture influence life in different parts of the world.

Through this comparison, students begin to understand concepts such as climate, lifestyle, and the interconnection between people and their surroundings and by the end of KS1, pupils will have gained a well-rounded introduction to geography, fostering curiosity and a deeper understanding of the world and their place within it.

	<p>By the end of their time at Foxhills Infant School, Year 2 pupils should have developed an appreciation of the diversity and complexity of the world we live in, which prepares them for the more in-depth exploration of the world they will do at Junior School. They will have gained some appreciation for how geography shapes the lives of people and ecosystems, which helps to foster a sense of responsibility toward preserving the planet's natural and cultural riches.</p>
<p>What are the knowledge types and how will they be taught?</p>	<p>The curriculum at Foxhills is knowledge-based because our staff are united by the belief that knowledge promotes intellectual growth: The more you know, the more you understand the world. Knowledgeable children are confident and can broaden their experiences.</p> <p>The knowledge in our geography curriculum has been split into two different knowledge types. Substantive knowledge (knowing that...) and disciplinary knowledge (knowing how...)</p> <p>At Foxhills, substantive knowledge in geography refers to the factual content and core concepts that pupils are expected to learn, such as place names, physical processes, human activities, and spatial relationships. Teaching substantive knowledge effectively involves a combination of structured approaches, practical activities, and integration with skills-based learning. This includes introducing geographical terms (e.g., mountains) through direct teaching and discussions and exposing children to new vocabulary, often reinforced through word walls, flashcards, or topic-based glossaries.</p> <p>The teaching of geography aims to develop disciplinary knowledge by fostering curiosity about the world and building understanding of the Earth's physical and human processes. Hands-on activities make geography tangible such as local field trips to study rivers, parks, or city developments, measuring weather patterns using tools like thermometers or rain gauges and observing land use in their neighbourhood or drawing simple maps. In addition to this, teachers use stories, news articles, and case studies to relate geographical topics to students' lives. For instance, discussing how climate change affects local communities and comparing it to its global impact. Children have the opportunity to explore how cultural practices differ in other countries through the use of technology and digital resources and use Digimaps and Google Earth for a more virtual exploration of the globe. By blending practical skills, theoretical knowledge, and real-world application, UK primary schools aim to create well-rounded geographical understanding that prepares students for further learning in the subject.</p>
<p>How is the curriculum implemented?</p>	<p>The geography curriculum is organised into clear, thematic units that align with the National Curriculum. The topics are progressive, starting at local geography (e.g., understanding the school's location) to national and global scales (e.g., continents and countries, natural phenomena).</p> <p>Teachers use maps, atlases, globes, videos, and digital tools to present information visually as this provides concrete representations of abstract concepts, like scale and distance. Furthermore, lessons typically start with clear learning objectives and use direct instruction to introduce concepts systematically. For example, a lesson might begin with defining geographical terms like "urban" and "rural" before exploring specific examples. Teachers ensure that key terminology is explicitly taught and revisited throughout the unit to build understanding (e.g., words like "climate").</p> <p>At Foxhills, teachers encourage pupils to ask questions and explore geographical concepts through guided discussion. For example, a question like "Which economic activity has the biggest impact in South America?" might prompt group dialogue. As well as this, pupils might debate issues like the impact of deforestation or the best ways to reduce waste, fostering critical thinking and collaborative discussion. Pupils often work in small groups to analyse maps, compare climates, or explore case studies, facilitating peer discussion and shared learning.</p> <p>It is important for teachers to link geography to pupils' own experiences, such as discussing local landmarks, to make discussions meaningful and relatable and constant revisiting is essential to ensure knowledge is remembered. For example, concepts like place, space, and environment are revisited at different levels of complexity as pupils progress through school. This builds a strong foundation and helps integrate new knowledge into existing mental frameworks.</p> <p>Pupils engage in tasks like map-reading, fieldwork, and data collection (e.g., surveying local weather patterns). These hands-on experiences develop their ability to apply knowledge independently. In addition to this, longer-term projects, such as creating a report on a country or presenting on climate change, encourage pupils to produce information and develop independent research skills.</p> <p>At Foxhills, the geography curriculum is thoughtfully implemented to ensure clear presentation, active engagement through discussion, and opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their knowledge over time. By integrating these strategies, children not only learn geographical facts but also develop the skills and independence to think critically about the world around them.</p>
<p>Adaption and variation</p>	<p>Adapting and varying geography lessons requires a thoughtful approach that aligns with the National Curriculum while ensuring all pupils, including the most disadvantaged and those with SEND can achieve exceptionally well. To achieve this, lessons should incorporate a blend of teaching strategies, differentiated activities, and inclusive resources. A key aspect is creating an engaging curriculum that balances theoretical knowledge with practical, hands-on experiences, enabling students to explore and understand geographical concepts in depth.</p>

