

Geography Policy



The Valley Community School

Reviewed: January 2025

**Reviewed by: Linked Governor and
C. Vickers**

To be reviewed: January 2027

The Valley Community School

OUR VISION

“A world class centre of outstanding learning”

OUR MISSION

“Together we’re better”

Founding principles that underpin our philosophy of being truly inclusive

We aspire in all we do to ensure we create a culture of:

High Equity:

Narrowing the gaps between pupils in different socio-economic groups

High Achievement:

For all through rigorous challenge, adaptation and reflection

High Inclusion and Engagement:

Adapting and supporting narrowing and bridging gaps in achievement

High Expectations:

Of ourselves, our pupils and our families in effective partnerships

Our core values:

Acceptance

Fairness

Trust

Equality

Respect

Geography Policy

The school feels strongly that there is a need to develop both global citizenship and, where possible, teach the fundamental principles of British Citizenship.

This encompasses:

- a sense of fair play
- tolerance
- duty and remembrance
- respect
- values
- ethics
- belonging
- contributing to and supporting all our local communities
- perseverance.

Geography INTENT:

The geography curriculum at The Valley has been adapted and refined from the International Primary Curriculum (IPC). All of the units are planned into a schematic web that is cyclical, builds up and layers understanding. The curriculum has been planned to ensure it meets the requirements of the national curriculum.

The geography curriculum starts in the EYFS where foundational knowledge is linked intrinsically to self, families, homes, environments, the real world and very importantly to vocabulary. Children develop their understanding of the immediate area around them (the classroom and school).

Through the sharing of fiction and non-fiction books they are introduced to life and environments in the wider world.

In Key Stage 1 the children extend their knowledge of the local community and beyond.

In Year 1, pupils begin to describe simple physical and human features developing their knowledge of their locality and the United Kingdom including naming, locating and identifying characteristics of the four countries and capital cities and its surrounding seas

This is built upon in Year 2 where they further their understanding of geographical similarities and differences through studying a local holiday destination in the UK and comparing with a contrasting non-European holiday destination. This allows the children to start to understand the wider world, including naming and locating the world's seven continents and five oceans

In Key Stage 2 the children develop their knowledge of the world further.

Pupils in Year 3 build their knowledge of the physical and human features of the UK including farming types. They go on to study Italy which culminates in them making comparisons between Italy and the UK. They extend their knowledge of the continents by learning about the climate zones of the world. They make links between our climate and the type of farming in the UK. This is before a field trip visit to a local dairy farm. They study earthquakes and volcanoes and discuss why some people choose to live near a volcano.

Children in Year 4 revisit the UK and its location within Europe. They build upon their knowledge of the world's climate zones and focus on climate and the distribution of flora and fauna. They study the main biomes of the world with an in depth study of tropical rainforests. They learn to describe how features and places change and the links between people and environments. They debate the impact of economic activity on the world's rainforests.

Geography in Year 5 builds on the idea of settlement and land use (from Year 3) in the UK. Pupils begin by learning about the uneven distribution of water throughout the world and then focus on the major rivers in the UK, Europe and the world. They make links and reach conclusions about why towns and cities are located around rivers. They also look at the reasons why rivers flood their banks and the impact this has on communities.

Finally, in Year 6, pupils use their geography knowledge acquired in previous year groups to research a global issue of interest to them (for example, deforestation, climate change). They study global trade and explain how places are linked through movement of goods and people. They begin this unit by looking at land use within the local area and then extend this to the UK before looking

at the UK's major imports and exports. They discuss and debate a national or international issue of personal interest to them.

Each unit is vocabulary rich, emphasises first-hand experience, is highly visual, has an international dimension and builds in presenting skills (usually at the end of the topic). The unit begins by building factual knowledge using a direct instructional teaching approach. As the unit progresses, skills become more complex and the children start to apply, evaluate and reflect on their learning, utilising the ideas and concepts of Webb's Depth of Knowledge and Blooms Taxonomy.

