

Geography

Curriculum Overview
and
Progression Mapping



**Upper
Wharfedale
Primary
Federation**



Introduction

At the heart of our Geography curriculum shines the guiding light of our federation vision: ***“Be the Light”*** (Matthew 5:14). We believe every child holds a unique perspective and a deep curiosity about the world around them. Through Geography, we nurture that light, encouraging children to explore, understand, and care for the diverse landscapes, cultures, and communities that make up our planet.

Geography is more than maps and places: it’s a journey of connection. It invites children to ask questions, seek answers, and develop a sense of responsibility for the Earth and its people. Our curriculum fosters wonder, resilience, and a lifelong love of learning, helping children grow into informed, compassionate global citizens.

Our core values, **Love, Thankfulness, Trust, Forgiveness, and Kindness**, are woven into every exploration and enquiry. They guide how we investigate, collaborate, and reflect on our place in the world. In embracing these values, our pupils learn to ‘be the light’ using geographical knowledge to make thoughtful choices, to uplift others, and to shine brightly as stewards of the world they inhabit.

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Intent Statement

Geography is a living, breathing subject, constantly adapting itself to change. It is dynamic and relevant. For me, geography is a great adventure with a purpose.”

— *Michael Palin*

Our Geography curriculum is a gateway to wonder. It's designed to spark and sustain a deep curiosity about the world; its people, places, and patterns and to nurture a lifelong fascination with the planet we call home. We want our children to become explorers of knowledge, developing a rich understanding of their local surroundings and the diverse global communities beyond.

As children journey through our curriculum, they build a layered understanding of how physical and human processes interact to shape landscapes, environments, and societies. They learn not only *about* the world, but also how to *care* for it—recognising their role as stewards of the Earth and discovering how their actions can make a positive impact.

With our federation nestled in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, we are uniquely placed to bring geography to life. Our curriculum embraces the beauty and complexity of our local area, offering hands-on opportunities to investigate, enquire, and connect with the land. Through these experiences, children develop a strong sense of identity, heritage, and pride in what makes our region special—and how we can protect it for generations to come.

We also empower pupils to become confident communicators of geographical knowledge. Whether through maps, fieldwork, presentations, or debate, they learn to express their ideas clearly, thoughtfully, and with purpose.

Through high-quality teaching, we cultivate the essential characteristics of young geographers:

- **A strong sense of place**—knowing where places are and what makes them unique
- **An understanding of global connections**—how places and people are interlinked
- **A rich geographical vocabulary** and knowledge base
- **Fluency in enquiry and investigation**, with sharp questioning and presentation skills
- **The ability to draw conclusions and explain findings with clarity**
- **Excellent fieldwork skills**, and confidence in using geographical tools and techniques
- **Balanced, informed opinions** on current environmental and societal issues
- **A genuine passion for geography**, and a lasting curiosity about the world and its people

Our aim is simple: to inspire children to see the world not just as it is, but as it *could be*—and to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and values to help shape a brighter future.

Implementation

Geography is taught across our school in carefully planned blocks, with a dedicated focus in the autumn term and a further unit delivered in the summer. This structure allows children to immerse themselves in geographical learning while making meaningful connections across the wider curriculum. Skills and knowledge gained in Geography are intentionally woven into other subjects, enriching pupils' understanding and encouraging cross-disciplinary thinking. Our curriculum is designed to begin with the familiar. Children explore their immediate surroundings, including their school and local area, before expanding outward to study regions of the UK and the wider world. This layered approach helps pupils build a strong sense of place and scale, developing their understanding of geographical concepts in a way that feels relevant and accessible.

Progression is at the heart of our planning. We have developed a clear sequence of skills and knowledge with defined end points for each Key Stage, ensuring that learning builds year on year. Geography is also enriched through purposeful cross-curricular links with subjects such as Maths, English, History, and Forest Schools allowing children to apply and deepen their understanding in varied contexts.

