Geography Subject Rationale

Year Group	Unit	We teach this because…	We teach this now because…
Reception	I am Unique / My Local Area	We teach this early geographical learning to help children develop a secure sense of place, beginning with the places most meaningful to them—Eston, their home, and England. By learning key concepts such as where they live, what their local area is like and who helps them in the community, children begin to understand the world around them and how people and locations are connected. Exploring woodland environments, seasonal changes and features of the natural world builds children's early geographical vocabulary and lays strong foundations for later map-reading, enquiry and fieldwork. These experiences support children to describe places, identify simple geographical features and develop early mapping skills in meaningful, age-appropriate ways.	We teach this in the autumn term because starting with children's immediate environment allows them to make sense of new settings at the beginning of the school year and provides a familiar context for developing early geographical understanding. Autumn also offers rich real-world opportunities for children to observe seasonal change, weather patterns and how the environment transforms over time. At this stage in Reception, children are developmentally ready to learn simple locational knowledge such as Eston, England and London, as well as practise early map skills through play, outdoor learning and using programmable toys like Bee-Bots. Introducing these concepts now builds secure foundations that will support all future geography learning across the school.
Reception	Exploring Our Local Area / Africa	We teach this to help children develop an early understanding of the wider world by comparing familiar places with contrasting environments. Learning about a village in Africa alongside their own locality in Eston supports children in noticing similarities and differences in homes, landscapes, weather and daily life. This builds cultural awareness, broadens children's perspectives and strengthens their sense of identity and belonging. At the same time, learning the names and features of their immediate surroundings—such as Eston Hills and local shops—helps children develop secure geographical vocabulary and early locational knowledge, while recognising Africa as a hot continent introduces them to global climate differences in an age-appropriate way.	We teach this in the spring term because children have already gained confidence in understanding their own home and local area during the autumn, making it the ideal time to extend their learning to contrasting places. The spring term provides opportunities for simple comparative study as children begin to recognise patterns in weather, environment and daily routines. At this point in Reception, pupils are developmentally ready to explore similarities and differences between near and far locations, while continuing to build knowledge of their own community. Introducing Africa now ensures progression in their geographical understanding and prepares them for later work on continents, climate and human–environment relationships in KS1 and beyond.
Reception	The Farm and Minibeasts	We teach this to help children understand the basic geographical idea of where the things we use and eat come from, connecting food choices to the natural world in a simple and meaningful way. Learning that fruit and vegetables grow from plants and that meat comes from animals helps children build early knowledge of farming, land use and habitats. At the same time, drawing simple plans and maps introduces foundational spatial skills—helping children represent real places, follow routes and understand how features relate to one another. These early geographical concepts prepare children for later learning about human and physical geography, sustainability and locational knowledge in KS1 and KS2.	We teach this in the summer term because by this point children have a secure understanding of their local environment and are ready to extend their learning to how food is produced and how places can be represented. Summer provides natural opportunities to observe plants growing, visit outdoor spaces and link real experiences to where food comes from. Children are also developmentally ready to create simple maps and plans, as their spatial awareness, drawing skills and understanding of place have matured over the year. Introducing these concepts now builds on their earlier work and ensures they complete Reception with the fundamental geographical knowledge and skills needed for Year 1.
1	Eston in the UK	This unit introduces pupils to the concept of place and region by exploring their local area and its relationship to the wider UK. It helps children develop an understanding of human and physical features, aerial views, and basic map skills, which are foundational for all future geographical learning. By learning about the four countries of the United Kingdom and the difference between Great Britain and the UK, pupils begin to build spatial awareness and national identity. These skills and concepts underpin later work on continents, climate, and global geography.	At the start of Key Stage 1, pupils are ready to explore familiar environments and make simple observations about the world around them. This timing allows them to connect prior experiences of their local area to structured geographical concepts such as landforms, regions, and human/physical features. Introducing map skills and aerial views early supports progression towards more complex spatial reasoning in later years. Focusing on the UK provides a meaningful context for developing vocabulary and enquiry skills, while fostering curiosity about places beyond their immediate experience.

