



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Geography Policy

Policy Date: September 2026

Policy Lead: J Jones

Mission Statement

We are proud of our school as a place of learning, prayer and happiness.
Hand in hand with God, Our Lady and St. Joseph, we promise to work hard and be kind to one another so that we can grow stronger together in our faith.
Hand in hand with God we learn.

Aims of the Curriculum

At St Joseph's we value every child as a gift from God.

Our curriculum is created with a deep understanding of how our faith influences our thoughts, decisions and actions.
Resilience and pride shape the learning culture within this school for both children and adults. Having the highest aspirations for and of all, we learn together, opening minds and creating an environment of intellectual curiosity.

Working towards a rich and meaningful curriculum that reflects the diverse population of our school family. Teaching children about where they live, making experiences personal and memorable.
Giving children worldwide experiences that help them to understand who they are.

Our curriculum design is based on evidence from cognitive science; three main principles underpin it:

- Learning is most effective with spaced repetition.
- Interleaving helps pupils to discriminate between topics and aids long-term retention.
- Retrieval of previously learned content is frequent and regular, which increases both storage and retrieval strength.

Geography – Curriculum Intent

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we are committed to nurturing geographically literate pupils who are equipped to understand and navigate an increasingly interconnected world with curiosity, empathy and respect. We believe that every child is uniquely created in the image and likeness of God, and through our Geography curriculum we encourage pupils to develop a deep appreciation of God's creation, their local community and the wider world.

Our Geography curriculum inspires curiosity about people, places and environments while developing pupils' understanding of how physical and human processes shape the world around them. Through engaging and memorable learning experiences, pupils develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to become informed global citizens who recognise their responsibility to care for our common home.

Our carefully sequenced curriculum is built around the core strands of physical geography, human geography and environmental sustainability, ensuring that pupils progressively develop both substantive geographical knowledge and disciplinary enquiry skills throughout their time at St Joseph's.

Geography – Implementation – Planning and Teaching

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, our Geography curriculum is carefully sequenced to develop pupils' curiosity about the world while building secure geographical knowledge and disciplinary skills progressively from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6. Through engaging, enquiry-based learning, pupils develop an understanding of people, places and environments and recognise the interconnected nature of our world.

Geography is taught each term through carefully planned Topic Weeks, which immerse pupils in purposeful learning centred around a Big Question. This enquiry-led approach encourages pupils to investigate geographical concepts, ask thoughtful questions and apply their knowledge through practical, creative and collaborative learning experiences.

Curriculum Structure

Our curriculum follows a clear progression of knowledge, concepts and skills, ensuring that new learning builds upon prior knowledge and strengthens long-term understanding.

In Key Stage 1, pupils begin by exploring their immediate surroundings, including St Joseph's, Derby and the local community. This local-first approach helps children develop a strong sense of place, belonging and pride in their families, school and community.

As pupils move into Key Stage 2, their understanding expands to encompass the United Kingdom and the wider world. They explore a range of physical and human geographical themes, comparing different environments, cultures and settlements while developing an increasingly sophisticated understanding of global interdependence.

Where appropriate, learning is revisited through retrieval practice and chronological progression within the wider curriculum, enabling pupils to make meaningful connections between geographical concepts over time.

Key Geographical Concepts

Throughout the curriculum, pupils revisit three key concepts that deepen their geographical understanding.

How is the landscape shaped?

- Physical features
- Rivers and mountains
- Weather and climate
- Natural processes

How do people live and work here?

- Settlements
- Land use
- Trade
- Communities

How can we care for our world?

- Sustainability
- Environmental change
- Climate change
- Stewardship

These recurring concepts enable pupils to connect new learning with prior knowledge and develop increasingly confident geographical thinking.

Fieldwork and Practical Learning

Fieldwork is a central feature of Geography teaching at St Joseph's. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to observe, investigate and interpret the world around them through first-hand experiences.

Pupils develop practical geographical skills by:

- using maps, atlases and globes;
- interpreting aerial photographs and digital maps;
- collecting and analysing fieldwork data;
- observing physical and human features;
- comparing local and global environments.

