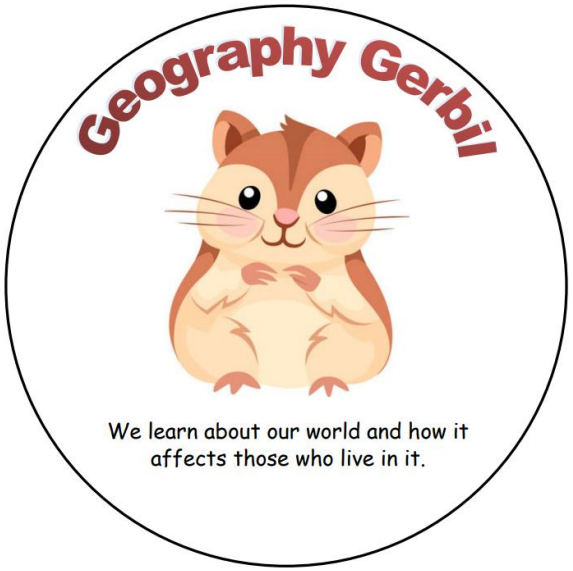

Onslow Infant School

Geography Knowledge & Skills

Reception—Year 2

Curriculum Intent

At Onslow Infant School, our Key Stage 1 geography curriculum inspires curiosity about the world and its diverse people, rooted in our values of Friendship, Respect, Positivity, Responsibility, Honesty, and Confidence. We focus on building foundational knowledge of local and global environments through enquiry, map work, and observation, linking new ideas to existing knowledge. The curriculum is carefully sequenced to support progression and fluency in key concepts and vocabulary, aligned with EYFS Development Matters.

Geography fosters critical thinking, respect for diversity, and environmental responsibility, nurturing confident learners ready for future education and global citizenship.

This curriculum design is appropriate for Onslow Infant School's diverse cohort, including 23% EAL learners and 10% SEND pupils, as it uses concrete, experiential learning and language-rich contexts to make geography accessible to all. It aligns with the school's commitment to ensuring geography contributes to broadening children's horizons and developing their understanding of the wider world.

Curriculum Implementation

The curriculum places a strong emphasis on the progressive development of geographical skills and knowledge. Subject-specific vocabulary is introduced deliberately and linked to topics, enabling children to build a concrete and meaningful understanding of geographical language. This scaffolding supports children's ability to use geographical terms confidently both verbally and in their recorded work, fostering deeper comprehension and communication skills.

Geographical enquiry is central to the curriculum, with fieldwork embedded as a key component. Children engage in enquiry-based learning activities within the school grounds, the local environment, and through planned visits further afield, including weekly woodland sessions. These experiences stimulate curiosity and encourage children to ask questions about the world around them, supporting their observational and investigative skills in real-world contexts. By embedding geography within a play-based and enquiry-led framework, the curriculum complements the OPAL principles that underpin the school's approach to learning and play. This ensures that children's natural curiosity is harnessed in a joyful and engaging way.

Curriculum Impact

By the end of KS1, Children have experienced geography through direct engagement with their local environment and beyond, fostering a lifelong curiosity and respect for the natural and human world.

The focus on vocabulary and enquiry-based learning directly supports the school's aim to improve the quality of writing and reading outcomes across the school.

Assessment is based on observation, pupil voice and evidence in books. We encourage the children to talk - in pairs, small groups or through class discussion, to share ideas and reflections. Summative and formative assessments are recorded on Tapestry, often with photographs of children's products in different stages of the design and making process. Data is analysed and acted upon by subject leaders and staff to ensure progress and development for all. Monitoring includes work scrutiny, learning walks and pupil interviews.

The curriculum goes beyond the National Curriculum by embedding enquiry, vocabulary development, and meaningful cross-curricular links. This prepares pupils well for future learning stages and fosters lifelong skills of observation, critical thinking, and respect for diverse environments and communities.

