



Geography

National Curriculum in England

Purpose of study:

A high-quality geography education should inspire in pupils a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people that will remain with them for the rest of their lives.

Rationale

Geography is the study of physical and human environments through the processes that shape them and the communities who inhabit them. It is a vital subject for helping children understand their relationship with the natural world, their impact on the planet, and their connections to diverse societies across the globe. Geography provides an essential framework for engaging pupils with environmental sustainability, climate responsibility, and what it means to be an active, informed global citizen.

This policy has been developed with the geographical context and rich coastal situation of St Eanswythe's in mind. Our catchment area extends across the town and surrounding areas, which we encompass as our local study area. We follow the National Curriculum for Geography and use the Oak National Academy curriculum to structure and support our teaching.

Intent

The Oak National Academy geography curriculum is knowledge-rich, systematic, and carefully sequenced. Foundational knowledge is explicitly specified and builds cumulatively year-on-year so that pupils know more, remember more, and understand more about their immediate locality, the United Kingdom, Europe, and the wider world.

High-level geographical understanding relies on strong foundations of both substantive knowledge (the locational facts, physical processes, human patterns, and environmental systems) and disciplinary knowledge (how geographers investigate, collect data, analyse representations, and construct conclusions). This structured approach helps pupils explore the dynamic interrelationships between human and physical geography, cultivating a lifelong curiosity and fascination with our planet.

Implementation

Conceptual understanding lies at the heart of our curriculum. Children investigate key geographical concepts—such as place, space, scale, interdependence, and physical/human processes—and enrich their understanding through real-world case studies. Over time, pupils become proficient in answering questions such as: *What is it like to live in this region? What hazards or opportunities does this landscape present? How are communities adapting to climate and environmental change?*

Core components of our implementation include:

- **Geographical Skills and Fieldwork:** Essential mapping and data skills are explicitly taught and integrated throughout units. Pupils develop fluency in using atlases, globes, digital maps, Ordnance Survey symbols, four- and six-figure grid references, compass directions, contour lines, and climate data. Fieldwork is embedded across year groups—from observational studies in EYFS and Key Stage 1 around the school grounds to detailed investigations in Key Stage 2 examining human land use, coastal change, and environmental challenges.
- **Locational and Place Knowledge (UK and Europe):** Pupils systematically build an understanding of the geography of the United Kingdom, studying its countries, capital cities, counties, topography, rivers, coastal features, and economic activity. In European studies, pupils explore contrasting regions, climate zones, trade networks, and cultural landscapes, interpreting data across maps, aerial photography, and graphs.
- **Global Understanding and Physical Processes:** Extending beyond Europe, pupils explore world geography using latitude, longitude, the Equator, hemispheres, and time zones. They study global biomes, vegetation belts, extreme weather, rivers, mountains, tectonic activity (volcanoes and earthquakes), and the water cycle, while examining human aspects such as urbanisation, migration, natural resource distribution, and global supply chains.
- **Making the Most of Our Coastal Heritage:** We enrich the curriculum by using our unique local setting in Folkestone. With the coast on our doorstep, visits to the shoreline, harbour, and beaches provide invaluable first-hand experience of coastal processes, erosion, sea defences, and local marine environments. Further educational visits across Kent and London (such as Dover, Kew Gardens, and regional heritage sites) allow pupils to apply their fieldwork and observational skills in diverse environments.

Impact

We aim for our pupils to leave St Eanswythe's as confident, articulate geographers who can explain complex processes and evaluate how human activity impacts the natural environment:

- **Ongoing Formative Assessment:** Teachers assess understanding continuously through questioning, verbal dialogue, and regular low-stakes retrieval tasks or timeline/map starters that ensure key knowledge is retained in long-term memory.
- **Evaluating Pupil Work:** Pupil books demonstrate a broad, balanced coverage of the curriculum with clear progression in disciplinary vocabulary, spatial representations, and extended written explanations. Regular curriculum monitoring and subject reviews ensure consistent quality and progression across key stages.
- **End-of-Unit Checks:** Structured review quizzes and enquiry assessments at the end of units help teachers pinpoint misconceptions and ensure prerequisite concepts are secure before moving to the next stage.

The Oak Academy geography curriculum equips our pupils with a rich mental map of the world and a deep respect for diverse cultures and environments. At St Eanswythe's, our pledge is to inspire children to look at the world with curiosity, understand the urgent importance of environmental stewardship, and carry the tools of geographical thinking with them throughout their lives.