The Federation of Middleham Church of England (VA) Junior School and Spennithorne Church of England (VA) Infant school Primary Schools

Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.
They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream.
It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green.
It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.
Jeremiah 17: 7 - 8

Geography Curriculum

Introduction

A FEDMAS geographer is…

*…**aspirational, respectful and resilient**, with a curiosity about the world and the people and places within it. Their geographical journey begins with a secure understanding of their **local area**, providing strong foundations from which to explore and appreciate the wider world. They confidently use **maps, fieldwork skills, location and direction** to investigate places, identify patterns and make connections. They ask thoughtful questions and use geographical enquiry to deepen their knowledge and understanding of both **human and physical geography**. They show respect for different people, places, cultures and environments, developing a broad and informed worldview. They are resilient learners who confidently apply their geographical knowledge and skills to investigate, explain and make sense of our ever-changing world.*

ASPIRATIONAL **RESPECTFUL** **RESILIENT**

We believe that by having these three aims at the root, will equip our pupils to **LIVE FRUITFUL LIVES** and to **LEARN, LOVE** and **GROW.**

At The Federation of Middleham CE (VA) Junior School & Spennithorne CE (VA) Infant Schools, we acknowledge and celebrate that each child is unique and that they learn in different ways. We provide a rich and varied geography learning experience that allows children to develop their knowledge, skills and abilities to their full potential. Our geography curriculum is ambitious and designed to meet the diverse needs of the children who attend The Federation of Middleham (VA) & Spennithorne (VC) CE Primary Schools. It aims to provide all pupils with the knowledge, skills and cultural capital they need to succeed in their lives.

The Federation of Middleham CE (VA) Junior School & Spennithorne CE (VA) Infant Schools follows the national curriculum and Early Years Framework to ensure knowledge; skills and understanding are taught throughout all key stages. The school has created its own long and medium-term planning which details the topics, objectives, knowledge, skills and vocabulary which should be covered, using Developing Experts to support subject knowledge. Through this planning, the national curriculum breath of study for geography is fully covered.

Our Curriculum

The geography curriculum is designed to embody the school's vision and values by promoting community awareness, stewardship of place, and global responsibility. Our self-designed curriculum is organised around a whole school, thematic progression:

Autumn	Spring	Summer
Love for ourselves and our community	Love for our country	Love for our world
Local geography	UK geography	Global geography

This cycle runs across all year groups so every pupil experiences coherent, sequenced geographical learning that builds from local to national to global contexts. Learning is underpinned by five golden threads: **map skills; fieldwork; geographical understanding; geographical enquiry; and location & direction**. These threads are intentionally revisited and deepened termly so pupils steadily develop procedural knowledge (skills) and declarative knowledge (place, processes, vocabulary).

We begin each year's sequence in the local area to secure foundational skills (simple map reading, human/physical feature identification, basic local data collection). In Spring we apply these foundations to UK places (urban/rural/coastal comparisons, regional physical features, human geography such as industry and transport). In Summer pupils transfer and extend learning to global contexts (comparative studies, climate change, oceans, Fairtrade and human–environment interactions).

Location	Place	Human and physical geography (including processes)	Geographical fieldwork and skills

Key skills categories				
Map skills	Fieldwork	Location and direction	Geographical understanding	Geographical enquiry

	Autumn		Spring		Summer	
	Cycle A	Cycle B	Cycle A	Cycle B	Cycle A	Cycle B
Reception						
KS1	Our local area	Fieldwork study: my school	UK – seasides and weather	UK and London	Hot and cold places	UK and Africa (Kenya- study)
LKS2	Our local area – local surveying	Settlements	UK – rivers and water cycle	UK – local and UK landscapes – land use study	Europe – country study (Greece)	Global study – climate, tropics
UKS2	Our local area – OS maps, surveying	Distribution of natural resources (farming and water focus)	UK – rivers and mountains (process study)	Volcanoes and earthquakes	Biomes – Amazon Rainforest	North America study

Progression and inclusion are secured by termly mapping of skills and knowledge in our progression documents and medium-term planning. These documents show age-appropriate end points and how concepts deepen across mixed-age classes so teachers can plan adaptive approaches that secure foundational skills for pupils with SEND without denying them age-appropriate content.

Fieldwork is a planned core component each term (local observational tasks, UK-based visits where possible, and place-based comparative projects) meeting the NC emphasis on practical enquiry and real-world application.

What are our aims for our geography curriculum?

At The Federation of Middleham CE (VA) Junior School and Spennithorne CE (VA) Infant Schools, we want our pupils to know their place in the world— physically, culturally and environmentally — so they can make informed choices that benefit themselves, their community and the wider planet. By progressing through "love for our country" to "love for our world," geography operationalises values of stewardship, empathy, and responsibility at increasing scales of impact, reflecting the school's aspiration to nurture ethically minded, globally aware citizens. Starting in the pupils' own locality recognises that our pupils' geographical sense-making is strongest when rooted in their lived place. This increases motivation, prior-knowledge activation and cultural relevance for our community-focused cohorts. Emphasis on contemporary issues (climate change, ocean health, Fairtrade) and use of real data prepares pupils for informed, active citizenship and broadens awareness of geography-related careers and local-to-global connections.