Geography Curriculum Statement of Intent:

Rationale – why this curriculum design?

- Primarily, we want to be sure the curriculum meets the National Curriculum requirements and from this we have built an enhanced offer that goes beyond the requirements.
- Secondly, the adaptations we have made mean each year group has a set and specific set of objectives that also encompass linked learning, British Values and SMSC
- At The Valley Community Primary School, we are all **GEOGRAPHERS!**
- We want our children to love geography!
- We want to ensure that through Geography, pupils are able to explore the relationship between the Earth and its people through the study of place, space and environment.
- In Geography, pupils in our school will learn the skills of understanding locational knowledge; how and where people fit into its overall structure.
- We also intend for children to become passionate and knowledgeable about our local community and beyond, by learning through experiences in practical and fieldwork activities.
- Children will develop a sense of responsibility and care in their environment both locally, nationally and globally.

Structure of the curriculum:

- Subject goals-build towards each end of phase Mileposts.
Introduction-Milepost 1 Y2 end -Milepost 2 Y4 end –Milepost 3 Y6 end
- The Subject Goals, Learning Goals and Mileposts do provide a rubric outline for the end of Phase 1/2/3.

- These mileposts coincide with the end of Year 2, Year 4 and Year 6. Based around two year targets
- Build a structure of substantive and disciplinary knowledge, understanding and skills.

Key areas of the structured knowledge:

- Enquiry
- Places
- Environmental change and development
- Geographical Features
- Mapping
- Communicating

Adaptations:

- We felt our curriculum adaptations needed to add specific content knowledge that is more progressive and incremental. Milestones also needed to be supplemented with some core information and key vocabulary.
- The additions also added requirements to learn about issues of relevance that we feel **are most significant for our children to learn**, here at The Valley Community School, specific to each unit and each year. These incremental programmes set out precise unit and end of phase teaching elements, with key knowledge to learn.

High-level concepts are central to a pupil's geographical education.

- place
- space
- scale
- interdependence
- physical and human processes

- environmental impact
- sustainable development
- cultural awareness

Curriculum progression

A high-quality geography education brings together careful selection of content, organisation of that content, choice of teaching approaches, assessment and other factors.

Our geography curriculum maps out the knowledge that pupils learn to gain geographical expertise. In planning the curriculum, the nature of the discipline should inform content and activity choices to ensure that pupils learn and can consider their own answers to geographical questions.

A clearly mapped journey starting in the early years and developing through the curriculum is critical.

Our curriculum therefore:

- Has sufficient breadth of content and ensures that pupils learn this in sufficient depth.
- Begins in the early years and builds year on year, developing pupils' expertise.
- Builds knowledge so that pupils can draw on it in future learning. Pupils are increasingly able to apply generalisations to understand the world around them.
- Uses strong subject knowledge to do this and take into account how pupils build their geographical knowledge over time.
- Identifies substantive geographical knowledge.
- Links common concepts
- Breaks down content they wish pupils to learn into component parts.

Locational knowledge:

- build their own identity and develop their sense of place
- develop an appreciation of distance and scale
- learn about the orientation of the world, including references such as the continents and oceans that they can navigate from

Place knowledge:

- Place knowledge is prioritised in the geography curriculum. It brings meaning to locations and processes studied.
- The curriculum and teachers' plans build pupils' knowledge of place by linking to places pupils already know or are familiar with. This may be from their personal experience as well as through what they have been taught.
- The curriculum gives pupils the knowledge they need to develop an increasingly complex understanding of place. Their understanding of place helps them to connect different aspects of geography. It also gives them different perspectives through which to consider the content studied.
- The curriculum builds pupils' place knowledge over time. This allows them to make meaningful comparisons.

