

Geography in the Early Years - Understanding of the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical environment and their community. The frequency and range of children’s personal experiences expand their knowledge of the world around them from visiting parks, libraries, and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses, and firefighters.

Listening to a wide range of stories, non-fiction texts, rhymes, and poems further supports children’s understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically, and ecologically diverse world. As well as building essential knowledge, these experiences strengthen vocabulary and language structures that underpin understanding across all areas of learning. Enriching and widening children’s vocabulary at this stage is vital in supporting later reading comprehension and knowledge acquisition.

At Sunnyside Primary Academy, we recognise that pupils’ geographical understanding begins well before formal subject teaching in Year 1. Our Reception curriculum provides a strong foundation for geographical knowledge, skills, and enquiry, fully aligned with *Development Matters* and the *Early Learning Goals* within the *Understanding the World* area of learning.

Through our carefully sequenced, topic-based EYFS curriculum, children explore the world around them observing and discussing places, environments, and communities. These early concepts and experiences are deliberately designed to feed directly into the Primary Knowledge Curriculum (PKC) Geography sequence from Year 1 to Year 6, ensuring a coherent and continuous progression of geographical understanding throughout the school.

Development Matters	Statutory Framework: Early Learning Goals
<p>Children in Reception will be learning to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draw information from a simple map - Understand that some places are special to members of their community. - Recognise some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries. - Recognise some environments that are different from the one in which they live - Understand the effect of changing seasons on the natural world around them. 	<p><u>People Culture and Communities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps. - 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><u>The Natural World</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class. - Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter

Transition from Reception to Year 1

Early Learning Goals	KS1 National Curriculum Objectives
<p><u>People Culture and Communities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps.- 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><u>The Natural World</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.- Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter	<p>Pupils should develop knowledge about the world, the United Kingdom and their locality. They should understand basic subject-specific vocabulary relating to human and physical geography and begin to use geographical skills, including first-hand observation, to enhance their locational awareness.</p> <p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <p><u>Locational knowledge</u></p> <ul 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><u>Place knowledge</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">♣ understand geographical similarities and differences through studying the human and physical geography of a small area of the United Kingdom, and of a small area in a contrasting non-European country <p><u>Human and physical geography</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">♣ 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♣ use basic geographical vocabulary to refer to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">♣ key physical features, including: beach, cliff, coast, forest, hill, mountain, sea, ocean, river, soil, valley, vegetation, season and weather♣ key human features, including: city, town, village, factory, farm, house, office, port, harbour and shop <p><u>Geographical skills and fieldwork</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">♣ use world maps, atlases and globes to identify the United Kingdom and its countries, as well as the countries, continents and oceans studied at this key stage♣ use simple compass directions (North, South, East and West) and locational and directional language [for example, near and far; left and right], to describe the location of features and routes on a map♣ use aerial photographs and plan perspectives to recognise landmarks and basic human and physical features; devise a simple map; and use and construct basic symbols in a key

♣ use simple fieldwork and observational skills to study the geography of their school and its grounds and the key human and physical features of its surrounding environment.

Our Reception Curriculum

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Topic	All About Me	Space	Superheroes	Dinosaurs	Minibeasts	Fairy Tales
Geography: People, Culture and Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore immediate environments (home, school, local area). - Identify familiar landmarks. - Recognise differences between their home and others around the world (People, Culture & Communities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notice differences between day and night. - Discuss the sky, moon, sun and stars. - Compare what the sky looks like in other parts of the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore 'people who help us' in the community. - Understand the role of place (fire station, hospital, police station). - Recognise similarities and differences between where people live and work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Observe and describe landscapes (mountains, volcanoes, forests). - Discuss how the Earth has changed over time. - Explore fossils and natural history. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore local habitats (garden, woodland, school grounds). - Observe weather, seasons and environmental change. - Understand the importance of caring for the natural world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore story settings (castles, forests, rivers, mountains, villages). - Compare real and imaginary places. - Discuss how environments differ and change.
Links to PKC across the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Year 1: Local area study – maps and features around school. - Year 2: Human and physical features of the local area. - Foundation for fieldwork, mapping and spatial awareness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Year 2: Continents and oceans – global perspective. - Year 3–4: Climate zones and Earth's position. - Year 5–6: Planetary and environmental knowledge (e.g. biomes, latitude/longitude). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Year 1: Human geography – jobs and community roles. - Year 2: Towns and cities – urban environments. - Builds understanding of settlement, land use and community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Year 3: Volcanoes and earthquakes. - Year 4: Physical geography – formation of landscapes. - Year 6: Natural resources and geological features. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Year 1: Seasonal weather and fieldwork. - Year 3: Rainforests and ecosystems. - Year 4–6: Sustainability and environmental impact studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Year 2–3: Comparing regions and contrasting localities. - Year 5–6: Place studies – understanding geographical diversity and culture.