

# A Guide to being a Geographer at HSA School

## Intent: What is it like to be a geographer at HSA school?

### SKILLS

At HSA School we develop our children's skills of Geographical enquiry in line with the National Curriculum programmes of study. Children develop key geographical skills such as observing, exploring, and describing the world around them — from their local area to different countries and environments. As they progress, they learn to use maps, interpret data, compare places, and explain human and physical processes with increasing accuracy and understanding.

### COMMUNITY

At HSA School we enable our children to be in a community as geographers by helping them explore, understand, and appreciate the places where they live. Through fieldwork, local studies, and real-world enquiry, pupils learn how people shape their environment and how environments shape people.

### ENJOYMENT

We want our children to discover how amazing and diverse our world is — from mountains and rivers to people and cultures. When children enjoy geography, they become motivated explorers.

### PURPOSE

We aim to give our children meaningful opportunities to develop all aspects of the geography curriculum, using a range of purposes and cross-curricular opportunities. Every lesson of geography has a purpose – to help children understand how people, places, and environments are connected across the world. Ultimately, we want our pupils to grow as responsible stewards of their planet and their environment.

## How we teach Geography

Children are taught topics in blocked units which enables them to learn from engaging experiences, high quality texts and teacher modelling. We want all our geographers to understand where they come from and be able to use that knowledge to understand the wider world. Each unit has key vocabulary that children learn in context. This vocabulary is built on each year.

Geography is explored through our key themes:

<b>Where in the world?</b>
<b>Understanding our world</b>
<b>People in our world</b>
<b>Diversity in our world</b>
<b>Our changing world</b>
<b>Taking care of our world</b>

These themes are revisited in all units as children progress through the school.

Children are taught to think like a geographer through opportunities for enquiry, revisiting key disciplinary knowledge. Children build on their skills and disciplinary knowledge in these areas:

<b>Using maps, globes and atlases</b>
<b>Recording and communicating</b>
<b>Way finding with compasses and directions</b>
<b>Fieldwork skills including measuring and analysing</b>
<b>Making maps and plans</b>
<b>Observing and asking questions</b>

Children build on a knowledge of their place in the world throughout their time here. In terms of physical geography, they will be able to answer the question 'Where do you come from?' with increasing awareness of the relationship between Hertford and the wider world. In terms of human geography, they will know how their actions affect the world and how to look after the environment they live in.

Enquiry questions are a key part of geography learning, meaning that pupils gain a solid understanding of geographical knowledge and skills by answering these big questions. The questions are designed to be open-ended with no preconceived answers. Examples of these questions include: How can the weather affect us? Where does our food come from? In attempting to answer them, children learn how to collect, interpret and present data using geographical methodologies and make informed decisions by applying their geographical knowledge.

When undertaking fieldwork activities, pupils follow the "enquiry cycle" of "question, observe, measure, record and present". In addition, lessons also incorporate various

teaching strategies such as independent tasks, paired and group work, computer-based problem solving and a range of practical activities.

Children receive high quality feedback during the learning process through verbal input from adults, conferencing and written marking.

All children, including those with additional needs and vulnerabilities, are planned for so that all children achieve their potential. Scaffolds, wordlists and other adaptive tools are available to all. High quality teaching in geography is our first response to challenges, and a wide range of further support is available to help children with SEND and EAL.

## Geography everywhere

At HSA we work hard to promote high standards of geography across the curriculum. We work to do this in a number of ways:

Around the school we showcase and draw attention to geography across the curriculum. This may take the form of class displays of current work and learning. Book corners and library areas have books on relevant topics and other areas of geography for children to explore.

### **Cross-curricular opportunities**

Geography units make links with other curriculum areas, especially History and Science. For example, children learn about Pirates in Year 2 History which links to geographical learning about oceans and seas.

It is expected that children will apply the skills taught in Geography across the curriculum. They learn new ways of applying skills with everyday activities: discussions about exploring environmental issues such as recycling; using maps and directions when planning journeys or navigating their local area.

### **Enrichment Opportunities**

Every opportunity is used to undertake fieldwork. Much of this takes place within the school grounds and in the immediate area around the school thus making fieldwork regular and accessible. As often as possible, pupils explore our local area e.g. walks around Sele Farm or river dipping in Panshanger park. This also supports the school's wider aim of broadening children's cultural experiences.

### **Meeting our geographers where they are**

We meet students where they are by assessing prior understanding to guide next steps; adapting teaching to support and challenge all learners; connecting new content to what pupils already know or care about; valuing every voice and ensuring all children see themselves in geography.

## Implementation: what we do

Geography is taught in blocks. All children are geographers, from our youngest learners.

Each unit follows the basic structure below, with teachers using ongoing AfL, as well as formal, to inform planning to meet the needs of individual classes and children.