Environmental

From the early years on, the curriculum should set out how pupils gain knowledge of environmental, human and physical processes so that pupils can:

- describe their own and others' environment
- recognise the similarities and differences between the world around them and contrasting environment

- understand important processes and changes in the world around them, including those affecting the land, bodies of water and the air, people, and wildlife

Fieldwork

In our high-quality geography curriculum, plans introduce pupils to different types of mapping, including topological and thematic mapping, as they progress through key stage 2 and secondary education. A high-quality geography curriculum also includes sufficient opportunity for pupils to practise:

- decoding information from maps
- constructing (or encoding) maps
- analysing distributions and relationships
- route-finding
- interpreting the information to draw conclusion

Geographical skills allows them to gather, analyse, present and interpret spatial information. In doing so, they are adept at identifying patterns and trends.

Pupils have the specific skills they need to represent and interpret geographical data. These skills are integrated into the curriculum so that pupils understand their application.

Repeated practice of geographical skills improves pupils' fluency and accuracy.

Fieldwork includes data collection, analysis and presentation. The experience of fieldwork draws together pupils' locational knowledge and that of human and physical processes. It supports pupils to appreciate the interplay between them.

Developing thinking like a geographer

- We make informed and careful choices about what is taught. This may go beyond the content prescribed in the national curriculum.
- The curriculum has examples and case studies to demonstrate each aspect being learned. These are always real and relevant to the content.

- When we introducing new component knowledge, teachers make sure that pupils can relate this to what they already know, so that they build a strong schema and so remember more.
- Teachers emphasise this interconnectedness between forms of knowledge to help pupils do this.
- Knowledge receives due consideration.
- Pupils build their knowledge both within the form and in how each form relates to others. Crucially, the interplay between each develops pupils' secure geographical thinking.
- We appreciate structure of the subject, so their curriculum plans are constructed effectively to ensure that pupils know more, remember more and are able to do more

Thematic approaches

Because the sequencing geographical content is complex. We have sequenced clearly and simply what pupils need to know. A clear progression 'map' for geography makes best use of the Geography Association guidelines.

Our geography education has the following features:

The curriculum is designed to allow pupils to see that geography is a dynamic subject where thinking and viewpoints change. In developing pupils' **disciplinary knowledge**, teachers' plans allow pupils to:

- Takes a holistic view of the content studied
- Establish whether the geographical questions posed, the methods used, and the answers found are valid
- Recognise the interconnectedness of different geographical content
- Appreciate what it means to be a geographer by asking geographical questions such as 'why is this place like this?', 'how is this place changing?' and 'how are other places affected?'

- Disciplinary knowledge ensures that pupils appreciate the context in which substantive knowledge was generated. This helps pupils to appreciate context and the perspective from which knowledge was created, different standpoints and how views have changed.

Schema

- We believe the knowledge pupils learn is well organised with clear connections between components, which means they are more likely to remember it in the long term.
- The curriculum builds on pupils' prior learning and re-visits the content, which supports pupils in developing strong schemata

Pedagogy

- Teachers avoid overloading pupils' working memory. They break larger concepts or ideas into smaller 'bite-size' chunks and teach a small number of these
- Pupils commit knowledge to their long-term memory through recalling and repeated practice.
- Pupils are efficient at carrying out tasks such as using grid references because they practise their procedural knowledge regularly

Use of ICT

ICT is a valuable tool to enhance teaching and learning in geography, and geographical work can provide a relevant and purposeful way of practising ICT skills too.

Access to the Internet, e-mail, digital mapping, digital cameras and remote controlled toys can be used to make geographical teaching and learning more exciting and to bring images of people, places and environments, both locally and around the world, instantly into our classrooms. Our school subscribes to Digimaps (removed Lyfta)

ICT equipment such as digital cameras, video recorders and tape recorders can also be used by both children and teachers to gather evidence. It can also be used to show to other staff and children when back in class.

How we make suitable adaptations to support the learning of disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs

- Pupils with SEND generally study the same curriculum scope as other pupils.
- Our teachers have the same level of ambition for all pupils. They use specialist advice to adapt their teaching approaches where necessary.
- Our teaching assistants are well briefed in the subject knowledge aspects to be studied and learnt and the approaches taken.
- Teachers and specialists, including the SENCO support pupils in their role.
- Classroom resources and learning outside the classroom are adjusted, and where necessary risk assessed, as required, to ensure that all pupils are active learners.