At the start of each unit, pupils are encouraged to share what they already know and what they are curious to find out. They are introduced to key vocabulary and given a clear overview of their learning journey. Lessons are structured with clear learning intentions and success criteria, promoting independence and ownership of learning. Teachers model effectively, address misconceptions promptly, and use a range of assessment strategies to ensure all pupils can access and succeed in Geography.

Inclusion is central to our approach. Lessons are practical, hands-on, and carefully scaffolded to support all learners, reflecting our commitment to equity and engagement for every child.

Location knowledge, fieldwork, and map skills are embedded throughout the curriculum. Educational visits, local fieldwork, and guest speakers are used to bring Geography to life, offering rich, real-world experiences. Bespoke units focused on the Yorkshire Dales provide in-depth fieldwork opportunities, where children conduct observations, surveys, investigations, and field sketches, enhanced by the use of maps, compasses, and digital tools.

At the end of each unit, pupils complete a post-assessment to reflect on their learning, celebrate progress, and identify next steps.

Impact

The impact of our Geography curriculum is measured through a rich variety of strategies that capture both the depth and breadth of pupil learning. These include skilled questioning during lessons, marking and feedback on written work, listening to pupil-led discussions, pupil interviews across year groups, book scrutinies, and the use of images and videos to document practical learning experiences.

As children move through the school, they develop a deep and meaningful understanding of their local area and its place within the wider geographical context. Their growing geographical awareness is complemented by their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development which is strengthened further through our school's links with international partner schools, which offer real-world perspectives and global connections.

By the end of their Geography journey, our pupils will:

- **Have a growing and confident knowledge of the world and their place within it**
- **Use a rich and precise geographical vocabulary to describe and explain**
- **Feel inspired to explore the world further—through reading, travel, and media**
- **Understand the power of their voice to express ideas, opinions, and solutions**
- **Apply key geographical skills such as enquiry, evaluation, creativity, and problem-solving**

SMSC and British Values in Our Geography Curriculum

Spiritual Development Through Geography

Geography contributes meaningfully to pupils' spiritual development by encouraging reflection on their relationship with the world and the people within it. Through the study of real places and communities, children are invited to consider their own values and beliefs, explore the perspectives of others, and develop emotional responses to the environments they encounter. This fosters a deeper sense of connection, empathy, and responsibility, helping pupils to appreciate the beauty, diversity, and complexity of the world around them.

Moral Development Through Geography

Geography provides a powerful platform for exploring moral issues, particularly through environmental and social topics. Questions such as whether rainforests should be exploited, how we respond to global migration, or what diversity means within continents like Africa, encourage pupils to think critically and ethically. Through discussion, debate, role-play, and decision-making activities, children engage with multiple perspectives, deepening their understanding of societal values and the moral choices faced by individuals and communities around the world.

Social Development Through Geography

Activities in the Geography classroom such as paired and group work, debating, role-play, and geographical games, promote collaboration, respectful dialogue, and self-discipline. Geography makes a particularly distinctive contribution to social development through fieldwork, where pupils must work together, take responsibility, and rely on one another to ensure a successful experience. These opportunities help children develop teamwork, independence, and a strong sense of shared purpose beyond the classroom.

Cultural Development Through Geography

Geography makes a significant contribution to cultural development by helping pupils explore the lives, traditions, and values of people in both familiar and distant places. Through studying their local area and comparing it with other regions in the UK and around the world, children gain a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and shared human experiences. A strong sense of place is built through learning about the customs, beliefs, and lifestyles of different communities—for example, exploring environmental attitudes at Key Stage 2 or the cultural life of Kenya at Key Stage 1. Geography naturally supports the exploration of our own diverse society, fostering respect, curiosity, and global awareness.