These experiences help pupils apply classroom learning to real-world contexts while fostering independence and curiosity.

Talk for Writing Across the Curriculum

As with all subjects at St Joseph's, our planning is informed by the Talk for Writing approach. Teachers use the familiar cycle of Imitation, Innovation and Independent Application to develop pupils' geographical understanding.

Teachers model geographical thinking, co-construct age-appropriate toolkits and explicitly teach the disciplinary skills needed to observe, compare, explain and evaluate geographical features and processes. This familiar approach supports all learners by providing consistency across the curriculum.

Knowledge Organisers and Retrieval Practice

Knowledge organisers support both classroom learning and home learning by identifying the essential knowledge and vocabulary pupils are expected to retain.

Regular retrieval activities revisit previously taught content through quizzes, discussion, mapping activities and vocabulary recall, strengthening long-term memory and helping pupils make meaningful connections between geographical themes.

Vocabulary and Reading

As a school that celebrates linguistic and cultural diversity, explicit vocabulary instruction is an important feature of Geography teaching.

High-quality fiction, non-fiction and geographical texts are carefully selected to immerse pupils in each topic. Knowledge organisers provide clear definitions of ambitious subject-specific vocabulary, enabling pupils to communicate their geographical understanding confidently and accurately.

Faith, Stewardship and Global Responsibility

Our Catholic faith is woven throughout the Geography curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their responsibility as stewards of God's creation and to consider how geographical issues affect people both locally and globally.

Where appropriate, learning is linked to the Seven Principles of Catholic Social Teaching, encouraging pupils to explore themes such as:

- care for creation;
- human dignity;
- solidarity;
- the common good;
- peace and justice;
- responsible use of natural resources.

Through these opportunities, pupils develop empathy, compassion and a growing understanding of their role as responsible global citizens who can contribute positively to both their local community and the wider world.

Inclusion and Adaptive Teaching

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we believe that every pupil should experience success in Geography. Lessons are carefully adapted to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and higher-attaining pupils, can access an ambitious curriculum and make excellent progress.

Adaptive teaching strategies may include:

- visual timelines and chronological scaffolds;
- teacher modelling and worked examples;
- pre-teaching and revisiting historical vocabulary;
- historical artefacts, photographs and visual prompts;
- sentence stems and writing frames;
- co-constructed toolkits;
- flexible grouping;
- targeted adult support where appropriate;
- additional challenge through deeper historical enquiry.

Where pupils have an EHCP or SEND Support Plan, learning is adapted in line with individual targets and recommendations from external professionals while maintaining high expectations for all learners.

Geography – Curriculum Impact

The impact of our Geography curriculum is measured by how successfully pupils develop secure geographical knowledge, disciplinary skills and a lasting curiosity about the world around them. By the time pupils leave St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, they will have developed a secure understanding of the physical and human processes that shape our world, alongside the geographical skills needed to investigate, interpret and explain a range of environments, places and communities. They will be able to use geographical vocabulary accurately, interpret maps and other geographical sources confidently, and make meaningful connections between local, national and global issues.

Our enquiry-based approach enables pupils to think and speak confidently as geographers. They learn to ask thoughtful questions, analyse evidence gathered through fieldwork and research, compare different locations and environments, and consider how geographical processes affect people's lives. Through regular opportunities to revisit prior learning, pupils build increasingly secure knowledge that prepares them for the next stage of their education.

Geography at St Joseph's develops pupils' cultural awareness, empathy and appreciation of the diversity of God's world. Through the study of sustainability, climate change, trade, natural resources and global communities, pupils grow as responsible global citizens who recognise their role

as stewards of creation and understand the importance of caring for both their local community and the wider world.

Our pupils leave St Joseph's with confidence, curiosity and a genuine enthusiasm for Geography. They are equipped with the knowledge, skills and values needed to engage thoughtfully with the opportunities and challenges of an increasingly interconnected world while continuing to grow in faith, knowledge and love.