	<p>Tasks and resources should be carefully differentiated to meet the diverse needs of learners. For pupils with SEND, this might include simplified texts, visual aids such as maps or diagrams with clear labels, or the use of assistive technology. For more advanced learners or those needing greater challenge, activities could include analysing data, making comparisons, or solving real-world geographical problems. Disadvantaged pupils can benefit from pre-teaching key vocabulary and concepts to build confidence, while scaffolding is gradually removed as they progress.</p> <p>To ensure all pupils thrive, geography lessons should provide rich experiences that broaden their horizons and build cultural capital. This might involve visits to local landmarks, exposure to diverse case studies, or connections to real-world issues like climate change and sustainability. Such activities help contextualize learning and create meaningful connections for all pupils.</p> <p>By providing differentiated, engaging, and inclusive geography lessons, teachers can ensure that every pupil achieves their potential. Thoughtful planning, rich resources, and high expectations—underpinned by strong support—create an environment where all pupils, including those who face the greatest challenges, can excel.</p>
Rationale for enrichment and wider personal development	<p>In addition to the design of the geography curriculum, leaders have sequentially mapped opportunities for enrichment and personal development. Enrichment in geography takes the form of educational visitors to provide hands-on experience, local trips to areas of The New Forest, opportunities to look at holiday photos of both staff and pupils to gauge a more familiar understanding of global destinations and a chance to experience the culture of a location such as flamenco dancing or food tasting of a country's typical cuisine.</p>
Impact	<p>At Foxhills, Teachers actively monitor pupils' understanding through targeted questioning, discussions, and the use of formative assessment techniques. Open-ended questions, such as "What are the positives to global distribution of food?" or "What might happen if the climate of this region changes?" encourage pupils to explain their thinking, allowing teachers to identify gaps or misunderstandings. Class activities such as map analysis, collaborative group work, or individual tasks are designed to reveal misconceptions—for example, confusing weather with climate or misunderstanding the concept of scale on a map.</p> <p>Additionally, the use of mini-plenaries during lessons allows teachers to pause and review pupils' progress. These short sessions help clarify any immediate misconceptions. Techniques such as peer teaching, where students explain concepts to one another, and the use of visual aids like diagrams or maps, help make learning explicit and provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their understanding.</p> <p>Subject leaders may also implement lesson observations, regular book-looks, and discussions with pupils about their work to evaluate the depth and accuracy of understanding across the school. Pupil voice exercises, where children articulate their learning, give insight into whether they are retaining and applying knowledge effectively.</p> <p>Assessment in geography is designed to ensure pupils not only learn key knowledge but can recall and apply it fluently. Mini quizzes, retrieval practice, and whiteboard work are commonly used at Foxhills to reinforce prior learning. End-of-unit assessments often focus on applying knowledge to new contexts, such as reasoning or solving geographical problems and queries. For example, "Miss Smith thinks that a county is bigger than a country- do you agree?" These tasks are carefully crafted to assess deeper understanding and the ability to explain their geographical reasoning.</p> <p>The curriculum is structured to build on prior knowledge incrementally. For example, pupils might study local geography in lower years before progressing to global geographical concepts. Subject leaders oversee this progression, ensuring that assessment data informs curriculum planning and supports sustained mastery of key concepts.</p>