1	Wonderful Weather	Understanding weather and climate is fundamental to geography and helps pupils make sense of the world around them. This unit introduces key concepts such as seasons, weather patterns, and extreme weather, which underpin later learning about climate zones and sustainability. Pupils learn how weather affects daily life, clothing, activities, and safety, fostering awareness of human-environment interaction. Developing skills in observation, recording, and interpreting weather data builds enquiry and analytical thinking, while introducing global perspectives through hot and cold climates broadens pupils' understanding beyond their local area.	At this stage in Year 1, pupils are ready to explore familiar phenomena like weather and seasons, making learning meaningful and accessible. This timing allows them to connect personal experiences of daily weather to structured geographical concepts, supporting progression from local to global understanding. Introducing weather vocabulary and forecasting early develops communication and enquiry skills, while practical activities such as weather diaries and role-play forecasts engage learners actively. Exploring extreme weather and safety measures now builds resilience and awareness, preparing pupils for more complex topics in later years.
1	Eston locality and Australia	This unit helps pupils understand the concept of place by comparing their local area with a contrasting location in another continent. It introduces key geographical ideas such as human and physical features, continents, and locational language, which are essential for developing spatial awareness. By exploring similarities and differences between Eston and Australia, pupils begin to appreciate diversity in landscapes, climate, and culture. These foundational skills prepare learners for future work on global geography, sustainability, and human-environment interaction.	At this stage in Year 1, pupils have developed basic map skills and an understanding of weather and seasons, making them ready to extend their knowledge to global contexts. Introducing continents and contrasting regions now builds on prior learning and supports progression from local to international geography. Comparing familiar and unfamiliar places engages curiosity and encourages enquiry, while reinforcing vocabulary for human and physical features. This timing also allows pupils to practise directional language and simple mapping, laying the groundwork for more complex geographical concepts in later years.
2	Maps	This unit introduces pupils to the fundamental geographical skill of map reading, which underpins all future geographical enquiry. Understanding how to interpret aerial photographs, identify human and physical features, and use keys and symbols helps children make sense of the world around them. Learning about directions through compass points supports spatial awareness and teaches pupils how geographical tools are used in real-life contexts, from navigation to planning. These foundational skills prepare learners for more complex mapping work, fieldwork, and spatial reasoning as they progress through KS2.	At this point in Year 2, pupils have developed basic geographical vocabulary and understanding of their local environment, making them ready to apply this knowledge to maps and simple fieldwork. Introducing aerial views and map symbols now supports their transition from concrete experiences to more abstract representations of places. This timing allows pupils to strengthen their enquiry skills through hands-on activities such as constructing maps, interpreting keys, and using directional language. By exploring compass directions and understanding their purpose, children gain early confidence in navigation and problem-solving—skills they will continue to build on throughout the geography curriculum.
2	Africa	This unit broadens pupils' understanding of the world by introducing them to the African continent, with a focus on Kenya. It helps children develop a global perspective, learning the names and locations of the world's seven continents and five oceans while deepening their knowledge of climate, landforms, and the equator. Exploring Kenya allows pupils to compare and contrast human and physical features with those in the UK, developing an early understanding of how geography shapes lifestyle, work, and culture. By learning about rural jobs, water sources, and physical environments such as Mount Kenya and the Great Rift Valley, pupils build awareness of sustainability and the relationship between people and place. These concepts lay the foundations for later study of biomes, global development, and environmental responsibility.	At this stage in Year 2, pupils have a secure understanding of maps, human and physical features, and basic locational language, making them ready to apply this knowledge to a contrasting non-European country. Introducing Kenya now supports progression from local to global geography, enabling children to make meaningful comparisons between familiar and unfamiliar places. The focus on the equator and climate builds directly on their earlier learning about weather and seasons, helping them develop early climate literacy. This timing also encourages curiosity about the wider world and strengthens enquiry skills through map work, prediction activities, and discussions about how geographical features influence jobs, lifestyles, and settlement patterns. Through structured comparison and fieldwork-style tasks, pupils develop the analytical skills needed for more complex geographical thinking at KS2.
