

# GEOGRAPHY CURRICULUM DESIGN

"THE STUDY OF GEOGRAPHY IS ABOUT MORE THAN JUST MEMORISING PLACES ON A MAP. IT'S ABOUT UNDERSTANDING THE COMPLEXITY OF OUR WORLD."  
- BARACK OBAMA



## KNOWING



A sense of place or belonging is an interesting concept for our pupils at Leeming. Whereas in most other schools, children will usually have grown up in one or maybe two locations, our pupils have often lived in many communities, counties and even countries by the time they arrive at our school. This provides them with a wonderful range of experiences from which we can draw and build on in our Geography learning – comparing, contrasting and studying these locations. Our curriculum helps pupils root their experiences in a sense of scale by studying geography at a local, regional and global level. We help children to appreciate the uniqueness of Geography as a mixed science, reflecting both social and natural sciences and the interplay between these as they look at how places change over time. We want to help pupils to understand and engage with features of their immediate locality, as well as developing curiosity and excitement about other places around the country and the globe.

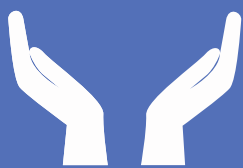
The knowledge underpinning our Geography curriculum is based around the four substantive domains of Locational Knowledge; Place Knowledge; Human and Physical Geography; and Geographical Skills including Fieldwork. These domains cover the various aspects of the national curriculum, and allow us to provide pupils with a clear progression in their learning – from basic oral or pictorial descriptions of locations in EYFS to utilising six-figure grid references and complex symbols by Y6. Similarly, pupils learn about comparing and contrasting locations both within and beyond Europe, covering both natural and human features of their landscapes. In so doing, pupils learn why changes occur to environments and the impact such changes can have. Pupils are exposed to a range of digital and paper-based maps to gain familiarity with decoding these. By regularly returning to this core learning, they become totally fluent in their ability to use maps, thus reducing cognitive load to allow them to develop other geographical concepts. Throughout the curriculum, the acquisition of key geographical vocabulary and terminology is fundamental to progression.

Alongside this substantive knowledge, children are equipped with the disciplinary knowledge of geography. It is this disciplinary knowledge – of how to ask questions, explore connections between places, make observations or consider implications – that underpins the idea of our pupils 'becoming geographers'. Pupils are encouraged to develop this disciplinary knowledge by engaging with real issues and environments – for example undertaking fieldwork in our own locality or further afield and asking questions about why things are as they appear, or how they might be changing in response to different activities.

This brings theoretical classroom learning into the real outdoor environment. We help children to see how geographers can shape our understanding of the world we live in, and the ways our behaviour affects it. By introducing children to the ideas of human impact, climate zones, trade links etc., they can begin to think critically about their choices and activities. As we consider such matters, we try to avoid stereotypes and misconceptions – no geographer would present a single city as representative of a whole country, or suggest that every mountain looks like Everest – similarly, we would seek to help children understand whether what they are studying is a snap-shot of a feature or location or something that is representative of a wider area or concept.

Making links to pupils' lived experience helps us to engage children's hearts in geography. We do this wherever possible – drawing on their diverse backgrounds in order to develop their thinking. Geography is a subject of huge excitement – whether cracking the code of a map or encountering, in the reality of a riverbank or rock face, the evidence of a theoretical concept such as erosion – it's full of moments of discovery. It is also a subject for reflection, and we seek to enable pupils to step back and engage their minds and their hearts as they evaluate human impact – for instance through climate change, deforestation or land use. Ultimately, we want pupils to believe that the choices they make really matter, and to be inspired to explore the world around them.

## BECOMING



## FEELING