Engaged and Curious Learners	Pupils explore geographical concepts through hands-on investigation and outdoor learning. They develop confidence in asking questions, noticing patterns, and seeking answers independently.
Clear Learning Intent and Progression	Lessons have explicit geography objectives, not just topic content. Teachers make clear links to prior learning (“Last term we learned about...”) Each stage builds children to develop deeper understanding and vocabulary, as they move through the curriculum.
Enquiry-Based Learning	Lessons built around geographical questions (“Why did this happen?” “What was it like?”). Pupils handle sources, images, or texts to find answers. Children are encouraged to draw their own conclusions through exploration and discussion.
Use of Evidence	Pupils use and discuss different sources (photographs, data, maps). Through analysing a range of sources, children learn to justify their ideas and form well-informed conclusions about the world around them.
Strong Oracy and Vocabulary	Teachers explicitly teach geographical vocabulary (e.g. storm, hurricane, sandstorm, blizzard). Pupils use precise, subject-specific language when talking and writing. Class discussions and reasoning are valued and encouraged.
Inclusion	All children are supported to access the geography content. Scaffolds, visuals, and word banks are used for accessibility.
Cross-Curricular Links	Links to geography, art, literacy, and science where relevant. Writing tasks (description of a place they have studied; explanation writing- such as how weather changes using subject-specific vocabulary. Use of maps, photographs, or digital resources to enhance context.

High-Quality Outcomes	Books show sequenced learning and accurate use of vocabulary. Evidence of pupil reflection (What did I learn? What surprised me?).
Enjoyment and Relevance	Children enjoy learning geography and can explain why it matters. Lessons include discussion- connecting to pupils' own lives, local surroundings, and real-world issues they can see and understand.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), geography is not taught as a distinct subject but is integrated into the broader area of learning known as Understanding the World. This area helps children make sense of their physical world and their community through exploration, observation, and conversation.

In KS1, children develop knowledge about the world, the United Kingdom and their locality. They should understand basic subject-specific vocabulary relating to human and physical geography and begin to use geographical skills, including first-hand observation, to enhance their locational awareness.

In KS2, children extend their knowledge and understanding beyond the local area to include the United Kingdom and Europe, North and South America. This will include the location and characteristics of a range of the world's most significant human and physical features. They should develop their use of geographical knowledge, understanding and skills to enhance their locational and place knowledge.

Over their years at HSA, children gain a growing understanding of the world around them through progressive, carefully sequenced geographical learning. They build confidence in using maps, observing their environment and climate change, asking thoughtful questions about places and people.

### What does the National Curriculum require us to teach?

The National Curriculum for geography aims to ensure that all pupils:

- develop contextual knowledge of the location of globally significant places – both terrestrial and marine – including their defining physical and human characteristics and how these provide a geographical context for understanding the actions of processes
- understand the processes that give rise to key physical and human geographical features of the world, how these are interdependent and how they bring about spatial variation and change over time
- are competent in the geographical skills needed to:

- collect, analyse and communicate with a range of data gathered through experiences of fieldwork that deepen their understanding of geographical processes
- interpret a range of sources of geographical information, including maps, diagrams, globes, aerial photographs and Geographical Information Systems (GIS)
- communicate geographical information in a variety of ways, including through maps, numerical and quantitative skills and writing at length.

### What do we teach and when?

Year Group	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Nursery YR	<b>I live here!</b>  My house, my road, Sele Farm	<b>I can take care of my part of the world</b>  Recycling, tidying up, planting and composting	<b>What is it like at the beach?</b>  Sand and pebbles, the sea, a day at the seaside
Y1	<b>I live in Hertford, in the United Kingdom</b>  Know the names of our town and local towns	<b>Life in the freezer: the Arctic and Antarctic</b>  Know where the polar regions are and the key differences between them	<b>Would I rather: Hertford or Brighton?</b>  Compare life in a county town with life in a seaside city
Y2	<b>I live in the Hertford, United Kingdom, Europe, The Northern Hemisphere, The World</b>  Know names for different parts of the world	<b>Life by a river: The Lea in Hertford, The Nile in Egypt</b>  Compare the rivers' size.	<b>Mapping my school: what's our geography?</b>  Know names of geographical features and where to find them here
Y3	<b>I live on a globe: geography in 3d</b>  Know how to use a globe or google earth to recognize different features of our round world	<b>Life in the hot dry desert: Compare Central Australia and North American deserts</b>  Know what a desert is  Look at features of deserts in North America and Australia	<b>World cup of mountains: which is best?</b>  Know the names and locations of major mountain ranges: Alps, Himalayas, Rockies, Andes

Y4	<p><b>I live on a restless earth: features of seismic areas</b></p> <p>Know about volcanoes and earthquakes</p>	<p><b>Life in the South American Rainforest: the world's most important biome</b></p> <p>Know the climate and weather in the SA rainforest</p>	<p><b>What do farmers grow in the UK? What do they grow in Italy?</b></p> <p>Know the different types of farming in the UK and Italy</p>
Y5	<p><b>I live on a water world: oceans and the water cycle</b></p> <p>Know the water cycle</p>	<p><b>Life in a city: London and Madrid</b></p> <p>Know what a city is compared to a town or village</p>	<p><b>Where does all my food come from?</b></p> <p>Know about importing food</p>
Y6	<p><b>I live with wild weather: extreme weather events</b></p> <p>Know the Beaufort Scale and extreme wind events including gales and tornados</p>	<p><b>Life in a Megacity: Tokyo and Mexico City</b></p> <p>Know what a megacity is and its features</p>	<p><b>Are we sharing our world equally?</b></p> <p>Use knowledge about global south and climate impacts.</p>

### How do we know children are learning and developing their skills?

Each lesson begins by revisiting prior knowledge. Adapted activities are available for every lesson to ensure that all pupils can access learning, and opportunities to stretch and challenge pupils are also provided. Teachers check that key vocabulary and knowledge is learned and remembered in each lesson.

