



Geography

Progression Document 2026

In *Geography*, children begin in EYFS through Understanding the World, particularly The Natural World, using first-hand exploration, observation, simple maps and talk about places and change. In *Geography*, pupils learn to understand places, people and environments at local, national, continental and global scales. The curriculum builds secure locational knowledge, place knowledge, understanding of human and physical processes, and increasingly independent fieldwork and mapping skills.

Whole-school long-term overview

Year	Autumn unit and question	Spring unit and question	Summer unit and question
Nursery Sky	Familiar Places and Autumn Where do I play at nursery?	Weather, Winter and Story Places What is winter like outside?	Animals, Growth and the Seaside What might we find at the seaside?
Nursery Ocean	Special Places, Homes and Community Which places are special to me?	Cold Places and Changing Seasons What is different in a very cold place?	Habitats, Routes and Coast How could we travel to the seaside?
Reception	My Place in the World and Community Where in the world do I live?	Hot, Cold and Special Places Why are some places hot and others cold?	Farm to Table, Maps and Oceans How can a map help us find our way?
Year 1	All Around Me Local area field study: tour of the school grounds Key question: What is our local area like?	Rochdale: What makes a town? UK countries Key question: What makes Rochdale a town in the UK?	Weather and Seasons in the UK Key question: How does weather change across the seasons in the UK?
Year 2	Capital Cities of the UK Key question: What are the capital cities of the UK?	What is special about where we live? Local field study: walk to Shawclough Victorian railway track Key question: What is special about where we live?	Coastal fieldwork: Lytham St Annes Location: A Seaside continents and coasts Key question: What is the seaside like and where are the continents?
Year 3	European Neighbours Europe Key question: Who are our European neighbours?	UK Land Use Field study: look at land use in the immediate area Key question: How is land used across the UK and in our immediate area?	Volcanoes and Earthquakes tectonic activity Key question: What causes volcanoes and earthquakes?
Year 4	Rivers and Water Cycle Local rivers field study: walk to Healey Dell for water activities and environmental investigation Key question: How do rivers and the water cycle affect our local area?	Europe: A Region regional comparison Key question: What is a region of Europe like?	Manchester City urban geography Key question: Why would someone choose to live in a city?
Year 5	Americas: Brazil and Rochdale Village regional comparison Key question: How can we compare places in North and South America?	UK, Americas and Europe Compare human and physical geography Key question: How do human and physical features compare between the UK, the Americas and Europe?	Counties Field Study Local field study: walk to Rochdale for mapping and local-history links Key question: What can fieldwork tell us about counties and our local area?
Year 6	Biomes global ecosystems Key question: What are biomes and where are they found?	Latitude, Longitude and Equator global position Key question: How do latitude, longitude, the equator and hemispheres help us locate places?	Local Area Mapping Field study: walk down Whitworth Road to investigate building and land usage Key question: How can we map our local area?

Progression strands and National Curriculum alignment

The curriculum ensures that pupils build locational knowledge, place knowledge, understanding of human and physical geography, and geographical skills and fieldwork from Key Stage 1 to Upper Key Stage 2.