2	United Kingdom	This unit develops pupils' understanding of their national context by introducing the four countries of the United Kingdom, their capital cities, symbols, and key characteristics. Learning about the UK helps children build a strong sense of identity and place, while deepening their understanding of regions, human and physical features, and how nations are formed. Understanding the history of the UK, its flag, and the cultural significance of national flowers helps pupils appreciate diversity within a shared nation. Exploring	At this stage in Year 2, pupils have already explored continents, oceans, and contrasting countries, which prepares them to consolidate locational knowledge by focusing on the United Kingdom in more depth. This timing enables them to apply map skills, directional language and prior comparative work to a context that is both familiar and meaningful. Introducing capital cities, national symbols and the formation of the UK helps children make sense of their place in the world before progressing to more complex geographical ideas in KS2. Exploring pollution at

		pollution and sustainability introduces the idea that human activity impacts the environment differently in urban and rural areas, laying the foundations for future study of climate, environmental change and responsible citizenship.	this point encourages children to begin thinking about sustainability and how everyday choices affect the environment, building early awareness of environmental responsibility and stewardship.
3	India	This unit develops pupils' understanding of the wider world by exploring India, a contrasting country with diverse landscapes, climates, and cultural significance. It strengthens core geographical concepts—continent, landform, climate, biome, and sustainability—while enabling pupils to make meaningful comparisons with the UK. By studying major features such as the River Ganges, the Himalayas, and India's biomes, pupils learn how physical geography influences human activity, beliefs, and ways of life. Through enquiry, mapwork, fieldwork-style tasks, and independent research, pupils build essential geographical skills, including interpreting maps, analysing information, and communicating findings. Understanding sustainability issues, such as pollution in the Ganges, helps pupils recognise the impact humans have on environments and encourages responsible decision-making for the future.	By Year 3, pupils have already studied local geography and contrasting countries at a basic level, making them ready to deepen their spatial understanding and explore a larger-scale region such as India. At this stage, pupils are able to use atlases, grid references, and compasses with greater independence, making the study of maps, sketch maps, and locational features both accessible and meaningful. This timing also aligns well with their developing ability to understand climate zones, the equator, and how global location affects weather patterns and lifestyles. Introducing biomes now prepares pupils for more complex ecosystem learning in upper KS2. Finally, exploring sustainability concerns, such as threats to the River Ganges, provides an early but crucial foundation for environmental awareness and global citizenship as pupils begin to understand the consequences of human actions on the natural world.
3	Land Use	This unit helps pupils understand how land is used in the UK and across the world, introducing them to essential ideas about settlement, agriculture, trade, food production and sustainability. As pupils learn where their food comes from, how it is grown, and how far it travels, they begin to understand the global connections that underpin everyday life. Exploring concepts such as Fairtrade, farming, greenspace, and rural–urban differences helps children recognise the social, economic and environmental factors that influence land use and human decision-making. Through mapwork, fieldwork, and critical evaluation of real case studies, pupils develop the ability to interpret geographical information, ask meaningful questions and make informed, responsible choices about sustainability. This learning provides a foundation for later study of economic activity, environmental change and global interdependence in upper KS2.	By Year 3, pupils have a secure understanding of basic place knowledge, simple map skills, and contrasting countries, making them ready to explore more complex ideas about how humans use land and resources. This unit builds on their growing ability to work with atlases, fieldwork data and digital mapping, enabling them to investigate the relationship between climate, location, farming and trade. The timing supports pupils' emerging curiosity about where products come from and how people around the world contribute to the food they eat. Introducing sustainability, Fairtrade and land-use decisions now gives pupils the language and frameworks they need to think critically about the environment and human impact, preparing them for deeper study of settlements, biomes, resources and environmental responsibility in Years 4–6.
