



# Whitby School

## Geography

In the broad scope of our curriculum, we take pupils to ends of the earth by teaching them about physical, environmental, and human geography across the globe. However, in our broader ambitions for the subject, Geography does not have an 'end' at Whitby School.

We want children to make connections and see the relevance and complexity of geography when they read about current affairs, when they navigate the world around them, and when they move into their chosen future employment or training. We are all a product of the earth we stand on – and the economy, our society, and our world view is informed by our geography.

To help children to see geography beyond the classroom, we offer a virtual learning environment to help children catch up and revisit classwork but also to offer enrichment and links to how geographical topics taught in the classroom are changing and shaping the world outside of it.

Geography is part of our **World** discipline.

### Our Intent

*"I will endeavour to be a person of great **character** who has the **courage** to realise my **ambitions**."*

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Courage</b> <b>Curious</b></p>	<p>We are passionate about the use of fieldwork to make the subject practical and engaging. Through developing their curiosity and their analytical skills, we want pupils to apply the things they have learned the classroom to physical observable phenomenon</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Character</b> <b>Logical</b></p>	<p>The logical nature of geography means that the connections between topics and the wider world are very important. Human geography, for example, is connected to the demands of the physical environment – and the physical environment is impacted upon by the people who inhabit it.</p> <p>In addition, Geography requires children to apply systematically their learning in other subjects – such as mathematics and science.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ambition</b> <b>Aware</b></p>	<p>Our aim as teacher is to lead children into an awareness of the significance of places in order to build their engagement and enjoyment. To do this, we aim to show children the logical links between Geography and the wider world. We are a product of the land we live on.</p> <p>We also wish to give them an awareness of the world beyond their immediate home so that as they grow they wish to continue to explore it in the classroom and beyond.</p>

### Our teaching:

In Geography pupils will encounter two types of knowledge: **substantive knowledge**, which is the content and information that is to be learned and **disciplinary knowledge**, which teaches children how to think like a geographer.

#### Substantive Knowledge

The national curriculum for Geography categorises the knowledge your child will learn into four broad areas of learning.

**Locational** knowledge: ‘knowing where’s where.’ This is one of the main components of a traditional Geography education. In addition to helping children understand the shape and

orientation of the world around them, it supports all other aspects of learning in Geography. In addition, it allows children to:

- 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.

The uniqueness of different places helps children to explain why the outcome of universal environmental and human processes may vary, and why similar problems may require different strategies in different places.' Locational knowledge is developed by taking pupils on a journey. Over time, pupils learn and remember more locational knowledge. The curriculum is carefully constructed to build on their locational knowledge from KS2 and then introduce more and more through the study of different topics.

**Place** knowledge: place is an ordinary word that is used on a daily basis in most people's lives. However, it has a more specific meaning in the geography classroom. Principally, place is a physical area that can be found on a map and has a personal meaning, attachment or distinct identity. In respect of the curriculum, we consider place to be a specific location on the earth's surface, or in the atmosphere, where a particular physical or human process took place. For some processes, the particular time it occurred is also relevant.

**Environmental, physical and human** geography: Knowing why a phenomenon occurs physically and the impacts it has on humans and the environment that it has are at the core of the discipline. Human and physical geography are therefore covered in a balanced and methodical way at Whitby School. This allows them to:

- describe their own and others' environments
- recognise the similarities and differences between contrasting environments
- understand important processes and changes in the world around them. These will include changes to the land, water, air, people, and wildlife.

The human and physical aspects of Geography are sequenced carefully to allow them to appreciate the interplay between them. For example, most of the physical processes, and many human processes too, are driven by the atmospheric conditions (the weather). So, pupils first need to secure an understanding of components such as air pressure, the water cycle and longitude. With this knowledge, pupils have a strong basis to understand why certain biomes exist and also how they are changing. It also contributes towards pupils' understanding of climate change and the effects, both physical and human, that are happening in different locations, such as changes to agricultural practices and rising sea levels.

**Geographical skills and fieldwork:** Geographical skills that allow pupils to collect, represent and interpret information is an important dimension of our curriculum. These experiences give pupils ‘a critical insight into the nature of geographical knowledge’.

### Disciplinary Knowledge

Your child will consider how geographical knowledge originates and is revised. It is through disciplinary knowledge that pupils learn the practices of geographers. This involves:

- Using what they know from one context in another
- Thinking about alternative futures
- Considering wider influences on decisions that need to be made
- Giving pupils the knowledge they need
- Giving some insight into the ways geographers work
- Allowing pupils to see that geography is a dynamic subject where thinking and viewpoints change.

This means, for example, that pupils are able to combine their geographical knowledge in powerful ways to understand the broader world around them. For example, they may consider the impact of a flood or volcanic eruption on people living in the area and their response. Furthermore, it makes sense to teach development before tectonics, since exploration of responses to a tectonic event in a high-income country compared to that in a low-income country requires a foundation knowledge about varying economic development to appreciate the nuances.

Geographers ask questions such as ‘where is this place?’, ‘why is it here and not there?’, ‘what is it like?’ and ‘how did it get like this?’ It is important that the curriculum gives pupils the knowledge they need to ask these geographical questions and learn how geographers reach their answers. In this way, we seek to create the geographers of tomorrow.

### Our curriculum

We have created a curriculum which is appropriately sequenced to enable pupils to revisit and remember key knowledge. This is a curriculum that begins with a pupil’s personal geographies but takes them beyond through powerful geographical knowledge. It includes:

- big geographical questions and enquiry
- why geography matters to the lives of our pupils in the 21st Century
- big geographical concepts – place, space, scale, cultural awareness and diversity, interdependence, environmental impact, sustainable development, human processes, physical processes, geographical skills.

- key concepts and terminology (the “Tier 3 vocabulary”) to allow children to think, write and speak geographically
- a clear progression framework that shows pupils how they become better geographers (make progress) in knowledge, skills (including fieldwork) and understanding of geography

The curriculum has been sequenced to account for prior knowledge and craft readiness. We want pupils to be able to make progress by increasingly identifying links in their geographical studies. We therefore carefully consider the order of all topics such that these “linked learning” opportunities are maximised. This is a key part of thinking like a geographer. For example, when teaching the regional geography topics we depend upon the pupils having prior knowledge of many of the geographical issues that we explore in the context of the region in question. We are also mindful of the fact that some pupils seem to like the more traditionally ‘physical’ topics rather than ‘human’ topics, and vice versa. Whilst trying to ensure that all units have elements of both these parts of geography we also alternate physical and human units to ensure that all pupils remain engaged.

## Why do we sequence the curriculum in this way?

In mapping progression over the course of a programme of study, our curriculum aims to set out the substantive knowledge that pupils need to learn in a connected way. Over time, curricular goals should be increasingly challenging.

- the curriculum organises and repeats substantive and disciplinary knowledge in ways that show pupils how each component fits together and how each composite idea fits with others
- the prior content that pupils have remembered allows them to understand the conditions, processes and interactions that explain geographical features, distribution patterns and changes over time and space.

## How families can support

Parents and carers can help by encouraging pupils to take an active interest in the world around them. Our Google classroom contains regularly updated links to videos and articles about current affairs. This allows pupils to put their learning into a wider context and enables them to add extra details and comparisons into their work.

Additionally, supporting pupils with their homework is greatly appreciated and all of our resources are accessible through our class portal. If children are stuck or need further support, please encourage them to speak to their teacher.