



## Geography Policy 26/27

The school is committed to reviewing this policy regularly to ensure it remains compliant with current legislation, statutory guidance, and best practice.

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## Overview of Geography

The Kassia Geography curriculum helps pupils to get to grips with this 'unwieldy' discipline. It equips them with the knowledge they need to make sense of the world's complexity and diversity. As the subject makes a vital contribution to our knowledge of the rapidly changing environmental and social challenges facing us and how we should tackle them. This policy ensures Geography education is relevant and meets the needs of SEN learners.

### Intent

At Kassia Academy, the Geography curriculum intent for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) prioritises a knowledge-rich, highly inclusive, and practical approach to learning. The curriculum is designed to ensure that all learners, regardless of need or prior attainment, can successfully access geographical knowledge, develop curiosity about the world, and build confidence through engaging and meaningful learning experiences.

The curriculum focuses on providing concrete, sensory-based, and experiential learning opportunities rather than relying solely on abstract concepts. Through practical activities, visual supports, fieldwork, discussion, and real-world contexts, learners are supported to develop key locational knowledge, spatial awareness, environmental understanding, and an appreciation of the wider world from their individual starting points.

This approach is particularly important within Kassia Academy's inclusive SEMH and alternative provision context, where many learners may experience barriers linked to cognition and learning, communication, sensory needs, emotional regulation, or disrupted educational experiences. Teaching is therefore carefully adapted to reduce cognitive overload, remove barriers to participation, and ensure that learners experience success within Geography.

The geography curriculum aims to:

- Develop learners' understanding of the world, environments, and communities
- Build locational knowledge and spatial awareness
- Promote curiosity, enquiry, and exploration
- Encourage respect for the environment and sustainability
- Support learners in understanding their local area and wider global issues
- Develop communication, oracy, and problem-solving skills
- Build confidence, independence, and engagement within learning

At Kassia Academy, Geography is implemented through adaptive teaching approaches that make learning accessible, relevant, and engaging for all learners. The curriculum is designed to ensure pupils with SEND are able to participate fully, develop geographical understanding, and experience meaningful success within the subject.

### Implementation

Implementing Geography effectively for learners with SEND at Kassia requires adaptive teaching approaches that minimise cognitive overload, reduce sensory or physical barriers, and ensure all learners can access a rich, ambitious, and engaging curriculum. At Kassia Academy, Geography lessons are carefully planned to provide inclusive learning experiences that enable pupils to develop

geographical knowledge, enquiry skills, and understanding of the wider world from their individual starting points.

We ensure effective implementation within Geography relies heavily on practical strategies tailored to learners' individual needs, ensuring that barriers to learning are reduced whilst maintaining high expectations and curriculum ambition.

For learners with cognition and learning needs, teachers simplify complex information through the use of visual supports, photographic word mats, diagrams, symbols, and structured resources. Activities are carefully chunked into smaller, manageable steps and key geographical vocabulary is pre-taught and revisited regularly to support understanding, confidence, and long-term retention.

For learners with speech, language, and communication needs, Geography lessons promote oracy and discussion-based learning through approaches such as "Think-Pair-Share," collaborative activities, and structured questioning. Learners are provided with additional processing time before responding and may communicate their understanding through verbal explanations, presentations, drama activities, ICT, or recorded responses rather than relying solely on extended written tasks.

For learners with sensory or physical needs, appropriate adjustments are made to ensure accessibility and participation. This may include enlarged maps, tactile or raised relief maps, adapted resources, sensory supports, and careful planning of classroom layouts or fieldwork activities. During fieldwork or enrichment activities, routes may be planned in advance, quiet spaces identified, and sensory adjustments such as ear defenders or additional adult support provided where appropriate.

Geography teaching at Kassia Academy also seeks to make learning meaningful and relevant by linking geographical concepts to learners' local environment, community, and personal experiences. Connecting abstract concepts such as settlements, weather, sustainability, population, or biomes to familiar places and real-life situations helps learners develop understanding and engagement more effectively.

### **Pedagogy and Assessment**

At Kassia Academy, pedagogy and assessment are carefully designed to ensure that learners develop secure knowledge, understanding, and skills over time. Teaching approaches prioritise clarity, sequencing, repetition, retrieval, and application of learning so that pupils are able to build confidence and make meaningful progress from their individual starting points.

Teachers identify likely misconceptions within each topic and plan explicitly for how these misconceptions will be identified, addressed, and revisited through teaching and assessment. This is particularly important in supporting non-specialist and less experienced colleagues to deliver the curriculum consistently and effectively. Staff use questioning, modelling, low-stakes assessment, retrieval practice, and ongoing formative assessment to identify gaps in understanding and respond appropriately.