Our Inclusion practices may also include:

- Schemes of work in the short, mid and long-term, with clearly defined milestones and practical objectives exemplified clearly
- Pre-teaching key concepts and language
- Post-teaching to consolidate
- Supporting accessibility by understanding by focussing on key vocabulary
- Using hands on drama, making and the arts, rather than defaulting to reading/written content only
- Using ICT technology, apps, video and computer based technologies where appropriate
- Waves of intervention that focus on Basic Skills and language proficiency that supports wider curriculum accessibility

Assessment, recording and reporting procedures

The EYFS:

All our subjects begin life the EYFS, where pupils work towards understanding the foundational aspects of the national curriculum subjects. Whilst subjects may not be studied as discreet subjects, key elements and the foundations for subject learning are taught to secure effective transition to Year 1

Reporting to Parents

Completed via Parents' Evenings, termly reporting procedures and ongoing discussions where necessary to support home learning and maximise impact,

Adaptations and reasonable adjustments:

How we make suitable adaptations to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs

- Pupils identified as having Special Educational Needs generally study the same curriculum "scope" as their peers unless there is specific cognitive reason that makes this impossible, or pupils are working at a level significantly below their peers with large gaps in learning.
- Our teachers have the same level of ambition for all pupils. They use specialist advice to adapt their teaching approaches where necessary.
- Our staff are well briefed in the subject knowledge aspects to be studied and learnt and the approaches taken.
- Teachers and specialists, including the SENCO, support pupils in their role.
- Classroom resources and learning outside the classroom are adjusted, and where necessary risk assessed, as required, to ensure that all pupils are active learners.
- Adaptive practices within the lesson itself are used ensure exceptional progress

Our Inclusion practices may also include:

- Schemes of work in the short, mid and long-term, with clearly defined milestones and practical objectives exemplified clearly

- Larger elements broken down into smaller components
- Cross curricular consolidation
- Pre-teaching key concepts and language
- Post-teaching to consolidate
- Supporting accessibility by understanding by focussing on key vocabulary
- Using hands on activities, rather than defaulting to reading/written content only
- Using Visual prompts and stimuli, ICT technology, apps, video and computer based technologies where appropriate
- Waves of intervention that focus on Basic Skills and language proficiency that supports wider curriculum accessibility
- Overlearning key concepts that build towards longer term aims and ambition

Assessment adaptations-examples

- These may include a focus on discussion and observation
- Small incremental assessments
- Increased time for pupils to process information, respond and recall information
- The need for some pupils to reactivate knowledge with visual prompts

Assessment in general

Staff will need to ensure that during lessons they observe children as they are working with them. This is in order to make assessments that support the next step in learning and so that progress is monitored. Components of objectives achieved build towards specific elements/blocks recorded on Educater, the schools' tracking system.

This is completed at least once per term but ongoing formative assessment takes place all the time. Progress is judged "within the curriculum" as pupils build their cumulative knowledge towards longer term larger curriculum aims:

- In the lesson
- Across a range of lessons
- Across the Year (SCIENCE/ENGLISH/MATHEMATICS)

- Across the phase KS1 LKS2 UKS2
- Preparation for next phase of learning REC/KS1/KS2/Y7

Metacognition and harnessing the learning narrative:

To support learning, vocabulary will always be examined and discussed by pupils in each new lesson.

This approach reduces cognitive load (CLT) and allows pupils to easily reactivate prior learning. Strong links will be made with previous and future learning and pupils will explicitly see themselves on a “Learning Pathway” or journey.

Previous learning will be reactivated via discussion and books and sketch books will support a sense of a visible learning pathway.