Contents

Reception

- including continuous provision

Year 1

- continuous provision

KS1

- Geographical Skills and Field Work - *taught in isolated lessons*
- Locational Knowledge *and* Geographical Skills
- Human and Physical Geography *and* Geographical Skills

Year 2

- Place Knowledge *and* Geographical Skills

**In curriculum design, knowledge and skills are not interchangeable in the sense that they are directly synonymous, but rather interconnected and interdependent. Knowledge serves as the foundation for developing skills, while skills require knowledge*

Reception

Content	Pupils will learn		Retrieval (Last lesson, unit, year)	Key Vocabulary
	Knowledge	**Skills**		
What is a globe?	• Know the subject character Geography Gerbil. • Understand that a globe is a model of the Earth. • Know that they live in the United Kingdom	• Turn the globe to explore it. • With support from an adult, use a globe to find the UK and to find countries they know.	*Pre-unit questioning: what do they know already?*	*Geography, globe, Earth, United Kingdom,*
Land and water on a globe.	• A globe shows us where land and water is on our planet. • Water is mostly seas and oceans. • People live on land.	• Identify areas of land (green) and water (blue) on a globe.	Geography Gerbil What is a globe?	*Land, water, sea, ocean*
What is a map?	• Understand that a map is a drawing of a real place. • Recognise that maps can show us where familiar places are, such as home, school, and the local area.	• Identify simple features on a map of the school. • Draw a simple map of the classroom or playground. *(Woodland School)*	Geography Gerbil What colour is the sea on a map?	*Map, place, features*
How is a beach different to where we live in Guildford?	• To know Guildford is a town and not near the sea. • Understand that a beach is a place with sand, water, and sometimes rocks, near the sea.	• Talk about what is the same and what is different between the beach and their local area in Guildford.	Geography Gerbil What is a map?	*Beach, town, Guildford, same / different*

Reception skills and knowledge developed through continuous provision across the year:

- Investigation area: globe, atlas, maps etc.
- Builders tray activities e.g. setting up a town scene, driving cars around roads, following routes and identifying features (traffic lights, crossings). Using these to understand a 'birds eye view'.
- Using high quality small world toys e.g. buildings, plants, road signs, fences, vehicles, animals and people.
- Construction: building models of buildings and other geographical features, for example bridges and mountains.
- Non-fiction books and stories, including traditional tales, related to the world – local and further away. Stories about looking after our planet.
- Family photos displayed all year round – discussing where we live.
- Songs related to our world.
- Woodland school lessons – observing the world around us, giving and receiving positional language to locate things on the school site.
- Drawing and painting their home and the sea.
- Using senses to explore and describe the world around them (including during Big Talk lessons).
- Visits from people from other cultures.
- Researching facts about the world using iPads and computers.
- Tour of the school – learning where things are located.
- Positional language games e.g. using the small world to find and describe where the octopus is.
- Exploring photos and pictures of different places around the world: using language to describe similarities and differences.
- Use Bee Bots on a town map to move along a route.
- Sharing their adventures and travels outside of school by posting photos on Tapestry and telling their class about them.
- Role play – pretend to travel to different places around the world, use props to encourage imaginative play e.g. sunglasses, flip flops, beach towels.
- Writing opportunities: drawing maps, writing instructions to follow a route, labelling places etc.
- Talk about their journey to and from school using small world props.

Outside area

- Exploring the world around them and understanding where things are located. Using magnifying glasses to investigate plants and minibeasts.
- Enhanced provision – drawing maps of our outside areas and placing fixed and movable objects in the correct space.
- Discussing changes in seasons including weather (including how we dress to keep warm/cool).
- Seasonal changes e.g. plants and how we look after them.
- Exploring the local area through trips to the park, arboretum etc.
- Taking part in treasure hunts using simple maps and directional instructions.

Year 1 skills and knowledge developed through continuous provision across the year:

Geographical Skills and Fieldwork

- Tuff tray exploring globes, atlases, maps and photographs to locate places and identify geographical features.
- Map-making activities
- Using positional and directional language to describe routes and locations, including left, right, forwards, backwards, near and far.
- Fieldwork activities around the school grounds e.g. observing, collecting and recording information about the local environment.
- Non-fiction books, atlases and digital resources to research places, environments and geographical features.