Learning is carefully sequenced to ensure that pupils are taught the necessary substantive and procedural knowledge before being expected to apply it independently. Teachers consider the prior knowledge learners require in order to engage successfully with activities and avoid approaches that encourage pupils to guess answers or complete independent research without sufficient understanding or guidance.

At Kassia Academy, teaching focuses on securing understanding rather than rushing through curriculum content. Staff recognise that rapid coverage of topics does not necessarily lead to secure learning, particularly within an SEMH and alternative provision context where many learners may require repetition, small-step instruction, scaffolding, and opportunities for overlearning in order to retain and apply knowledge successfully.

Assessment is used purposefully to monitor progress, identify misconceptions, inform planning, and support targeted intervention. Teachers ensure that summative judgements about learners' knowledge and skills are based on reliable, accurate, and appropriately moderated assessment information.

Assessment approaches are planned to evaluate both component knowledge and learners' ability to apply that knowledge within different contexts. Assessment's check:

- Substantive knowledge and understanding
- Procedural knowledge and application of skills
- Recall and retention of prior learning
- Reasoning, analysis, and problem-solving
- Application of learning within practical, vocational, or real-life contexts

A range of formative and summative assessment strategies are used, including questioning, retrieval activities, practical application tasks, written assessments, discussion, observation, and low-stakes quizzes. Assessment information is used to adapt teaching, support curriculum refinement, and ensure learners are progressing appropriately towards their individual targets and qualification pathways.

At Kassia Academy, pedagogy and assessment are underpinned by adaptive teaching, high expectations, and a commitment to ensuring that all learners can experience success, develop confidence, and secure learning over time.

### **Systems at subject and School Level**

At Kassia Academy, leaders recognise the importance of ensuring that sufficient curriculum time is allocated to Geography in order to deliver an ambitious, knowledge-rich, and well-sequenced curriculum. Curriculum time is planned carefully to ensure learners are able to develop secure geographical knowledge, understanding, and enquiry skills without unnecessary interruption or dilution of subject content.

Leaders ensure that time allocated to Geography is used productively and consistently for the delivery of geographical learning rather than routinely being replaced by other curriculum areas. This is particularly important within an SEMH and alternative provision context, where consistency, sequencing, and opportunities for revisiting learning are essential in supporting learners to retain and apply knowledge successfully over time.

The geography curriculum is planned to allow learners sufficient opportunities to develop locational and place knowledge, build understanding of human and physical Geography, engage in geographical enquiry and fieldwork, develop map skills and spatial awareness, apply learning within real-world and local contexts and revisit and consolidate prior learning

Senior leaders support subject leaders in developing a deeper understanding of Geography curriculum concepts and the disciplinary knowledge that underpins the subject. This includes

supporting leaders to understand how geographical knowledge is sequenced, how substantive and disciplinary knowledge are connected, and how curriculum design supports progression over time.

Subject leadership development may include curriculum development opportunities, access to subject-specific CPD and professional networks and curriculum monitoring and quality assurance activities. We place great focus on collaborative planning and curriculum review, support with assessment design and curriculum sequencing and opportunities to review research and best practice within Geography education.

At Kassia Academy, systems at both subject and whole-school level are designed to ensure that Geography remains ambitious, inclusive, and coherently planned, enabling all learners to access a meaningful and high-quality geographical education.

### **Geographical Concepts**

Geographical concepts are central to the teaching and learning of Geography because they help learners understand the relationships between places, people, environments, and processes. Concepts enable pupils to make connections across different areas of the curriculum and support deeper understanding of how the world functions at local, national, and global levels.

Research and curriculum guidance from the Geographical Association (GA) identify a number of key geographical concepts that underpin effective Geography teaching. These commonly include space, place, Earth systems and environment.

At Kassia Academy, Geography teaching is carefully sequenced to support learners in developing understanding of these concepts progressively over time. In order for learners to understand complex geographical ideas successfully, curriculum content is broken down into smaller component parts or “chunks” of knowledge and skills. This enables learners to first secure understanding of individual concepts, vocabulary, processes, and skills before combining them to develop deeper geographical understanding.

At Kassia Academy, Geography teaching aims to ensure that learners not only acquire factual knowledge but also develop the ability to think geographically, make connections between ideas, and apply their understanding within real-world contexts.

