

Primary Geography Skills Progression Matrix (Year 1 - Year 6)

Geographical skill	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Use maps, atlases, globes and digital mapping	Uses simple maps, atlases and globes to find the UK, its four countries, capitals and surrounding seas.	Uses world maps, atlases and globes to locate continents, oceans, the Equator, the poles and named places.	Uses atlases, OS maps and digital mapping to locate UK regions, counties and cities and European countries and capitals.	Uses atlases and digital maps to locate global rainforests, the Equator, the tropics and the Amazon region; interprets local land-use maps.	Selects maps, atlases and aerial images to locate rivers, reservoirs, mountain ranges, volcanoes and earthquake zones.	Selects and combines maps and atlases to investigate climate zones, biomes, resources, trade routes and global connections.
Use compass directions and grid references	Uses near, far, left and right to describe the position of familiar features and routes.	Uses North, South, East and West to describe locations and follow simple routes in the local area.	Uses four-figure grid references and map grid lines to locate features on an OS map.	Uses the eight points of a compass with OS symbols to describe the location of features around Bartley Green.	Uses six-figure grid references to locate features accurately and applies compass directions during fieldwork.	Applies prior compass and grid-reference knowledge when an enquiry requires precise location and direction.
Interpret aerial photographs, plans and OS maps	Recognises the school and familiar landmarks in aerial photographs and matches views from above to real places.	Identifies local landmarks and human and physical features in aerial photographs of Bartley Green.	Reads OS symbols and compares paper maps, satellite views and digital maps of the UK and local area.	Interprets OS and land-use maps to identify settlement features, functions and patterns.	Uses aerial photographs and maps to observe river features and interpret the local water system.	Chooses and interprets appropriate map sources to investigate global patterns, connections and environmental change.
Create maps and use symbols and keys	Draws simple maps of the classroom and school grounds, using basic symbols, labels and a key.	Creates an aerial-view map of the local area, using symbols and a key to show relative position.	Creates labelled maps showing UK and European locations, features and simple regional patterns.	Produces sketch and land-use maps using recognised symbols, a key and directional information.	Creates accurate field sketches and maps showing river or reservoir features, using a key and compass information.	Creates purposeful thematic maps or mapped routes to communicate climate, resource, trade or global-connection findings.
Develop locational knowledge	Names and locates the UK countries, capital cities and surrounding seas and knows which country they live in.	Names and locates seven continents and five oceans and identifies hot and cold areas in relation to the Equator and poles.	Locates UK regions, counties, major cities and topographical features; locates Europe and selected countries and capitals.	Locates major rainforest regions and relates their distribution to the Equator and tropics; locates local settlements and resources.	Locates major world rivers, mountain ranges, volcanoes and earthquake zones, including UK mountain regions.	Locates climate zones, biomes, the Prime Meridian, time zones, resource regions and countries linked through trade and migration.
Compare places and regions	Describes the school and local community and identifies simple features that make places distinctive.	Compares Bartley Green with a UK coastal locality and Mombasa, identifying similarities and differences.	Compares Catalonia and the West Midlands, explaining similarities and differences in human and physical geography.	Compares the Amazon with Birmingham and the UK; compares villages, towns and cities by features and land use.	Compares a local water system with a global river and considers how communities experience physical hazards differently.	Compares global case studies, explaining how climate, resources, trade and migration affect places and people differently.
Observe and collect fieldwork evidence	Observes human and physical features in the school grounds and collects simple tally data.	Observes and records features of Bartley Green using tallies, photographs and simple field notes.	Observes and records Birmingham's human and physical features using photographs, field sketches, annotated maps and tally charts.	Plans and carries out local settlement fieldwork, recording human and physical features systematically.	Conducts reservoir fieldwork, making accurate observations and recording evidence through notes, sketches and maps.	Conducts an environmental audit, selecting methods to collect consistent evidence about energy, waste and water use.
Record, present and interpret geographical data	Records observations with labels, simple tallies, pictures and spoken or written sentences.	Organises tally data and presents findings using a simple bar graph, map and verbal explanation.	Presents mapped and fieldwork findings using annotations, photographs, sketches and geographical vocabulary.	Reads simple climate graphs and presents fieldwork using sketch maps, keys and organised comparisons.	Interprets diagrams and mapped evidence; presents fieldwork and comparisons clearly and draws conclusions.	Organises and analyses audit or case-study data, identifies patterns and communicates evidence-based conclusions.
Use geographical vocabulary	Uses basic vocabulary for familiar human and physical features, weather, maps, symbols and position.	Uses vocabulary for continents, oceans, climate, coasts, settlements, compass directions and comparison.	Uses increasingly precise terms for regions, counties, topography, land use, climate and grid references.	Uses terms such as biome, vegetation belt, deforestation, settlement, land use, resource and sustainability accurately.	Uses process vocabulary accurately, including source, tributary, water cycle, tectonic plate, eruption and earthquake.	Uses precise vocabulary to explain climate change, adaptation, migration, trade, supply chains, inequality and interconnectedness.
Explain processes, connections and change	Describes what places and weather are like and gives simple reasons why local places matter.	Explains how location and climate affect people, animals and everyday life and suggests ways to care for places.	Explains how physical and human features shape regions and how land use and cities change over time.	Explains relationships between climate, biomes, people, resources and settlement change, including causes and effects.	Explains river, water-cycle and tectonic processes and evaluates how people use resources and respond to hazards.	Analyses interdependence and change, evaluating climate impacts, sustainability, resource distribution, trade and migration.
Undertake geographical enquiry and communicate conclusions	Answers simple questions about familiar places using observation, maps, photographs and talk.	Asks and answers questions about the local area and contrasting places using maps and collected data.	Uses maps, digital sources and Birmingham fieldwork evidence to answer questions and explain findings.	Combines maps, graphs, fieldwork and case studies to investigate settlements and environments and reach conclusions.	Selects evidence to compare places, explain processes and evaluate sustainability or hazard responses.	Plans increasingly independent enquiries, evaluates evidence and communicates justified conclusions about complex global issues.

Progression principle: pupils move from recognising and describing familiar places to selecting tools independently, analysing evidence and explaining complex human-physical interconnections. Skills are revisited through the 12-unit geography curriculum.