

## Reception

This document shows how children's early experiences within the Knowledge and Understanding of the World area in EYFS support the development of geographical knowledge, skills and understanding. It highlights the early knowledge, skills and vocabulary children begin to develop as they explore their local environment, the wider world and the natural world around them. While geography is introduced as a discrete subject in Year 1 and developed throughout the primary curriculum, children's geographical understanding begins to develop much earlier through meaningful experiences, exploration and discussion.

The document identifies how these early experiences set the foundations for future geographical learning, helping teachers to build on children's existing knowledge and understanding as they begin their formal geography education.

## EYFS Statutory Framework (Development Matters)

### Understanding of the World, People – Cultures and Communities

#### Educational Programme

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them - from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

#### Development Matters

- Draw information from a simple map.
- Explore the natural world around them.
- Describe what they see, hear and feel whilst outside.
- Recognise some environments that are different from the one in which they live.
- Understand that some places are special to members of their community.

#### Characteristics of Effective Learning

Playing and exploring

Active learning

Creating and Thinking Critically

Geography Skills and Progression - EYFS 2026-2027  
Subject Leader: Mrs Lonsdale

|                   | Autumn 1/2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                | Spring 1/2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                               | Summer 1/2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
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| Focus             | Exploring Maps                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                | Around the World                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                               | Outdoor Adventures                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
| Enquiry Questions | How do we use maps?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                | How are places around the world different to where I live?                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                               | How does the outdoors change?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
| Key Vocabulary    | above<br>aerial<br>bird's eye view<br>building<br>car park<br>direction<br>feature<br>field<br>find<br>house<br>identify<br>journey                                                                                                                                                                          | lake<br>look<br>map<br>park<br>path<br>photograph<br>pirate<br>river<br>road<br>route<br>search<br>town<br>treasure<br>village | beach<br>blizzard<br>building<br>bus stop<br>cactus<br>camel<br>church<br>city<br>cottage<br>countryside<br>desert<br>explorer<br>farm<br>field<br>flats<br>forest<br>hill<br>ice                                                                                                | lamp post<br>land<br>map<br>mountain<br>palm tree<br>playground<br>polar<br>pond<br>post box<br>postcard<br>rainforest<br>river<br>roundabout<br>sand dune<br>scientists<br>snow | storm<br>tractor<br>travel<br>village<br>waterfall<br>weather | acorn<br>autumn<br>bark<br>bent<br>big<br>bright<br>colour<br>dark<br>dry<br>feather<br>feel<br>flower<br>freezing<br>frosty<br>gentle                                                                                                                                                                                          | hard<br>hot<br>leaf<br>long<br>look<br>loud<br>notice<br>observe<br>rain<br>rough<br>see<br>seed<br>short<br>snow<br>soft | small<br>smell<br>sound<br>sour<br>spiky<br>spring<br>straight<br>summer<br>sun<br>sunny<br>sweet<br>tickly<br>touch<br>twig<br>wet<br>winter |
| Early knowledge   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To know a map is a picture of a place.</li> <li>Water is usually represented in blue on a map or globe.</li> <li>Some vocabulary to describe the characteristics of different places, even if used inaccurately (hill, field, building, road, house, old).</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That places within this country can differ from each other.</li> <li>That there are differences between places in this country and places in other countries.</li> <li>The name of their school and the place where they live.</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know some vocabulary to describe different bodies of water, even if used inaccurately (sea/ocean, lake, river, pond).</li> <li>Know some vocabulary to describe the characteristics of different places, even if used inaccurately (hill, field, building, road, house, old).</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |

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|                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That a place and its features can be represented in a picture.</li> <li>• Some vocabulary to describe directions, even if used inaccurately (e.g. near, far, next to, close, behind).</li> <li>• Some vocabulary to describe different bodies of water, even if used inaccurately (sea/ocean, lake, river, pond).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some vocabulary to describe the characteristics of different places, even if used inaccurately (hill, field, building, road, house, old).</li> <li>• That a map is a picture of a place.</li> <li>• That a place and its features can be represented in a picture.</li> <li>• That usually water is represented in blue on a map or globe.</li> </ul>                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know that the terms Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter are used to describe the season.</li> <li>• Know some of the key characteristics of each season.</li> <li>• Know that there are four seasons in a year marked by certain weather conditions.</li> <li>• Know that a place and its features can be represented in a picture.</li> </ul>                            |
| Early Learning Goals | <p>ELG: Understanding the World - The Natural World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>ELG: Understanding the World - The Natural World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>ELG: Understanding the World - The Natural World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants.</li> <li>• Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.</li> </ul>                                             |
| Early skills         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying land and water on a map or globe.</li> <li>• Recognising features on maps (real or imaginary).</li> <li>• Creating real or imaginary maps even if features are indistinguishable.</li> <li>• Beginning to use modelled directional vocabulary when describing features in the surrounding environment.</li> <li>• Beginning to look at and talk about maps (real or imaginary) in stories, non-fiction books, atlases and on globes.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making observations about the characteristics of places (in stories, photographs or in the school grounds/local area).</li> <li>• Discussing how environments in stories and images are different to the environment they live in.</li> <li>• Making observations about the features of places (in stories, photographs or in the school grounds/local area).</li> <li>• Answering simple questions, guided by the teacher.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make observations about the characteristics of places (in stories, photographs or in the school grounds/local area).</li> <li>• Discuss how environments in stories and images are different to the environment they live in.</li> <li>• Begin to use the names of the seasons in the correct context.</li> <li>• Ask questions about the world around them.</li> </ul> |

# Geography Skills and Progression - EYFS 2026-2027

Subject Leader: Mrs Lonsdale

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|                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making observations about the characteristics of places (in stories, photographs or in the school grounds/local area).</li> <li>• Making observations about the features of places (in stories, photographs or in the school grounds/local area).</li> <li>• Discussing how environments in stories and images are different to the environment they live in.</li> <li>• Answering simple questions, guided by the teacher.</li> <li>• Expressing their likes and dislikes about a specific place and its features, beginning to explain their reasoning.</li> <li>• Ask questions about the world around them.</li> <li>• Commenting on the features they see in their school and school grounds on a walk around the respective places, taking supported risks.</li> <li>• Representing some of the features they notice in their school and school grounds.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expressing their likes and dislikes about a specific place and its features, beginning to explain their reasoning.</li> <li>• Beginning to look at and talk about maps (real or imaginary) in stories, non-fiction books, atlases and on globes.</li> <li>• Recognising features on maps (real or imaginary).</li> <li>• Identifying land and water on a map or globe.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comment on the features they see in their school and school grounds on a walk around the respective places, taking supported risks.</li> <li>• Answer simple questions, guided by the teacher.</li> <li>• Make observations about the features of places (in stories, photographs or in the school grounds/local area).</li> <li>• Observe weather across the seasons.</li> <li>• Observe and discuss the effect the changing seasons have on the world around them.</li> <li>• Represent some of the features they notice in their school and school grounds.</li> </ul> |
| How do EYFS experiences support progression into the Year 1 geography curriculum? | <p>Year 1: What is it like here?</p> <p>Supports children in identifying and describing features of their school and local area</p> <p>Supports children in understanding that places can be represented and developing map skills</p> <p>Prepares children to locate places and consider where features are positioned</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>Year 1: What is it like to live in Shanghai?</p> <p>Helps children understand that places have different features and characteristics</p> <p>Supports identifying human and physical features in China and Shanghai</p> <p>Prepares children to locate China, Shanghai and interpret maps</p>                                                                                                                           | <p>Year 1: What is the weather like in the UK?</p> <p>Supports children in identifying different types of weather and using appropriate vocabulary</p> <p>Helps children recognise patterns across the seasons</p> <p>Supports understanding of how weather influences places and daily life</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

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|  | Supports describing routes and using geographical vocabulary                    | Supports comparing images and information about Shanghai with their own locality | Builds the geographical vocabulary needed to describe weather |
|  | Develops children's ability to ask questions and make observations about places | Develops the geographical thinking needed to compare places                      | Prepares children for collecting and presenting weather data  |