### **Summary of the Research review Relevant to the Dangers of Misconceptions**

Research highlights those misconceptions can significantly hinder pupils’ understanding and progression within Geography and wider curriculum learning. Misconceptions may develop when learners misunderstand key concepts, rely on inaccurate prior knowledge, make incorrect assumptions, or attempt to apply knowledge without secure understanding. If misconceptions are not identified and addressed effectively, they can become embedded and create barriers to future learning.

The role of the teacher is therefore crucial in identifying, addressing, and correcting misconceptions so that pupils can develop accurate understanding of the geographical phenomena, processes, and concepts they are studying. Secure subject knowledge is essential in enabling teachers to recognise misconceptions, respond appropriately, and provide clear explanations, modelling, and questioning that support learners in refining their understanding.

At Kassia Academy, staff recognise that misconceptions are a natural part of the learning process, particularly for learners who may have gaps in prior knowledge, disrupted educational experiences, SEND, or SEMH needs. Teaching approaches are designed to identify misconceptions early through regular questioning, retrieval activities, discussion, formative assessment, and observation.

### **Summary of how we support fieldwork**

Research identifies fieldwork as a fundamental component of an effective Geography curriculum because it enables pupils to apply geographical knowledge, concepts, and skills within real-world environments. Fieldwork supports learners in developing observational, investigative, analytical, and enquiry skills whilst strengthening understanding of geographical processes and places through direct experience.

Although off-site visits require significant curriculum time, planning, and organisational commitment, fieldwork remains essential in helping pupils develop authentic geographical understanding. Leaders therefore play an important role in ensuring that fieldwork is valued appropriately within curriculum planning and supported effectively at both subject and whole-school level.

### **Fieldwork provides meaningful opportunities for learners to:**

- Apply geographical knowledge and enquiry skills
- Develop map-reading and spatial awareness skills
- Observe human and physical Geography directly
- Build confidence, independence, and communication skills
- Engage with their local environment and wider world
- Develop curiosity and environmental awareness
- Strengthen understanding through practical and experiential learning

Research also highlights that effective fieldwork does not always require extensive travel or large-scale educational visits. In some cases, valuable geographical enquiry and skill development can take place within the school grounds or local community, reducing barriers linked to time, cost, staffing, or accessibility whilst still supporting meaningful geographical learning.

For many aspects of Geography, however, visiting different environments and locations remains important in helping learners experience a wider range of geographical contexts and apply learning beyond the classroom.

Leaders support effective fieldwork by ensuring fieldwork is planned as an integral part of the geography curriculum rather than an isolated activity, allocating sufficient curriculum time for fieldwork preparation, participation, and follow-up learning and supporting staff with risk assessments, organisation, and safeguarding procedures. At Kassia we try to ensure fieldwork activities are inclusive and accessible for learners with SEND and SEMH needs, whilst providing opportunities for learners to practise geographical enquiry skills regularly, supporting staff development and confidence in delivering fieldwork activities and ensuring fieldwork links clearly to curriculum content and intended learning outcomes.

Within an SEMH and alternative provision context, fieldwork can provide particularly valuable opportunities for experiential, sensory, and practical learning that may improve engagement, confidence, and learner participation. At Kassia Academy, fieldwork activities are carefully planned to ensure that learners can access experiences safely and successfully through adaptive support, clear routines, preparation, and appropriate staffing.

By supporting fieldwork effectively, leaders help ensure that Geography remains practical, engaging, relevant, and ambitious for all learners.

### **Outcomes for Geography learners at Kassia**

Geography outcomes for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) at Kassia Academy focus on developing core locational knowledge, spatial awareness, environmental understanding, and geographical enquiry skills through adaptive, accessible, and highly inclusive teaching approaches. The curriculum is designed to ensure that all learners, regardless of need or starting point, can access ambitious geographical learning and achieve personalised outcomes that support both academic progress and wider personal development. Through practical, sensory-based, and real-world learning experiences, learners develop understanding of human and physical environments, map skills, fieldwork, and the wider world whilst also building communication, confidence, independence, and problem-solving skills.

At Kassia Academy, Geography teaching is carefully adapted to remove barriers to learning and ensure pupils with SEND can access the same broad geographical concepts and experiences as their peers. Teaching approaches may include the use of visual supports, tactile maps, pre-teaching vocabulary, ICT, scaffolded tasks, oracy-based learning, and practical fieldwork opportunities. The curriculum aims to make geographical concepts meaningful and relevant by linking learning to learners' local environments and personal experiences. Through adaptive teaching, positive relationships, and structured support, pupils are encouraged to engage positively with Geography, develop curiosity about the world around them, and gain transferable life skills that prepare them for further education, employment, and adult life.