Locational Knowledge and Geographical Skills

- Exploring maps and globes to locate the United Kingdom and its surrounding seas.
- Learning about the four countries of the UK and locating their capital cities using maps and atlases.
- Travel and exploration role play e.g. creating travel agents, airports, explorers and holiday shops to explore different locations around the world.
- Using stories, photographs and videos from around the world to compare places and develop an understanding of different communities.
- Songs, rhymes and stories linked to places around the world to develop geographical vocabulary.
- Exploring different cultures and communities through visits, artefacts and shared experiences.
- Using globes and maps during child-led play to identify countries, continents and oceans.

Human and Physical Geography and Geographical Skills

- Tuff tray activities. creating different environments and landscapes such as towns, villages, forests, beaches and mountains.
- Using high quality small world toys e.g. creating and comparing urban, rural, coastal and woodland environments.
- Exploring human and physical features through photographs, maps, stories and real-life experiences.
- Drawing, painting and modelling different environments including beaches, forests, towns and the local area.
- Exploring natural materials and habitats through outdoor learning and woodland school sessions.
- Using senses to explore and describe environments including sounds, textures, smells and changes in the natural world.
- Enhanced provision linked to geographical themes e.g. creating weather stations, maps, landscapes and environmental investigations.
- Discussing seasonal changes and weather patterns including how environments change throughout the year.
- Observing changes in plants, animals and habitats across the seasons.
- Exploring how humans affect and care for the environment through activities linked to recycling, conservation and sustainability.

Year 1: Geographical skills and field work

Content	Pupils will learn		Retrieval (Last lesson, unit, year)	Key Vocabulary
	Knowledge	**Skills**		
What are Atlases?	• That an atlas is a book of maps. • That places are shown on a map.	• Use an atlas to find the UK	What does Geography Gerbil help us to learn? What is a globe?	*Atlas*
What are the 4 main compass directions?	• Know the four main compass directions: north, south, east, west • Know that north south east and west are compass directions often shown on a map.	• Begin to use simple compass directions (North, South, East, West) to describe the movement on a map or globe.	What is an atlas and how would you use it?	*North south east west, compass*
Where are the poles?	• That a globe is different to an atlas but shows the same information differently. • That the north pole and South pole can be found at opposite ends of the earth.	• Use a globe to locate the north pole and south pole	Which direction is the compass pointing compass image)	*North Pole, South Pole*
How to use a map *(Woodland School)*	• Know that maps can be turned around to help find where you are. • Know that maps show physical features.	• Observe the human features of the school grounds and use these observations to identify their position on a map. • Describe their position in relation to human features e.g. near, far	What is your favourite place in school.	*Near, far*

Year 2: Geographical skills and field work

Content	Pupils will learn		Retrieval (Last lesson, unit, year)	Key Vocabulary
	Knowledge	**Skills**		
What are the human features of our school? *(Woodland School)*	• Know that maps show human features from above.	• Observe the human features of the school site. • Draw a simple map of the school buildings in relation to each other. • Observe the human features (including the location of planted trees) and add these to their map.	Describe how your family find a new place like a new friend's house or a holiday location. Find where you are on the map of the school grounds.	
What is an aerial photograph?	• Know that an aerial photograph is a photograph taken from above, often from an aeroplane or drone. • Recognise that aerial photographs show the world from a different perspective compared to ground-level views.	• Observe and describe what they can see in an aerial photograph • Identify simple physical and human features in an aerial photograph, such as buildings, roads, fields, and rivers • Use aerial photographs to locate and identify the position of physical and human features in the local area.	What are the 4 directions on this compass?	*Aerial photograph, bird's eye view.*
I can use compass directions.	• Understand that compass points can be used to describe direction of travel.	• Use simple compass directions to give and follow a route on the school grounds.	If we travelled North as far as we could go, where would we go?	*Route, compass points*
I can follow a route using a simple map *(Woodland School)*	• Know that maps can be used to navigate a route.	• Follow a route on a simple map to find a marked location.		*navigate*
Draw a map of the route	• Know that a simple map can be drawn from close observation of these features.	• Draw a simple map of the route taken. • Devise a simple key for roads, paths, houses, buildings and green spaces including trees • Describe the route taken using direction language e.g. turn right, left,	Describe your journey to school this morning.	*Village, key*