National Curriculum alignment overview

National Curriculum for England requirement	Shawclough progression strand	How this document secures coverage
Develop locational knowledge of the United Kingdom, continents, oceans, countries, regions and globally significant places.	Locational Knowledge	Key Stage 1 names and locates the UK, its four countries and capitals, surrounding seas, seven continents and five oceans. Key Stage 2 develops knowledge of UK countries, counties, cities, regions and topography; European countries and cities; North and South American countries, cities and environmental regions; and latitude, longitude, hemispheres, tropics, polar circles, the Prime Meridian and time zones.
Develop place knowledge by understanding geographical similarities and differences through studying local, UK, European and wider world locations.	Place Knowledge	Pupils compare local places and a contrasting non-European locality in Key Stage 1, then study and compare a region of the United Kingdom, a region in a European country and a region within North or South America in Key Stage 2.
Understand human and physical geography, including weather, settlements, rivers, volcanoes, earthquakes, land use, trade, biomes and environmental processes.	Human and Physical Geography	The sequence includes seasonal and daily weather; hot and cold areas linked to the Equator and poles; climate zones, biomes and vegetation belts; rivers, mountains, volcanoes, earthquakes and the water cycle; and settlement, land use, economic activity, trade links and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water.
Use geographical skills and fieldwork, including maps, atlases, globes, digital mapping, compass directions, grid references and first-hand observation.	Geographical Skills and Fieldwork	Pupils progress from maps, globes, aerial photographs, plans, simple compass directions, symbols, keys and guided observation to eight-point compass directions, four- and six-figure grid references, scale, Ordnance Survey maps, digital mapping, and the observation, measurement, recording, presentation and evaluation of fieldwork evidence.

Leadership check: the section supports curriculum monitoring because each geography strand can be traced to statutory locational knowledge, place knowledge, human and physical geography, and fieldwork requirements.

Planned local fieldwork progression

The planned fieldwork below makes local geography explicit and shows how pupils build from guided observation to independent enquiry.

Year group	Fieldwork location	Main geographical focus	Progression and learning outcome link
EYFS	Immediate area around school	Land use, urban/rural features and how local space is used	Fieldwork observation, land-use tally, sketch map, photographs and simple data interpretation. Learning intention link: To identify different types of land use in the UK; use maps and fieldwork evidence; explain how and why land is used in different ways.
Year 1	School grounds/ walk within the immediate area around school	Local area features, routes and landmarks	Guided walk, simple map use, photographs and oral observations. Learning intention link: To ask questions about places near school; use a simple map, photos and a walk to spot features; say what our local area is like using geography words.
Year 2 Spring	Shawclough Victorian railway track	Local heritage, routes and how places are used	First-hand observation, simple route and map use
Year 2 Summer	Lytham St Annes	Coastal physical and human features; comparison with Shawclough	First-hand observation, photographs, labelled sketches and tallies. Learning intention link: To observe and record coastal features and compare Lytham St Annes with Shawclough using fieldwork evidence of human and physical features.
Year 3	Healey Stones	Views, land useage including physical and human features	First hand observation land use. Learning intention: to observe and record land use in our local area. Looking at the local area from a higher viewpoint.
Year 4	Healey Dell	Water, rivers, habitats and environmental quality	Water activities, environmental observation, map use and field notes. Learning intention link: To describe river features and the water cycle; use maps and fieldwork to investigate local water; explain how rivers affect people and places.
Year 5	Rochdale	Mapping, local study and history links	Route mapping, land-use notes, local-history evidence and data collection. Learning intention link: To locate counties and regions in the UK; plan fieldwork and collect accurate data; analyse evidence to explain what it shows about our local area.
Year 6	Whitworth Road	Building use and land usage patterns	More independent enquiry using OS maps, digital maps, grid references and evaluated evidence. Learning intention link: To plan an independent mapping enquiry; use OS maps, digital maps, scale, grid references and fieldwork; present and evaluate an accurate local area map.

Curriculum coverage

This table maps each taught unit to the main curriculum strands.