British Values

Our Geography curriculum aims to inspire a deep fascination with the world and encourage children to become thoughtful, active citizens of Britain. Through the study of their local area and the UK, pupils develop pride in their heritage and gain a respectful understanding of the multicultural society in which they live. As children learn about countries around the world, including their own, they begin to explore concepts such as democracy and understand how decisions made by leaders can affect people and places. The curriculum also promotes individual liberty by teaching children about environmental responsibility and empowering them to take action to protect the planet. Fieldwork activities help pupils see the impact of human behaviour on the environment and encourage them to make positive changes, even when those choices may differ from the majority.

Geography beyond the Curriculum

At The Upper Wharfedale Primary Federation, we believe that Geography is not confined to the classroom. It is a living subject that connects children to the world around them. Our pupils regularly engage in outdoor learning through our Forest School programme, where they develop a deeper connection with the natural environment, build resilience, and learn to observe and interact with the world in meaningful ways.

Geography is further enriched through our Global Spotlight Weeks, which expose children to cultures, landscapes, and communities far beyond the dry stone walls of the Dales. These experiences challenge stereotypes, particularly around developing countries, and encourage pupils to think critically about global diversity and shared human values. We also celebrate pupil-led enquiry, encouraging children to bring in geographical observations from home and share their perspectives. Through community links, enrichment activities, and real-world exploration, our Geography curriculum helps children grow into curious, informed, and globally aware citizens.



Skills Progression

At The Upper Wharfedale Primary Federation, our Geography curriculum is carefully structured to ensure full coverage across mixed-age classes through a cyclical model. This approach guarantees that, over time, all pupils access the full breadth of the Geography curriculum, with opportunities to revisit, deepen, and embed their learning. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children engage with geographical themes that support the achievement of their Early Learning Goals, laying strong foundations for future study.

Our curriculum is purposefully sequenced, with clearly defined end points that ensure progression in both knowledge and skills. New learning builds on prior understanding, allowing pupils to make meaningful connections across different areas of study. Through this structure, children develop a coherent and cumulative understanding of Geography, preparing them to think critically about the world around them.

GEOGRAPHY Key learning objectives	Pre School	By the end of EYFS	By the end of KS1	By the end of LKS2	By the end of UKS2
Prior knowledge		Building on their knowledge of their immediate environment, children will begin identify places meaningful to them.	Building on EYFS knowledge of their own environment, children start to learn the names of key places in the UK beyond their immediate environment. Children also learn the names of the world's oceans and continents.	Building on KS1 knowledge of the UK, children begin to know more in-depth about places in the UK before looking at Europe. Children will start to understand how the world has zones and the significance of those zones.	Building on KS1 and lower KS2 knowledge of UK and Europe, children begin to explore South America and Africa using maps to find these locations. Children use their knowledge of longitude, latitude, coordinates and indexes to locate places.
Locational knowledge	<p>Pupils will begin to explore their immediate environment.</p> <p>Know that there are different countries in the world and talk about the differences they have experienced or seen in photos.</p>	<p>Pupils will explore the natural world around them.</p> <p>Reception UTW Recognise some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries.</p> <p>ELG UTW: People, Culture and Communities Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps.</p>	<p>Pupils develop contextual knowledge of the location of globally significant places.</p> <p>They should develop knowledge about the world, the United Kingdom and their locality. Children can:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> name and locate the world's seven continents and five oceans; name, locate and identify characteristics of the four countries and capital cities of the United Kingdom and its surrounding seas; 	<p>Pupils should extend their knowledge and understanding beyond the local area to include the United Kingdom, Europe and North and South America.</p> <p>Children can develop contextual knowledge of the location of globally significant places - both terrestrial and marine. The children will begin to explore deforestation and the impact it has on the environment. Children develop their understanding, recognising and identifying key physical and human geographical features. Children can:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> locate the world's countries, using maps to focus on South America, concentrating on environmental regions and key physical and human characteristics; name and locate counties and cities of the United Kingdom, identifying human and physical characteristics including hills, mountains, rivers and seas, and how a place has changed; identify the position and significance of latitude, longitude, Equator, Northern Hemisphere, Southern Hemisphere, the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, Arctic and Antarctic Circle, the Prime/Greenwich Meridian and time zones; 	<p>Pupils should extend their knowledge and understanding beyond the local area to include the United Kingdom and Europe, North and South America.</p> <p>They will explore further climate change and the impact it is having on areas around the world. Children can develop contextual knowledge of the location of globally significant places - both terrestrial and marine. Children develop their understanding of recognising and identifying key physical and human geographical features of the world; how these are interdependent and how they bring about spatial variation and change over time. Children can:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> use maps to locate the world's countries with a focus on Italy and Norway in Europe and South America, concentrating on their environmental regions, key physical and human characteristics, countries, and major cities; name and locate counties and cities of the United Kingdom, identifying their physical features, including mountains, and rivers, and land-use patterns; showing change over time; identify the position and significance of latitude, longitude, Equator, Northern Hemisphere, Southern Hemisphere and use longitude and latitude to find locations on a map;
Vocabulary		<p><u>Use key vocabulary to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in this strand:</u></p> <p>Environment, place, quiet, busy, calm, noisy, similar,</p>	<p><u>Use key vocabulary to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in this strand:</u> United Kingdom, England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, town, city,</p>	<p><u>Use key vocabulary to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in this strand:</u> county, country, town, coast, physical features, human features, mountain, hill, river, sea, climate, tropics, tropical, of</p>	<p><u>Use key vocabulary to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in this strand:</u> atlas, index, coordinates, latitude, longitude, contour, altitude, peaks, slopes,</p>