Year 1: Locational knowledge *and* Geographical Skills

Content	Pupils will learn		Retrieval (Last lesson, unit, year)	Key Vocabulary
	Locational Knowledge	**Geographical Skills**		
The United Kingdom!	• Know the outline of the UK to identify it on a map. • Recognise that the United Kingdom is an island surrounded by seas (the English Channel, Irish Sea, North Sea, and Atlantic Ocean).	• Use simple maps, globes, and atlases to locate the UK. • Recognise physical features of the UK, such as coastlines and major rivers.	Geography Gerbil What does a globe show?	*UK, coastline, English Channel, Irish Sea, North Sea, and Atlantic Ocean*
Where is England?	• Know that England is one of four countries in the UK. • Know where England is on a UK map. • Know that the Capital city of England is London, • Know the names of some famous landmarks of England e.g. Stonehenge, Windsor Castle, Angel of the North, Lake District. • Know that the English Channel is between England and France.	• Locate England on a map of the UK • Use a simple key to find features of England e.g. coastline, country borders, cities	What countries in the world can you name?	*Key, landmark, river capital city, London, cities, south, border, English Channel*
Where is Wales?	• Know where Wales is on a UK map. • Know that the capital city of Wales is Cardiff • Name some landmarks in Wales. E.g Caernarfon castles, Mount Snowdon. • Name some characteristics of Wales. E.g hills and valleys • Know that the Irish Sea is between Wales and Northern Ireland	• Locate Wales on a map of the UK to the west of England • Use a simple key to find physical features of Wales, e.g. coastline, hills, country borders. • Use a simple key to find human features on a map of Wales including farms, towns, villages, ports, city	How many countries are in the UK? Name 3 features of England on a map.	*Wales, landscape, Cardiff, hills, valleys, farms, port*
Where is Scotland?	• Know where Scotland is on a UK map. • Know that the Capital city of Scotland is Edinburgh • Name of some characteristics of Scotland e.g. mountains and Lochs. • Name famous landmarks in Scotland e.g. Edinburgh Castle, Loch Ness, Ben Nevis • Know that the North Sea surrounds the east coast of Scotland	• Locate Scotland on a map of the UK to the north of England • Use a simple key to find physical features of Scotland, such as coastline, mountains, Lochs, islands	What is a capital city? What is the capital city of Wales / England?	*Scotland, Edinburgh, mountain*

Where is Northern Ireland?	• Know where Northern Ireland is on a UK map. • Know that the capital city of Northern Ireland is Belfast • Name some characteristics of Northern Ireland e.g. Mountains and Lochs, border with Republic of Ireland, an island. • Name some famous landmarks e.g. the Giant's Causeway • Know that the Atlantic Ocean is off the west coast of Northern Ireland.	• Locate Northern Ireland on a map of the UK • Use simple maps, globes, and atlases to locate the four countries and capital cities of the UK. • Use a simple key to find human features on a map of Northern Ireland including farms, towns, villages, ports, city	Name 3 features of Scotland. Name a sea off the coast of the UK.	*Northern Ireland Belfast, Atlantic Ocean*

Year 2: Locational knowledge *and* Geographical Skills

Content	Pupils will learn		Retrieval (Last lesson, unit, year)	Key Vocabulary
	Locational Knowledge	**Geographical Skills**		
Which parts of London were affected by the Great Fire in 1666?	• Know the location of London on a map of the UK	• On a map identify the location of the fire in relation to recognisable landmarks and basic human and physical features. • Identify some of the London landmarks that were affected by the great fire of London (e.g. River Thames, St Paul's Cathedral). • Devise a simple key to show how the fire spread.	Name the 4 capital cities in the UK.	*location*
Locate the seven continents on a map.	• Know that the Earth has seven continents. • A continent is made up of many countries in the same area of the globe. • Recognise that the UK is part of Europe and locate it on a map of Europe.	• Locate the continent they live in on a map of the world in an atlas and on a globe. • Say the name of each continent. • Use maps, globes, and atlases to locate the 7 continents of the world.	Name the 4 countries in the United Kingdom and one fact about each.	*Continent, Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Europe, Australia (Oceania)*
What are the five oceans called and where are they located?	• Know that the Earth has five oceans. • Know the name of each ocean. • Know the location of each ocean to identify it on a map.	• Use maps, globes, and atlases to locate the five oceans. • Describe the position of oceans on a globe in relation to the south, north, the	Find the north and south poles on globe.	*Pacific, Indian, Southern, Arctic, Atlantic*