This will be achieved using photographs and strong visual and language reminders for pupils of previous learning. This approach is most important for our lowest achieving 20% of pupils who often have communication, language delay, this can be most complicated by pupils presenting as being on the Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC).

Whilst the curriculum remains constant the pedagogy used to access the curriculum will differ, some pupils will need additional processing time to “over learn” concepts and consolidate learning. Other pupils may need a variety of taught and sequenced strategies to support longer term progress in the curriculum.

Long and short term planning and sequencing

Long, medium and short term planning is the responsibility of individual teachers who take account of the needs of the children in a particular class; the topic area they are covering and the progression guidance then plan accordingly, building components towards long, medium and short term aims of the curriculum.

Related policies

- Assessment Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Curriculum Policy

Systemic documents

Key documents held in house and maintained by subject leaders that promote, monitor and support this subject development.

- Position statement
- Action and/or development plan
- External and/or Internal Data Profiles
- Impact statement
- Monitoring plan
- Documents that support exemplification of standards

Equal Duties/ Opportunities and Inclusion statement

The school is committed to ensuring every child irrespective of race, gender, ability and disability, culture and religion achieves their absolute maximum potential (please refer to the 9 protected characteristics).

Community Cohesion

The school sees community cohesion as being implicit in everything that the school does in developing well rounded and knowledgeable individuals who not only tolerate the views of others but value the importance of diversity.

Role of Subject leader

- To lead development of subject in school ,
- provide guidance to individual staff members and professional development
- regularly update staff
- review and monitor the success of the planned units of work, components and learning sequencing
- be responsible for the organisation and maintenance of resourcing
- Support staff in appropriate and manageable assessment
- Support staff, alongside the SENCO in making reasonable adjustments and adaptations
- Monitor impact, plan and review

- Keep up to date knowledge of all association and “body” recommendations including research information

Appendix

Global Citizenship

Global citizenship is a key strand of our geography curriculum at The Valley, supporting pupils to become knowledgeable, reflective, and responsible members of both local and global communities. The curriculum is carefully designed to build understanding, skills, and values progressively from EYFS through Year 6.

EYFS and Key Stage 1: Children begin by exploring themselves, their families, homes, and local environment. They learn about other countries through stories, cultural experiences, and simple comparisons, such as transport, food, and daily life. Year 1 introduces basic concepts of democracy, moral reasoning, and social rules (e.g., Green Cross Code), while Year 2 explores trade, tourism, and environmental awareness, encouraging respect for different communities and recognition of shared human experiences.

Key Stage 2: Pupils deepen their understanding of global issues and interdependence.

Year 3: Children study natural disasters, Fairtrade, and international aid, learning social responsibility through volunteering and cooperation.

Year 4: Pupils investigate global inequalities, deforestation, and the ethical consequences of human activity, developing critical thinking, debate, and empathy.

Year 5: Focus shifts to environmental issues such as climate change, water scarcity, and sustainability, alongside exploration of human rights, Fairtrade, and charitable initiatives. Pupils engage in reflective and culturally rich experiences to foster awareness of global interconnections.

Year 6: Children conduct in-depth studies of current national or international issues, applying research and investigation skills. They explore globalisation, Fair Trade, and cross-curricular topics, while participating in community projects and reflecting on ethical, social, and cultural responsibilities.

Throughout all years, pupils' understanding of global citizenship is reinforced by:

International Dimension: Learning about diverse cultures, global issues, and interdependent communities.

British Values: Applying fairness, democracy, rule of law, tolerance, and respect in both local and global contexts.

SMSC: Developing moral reasoning, empathy, spiritual reflection, and social skills through engagement with ethical and environmental challenges.

Cultural and Spiritual Learning: Experiencing awe, wonder, and appreciation for natural and human-made environments, participating in cultural opportunities, and recognizing shared human experiences.

By embedding global citizenship in geography, The Valley ensures that pupils are not only well-informed about the world but are also equipped to act with responsibility, compassion, and confidence—contributing positively to society and the planet both now and in the future.