		same, different, old, new, past, present	village, sea, beach, hill, mountain, London, Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh, capital city, world map, continent, ocean, Europe, Africa, Asia, Australasia, North America, South America, Antarctica.	latitude, longitude, Equator, Northern Hemisphere, Southern Hemisphere, the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, Arctic and Antarctic Circle	continent, country, city, North America, South America, border, key.
Prior Knowledge		Building on their knowledge of their immediate area, children will begin to recognise differences between the UK and other places in the world.	Children begin to compare places in the UK with a place outside of the UK. This builds on EYFS knowledge and understanding of the world, people and communities. Children can apply the skills of observing similarities and differences to places as well as people.	Children develop vocabulary relating to physical and human geographical features from KS1. They begin to develop the skills of comparing regions, by focusing on specific features. Children focus on comparing regions of the UK in depth and start to look at an area outside of the UK.	Children develop their analytical skills by comparing areas of the UK with areas outside of the UK. They will have a deeper knowledge of diverse places, people, resources, natural, and human environments. They can make links to places outside of the UK and where they live. Children are encouraged to conduct independent research, asking and answering questions.
Place knowledge	Pre-school UTW: Talk about what they see, using a wide vocabulary	<p>Reception UTW Talk about members of their family and community. Understand that some places are special to members of their community Recognise that some environments are different from the one in which they live.</p> <p>ELG UTW: People, Culture and Communities Explain some similarities and differences between life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate – maps</p> <p>ELG UTW: The Natural World Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what is read in class.</p>	<p>Pupils develop contextual knowledge of the location of globally significant places. They should develop knowledge about the world, the United Kingdom and their locality. Children begin to understand basic vocabulary relating to human and physical geography. Children can:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> compare the UK with a contrasting country in the world; compare a local city/town in the UK with a contrasting city/town in a different country; 	<p>Children can understand geographical similarities and differences through the study of human and physical geography of a region of the United Kingdom, a region in South America. Children can:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> understand geographical similarities and differences through the study of human geography of a region of the United Kingdom; explore similarities and differences, comparing the human geography of a region of the UK and a region of South America; understand geographical similarities and differences through the study of physical geography of a region of the United Kingdom; explore similarities and differences comparing the physical geography of a region of the UK and a region of South America 	<p>Children can understand geographical similarities and differences through the study of human and physical geography of a region of the United Kingdom, a region in a European country, and a region within North or South America. Children can:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> understand geographical similarities and differences through the study of human geography of a region of the United Kingdom, a region Europe and South America; understand geographical similarities and differences through the study of physical geography of a region of the United Kingdom, a region of Europe and South America;
Vocabulary		<p><u>Use key vocabulary to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in this strand:</u></p> <p>Environment, place, quiet, busy, calm, noisy, similar, same, different, old, new,</p>	<p><u>Use key vocabulary to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in this strand:</u> North America, London, Alaska, compare, capital city, country, population, weather,</p>	<p><u>Use key vocabulary to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in this strand:</u> Amazon rainforest, Yorkshire, physical features, human features, landscape, feature, population, land use, retail,</p>	<p><u>Use key vocabulary to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in this strand:</u> latitude, Arctic Circle, physical features, climate, human geography, land use, settlement, economy, natural resources.</p>

