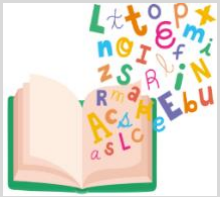
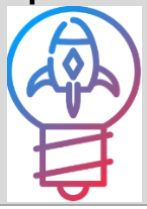
TJS Geography Curriculum

Together Everyone Achieves More

"Understanding the world is the first step to caring for it."
— Sir David Attenborough

Our Geography curriculum sparks curiosity about the world and helps pupils understand how places and processes shape life today and in the future. Through a clear, sequenced programme, pupils develop strong locational knowledge, explore significant places, and investigate the themes that influence environments and communities. We promote critical thinking, using maps, data, and evidence to ask thoughtful questions and understand diversity, continuity, and change. Rooted in our local area—from the Eastbourne coast and Beachy Head to the South Downs and River Cuckmere—our curriculum connects local, national, and global geography, helping pupils build identity, act sustainably, and challenge environmental injustice.

Our Geography curriculum encompasses the five key curriculum drivers in the following ways:

Numerate	Literate	Articulate	World Wise	Aspirational
				
Pupils read scales, use coordinates, measure distances, analyse data, and interpret graphs and statistics in fieldwork and enquiries (e.g., measuring longshore drift at Eastbourne seafront, plotting transects on the South Downs).	Children use precise geographical vocabulary and write clear explanations, comparisons, and evaluations (e.g., describing the meanders of the River Cuckmere or contrasting Eastbourne with a European coastal town).	Pupils present findings, justify conclusions with evidence, and debate human–environment decisions respectfully (e.g., Shoreline Management Plans for Beachy Head and local land-use changes).	Learners explore diverse places and cultures, understanding interdependence, sustainability, and global citizenship, linking local studies (Downland farming, tourism) to national and global contexts.	We inspire pupils to see themselves as geographers, fostering curiosity, resilience, and ambition for future study and careers in STEM, environmental stewardship, and planning (including participation in local fieldwork and eco-projects).

Substantive Concepts: The 'Big Ideas' that children at Tollgate need to know in Geography		
Place	**Space**	**Environment**
Understanding what makes places distinctive, including landscapes, cultures, and communities; how places are perceived and experienced.	Exploring location, distribution, and patterns of features; how distance, accessibility, and networks influence interactions.	Investigating Earth's physical systems (atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, biosphere) and how humans depend on, modify, and manage environments.
Interconnection	**Scale**	**Sustainability and Change**
Examining how places and processes are linked through flows of people, goods, and ideas; how changes in one place affect others.	Understanding how geographical questions and explanations vary from local to global; why decisions at different scales lead to different impacts.	Considering how resources are used and managed for present and future needs; how physical and human processes drive change and how actions can reduce risk and build resilience

National Curriculum Requirements Key Stage 2

Locational knowledge: locate the world's countries (focus on Europe, North & South America) and name/locate counties and cities of the UK, regions and key topographical features; understand how some aspects change over time.
Position and significance: identify latitude, longitude, Equator, Northern/Southern Hemispheres, Tropics of Cancer/Capricorn, Arctic/Antarctic Circles, Prime/Greenwich Meridian and time zones.
Place knowledge: study human and physical geography of a region of the UK, a region in a European country, and a region in North or South America.
Physical geography: climate zones, biomes and vegetation belts; rivers and mountains; volcanoes and earthquakes; water cycle.
Human geography: types of settlement and land use; economic activity, trade links; distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals & water.
Geographical skills & fieldwork: use maps, atlases, globes & digital/computer mapping; 8-point compass, 4- and 6-figure grid references, symbols & keys (including Ordnance Survey maps); use fieldwork to observe, measure, record and present local features using sketch maps, plans, graphs, and digital technologies.

Second order (Disciplinary) concept development - throughout the year

- **Geographical enquiry:** formulating questions, hypotheses, and decisions; selecting appropriate methods; evaluating limitations.
- **Fieldwork and evidence:** observing, measuring, and recording; collecting, analysing, and presenting data; triangulating multiple sources (maps, aerial photos, GIS, statistics).
- **Spatial thinking:** recognising and explaining patterns in distributions and relationships (e.g., settlement, land use, climate), and exploring scale and interdependence.
- **Classification and comparison:** grouping features (biomes, settlement types), comparing places and processes, and using generalisations to explain similarities/differences.
- **Communication:** using agreed conventions—map symbols, coordinates, diagrams, graphs—and writing at length to explain and evaluate.

