Geography curriculum overview

Years 1 to 6 | Two-year cycle: even years 2026–27, odd years 2027–28

What we want pupils to learn

Geography at Sparken Hill starts with Worksop. Pupils learn where they live, how the town and the land around it have changed, and then use that knowledge to compare it with places across the UK and the wider world. By the end of Year 6 we want pupils to:

- know where the world's continents, oceans, countries and major places are, and what makes each one distinctive;
- understand how physical processes (weather, rivers, plate movement, mountain building) and human activity shape places, and how the two affect each other;
- read and make maps, use atlases, globes, aerial photographs and digital mapping, and use grid references and compass points with confidence;
- collect, record and present evidence from fieldwork in the local area and on visits;
- use the right geographical words when they talk and write about places.

How the curriculum is organised

Classes are taught in three phases: key stage 1 (Years 1 and 2), lower key stage 2 (Years 3 and 4) and upper key stage 2 (Years 5 and 6). Each phase follows a two-year cycle, so a pupil meets every unit once and never repeats one. Geography and history take turns across the half-terms.

Every unit in the consolidated long-term plan names the National Curriculum objectives it covers and lists no more than five "to know" statements. Those statements are what we expect pupils to remember. Medium-term plans then set out the lessons, vocabulary and fieldwork for each unit. In the Foundation Stage, early geography is taught through Understanding the World, so children arrive in Year 1 having talked about their own area, the seasons and places that are different from Worksop.

Geography units by phase

Phase	Even cycle (2026–27)	Odd cycle (2027–28)
Key stage 1 Years 1 and 2	Our Capital City: London (Autumn 2) The Arctic (Spring 1) Our Climate (Summer 1)	Location of Castles (Autumn 1) My Locality: Worksop and the UK (Spring 1) Weather and Climate (Spring 2) Darwin and Cleethorpes (Summer 2)
Lower key stage 2 Years 3 and 4	Remarkable Rainforests (Autumn 1) Stone Age Settlements (Spring 2)	Kenya: Location and Climate (Autumn 1) Kenya: Farming, Biomes and Water (Autumn 2) Local Study: Worksop and Castleton (Summer 1) National Parks and Human Impact (Summer 2)
Upper key stage 2 Years 5 and 6	Local landscape fieldwork at Manton, within the mining unit (Autumn) Extreme Earth: Volcanoes (Spring 1) Extreme Earth: Earthquakes and Recovery (Spring 2) The River Nile (Summer 2)	Biomes: Deserts and Polar Regions (Spring 1) Mountains: The Rockies and Kinder Scout (Spring 2) A European Region: South Aegean v East Midlands (Summer 2)

How pupils build on what they already know

Some ideas come back in every phase on purpose. Climate is the clearest example. In key stage 1 pupils learn the difference between weather and climate and why the Arctic is cold. In lower key stage 2 they explain why the Amazon and Kenya are hot and wet or dry, and in upper key stage 2 they read climate graphs and link climate change to natural disasters.

The local area follows the same pattern. Pupils start with a simple map of the school grounds, move on to OS maps and surveys in Worksop and Castleton, and finish with fieldwork on how mining changed Manton. Because each unit has a short list of "to know" statements, teachers can return to earlier units in recap questions and pupils can see how new learning connects to what they met before.

How we check what pupils have learned

Teachers check pupils' recall against the "to know" statements for each unit, both during the unit and at the end of it. The geography lead looks at books, talks to pupils about what they remember and visits lessons, then uses what they find to adjust the medium-term plans.

Threshold concepts and milestones

We group geography into three threshold concepts. Each one is split into strands, and pupils meet every strand in each phase, with the content getting harder as they move up the school. The milestones below show what pupils should know and be able to do by the end of each phase, and which units teach it.