Year 1: Human and Physical geography

Content	Pupils will learn		Retrieval (Last lesson, unit, year)	Key Vocabulary
	Knowledge	**Skills**		
What is it like in the Arctic?	• the Arctic is a region at the northernmost part of the Earth. • there are extremely cold places on Earth. • the Arctic is a cold, snowy, and icy environment. • the Arctic Sea freezes in the winter and the daily temperature is much lower than the UK. • key physical features of the Arctic include glaciers, icebergs, frozen ocean • Understand that humans have adapted to live in very cold places.	• Locate the Arctic on a globe, in an atlas and on a map. • Begin to compare the Arctic to the UK.	What landmarks are in Wales? Describe where you live. How do you travel to school?	*Arctic region, polar, North pole*
What is it like in Antarctica?	• Antarctica is opposite to the Arctic • no one lives there permanently • the ocean surrounding the coast of Antarctica freezes in the winter. • there are mountains and volcanoes. • Antarctica is the coldest and windiest place on Earth • key physical features of the Antarctica's include landscape can be rocky, mountainous, coastal, icebergs.	• Locate Antarctica on a map or globe. • Use a simple key to identify features e.g. coast, South Pole, ocean, desert, very little vegetation.	What country is Cardiff in? Why is the sea ice melting?	*Desert, vegetation*
Where is the Equator?	• there is an invisible line that goes around the Earth called the equator. • On a map, the Equator is shown as a line • On a globe the Equator is a line around the middle. • The equator is very far away from the north and south pole.	• Use simple maps, globes, and atlases to locate the equator.	What is the name of the areas surrounding the North Pole? What is the name of this country (show shape of Scotland)	*equator*
What is it like near the equator?	• Know that a key is a way of identifying a feature such as deserts being orange and rainforests green. • It is hot near the equator	• Describe the weather near the equator • Use a simple key to identify physical features of hot places (deserts, mountains)	Why do we describe the UK as an island? True or False. The	

		• Compare and contrast the physical and human features of hot and cold places.	Antarctica is at the top of a globe	
Identify seasonal and daily weather patterns in the UK (*throughout the year)*	• The UK has 4 seasons each year. • the weather changes in each season.	• Observe the daily weather throughout the year (*linked to science)*	What are the 4 seasons? What was the weather like yesterday? Which season is your birthday in?	
What is a physical feature and what is a human feature?	• A human feature is something built or changed by people. • A physical feature is something here without people.	• Sort photographs of human and physical geographic features in the KS1 curriculum • Identify human features of the UK coastline including ports, harbours, shops, towns, villages. • Identify physical features of the UK coastline including beaches, sea, cliffs, vegetation.	Name 3 physical landmarks in the United kingdom What is the line called that goes around the centre of the Earth separating north and South.	*cliff, port, harbour, village, town*

Year 2: Place knowledge *and* Geographical Skills

Content	Pupils will learn		Retrieval (Last lesson, unit, year)	Key Vocabulary
	Place Knowledge	**Geographical Skills**		
Where is Fiji?	• Know there is a country called Fiji in Australasia. • Know that places around the world will have things the same and different to the country they live in.	• Identify Fiji on a map and describe its key physical features e.g. Island, vegetation, mountains, volcano, coast.	Describe the key physical features of the UK	*Non-European*
What are the physical and human features of the country?	• Understand that Fiji has both human and physical features. • Understand how the physical features of a country can influence the types of human activity.	• Use aerial photographs to discover more about the physical and human features of a non-European country. • Record the human features • Record the physical features	Name 5 oceans What are the key human features of an English seaside?	
Compare Viti Levu, Fiji to Guildford, Surrey	• Discuss the human and physical geography of the Viti Levu, Fiji with Guildford.	• Understand and record the similarities and differences of the two places.	Name 5 physical features of your non-European country.	