Year	Term	Unit	Locational knowledge	Place knowledge	Human and physical geography	Geographical skills and fieldwork
Nursery Sky	Autumn	Familiar Places and Autumn	Explore home/nursery	Talk about familiar places	Notice autumn and weather	Explore outdoors; positional talk
Nursery Sky	Spring	Weather, Winter and Story Places	Name nursery/story places	Compare familiar settings	Observe winter to spring	Photographs, walks, sensory observation
Nursery Sky	Summer	Animals, Growth and the Seaside	Recognise seaside as a place	Compare nursery and coast	Habitats, summer and living things	Explore routes, sand/water and images
Nursery Ocean	Autumn	Special Places, Homes and Community	Recognise local places	Compare homes/communities	Autumn, harvest, people and place	Community walk and simple route talk
Nursery Ocean	Spring	Cold Places and Changing Seasons	Know here and distant	Compare local and cold places	Winter to spring; habitats	Repeated observation; simple maps
Nursery Ocean	Summer	Habitats, Routes and Coast	Locate local/coastal places	Compare Shawclough and seaside	Habitats, occupations and journeys	Follow/draw routes; use maps
Reception	Autumn	My Place in the World and Community	Locate school, Rochdale, UK	Describe community and celebrations	People, place and seasonal change	Maps, globe, local observation
Reception	Spring	Hot, Cold and Special Places	Locate contrasting environments	Compare hot/cold and Lake District	Climate, animals and adaptation	Ask questions; compare maps/images
Reception	Summer	Farm to Table, Maps and Oceans	Use maps to locate and navigate	Compare rural/coastal/local places	Food journeys, oceans, care for Earth	Create maps; observe and record
Year 1	Autumn	All Around Me	Locate places at appropriate scale using maps, atlases or digital mapping	Compare and describe distinctive features of places	Identify or explain relevant processes, patterns and interactions	Use evidence, simple maps, photographs and observation during a tour of the school grounds, linked to the local-area learning outcome.
Year 1	Spring	Rochdale: What makes a town?	Locate places at appropriate scale using maps, atlases or digital mapping	Compare and describe distinctive features of places	Identify or explain relevant processes, patterns and interactions	Use evidence, maps, photographs, data, observation or fieldwork
Year 1	Summer	Weather and Seasons	Locate places at appropriate scale using maps, atlases or digital mapping	Compare and describe distinctive features of places	Identify or explain relevant processes, patterns and interactions	Use evidence, maps, photographs, data, observation or fieldwork

Year	Term	Unit	Locational knowledge	Place knowledge	Human and physical geography	Geographical skills and fieldwork
Year 2	Autumn	Capital Cities	Locate places at appropriate scale using maps, atlases or digital mapping	Compare and describe distinctive features of places	Identify or explain relevant processes, patterns and interactions	Use evidence, maps, photographs, data, observation or fieldwork
Year 2	Spring	What is special about where we live?	Locate places at appropriate scale using maps, atlases or digital mapping	Compare and describe distinctive features of places	Identify or explain relevant processes, patterns and interactions	Use a simple route and map, a walk to the Shawclough Victorian railway track, linked to the local-area learning outcome.
Year 2	Summer	Location: A Seaside	Locate places at appropriate scale using maps, atlases or digital mapping	Compare and describe distinctive features of places	Identify or explain relevant processes, patterns and interactions	Observations and tallies during coastal fieldwork at Lytham St Annes; compare the evidence with Shawclough.
Year 3	Autumn	European Neighbours	Locate places at appropriate scale using maps, atlases or digital mapping	Compare and describe distinctive features of places	Identify or explain relevant processes, patterns and interactions	Use evidence, maps, photographs, data, observation or fieldwork
Year 3	Spring	UK Land Use	Locate places at appropriate scale using maps, atlases or digital mapping	Compare and describe distinctive features of places	Identify and explain land-use patterns, including housing, roads, shops, services, green space and other human and physical features in the immediate area.	Use maps, aerial photographs, observation, sketch maps, photographs and land-use tallies during fieldwork in the immediate area, linked to the UK Land Use learning outcome.
Year 3	Summer	Volcanoes and Earthquakes	Locate places at appropriate scale using maps, atlases or digital mapping	Compare and describe distinctive features of places	Identify or explain relevant processes, patterns and interactions	Use evidence, maps, photographs, data, observation or fieldwork
Year 4	Autumn	Rivers and Water Cycle	Locate places at appropriate scale using maps, atlases or digital mapping	Compare and describe distinctive features of places	Identify or explain relevant processes, patterns and interactions	Use maps, field notes, photographs and environmental observations during Healey Dell water and environment fieldwork, linked to the rivers and water-cycle learning outcome.
Year 4	Spring	Europe: A Region	Locate places at appropriate scale using maps, atlases or digital mapping	Compare and describe distinctive features of places	Identify or explain relevant processes, patterns and interactions	Use evidence, maps, photographs, data, observation or fieldwork