Geography – Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment in Geography is ongoing and is used to inform future teaching, identify misconceptions and celebrate pupils' progress. Teachers assess learning through a range of formative assessment strategies, including questioning, discussion, observation, fieldwork, practical enquiry, written outcomes and retrieval practice. Assessment focuses on pupils' ability to recall and apply substantive geographical knowledge, use appropriate geographical vocabulary, interpret maps and other geographical sources, apply fieldwork skills and communicate their understanding confidently.

By the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the knowledge, skills and processes set out in the National Curriculum for Geography. Teachers use both statutory and non-statutory guidance to provide appropriate support and challenge, ensuring that all pupils make strong progress from their starting points.

Assessment for Learning

Assessment is embedded throughout the planning, teaching and learning cycle. Teachers provide effective feedback through questioning, verbal feedback and whole-class feedback in line with the school's assessment procedures. Success criteria are explicitly modelled and shared with pupils, enabling them to understand learning expectations, identify areas for improvement and develop increasing independence as young geographers.

Teachers assess learning through a variety of approaches, including:

- observation of pupils during practical and fieldwork activities;
- questioning and classroom discussion;
- pupil explanations and geographical enquiry;

- written outcomes;
- map work and data interpretation;
- retrieval activities and low-stakes quizzes;
- self and peer assessment where appropriate.

Recording and Monitoring Progress

Teachers use Progression Documents to assess pupils' acquisition of essential knowledge and disciplinary skills across each year group. Knowledge Organisers support both classroom and home learning by identifying the key knowledge and vocabulary pupils are expected to retain over time.

Assessment information contributes to whole-school monitoring processes and is used by the Geography Subject Leader and Senior Leadership Team to evaluate curriculum effectiveness through planning scrutiny, work scrutiny, pupil voice, lesson visits and staff discussions. Findings inform curriculum development, professional development priorities and future planning to ensure that Geography remains ambitious, inclusive and progressive for all learners.

Subject Leader Responsibilities

The Geography Subject Leader is responsible for:

- Providing strategic leadership and direction for Geography across the school.
- Ensuring that the curriculum is ambitious, progressive and aligned with the National Curriculum.
- Developing and maintaining a clear progression of knowledge, skills and vocabulary from Foundation Stage to Year 6.
- Supporting teachers to plan and deliver high-quality Geography lessons.
- Ensuring that knowledge builds systematically building on pupils' previous learning.
- Monitoring teaching and learning through lesson visits, book scrutiny, pupil discussions and curriculum reviews.
- Identifying strengths and areas for development within the subject.
- Supporting staff with subject knowledge development and access to appropriate resources.
- Ensuring that assessment approaches accurately reflect pupils' progress in Geography.
- Promoting opportunities for pupils to apply creativity, problem-solving and practical skills.
- Ensuring that health and safety procedures are followed when using tools, materials and equipment.
- Ensuring equality of opportunity and accessibility for all pupils.

- Keeping up to date with developments in Geography education and relevant national guidance.
- Reporting regularly to senior leaders and governors regarding curriculum development and impact.

Headteacher Responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that Geography is given appropriate importance within the curriculum.
- Ensuring that the subject meets statutory requirements and reflects the aims of the National Curriculum.
- Providing appropriate support, time and resources for effective subject leadership.
- Ensuring staff have access to relevant professional development.
- Supporting the Subject Leader in monitoring and evaluating curriculum quality.
- Ensuring that pupils' entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum is maintained.
- Ensuring that safeguarding and health and safety requirements are met.

Governors' Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Supporting and challenging leaders to ensure that Geography contributes effectively to pupils' wider education.
- Ensuring that statutory curriculum requirements are met.
- Monitoring the impact of Geography provision as part of the school's curriculum monitoring processes.
- Supporting the school's commitment to providing a rich, ambitious and inclusive curriculum.
- Ensuring that appropriate resources are available to support high-quality teaching and learning.
- Understanding how Geography contributes to pupils' personal development, creativity and preparation for life beyond primary school.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required due to:

- Changes in statutory guidance.
- Updates to the National Curriculum.
- Changes in school priorities.
- Recommendations from monitoring activities.

The Geography Subject Leader will be responsible for reviewing and updating this policy in consultation with senior leaders.