Strand	Milestone 1 Years 1 and 2	Milestone 2 Years 3 and 4	Milestone 3 Years 5 and 6
Knowledge			
The UK and our local area	Name the four countries of the UK, their capital cities and the seas around them. Know that Worksop is a town in Nottinghamshire and compare it with London. *Units: London; My Locality; Darwin and Cleethorpes*	Locate UK counties and regions and their main physical features. Study Worksop's land use and how the town has changed, and explain why Stone Age people settled at Creswell Crags. *Units: Stone Age Settlements; Local Study; National Parks*	Study the Peak District through Kinder Scout, compare the East Midlands with a European region, and see how coal mining changed the landscape at Manton. *Units: Mining fieldwork; Mountains; A European Region*
The world and its continents	Locate the seven continents, five oceans, the Equator and the North and South Poles. Know which places are hot and which are cold. *Units: The Arctic; Weather and Climate; Darwin and Cleethorpes*	Locate South America and Africa, the Tropics and the hemispheres, and use latitude and longitude to find places. *Units: Remarkable Rainforests; Kenya units*	Locate North America, Europe and Africa, plate boundaries and the Ring of Fire, the polar regions and the countries along the Nile. *Units: Volcanoes; Biomes; Mountains; River Nile*
Understanding			
Physical geography	Tell weather from climate, describe the four seasons and use words such as hill, river, valley, beach, cliff and coast. *Units: Location of Castles; Weather and Climate; Our Climate*	Explain how a country's location decides its climate, name biomes and the layers of a rainforest, and describe rivers and mountains in a National Park. *Units: Remarkable Rainforests; Kenya units; National Parks*	Describe the layers of the Earth, how volcanoes and earthquakes happen, how rivers and mountains form, and read a climate graph. *Units: Extreme Earth; River Nile; Biomes; Mountains*
Human geography	Use words such as town, city, farm, port and harbour. Know how people affect places, from litter on a beach to pollution and warming. *Units: London; Our Climate; Darwin and Cleethorpes*	Describe settlements and land use, compare farming in Kenya and Worksop, and explain why water matters and how trade links us to the rainforest. *Units: Stone Age Settlements; Kenya units; National Parks*	Explain how communities prepare for and recover from disasters, how the Nile shaped farming and settlement, and how tourism affects mountain areas. *Units: Earthquakes; River Nile; Mountains; A European Region*
Places and connections	Compare Worksop with St Lucia, Sisimiut with London and Cleethorpes with Darwin. *Units: My Locality; The Arctic; Darwin and Cleethorpes*	Compare Naro Moru with Worksop, the Yanomami way of life with our own, Creswell Crags with Skara Brae, and Castleton with Worksop. *Units: Kenya units; Rainforests; Stone Age; National Parks*	Compare the Nile with the Trent or Ryton, the Rockies with Kinder Scout, and the South Aegean with the East Midlands. *Units: River Nile; Mountains; A European Region*
Skills and enquiry			
Maps, atlases and globes	Use world maps, atlases and globes, the four compass points, aerial photographs and a simple map with a key. *Units: Location of Castles; My Locality; London*	Use digital and old maps, the eight compass points, four- and six-figure grid references and an OS map to plan a route. *Units: Stone Age Settlements; Local Study; National Parks*	Read contour lines and climate graphs, and use digital mapping, latitude and longitude to locate and compare places. *Units: Mountains; Biomes; Volcanoes; River Nile*
Fieldwork	Study the school grounds and the streets around school, and record the weather. *Units: My Locality; Weather and Climate*	Draw sketch maps of the River Ryton and Chesterfield Canal, and run land-use, litter and traffic surveys in Worksop and Castleton. *Units: Local Study; National Parks (Castleton visit)*	Carry out fieldwork at Manton Pit Top and Manton Villas, recording how the landscape has changed since the pit closed. *Units: Mining unit (with history)*

Curriculum coverage documents

The KS1, LKS2 and UKS2 coverage documents on this page map each National Curriculum objective against the units in both years of the cycle. Together they show that every objective in the key stage 1 and key stage 2 programmes of study is taught by the end of Year 6.