Geography at Laira Green Primary School

Our Vision for Geography

At Laira Green Primary School, we provide a high-quality, carefully sequenced Geography curriculum that equips children with the knowledge, skills and understanding to become confident, curious and independent geographers. We aim to inspire a lifelong interest in geography, helping children appreciate the diversity of our world and understand the relationships between people, places and environments.

Our curriculum aligns with the National Curriculum for Geography, developing locational and place knowledge, human and physical geography, geographical skills and fieldwork. We balance substantive knowledge, including geographical facts, concepts and processes, with the disciplinary knowledge needed to investigate, interpret and communicate like a geographer.

Through engaging, practical and challenging experiences, children learn to ask meaningful questions, identify patterns, compare places, explore cause and effect and use geographical evidence to support their conclusions. We encourage an appreciation of different cultures and environments, alongside an understanding of sustainability and our responsibility to care for the planet.

Curriculum Organisation and Progression

Geography is taught through distinct, bi-termly topics, carefully sequenced from Early Years to Year Six. Learning builds systematically on prior knowledge, with regular retrieval activities and flashbacks helping children strengthen understanding, address misconceptions and retain essential geographical knowledge.

Complex concepts are broken into manageable components, enabling children to develop secure foundations before making connections and applying their knowledge in increasingly challenging contexts.

Progression is carefully planned across year groups. For example, in Year Three, children explore settlements and their human and physical features through *Villages, Towns and Cities*. This understanding develops in Year Four through *Human Migration*, where children investigate why people move and how resources influence communities. Learning about natural resources supports the study of energy and sustainability in Year Five, while Year Six builds on these foundations through more complex issues, including population distribution and globalisation.

These connections enable children to deepen their geographical understanding and confidently apply their knowledge to unfamiliar places, situations and questions.

Early Years Foundation Stage

In Early Years, geography is introduced through a thematic, play-based approach that encourages children to explore, observe and understand their immediate surroundings and the wider world. Learning supports *Understanding the World*, *Communication and Language* and *Personal, Social and Emotional Development*.

Throughout Reception, children develop early geographical knowledge through engaging themes and first-hand experiences. In *Marvellous Me*, they explore their school and local environment, developing a sense of place. *Underwater Explorers* introduces oceans and marine environments, while *Ahoy M' Hearties* develops positional language, direction and simple mapping skills.

Through *Dinosaur Detectives*, children explore different landscapes and how environments change over time. In *African Adventure*, they learn about Kenya and compare its weather, landscapes, homes and communities with Britain. Finally, *Let's Get Growing* encourages children to observe seasonal changes and explore connections between living things and their environments.

Across Reception, children develop geographical enquiry skills through observation, questioning, comparison, exploration and simple mapping. Opportunities to investigate the school grounds and local area provide meaningful first-hand experiences. These activities support Development Matters guidance and the Early Learning Goals, particularly *People, Culture and Communities* and *The Natural World*, preparing children for geographical learning in Year One.

Teaching and Learning in Geography

Our geography lessons combine explicit teaching with practical experiences, discussion and geographical enquiry. Teachers introduce concepts through clear explanations, maps, photographs, diagrams, geographical data and real-life examples, helping children connect their learning to the world around them.

Lessons provide regular opportunities to retrieve prior knowledge, develop subject-specific vocabulary and apply understanding in new contexts. Children are encouraged to think critically, recognise patterns, compare places, consider different perspectives and explain their reasoning using geographical evidence.

Our curriculum recognises the close relationship between human and physical geography. For example, in Year Three, children explore the processes that cause mountains, volcanoes and earthquakes while considering their impact on communities and why people choose to live in areas affected by natural hazards.

Independent and collaborative activities develop communication, problem-solving and analytical skills. Links with mathematics support children in interpreting graphs, measuring distances, understanding scale, collecting data and identifying geographical patterns.

Geographical Enquiry and Fieldwork

Geographical enquiry and fieldwork are central to our curriculum. We believe children develop a deeper understanding of geography through first-hand investigations and opportunities to work as geographers.

Fieldwork progresses from observing and exploring familiar surroundings in Reception to independently collecting, presenting, analysing and evaluating geographical information in Key Stage Two.

As children progress, they develop the ability to:

- **Ask geographical questions:** Investigate places, people, environments and geographical processes.
- **Observe and collect data:** Use surveys, measurements, observations and field sketches to gather first-hand evidence.
- **Use maps and geographical resources:** Interpret and create maps using atlases, globes, aerial photographs and digital mapping tools, developing understanding of direction, scale, symbols and grid references.
- **Present and analyse information:** Organise data using maps, graphs, tables and diagrams to identify patterns and relationships.
- **Draw conclusions and evaluate evidence:** Explain findings, justify conclusions and consider the reliability and limitations of geographical evidence.

Mapping provides a clear example of progression. In Early Years, children create simple treasure maps and explore positional language. In Key Stage One, *Marvellous Mapping* develops understanding of direction, location and scale. By Year Six, children use Ordnance Survey maps and six-figure grid references to locate places and interpret detailed geographical information.

Throughout their learning, children become increasingly confident in selecting appropriate methods, communicating findings and evaluating their investigations.

Geography Beyond the Classroom

We recognise that meaningful geographical learning extends beyond the classroom. Our school grounds, local community and wider environment provide valuable opportunities for children to investigate geographical concepts and apply their knowledge in real-world contexts.

Plymouth plays an important role in our geography curriculum, helping children develop a strong sense of place and understand connections between their local environment and wider geographical processes.

Throughout Key Stage Two, children investigate Plymouth from different geographical perspectives. In Year Four, they explore human migration and why people have moved to the city over time. In Year Five, they investigate local biomes and ecosystems, while Year Six examines population patterns and the influence of globalisation on Plymouth and its communities.

These carefully planned experiences build on earlier learning, strengthening geographical enquiry and fieldwork skills while deepening children's understanding of their local area.

Educational visits and practical investigations further enrich learning, allowing children to experience different landscapes, investigate geographical features and explore the relationship between human activity and the natural world.

By connecting classroom learning with first-hand experiences, we help children understand the relevance of geography in everyday life and their place within an interconnected world.

At Laira Green Primary School, Our Children Will:

- Develop curiosity, enthusiasm and a lasting interest in geography.
- Retain and apply geographical knowledge, making connections between people, places, environments and processes.
- Develop secure locational and place knowledge, recognising similarities and differences at local, national and global scales.
- Understand key human and physical geographical processes and how they interact to shape our world.
- Ask meaningful questions, investigate geographical issues and use evidence to explain their findings.
- Communicate confidently using accurate geographical vocabulary.
- Interpret and create maps using increasingly sophisticated geographical skills and resources.
- Plan and carry out fieldwork, collecting, presenting and analysing geographical data.
- Evaluate evidence, draw informed conclusions and appreciate different geographical perspectives.
- Recognise cultural diversity, environmental responsibility and the importance of sustainability.
- Develop independence, resilience, critical thinking and collaborative skills.
- Leave primary school as confident, knowledgeable and inspired geographers, equipped for future learning and a lifelong curiosity about the world.