Our Geography Curriculum

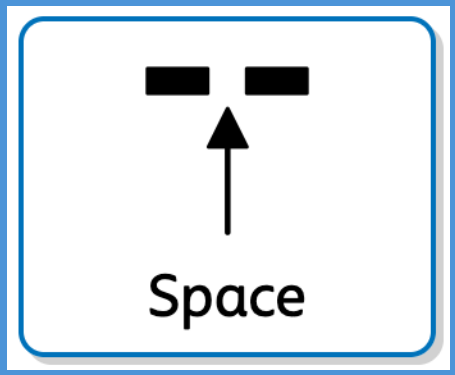
	Term 1 & 2	Term 3 & 4	Term 5 & 6
Year 3	**UK Regions and Land Use** Oak Academy Unit - Combined The UK: Who are we? Local area: How is it changing? Locality opportunity - Local walk **N/C: Locational knowledge • Place knowledge • Human geography • Skills/fieldwork**	**Climate and the Water Cycle** Oak Academy Unit - Combined The Water Cycle: Why is it important? Climate zones: What are they and why do they matter? **N/C: Physical geography • Skills**	**Coasts** Oak Academy Unit Coasts: What happens where the land meets the sea? Locality opportunity - Eastbourne Seafront **N/C: Physical geography • Skills/fieldwork • Place knowledge**
Year 4	**Europe** Oak Academy Unit - Combined Europe: How diverse are its landscapes and places? Europe: What's it like to live in northern Italy? **N/C: Locational knowledge • Place knowledge • Skills**	**Settlements** Oak Academy Unit Settlements- where do people live and why? Locality opportunity - Eastbourne maps **N/C: Human geography • Skills/fieldwork • Place knowledge**	**Rivers** Oak Academy Unit Rivers: what's special about them? Locality opportunity - Cuckmere visit **N/C: Physical geography • Skills/fieldwork**
Year 5	**Rainforests (South America)** Oak Academy Unit South America: Why does the Amazon Matter? **N/C: Locational knowledge • Place knowledge • Physical geography • Human geography**	**Biomes** Oak Academy Unit - Combined Local and global: why are trees and forest important? Biomes (2020-22) unit Locality opportunity - Woodland study **N/C: Physical geography • Place knowledge**	**Mountains, Volcanoes and Earthquakes** Oak Academy Unit - Combined Earthquakes: how do they change the world? Mountains and volcanoes: what, where and why? Locality opportunity - Downs walk **N/C: Physical geography • Human geography**
Year 6	**North America** Oak Academy Unit North and South America: how diverse are their places and landscapes? **N/C: Locational knowledge • Place knowledge • Position and significance**	**Global Trade and Energy** Oak Academy Unit - Combined Global trade: How do we get our stuff? Energy: How do we power the world? Locality opportunity - Shops audit **N/C: Human geography • Locational knowledge**	**Sustainability** Oak Academy Unit Sustainable world: does it matter where we live? Locality opportunity - Eco audit **N/C: Human geography • Skills/fieldwork • Place knowledge**

Substantive Concepts: Threads Through Our Curriculum

Place is about investigating:

- What makes places distinctive (landscapes, cultures, communities) and how they are perceived and experienced.
- How environmental and human characteristics interact to shape identity.
- Why similar processes lead to different outcomes in different places.

Key question to thread this concept across the topic:
What makes this place unique, and how has it been shaped by people and the environment?



Space is about investigating:

- How features are located, distributed, and connected.
- How spatial patterns arise (clusters, corridors, gradients) and what they show.
- How distance, accessibility, and networks influence interactions.

Key question to thread this concept across the topic:
What patterns can we see in where things are, and why do these patterns matter?

Environment is about investigating:

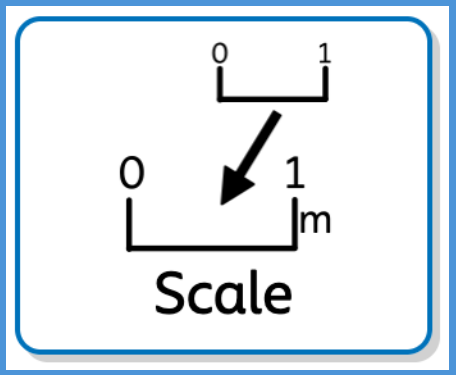
- How Earth systems (atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, biosphere) create environments.
- How humans depend on, modify, and manage environments.
- How environmental quality varies and affects wellbeing.

Key question to thread this concept across the topic:
How do natural systems and human actions shape the environments we live in?

Interconnection is about investigating:

- How places and processes are linked through flows (people, goods, water, energy, information).
- How changes in one place can have consequences elsewhere.
- How global systems (climate, trade) connect local decisions to wider outcomes.

Key question to thread this concept across the topic:
How are places connected, and how do those connections influence change?



Scale is about investigating:

- How geographical questions, evidence, and explanations change from local to global.
- How patterns at one scale relate to processes at another (e.g., neighbourhood to region).
- Why decisions taken at different scales lead to different impacts.

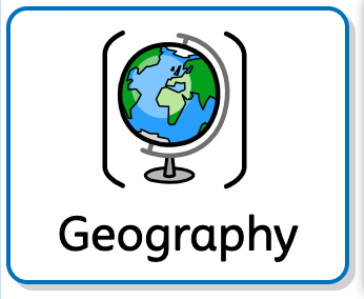
Key question to thread this concept across the topic:
What does looking at multiple scales help us explain that one scale alone cannot?

