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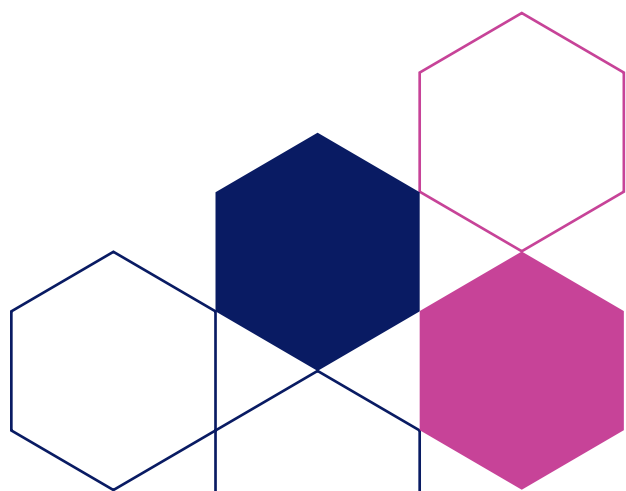
Northern Ireland Curriculum 2028

An entitlement to excellence and equity

Geography

Draft curriculum framework for Public Consultation

This document forms part of a suite of curriculum materials published for consultation





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Vision statement

Geography enables pupils to make sense of the world in all its diversity, nurturing curiosity and lifelong interest as they build knowledge about places, environments, and human and physical processes. Pupils learn about the distinctive landscapes and communities of Northern Ireland as well as diverse places and environments in the British Isles, Europe and across the world.

In geography, pupils gradually build knowledge of the world across local, national and global contexts. As they systematically revisit geographical substantive content such as river landscapes, coastal processes, urbanisation and trade, their knowledge of geographical features, processes and places builds and links together. Over time, as they encounter varied examples of human and physical features, processes and places, their webs of knowledge become more intricate and their use of terminology more secure and precise. By the end of their primary schooling, they are recognising and naming a wide range of geographical locations, features, processes and systems with fluency. This secure knowledge equips them to notice connection and pattern as well as complexity and variation. Geography's specialised vocabulary enables them to communicate with precision and to contribute informed perspectives on geographical issues.

Central to the discipline of geography is an understanding of interactions across human and physical systems which occur on a range of temporal and spatial scales. Pupils examine how places and environments are shaped by these interactions. They learn about past and present changes and how people predict and manage future change, for example through coastal management.

From their earliest years, children are naturally curious about the world. Pupils' geographical learning in school nurtures this curiosity. Through observing, noticing patterns, exploring their surroundings, and engaging in movement, play and sensory experience, they develop an understanding of place. Across the key stages, pupils explore what 'sense of place' and identity mean to geographers, by examining how physical landscapes, human activity, culture, history and power relations interact to shape how places are experienced, understood, valued and changed over time. Studying geography immerses children and young people in knowledge and experiences that connect to their own lives while also giving access to diverse places and cultures, fostering a sense of belonging to a diverse global community.

Throughout their study of geography, pupils learn how the subject works as a disciplinary tradition. They learn to recognise and answer questions shaped by the disciplinary concepts of place, space, time, environment, scale, sustainability, change, diversity and interaction. They

learn how geographical knowledge is generated, applied and revised. Pupils learn how the process of geographical enquiry works, progressing towards increasing sophistication in their own investigation, analysis, and evaluation. Through geographical skills and fieldwork, pupils learn how to collect and analyse spatially located data, including the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS). Fieldwork extends learning beyond the classroom, to school grounds, local neighbourhoods, and across Northern Ireland. They interpret evidence to understand how processes and human–environment relationships shape places.

Geography nurtures ethical awareness through considering how human actions affect environments and communities, and the responsibilities of living in an interconnected world. Pupils consider the perspectives of different communities, and patterns of global interdependence. Pupils understand how geographical knowledge and thinking contribute to shaping sustainable and equitable futures, including the subject’s distinctive role in understanding climate change. They are supported to see themselves as informed, knowledgeable citizens within their communities and the wider world, considering the consequences of today’s choices for current and future generations.

By the end of Key Stage 3, young people can apply geographical knowledge with confidence and participate in debate by considering different perspectives and evaluating the impacts of actions and responses. Geography equips young people to understand our rapidly changing and interconnected world as it is, and to imagine it as it could be in the future.