3	Rainforests	This unit introduces pupils to one of the world's most important and threatened biomes: the tropical rainforest. It develops their understanding of climate, biomes, continents, landforms and sustainability through the exploration of rainforest locations, layers, climate patterns, and biodiversity. Studying rainforests enables pupils to compare global regions meaningfully and understand how physical geography affects the lives of people, plants and animals. This topic also builds critical awareness of human impact, including deforestation and palm oil production, helping pupils recognise the link between their own choices and environmental sustainability. By learning about indigenous tribes, pupils deepen their cultural understanding and consider how people live differently around the world. The skills developed—interpreting maps, analysing data, comparing biomes, evaluating environmental threats—form an essential foundation for more advanced geographical enquiry in later key stages.	By the summer term of Year 3, pupils have already explored land use, food systems and global connections, making them ready to investigate a complex ecosystem such as the rainforest. This unit builds naturally on their growing geographical skill set, including using maps, atlases, graphs and digital mapping tools with increasing independence. Their developing understanding of climate zones, continents and human–environment relationships allows them to meaningfully compare biomes and recognise why rainforests exist where they do. Introducing sustainability issues now prepares pupils for later work on climate change, resources and global responsibility in Years 4–6. This timing also supports cross-curricular links with science topics such as plants, habitats and the water cycle, helping pupils make sense of patterns in climate, vegetation and seasonal change. Overall, teaching rainforests at this point ensures pupils are equipped to think critically about environmental protection and their role as global citizens.
4	Mountains	This unit deepens pupils' understanding of physical geography by exploring mountains—one of the most significant and awe-inspiring landforms on Earth. Studying mountains enables pupils to learn how the	By Year 4, pupils have established confidence with basic mapping skills, continents and landforms, making them ready to explore more complex physical processes such as mountain formation. This timing supports progression from

		Earth's surface is shaped through tectonic processes, volcanic activity and erosion, helping them build foundational knowledge for later work on earthquakes, volcanoes and the water cycle. Through investigating famous mountains and ranges across the world, pupils strengthen their locational knowledge, develop confidence using atlases, OS maps, contour lines and digital mapping tools, and understand how physical geography influences human activity. Learning how contour lines represent height and gradient develops spatial reasoning and prepares pupils for interpreting increasingly complex geographical representations in upper KS2. By exploring how mountaineers, scientists, geologists and local communities interact with mountain environments, pupils gain insight into sustainability, adaptation and the challenges of living and working in extreme conditions. These disciplinary and substantive skills support pupils in analysing geographical information, asking precise enquiry questions, and communicating findings in a range of forms.	Year 3's work on biomes, climate and land use, allowing pupils to connect their knowledge of global locations to new learning about tectonic plates and mountain ranges. At this stage, pupils are developmentally ready to interpret visual representations such as contour lines, OS symbols and topographical maps, building essential skills for later fieldwork and advanced geographical enquiry. Virtual fieldwork, including the Everest Base Camp Oddizzi experience, provides an engaging and accessible way for pupils to observe extreme environments, compare global regions and understand human–environment interaction. Introducing mountains at this point enables pupils to apply and extend previously taught skills—such as compass use, grid references and digital mapping—while preparing them for deeper study of Earth processes, climate and sustainability in upper KS2.
4	Europe	This unit expands pupils' geographical understanding by deepening their knowledge of Europe—its countries, climates, landscapes, cultures and human–environment interactions. It helps children build strong locational knowledge by learning where European nations are, how they differ, and what physical and human features define them. Studying Europe encourages pupils to understand regional diversity, from Mediterranean coastlines to mountainous areas and urban cultural centres such as Athens. The unit also introduces pupils to contemporary issues such as migration and environmental pressures linked to tourism, helping them recognise how geography influences people's lives and decisions. By exploring landscapes, climate zones, city features and daily life in Greece, pupils develop the ability to compare regions and analyse geographical information. These disciplinary skills—map interpretation, enquiry, evaluation and communicating geographical ideas—are essential foundations for later KS2 topics on global geography, climate change and sustainability.	By Year 4, pupils have developed secure map skills, understanding of continents and climate zones, and experience comparing contrasting regions. This makes Europe a well-timed and accessible unit that builds on prior knowledge while extending learning to a larger scale. At this stage, pupils are ready to use digital mapping tools, undertake comparative fieldwork-style tasks and interpret increasingly complex geographical information such as tourist maps, climate data, and migration case studies. Their growing maturity also enables them to engage sensitively with human geography topics like migration and the social impacts of tourism. Exploring life in modern Athens allows pupils to understand how climate, culture and environment shape daily experiences, preparing them for future comparison studies in Years 5 and 6. Introducing sustainability considerations now—such as managing tourism and supporting migrants—supports pupils' development as informed, reflective global citizens.