The curriculum aims for depth over superficial coverage: pupils revisit core concepts regularly, deepening understanding and application each year, so even our youngest pupils experience ambitious, meaningful geography. Our self-designed cycle and progression documents are intentionally built for mixed-year classes: a cyclical curriculum allows depth through repeated exposure rather than accelerated breadth in a single year. This supports the stronger retention and schema-building that mixed-age cohorts require. Our progression documents also ensure that pupils in mixed-age classes are accessing curriculum content at their age-appropriate level. Termly mapped objectives enable teachers to adapt activities and scaffolds for pupils with

SEND and for those needing greater stretch, ensuring all pupils access age-appropriate curriculum aims while securing foundational geographical skills first.

How do we deliver our geography curriculum?

Quality-first teaching

Our universal offer ensures that all pupils have access to high-quality geography teaching. Lessons follow a clear 'I do, we do, you do' sequence, enabling teachers to model new knowledge and skills before pupils practise with support and move towards confident independence. Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction underpin teaching and learning, with small steps of learning, regular questioning, modelling and opportunities for guided and independent practice. Clear explanations, purposeful vocabulary and appropriate geographical resources help all pupils to develop secure knowledge and skills.

Adaptive teaching

Geography lessons are designed to enable all pupils, including those with SEND, to access and engage with the same ambitious curriculum. Teachers identify potential barriers to learning and use adaptive strategies such as explicit instruction, modelling, carefully selected visuals, maps and photographs, pre-teaching of vocabulary, chunking of information and scaffolds for extended responses. Fieldwork is planned inclusively, with appropriate adaptations to ensure all pupils can participate in geographical enquiry and develop practical geographical skills. This may include visual prompts, adapted recording methods, additional modelling, accessible equipment or carefully considered groupings and adult support. Adaptations are responsive to individual need and are used purposefully, with scaffolds reduced as pupils develop knowledge, confidence and independence.

Retrieval practice

Retrieval practice is used at the start of each lesson to strengthen pupils' retention of geographical knowledge and help them make connections between previous and new learning. Lessons provide opportunities to revisit key vocabulary, locations, concepts and prior learning through questioning, low-stakes quizzes and retrieval activities. Teachers deliberately draw upon knowledge from previous lessons, units and year groups using a 'Flashback Four' format. Retrieval opportunities are mapped out in the curriculum overview for each term, and progression documents support teachers in identifying core knowledge to revise before each new unit. This enables pupils to build increasingly complex geographical understanding and apply previously learned knowledge to new places, processes and contexts.

Assessment

Assessment is embedded throughout the geography curriculum and is used to identify what pupils know, understand and can do, as well as misconceptions or gaps in knowledge. Teachers use questioning, retrieval activities, pupil discussion, written work and geographical enquiry tasks to assess understanding during lessons and adapt teaching accordingly. Teachers track progress termly using Insight, assessing core knowledge and skills. Curriculum leaders analyse data to identify trends and gaps across year groups, providing feedback to teachers to inform future planning.

Enrichment opportunities

Enrichment opportunities enable pupils to experience geography beyond the classroom and apply their knowledge in meaningful contexts. Fieldwork is carefully planned across the curriculum to develop pupils' ability to observe, collect, present and interpret geographical information, with opportunities to investigate both the local area and contrasting environments. Educational visits, visitors, local studies and links with current

geographical issues are used where appropriate to deepen curriculum learning. For example, we plan a seaside visit in KS1 and invite the Rivers Trust into school for a workshop in KS2. These experiences help pupils recognise the relevance of geography to their own lives while developing curiosity about places, people and environments beyond their immediate experience.

Contextual safeguarding

Curriculum planning takes account of the school's local context and the potential risks pupils may encounter within their environment. Within our rural context, this includes developing pupils' awareness of river and water safety, road safety and risks associated with agricultural environments, including farms and farm machinery. Fieldwork and local geographical studies provide opportunities to reinforce how pupils can engage safely and responsibly with rivers, farmland and other environments they may encounter. Wider geographical issues, including environmental hazards, climate change, migration and inequality, are explored in an age-appropriate and sensitive way. Fieldwork and educational visits are carefully risk assessed, and teachers remain alert to safeguarding issues that may arise through geographical content, creating opportunities for pupils to discuss these within a safe and respectful environment.

British Values

British Value	**Opportunities to demonstrate this through geography**
Democracy	**1.** Discuss and vote on local environmental issues, such as how a local green space could be improved. **2.** Explore how communities and governments make decisions about places, resources and the environment.
Rule of Law	**1.** Learn about rules and laws that protect environments, habitats and important places. **2.** Follow agreed rules and boundaries when undertaking fieldwork, understanding why these keep people and places safe.
Mutual Respect	**1.** Respect different viewpoints when discussing geographical and environmental issues. **2.** Show care and respect for their local area and the environments they encounter during fieldwork.
Individual Liberty	**1.** Express and justify their own opinions about geographical issues, such as transport, land use or climate change. **2.** Explore how people choose where and how they live while recognising that opportunities and choices can differ around the world.
Tolerance of Different Faiths and Beliefs	**1.** Explore different countries, cultures and communities without stereotyping, recognising both similarities and differences. **2.** Investigate how beliefs, traditions and cultures can influence settlements, landscapes and people's relationships with places.

Equal Opportunities

The geography curriculum is designed to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to participate, achieve and develop as geographers, regardless of their background, gender, ethnicity, SEND or disadvantage. Pupils are supported to access the same ambitious curriculum through appropriate adaptations, including during fieldwork and enrichment opportunities. Curriculum content reflects a diverse range of places, communities, cultures and perspectives, helping pupils to develop respect for different ways of life and challenge stereotypes or misconceptions. Where pupils may have had limited opportunities to experience places beyond their immediate locality, carefully selected resources, fieldwork, visits and wider enrichment are used to broaden experiences and develop cultural capital.