While teachers assess pupils learning and progress in all lessons, formal assessment takes place through activities such as quizzes and knowledge catchers at the end of each unit.

International Week provides additional opportunities to consolidate prior knowledge and assess what children have remembered as well as develop skills in a new context.

#### Additional needs

For children who experience additional challenge in geography, including EAL difficulties and SEND, support takes place in the lesson. Planning shows that scaffolds and resources, as well as adult support, enable children to access the learning with the whole class.

Additional support for complex needs is provided by the SENCo. For a small number of children, planning and teaching will follow advice from external professionals (e.g. SALTs, OTs) and requirements of EHCPs.

## Outcomes and impact

At HSA, Geography gives pupils a clear understanding of the ways in which places are interdependent and interconnected. Our desired impact for our children is that they make progress in their knowledge and understanding and we see our pupils inspired to learn about Geography and how they can be responsible stewards of the planet and the world they inhabit.

Formative assessment and adaptation are key features of every lesson.

Formal assessments enable teachers to see progress in all aspects of Geography. Observations of children's learning are regularly carried out, and evidence is collected in learning journals and topic books. Children are expected to make progress in developing knowledge, key skills and disciplinary knowledge.

Where children are not working at the expectations of their year group, the appropriate assessments are used so that teachers can fully understand the child's starting points, gaps and progress. The children have an opportunity to talk about and self-assess their own work.

### End Points

We have clear expectations for each end point within school.

By the end of EYFS, children develop a foundational sense of place, noticing features in their immediate environment and beginning to talk about similarities, differences, and simple maps.

By the end of KS1, pupils can identify key physical and human features, use basic geographical vocabulary, and ask simple questions about places. By the end of Lower KS2, they apply map skills more confidently, compare regions, and explain basic geographical processes.

By the end of Upper KS2, pupils use a range of sources to investigate complex geographical concepts, articulate well-reasoned conclusions, and demonstrate a secure understanding of the world and their role within it.

End point	What will children achieve?
End of Reception (GLD)	Reception - children are assessed against the ELG and Y1 teachers are informed of any areas for development.

	<p>Children should be able to understand the layout of their classroom and outside area and find their way independently to different areas of our school. They should be able to get some information from simple maps and be able to map the classroom and outside area. They should know that there are other countries around the world, using maps and globes to support this understanding. They should have undertaken a local walk around Sele Farm and be able to describe what kinds of human and physical features there are nearby.</p>
<b>End of KS1</b>	<p>In Year 2 children are assessed against National Curriculum requirements. Y3 teachers are informed of any significant areas of learning where more development is needed, both for individuals and cohorts. Y3 teachers are made aware of children making good progress, working to broaden and deepen skills or needing further support in specific areas.</p> <p>Children should be able to name the continents and oceans, as well as talk in more detail about the two countries they have focussed on during International Week. They should be able to talk about the weather, know about ways to observe and record it, and make comparisons with hot and cold places. They should be able to talk about the differences between where they live and cities like Tokyo, or the coast. They should be able to make simple maps of the grounds of our school, and the local area. They should be able to talk about Panshanger Park, its physical and human features, and what there is to do there. They should be familiar with using a compass and be able to explain what it does.</p>
<b>End of KS2</b>	<p>Children should know about settlements and the difference between urban and rural places. They should have ideas about why people might choose to live in extreme places such as near volcanoes, or in the Arctic. They should be able to suggest why populations change, and understand the concept of migration, particularly in relation to the UK. In terms of the physical geography of our planet they will be familiar with oceans and rivers and be able to describe how the earth is constructed. They will know how humans have affected the climate and oceans and understand the importance and responsibility they have going forward to protect and preserve it.</p>

Aside from progress shown in internal data, we know that we are achieving our aims when:

- Children can confidently discuss geographical concepts and apply their knowledge to new situations.
- Children demonstrate fieldwork skills during practical activities.
- Children see themselves as geographers and take pleasure in sharing their learning
- Children are able to talk about the difference between human and physical geography
- Children are able to use world maps, atlases and globes to locate countries, continents and geographical regions
- Children are able to talk about the units they have studied in geography, using appropriate geographical vocabulary such as equator, terrain and will ask questions to extend their interest, knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Children have a strong sense of the world and understand how countries differ in terms of basic geography including climate, resources, and people.