Progression of Skills: Geography

By the end of Key Stage 1, children will have developed a secure foundation in geographical knowledge and skills, becoming curious and confident young geographers. They will identify and compare places, recognise human and physical features, and use simple maps, compass directions and fieldwork to explore their surroundings. Children will begin to understand the world around them, preparing them to investigate places, people and environments in greater depth in Key Stage 2.

By the end of Key Stage 2, children will have developed secure geographical knowledge and skills, becoming confident, curious and independent geographers. They will understand global interdependence, land use, sustainability and environmental processes, recognising how people and places are connected. Children will confidently use fieldwork, maps and six-figure grid references to investigate locations, interpret geographical patterns and explain their findings, preparing them to explore global issues and make informed decisions about the world around them.

	EYFS	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Autumn	Understanding the world	Antarctica	The continents of the world		UK cities		
Spring					France	Rainforests and biomes	Extreme Earth
Summer	Africa		Meriden Now and Then	Rivers and Mountains			North America

1. Substantive Knowledge – What do children know?

Locational and place knowledge

Strand	EYFS	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Locational knowledge	I know familiar places in my school and local area.	I can name the seven continents and five oceans and locate Antarctica.	I can name and locate the four UK countries, capital cities and surrounding seas.	I can locate UK counties, cities, regions, rivers and mountains.	I can locate European countries, including Russia, and major cities.	I can locate South American countries, cities and environmental regions.	I can locate North American countries, cities and environmental regions.
Place knowledge	I know that different places have different features.	I know the main human and physical features of seaside environments.	I know similarities and differences between Meriden and Tulum, Mexico.	I know the characteristics of different UK regions.	I know similarities and differences between a region of France and the UK.	I know the geographical characteristics of regions in South America.	I know the geographical characteristics of regions in North America.

Human and physical geography

Strand	EYFS	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Weather and climate	I know that weather changes and that there are different seasons.	I know that Antarctica is cold and that weather varies between places.	I know that hot and cold places are related to the Equator and poles.	I know that weather conditions vary across UK regions.	I know that different regions have different climates.	I know the main climate zones and how they influence environments.	I know how climate influences land use, settlement and economic activity.
Physical features and processes	I know familiar physical features	I know physical features including	I know the physical features of the UK	I know about rivers,	I know how physical landscapes vary	I know about biomes, vegetation belts and South	I know how volcanoes and earthquakes occur

	such as hills, water and fields.	beaches, cliffs, seas and oceans.	and contrasting environments.	mountains and the water cycle.	between the UK and Europe.	American landscapes.	and affect people and places.
Human features and processes	I know that people build and use different places.	I know human features such as houses, shops, piers and harbours.	I know the human features of Meriden and Tulum.	I know the main human features of UK regions.	I know the human features of European settlements.	I know how people use environments in South America.	I know about economic activity, trade and land-use patterns in North America.
Settlements and land use	I know that people live in different homes and communities.	I know that land is used for homes, shops and tourism.	I know how land is used in Meriden and Tulum.	I know about settlement types and land use in UK regions.	I know how settlement and land use vary between the UK and France.	I know how climate and vegetation influence land use.	I know how resources, economic activity and physical features influence settlement and land use.
Economic activity and resources	I know that people have different jobs and use natural materials.	I know that people work in places such as shops, farms and seaside resorts.	I know that communities have different jobs and use different resources.	I know how physical features can influence the work people do.	I know how location and settlement influence economic activity.	I know how agriculture and climate influence economic activity.	I know about trade links and the distribution of energy, food, minerals and water.
Human and physical interactions	I know that people use and sometimes change their environment.	I know that people use seaside and local environments for different purposes.	I know that people live differently in contrasting environments.	I know that physical features influence how people use places.	I know how physical geography influences settlement.	I know how climate, vegetation and human activity are connected.	I know how human activity and physical processes influence environmental change.

2. Disciplinary Knowledge and Skills – How do children work as geographers?

Geographical enquiry and map skills

Strand	EYFS	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Geographical enquiry	I can ask questions and explore familiar environments.	I can answer simple questions about places using observations and pictures.	I can ask questions and compare different places.	I can ask geographical questions and collect evidence with support.	I can investigate places using different geographical sources.	I can plan geographical questions and independently collect evidence.	I can conduct independent geographical enquiries and evaluate findings.
Map reading and interpretation	I can recognise familiar places on simple maps.	I can use picture maps and globes to identify places.	I can use maps, atlases and globes to locate countries and continents.	I can use atlases and maps to locate UK geographical features.	I can use OS maps, atlases and digital maps to locate features.	I can select and interpret different types of maps.	I can confidently interpret maps at different scales and analyse geographical patterns.
Compass directions and grid references	I can use positional words such as left, right, near and far.	I can follow simple directions and begin to use north and south.	I can use north, south, east and west to describe routes.	I can use four compass points and simple coordinates.	I can begin to use eight compass points and four-figure grid references.	I can use eight compass points and four-figure grid references.	I can accurately use eight compass points, four-figure and six-figure grid references.

Fieldwork and geographical evidence

Strand	EYFS	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Fieldwork and observation	I can observe and describe features of familiar environments.	I can observe and draw features of my school and local area.	I can record observations using sketches, photographs and labels.	I can use field sketches and observations to record geographical features.	I can select and record important features using annotated sketches and photographs.	I can select appropriate fieldwork techniques and improve my observations.	I can independently choose fieldwork methods and evaluate their effectiveness.
Measuring and data collection	I can count and compare features I observe.	I can record simple observations using pictures and counts.	I can use tally charts and simple measurements.	I can collect data using surveys and simple measuring instruments.	I can use measuring instruments and organise data in tables or spreadsheets.	I can plan surveys and select appropriate methods for collecting data.	I can independently design, carry out and evaluate surveys and measurements.
Geographical evidence	I can talk about what I notice in my environment.	I can use pictures and observations to describe places.	I can use maps, photographs and observations to compare places.	I can collect and use geographical evidence to answer questions.	I can use different sources of evidence to explain geographical features.	I can compare evidence from different sources and explain patterns.	I can select, analyse and evaluate geographical evidence to justify conclusions.

Geographical thinking and communication

Strand	EYFS	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Identifying patterns and drawing conclusions	I can notice simple similarities and differences.	I can describe similarities and differences between places.	I can compare places and give simple reasons for differences.	I can identify patterns in maps and data and draw simple conclusions.	I can explain patterns using geographical evidence.	I can analyse relationships between geographical features and processes.	I can explain complex geographical patterns and justify conclusions using evidence.
Communicating and evaluating findings	I can share what I have found through talk and pictures.	I can describe places using simple geographical words and drawings.	I can present findings using labelled maps, charts and simple explanations.	I can communicate findings using maps, diagrams, charts and geographical vocabulary.	I can present findings using maps, graphs and structured explanations.	I can communicate detailed findings using thematic maps, graphs and extended writing.	I can present and evaluate geographical findings using appropriate evidence, vocabulary and methods.