Year	Term	Unit	Locational knowledge	Place knowledge	Human and physical geography	Geographical skills and fieldwork
Year 4	Summer	Manchester City	Locate places at appropriate scale using maps, atlases or digital mapping	Compare and describe distinctive features of places	Identify or explain relevant processes, patterns and interactions	Use evidence, maps, photographs, data, observation or fieldwork
Year 5	Autumn	Americas: Brazil and Rochdale Village	Locate places at appropriate scale using maps, atlases or digital mapping	Compare and describe distinctive features of places	Identify or explain relevant processes, patterns and interactions	Use evidence, maps, photographs, data, observation or fieldwork
Year 5	Spring	UK, Americas and Europe Compare	Locate places at appropriate scale using maps, atlases or digital mapping	Compare and describe distinctive features of places	Identify or explain relevant processes, patterns and interactions	Use evidence, maps, photographs, data, observation or fieldwork
Year 5	Summer	Counties Field Study	Locate places at appropriate scale using maps, atlases or digital mapping	Compare and describe distinctive features of places	Identify or explain relevant processes, patterns and interactions	Use route mapping, land-use notes, local-history evidence and data collection during the walk to Rochdale, linked to the counties and local-area learning outcome.
Year 6	Autumn	Biomes	Locate places at appropriate scale using maps, atlases or digital mapping	Compare and describe distinctive features of places	Identify or explain relevant processes, patterns and interactions	Use evidence, maps, photographs, data, observation or fieldwork
Year 6	Spring	Latitude, Longitude and Equator	Locate places at appropriate scale using maps, atlases or digital mapping	Compare and describe distinctive features of places	Identify or explain relevant processes, patterns and interactions	Use evidence, maps, photographs, data, observation or fieldwork
Year 6	Summer	Local Area Mapping	Locate places at appropriate scale using maps, atlases or digital mapping	Compare and describe distinctive features of places	Identify or explain relevant processes, patterns and interactions	Use OS maps, digital maps, scale, grid references, photographs and evaluated evidence during the Whitworth Road land-use enquiry, linked to the local-area mapping learning outcome.

Vocabulary progression

Vocabulary should be modelled explicitly during each unit and revisited when pupils discuss decisions, record evidence and evaluate outcomes.

Strand	Early Years Foundation Stage	Key Stage 1	Lower Key Stage 2	Upper Key Stage 2
Locational knowledge	place, home, nursery, near, far local, Shawclough, route Rochdale, UK, world, locate	local, near, far, route, map, UK, country, capital city, continent, ocean	region, county, Europe, border, atlas, river, volcano, land use, settlement	latitude, longitude, equator, hemisphere, time zone, global, thematic map, coordinates
Place knowledge	same, different, special, environment compare, coast, countryside	home, school, town, city, seaside, same, different, feature, landmark	region, locality, compare, contrast, rural, urban, physical feature, human feature	diversity, connection, interdependence, region, settlement pattern, economic activity
Human and physical geography	weather, season, autumn, winter, spring, summer habitat, climate, farm, community	weather, season, beach, cliff, coast, forest, hill, mountain, sea, ocean, river, soil, valley, vegetation; city, town, village, factory, farm, house, office, port, harbour, shop	water cycle, erosion, deposition, earthquake, volcano, tectonic, land use, urban	biome, climate zone, ecosystem, trade, resources, sustainability, population, migration
Geographical skills and fieldwork	map, globe, route, direction, observe, record, fieldwork	map, symbol, route, left, right, observe, photograph, tally	compass, north, south, east, west, sketch map, survey, data, evidence	OS map, scale, grid reference, GIS, layer, analyse, evaluate, enquiry