4	Oceans	This unit develops pupils' understanding of Earth's major water systems and the vital role oceans and rivers play in shaping environments, climate, biodiversity and human activity. By learning about the UK's significant rivers and their features, pupils strengthen their understanding of physical geography and how water influences settlement, industry and land use. Exploring oceans, their layers, and global circulation patterns helps pupils connect biomes, climate zones and the Earth's energy balance. The unit also introduces pupils to sustainability and environmental responsibility through the study of water pollution, oil spills and melting ice caps—global issues with profound local and international consequences. Through enquiry, data analysis, mapping, fieldwork simulations and digital research, pupils learn to interpret geographical information, communicate findings and evaluate human impact. These skills and concepts form an essential foundation for upper KS2 topics such as climate change, global trade, and the water cycle.	By the end of Year 4, pupils have developed secure knowledge of landforms, settlements and European regions, enabling them to explore more complex interactions between water systems and geography. Their increasing confidence using atlases, grid references and digital mapping tools supports the study of rivers, oceans, latitude, longitude and the tropics. At this stage, pupils are ready to interpret more detailed geographical data, such as rainfall graphs, contour patterns and digital images of environmental change. The timing also aligns well with their growing scientific understanding of states of matter, habitats and adaptation, allowing for meaningful cross-curricular connections. Introducing sustainability challenges such as water pollution, rising sea levels and oil spills now helps pupils understand the global significance of environmental stewardship and prepares them for deeper exploration of climate change and ecosystems in Year 5 and Year 6. Teaching this unit in the summer term also supports outdoor and practical enquiry—ideal for fieldwork-style investigations and hands-on modelling of environmental processes.
5	River Tees	We teach this unit to develop pupils' understanding of how rivers shape landscapes, influence human activity, and support economic development, using the River	We teach this in Year 5 because pupils are ready to work with more complex mapping skills, river processes and geographical enquiry, applying prior learning about the UK

		Tees as a meaningful and locally relevant case study. It enables children to build secure disciplinary skills such as asking geographical enquiry questions, interpreting maps and OS symbols, analysing data, and using geographical vocabulary with increasing precision. Through learning about physical processes, land use, sustainability and human impact, pupils gain the knowledge and tools to understand how environments change and how decisions about river management affect communities, wildlife and industry. This learning also supports future career awareness by highlighting roles such as hydrology and environmental management.	to deepen their understanding of regions, landforms and human–environment interaction. At this stage, children can interpret four- and six-figure grid references, annotate maps, and compare physical and human features confidently, making autumn term an ideal point to build foundational knowledge for later units involving global geography and sustainability. The River Tees is also locally significant for pupils, helping them connect their learning to real places, local history and regional identity, while developing an appreciation of how landscapes such as the Tees Valley have shaped settlement, industry and environmental decision-making over time.
5	Egypt	We teach this unit to develop pupils' understanding of how climate, landforms, regions and biomes shape life in different parts of the world, using Egypt as a contrasting non-European country. Through learning about the River Nile, desert environments, settlement patterns and the impact of climate, children deepen their knowledge of key physical and human geographical features and apply core disciplinary skills such as map interpretation, enquiry, data analysis and geographical communication. Studying Egypt allows pupils to compare environments with the UK, understand how landscapes influence culture, agriculture and sustainability, and recognise the importance of natural resources in shaping everyday life and economic activity.	We teach this in the spring term of Year 5 because pupils have already developed secure knowledge of UK geography and river features from the autumn term, enabling them to make meaningful comparisons with a contrasting global region. At this stage, children are ready to explore more complex concepts such as climate zones, land use, and how physical processes influence human settlement and historical development. The timing supports progression from their River Tees learning, allowing them to apply and extend mapping skills, enquiry questions and vocabulary to a new context. Exploring Egypt now also prepares pupils for future learning about global biomes, sustainability and world regions later in upper KS2.