Sustainability and Change is about investigating:

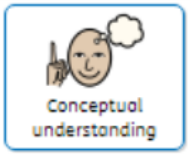
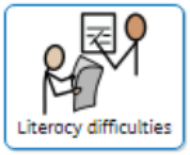
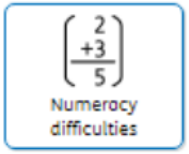
- How places and processes are linked through flows (people, goods, water, energy, information).
- How changes in one place can have consequences elsewhere.
- How global systems (climate, trade) connect local decisions to wider outcomes.

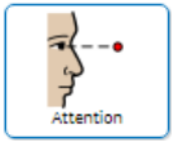
Key question to thread this concept across the topic:
How are places connected, and how do those connections influence change?

Geography and SEND



Adaptations should focus on how geography is taught rather than narrowing core ideas. All pupils should encounter the key concepts (place, space, environment, interconnection, scale, sustainability, change) with scaffolds that reduce unnecessary load on working memory and maximise access to fieldwork and sources.

Area of need	Adaptive practice
	▪ Use visual word banks with icons for geographical terms (e.g., continent, latitude, biome, settlement). ▪ Pre-teach and revisit vocabulary using Frayer models and sentence stems (The data show…, This pattern suggests…). ▪ Label maps and diagrams with word–image pairs; rehearse oral explanations before writing.
	▪ Sequence learning: local concrete examples → regional comparisons → global generalisations. ▪ Use concept cartoons and hinge questions to surface misconceptions (e.g., weather vs climate). ▪ Provide worked examples for map skills (grid references, scale, bearings) and exemplar comparisons.
	▪ Offer scaffolded writing frames for descriptions, explanations, and evaluations. ▪ Allow oral/pictorial evidence (voice notes, annotated maps, photo essays). ▪ Read prompts aloud; chunk multi-step instructions; provide dual-coded success criteria.
	▪ Provide measurement guides and map scale prompts; teach coordinates through games. ▪ Use pre-drawn axes/templates for graphs; highlight conversions (km–m) and estimation before measuring. ▪ Practise interpreting frequency tables and simple statistics used in enquiries.

 	▪ Establish consistent routines for fieldwork (plan–collect–present–evaluate). ▪ Provide visual task planners and kit mats; preview sites and routes through photos or simple maps. ▪ Use countdowns and clear stop/start signals; assign roles (navigator, recorder, safety lead). ▪ Start with short, high-interest stimuli (aerial image, odd-one-out map, local mystery photo). ▪ Break tasks into timed micro-activities with clear goals. ▪ Use mini whiteboards and physical mapping (floor grids, compass games) for frequent responses.

Fieldwork at Tollgate

Our geography curriculum includes practical, hands-on fieldwork experiences that bring learning to life and develop essential enquiry skills. These activities allow pupils to observe, measure, and interpret real-world features in our local environment.

Typical Fieldwork Opportunities	Skills Developed
• Eastbourne Seafront: Measuring longshore drift, beach profiles, and groyne effectiveness; investigating coastal management strategies. • Beachy Head and the South Downs: Conducting transects to study changes in vegetation, land use, and microclimates; exploring chalk downland ecosystems. • River Cuckmere: Investigating river features such as meanders, oxbow lakes, and floodplains; measuring flow rate and sediment size.	• Using maps, compasses, and GPS for navigation and data collection. • Recording observations through field sketches, annotated photographs, and digital tools. • Collecting and analysing data (e.g., pebble size, wind speed, temperature) and presenting findings using graphs and charts.

Assessment

Entered each term into Insight

Locate the world's countries, using maps to focus on Europe and North and South America, concentrating on their environmental regions, key physical and human characteristics; counties and major cities	Name and locate countries and cities of the UK, geographical regions and their identifying human and physical characteristics, key topographical features, and land-use patterns, and understand how some of these aspects have changed over time.	Identify the position and significance of latitude, longitude, Equator, Northern and Southern Hemisphere, The Tropics, Artic and Antarctic. Circle, the Prime/Greenwich Meridian and time zones	Understand geographical similarities. and differences through the study of human and physical geography of a region of the UK, a region in a European country and a region within North and South America	Describe and understand key aspects of physical geography, including climate zones, biomes and vegetation belts, rivers, mountains, volcanoes and earthquakes and the water cycle.
Y4 1/2, Y5 1/2, Y6 1/2 & 3/4	Y3 1/2, Y4 3/4 & 5/6	Y6 1/2	Y3 1/2, Y4 1/2, Y5 1/2 & 5/6, Y6 1/2 & 5/6	Y3 3/4 & 5/6, Y4 5/6, Y5 1/2, 3/4, 5/6
Describe and understand key aspects of human geography including types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links and the distribution of natural resources	Use maps, atlases, globes and digital/computer mapping to locate countries and describe features studied	Use the eight points of a compass, four and six figure references, symbols and key to build their knowledge of the UK and the wider world	Use fieldwork to observe, measure, record and present the human and physical features in the local area using a range of methods, including sketch maps, plans, graphs and digital tech.	
Y3 1/2, Y4 3/4, Y5 1/2 & 5/6 Y6 3/4 & 5/6	Y3 ALL, Y4 ALL, Y6 5/6	Y3 ALL, Y4 ALL, Y6 5/6	Y3 1/2 & 5/6 , Y43/4 & 5/6, Y6 5/6	