		past, present, village, church, doctors, maps,	similarities, differences, farming, culture, Africa, Kenya, Nairobi, river, desert, volcano.	leisure, housing, business, industrial, agricultural.	
Prior knowledge		Building on their understanding of their local environment, children will begin to recognise natural and man-made items around them.	Building on EYFS knowledge of how environments may vary. Children begin to learn about the physical and human features of geography.	Children have a stronger understanding of the difference between physical and human geography. They use more precise vocabulary, explaining the processes of physical and human geography and their significance. They will begin to learn and understand the impact of humans on the earth.	Children deepen their understanding of the difference between physical and human geography. They can explain the terminology of both aspects of geography with a range of examples. They spend time exploring human geography and the impact humans have on the world. They focus on trade links, resources and the distribution of resources around the world. Children also learn about the different types of natural disasters and the impact on people and places.
Human & physical geography	Pre-school UW Talk about what they see, using a wide vocabulary	Reception UW Explore the natural world around them. Describe what they see, hear and feel whilst outside. Understand the effect of changing seasons on the natural world around them. ELG UTW: The Natural World Understand some important processes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.	Children will understand key physical and human geographical features of the world. They identify seasonal and daily weather patterns. Children can: a. identify seasonal and daily weather patterns in the United Kingdom and the location of hot and cold areas of the world in relation to the Equator and the North and South Poles; b. use basic geographical vocabulary to refer to key physical features, including: beach, cliff, coast, forest, hill, mountain, sea, ocean, river, soil, valley, vegetation, season and weather;	Children locate a range of the world's most significant human and physical features. Explain how physical features have formed, why they are significant and how they can change. Explain the impact of humans on the earth in terms of land use, settlements and their direct connection to physical changes and how they have changed over time. Children can: describe and understand key aspects of: a. physical geography, including: climate zones, vegetation belts, rivers and the water cycle; b. human geography, including: types of settlement and land use and the distribution of natural resources	Children will locate a range of the world's most significant human and physical features. Explain how physical features have formed, why they are significant and how they can change. Children can understand how these are interdependent and how they bring about spatial variation and change over time. Children will deepen their understanding of the interaction between physical and human processes, and of the formation and use of landscapes and environments. Children can: describe and understand key aspects of: a. physical geography, including: biomes and vegetation belts, mountains, earthquake and volcanoes b. human geography, including: types of land use, trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water;