5	Renewable Energy	We teach this unit to deepen pupils' understanding of sustainability and the ways human activity impacts the environment, focusing on how energy, food, and resource use shape landscapes, economies, and daily life. Learning about renewable and non-renewable energy sources helps children evaluate modern challenges such as climate change, pollution, and global inequality, while developing key geographical skills including enquiry, map interpretation, fieldwork, and data analysis. This topic enables pupils to understand how power is generated, how resource choices influence land use, and why responsible consumption matters. It also introduces them to future-facing careers within the renewable energy sector, highlighting the importance of innovation and sustainability for the planet.	We teach this in the summer term of Year 5 because pupils have built strong foundational knowledge of physical and human geography earlier in the year, enabling them to apply and extend this understanding to environmental sustainability and global resource management. At this stage, children can work with more complex ideas such as trade links, food miles, carbon footprints, and the long-term consequences of relying on non-renewable energy. The timing supports progression towards Year 6 global geography and climate-focused learning, while preparing pupils to think critically about future challenges and their own role in protecting natural resources. Teaching this now helps children make meaningful connections between their everyday choices, UK landscapes, and global environmental issues.
6	Changing Landscapes	We teach this unit to give pupils a deep understanding of how physical processes—such as weathering, erosion and coastal formation—shape landscapes, and how human activity influences how these landscapes are used, protected and changed over time. By exploring regions, counties and key UK landforms, children develop strong geographical knowledge and apply essential disciplinary skills including map interpretation, fieldwork, analysis of change and accurate use of geographical vocabulary. This learning helps pupils recognise patterns in the environment, understand the long-term impacts of development and sustainability, and appreciate the importance of careers such as geology, coastal management and environmental planning in shaping the future of our landscapes.	We teach this in the autumn term of Year 6 because pupils bring secure knowledge of rivers, regions, sustainability and map skills from previous years, enabling them to tackle more complex concepts such as geomorphology, landscape change and coastal processes. At this developmental stage, children are ready to analyse evidence, compare historical and modern landscapes, and interpret data to understand how environments evolve over time. Beginning Year 6 with this unit strengthens their enquiry skills and supports later learning about global change, climate, and human–environment interactions, while giving pupils a mature lens through which to consider the future of their own local region and the wider world.
6	World Biomes	We teach this unit to deepen pupils' understanding of how climate, location and physical geography shape different environments across the world, and how these factors influence the plants, animals and people that live there. By studying global biomes, latitude and longitude, the Polar Regions and the impact of climate	We teach this in the spring term of Year 6 because pupils are ready to apply advanced mapping skills, such as six-figure grid references and interpreting global coordinates, to a broader, worldwide context. At this point, children can confidently work with more abstract geographical concepts, including climate zones, time zones,

		change, pupils develop the disciplinary skills needed to interpret maps, analyse geographical data and communicate complex information clearly. This learning enables them to recognise global patterns, compare contrasting regions, and understand the scientific and human significance of environmental change. It also raises awareness of careers linked to environmental science, planning, architecture and engineering, helping children see how geography plays a crucial role in shaping sustainable futures.	biomes, and human impacts on fragile ecosystems like the Arctic and Antarctica. The timing allows them to build on their autumn learning about landscape change before progressing into global environmental issues and sustainability, ensuring a coherent sequence of knowledge. Teaching this now also supports their readiness for secondary-level geography by strengthening analytical thinking, comparative study and understanding of global interdependence.
6	North and South America	We teach this unit to enhance pupils' understanding of how continents, climate zones, biomes and physical features shape the diversity of environments across North and South America, and how these factors influence human activity, trade and sustainability. By comparing contrasting regions such as Death Valley and the Eston Hills, locating ancient and modern wonders of the world, and exploring how geography affects trade in places like El Salvador, pupils strengthen essential disciplinary skills including mapping, enquiry, data interpretation and geographical communication. This learning helps pupils understand global interconnections and the real-world impact of consumer habits, including fair trade and fast fashion, and introduces them to careers connected to global supply chains, farming, environmental sustainability and ethical production.	We teach this in the summer term of Year 6 because pupils are ready to apply the advanced geographical skills developed throughout KS2—such as interpreting climate zones, analysing biomes, reading world maps and comparing physical features—to a broader comparative study of two major world continents. At this point in the year, children can confidently synthesise knowledge from earlier learning on climate, sustainability and human geography, enabling them to explore global trade, fair-trade systems and the environmental impact of modern industries with greater maturity. This unit also supports their transition to secondary geography by strengthening analytical thinking, world-scale mapping skills and their understanding of how physical and human processes connect across continents.