Vocabulary		<p>Use basic geographical vocabulary to refer to key human features, including: Environment, place, quiet, busy, calm, noisy, similar, same, different, old, new, past, present, street, road, change, seasons</p>	<p>Use basic geographical vocabulary to refer to key human features, including: beach, cliff, coast, forest, hill, mountain, sea, ocean, river, soil, valley, vegetation, seasonal weather, city, town, village, factory, farm, house, office, port, harbour, shop, similarities, differences, map, population, climate, hot, cold, wet, dry.</p>	<p>Use key vocabulary to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in this strand: tsunami, climate, tropics, deforestation, evaporation, water cycle, evaporation, condensation, precipitation, cooling, filter, pollution, settlement, settler, site, need, shelter, food.</p>	<p>Use key vocabulary to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in this strand: environmental disaster, mantle, outer core, inner core, magma, volcano, active, dormant, extinct, earthquake, epicenter, shock wave, magnitude, settlement, resources, services, goods, electricity, supply, generation, renewable, non-renewable, solar power, wind power, biomass, origin, import, export, trade, efficiency, conservation, carbon footprint, peak, plateau, fold mountain, fault-block mountain, dome mountain, volcanic mountain, plateau mountain, tourism, positive, negative, economic, social, environmental.</p>
Prior knowledge		<p>Building on their work in Preschool of their exploration of the natural world around them the children begin to draw simple maps to show simple routes.</p>	<p>Building on EYFS knowledge of their own environment, children begin to use maps to locate places and name features using keys and symbols. Children also begin to look at how the environment has changed over time.</p>	<p>Children begin to develop their map skills. They will be able to identify features on a map through the use of symbols and keys. Children begin to use fieldwork skills to monitor and explain patterns in human and physical features.</p>	<p>Children build on their map skills by communicating locations through grid references and coordinates. They also explain what makes a good map symbol and why. Children focus on observing and recording the changes of human features over time, for example trade patterns.</p>
Geographical skills & fieldwork	<p>Pre-School Mathematics Understand position through words alone-for example “The bag is under the table”. Describe a familiar route Discuss routes and locations, using words like ‘in front of’ and ‘behind’</p>	<p>Reception UW Draw information from a simple map. ELG UTW: The Natural World Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plant ELG UTW: People, Culture and Communities Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and - when appropriate - maps</p>	<p>Children can interpret geographical information from a range of sources. They can communicate geographical information in a variety of ways. Children can:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> use world maps, atlases and globes to identify the countries, continents and oceans studied at this key stage; use simple compass directions and locational and directional to describe the location of features and routes on a map; devise a simple map; and use and construct basic symbols in a key; use simple fieldwork and observational skills to study the geography of the surrounding area, including key human and physical 	<p>Children collect, analyse and communicate a range of data gathered through fieldwork that deepens their understanding of geographical processes. They interpret a range of sources of geographical information including maps, diagrams, globes, aerial photographs and Geographical Information Systems (GIS). Children can:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> use maps, atlases, globes and digital/computer mapping to locate countries and describe features studied; use symbols and keys (including the use of Ordnance Survey maps), to build their knowledge of the United Kingdom and the wider world; use fieldwork to observe and present the human and physical features in the local area using sketch maps, plans and digital technologies; 	<p>Children will become confident in collecting, analysing, and communicating a range of data. Children can explain how the Earth’s features at different scales are shaped, interconnected and change over time. Children can:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> use maps, atlases, globes and digital/computer mapping to locate countries and describe features; use the eight points of a compass, four and six-figure grid references, symbols and key (including the use of Ordnance Survey maps) to build their knowledge of the United Kingdom and the wider world; use fieldwork to observe, measure, record and present human features using a range of methods, including sketch maps, plans and graphs, and digital technologies;

			features, using a range of methods;		
Vocabulary		<p><u>Use key vocabulary to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in this strand:</u> move, direction forwards, backwards, route</p>	<p><u>Use key vocabulary to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in this strand:</u> compass, 4-point, direction, North, East, South, West, globe, plan, record, observe, aerial view, key, map, symbols, direction, position, route, journey, the UK, changes, tally chart, pictogram, world map, country, continent, human, physical.</p>	<p><u>Use key vocabulary to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in this strand:</u> sketch map, map, aerial view, feature, annotation, landmark, distance, key, symbol, land use, urban, rural, population, coordinates.</p>	<p><u>Use key vocabulary to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in this strand:</u> atlas, index, coordinates, latitude, longitude, key, symbol, Ordnance Survey, Silva compass, legend, borders, fieldwork, measure, observe, record, map, sketch, graph.</p>