Subject-specific categories

The geography curriculum is organised into three subject-specific categories:

- place knowledge
- human and physical geographical knowledge
- geographical skills, enquiry and fieldwork

The three categories make equally valuable contributions to pupils' geographical learning. They cannot, however, be learned in isolation. During implementation, teachers will select and combine aspects of the three categories in each unit of work so that geography's substantive and disciplinary knowledge are developed concurrently. Each category is presented separately in the framework below so that teachers can give careful thought to what each category involves and to ensure that, overall, pupils' entitlement to each of these aspects of geography is fully met. Teachers can then decide how best to combine the content items, across the categories, in order to fulfil the vision for geography in their school context.

Place knowledge

Place knowledge encompasses substantive knowledge about the locations, characteristics, interconnections and changing natures of places. Pupils build understanding of places across local, regional, national and global scales through the study of a broad range of places and regions, including those in Northern Ireland, across Europe and the wider world. They consider these places in the past, present and future. Pupils gain knowledge of how places are experienced and represented, and how this affects people's actions in and beyond those places. As place knowledge accumulates, pupils come to understand disciplinary concepts such as place, interaction, change and diversity. Place knowledge interlinks with content from other categories, supporting their learning about physical and human features and processes, as well as showing how geographers build new knowledge through a wide range of specific places.

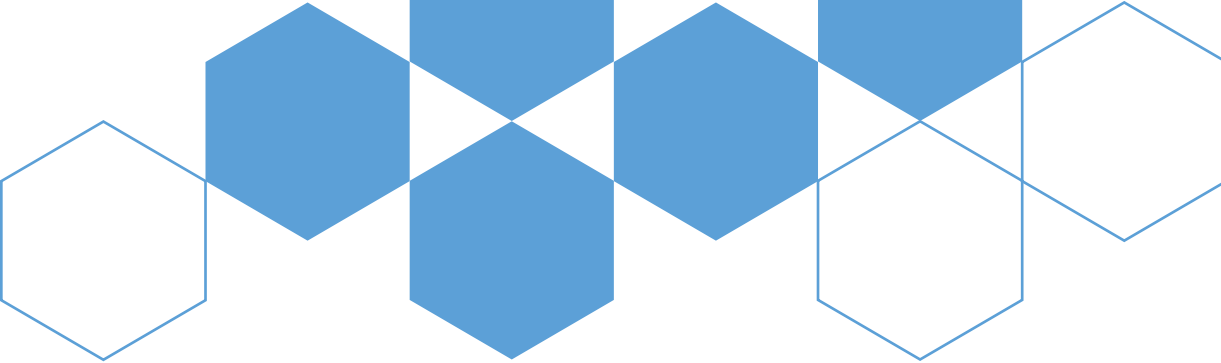
Human and physical geographical knowledge

Human and physical geographical knowledge provides pupils with substantive knowledge of the features, processes, systems and patterns that shape the world in which we live. Pupils explore the interactions within and between human and physical geography and how these relationships shape the world over space and time. For example, they learn how migration

affects urban growth, how rivers affect the physical landscape and how economic activity affects ecosystems. As substantive knowledge of human and physical geography is built and linked, pupils progressively gain knowledge of disciplinary concepts such as interaction, systems, change and sustainability.

Geographical skills, enquiry and fieldwork

Geographical skills, enquiry and fieldwork are the processes through which pupils investigate, interpret and communicate knowledge about the world. Pupils learn to use maps, data and geospatial technologies to analyse spatial patterns and relationships. Through a structured and scaffolded process of geographical enquiry, pupils learn to ask geographical questions about places, environments and the processes operating in them. Through fieldwork, pupils experience places first-hand and are inducted into the way that geographers collect and evaluate data, apply appropriate methods and reach reasoned conclusions. Together, geographical skills, enquiry and fieldwork enable pupils both to build geographical knowledge themselves and to understand how it is produced by others. They critically evaluate both the knowledge and the processes of its generation.



Foundation Stage

In the Foundation Stage, pupils begin to develop an awareness of places and their immediate environment. They learn about simple human and physical features and notice how places can change over time, including through observations of the weather and the seasons. Through observation, talk and play, pupils develop geographical skills using simple geographical language. Through outdoor learning, they gain first-hand experience of places, an opportunity to express feelings about them and to ask questions about what they hear, feel and see.

Place knowledge

Pupils should learn:

- that places can look and feel different over time (e.g. across seasons)
- that people use features of places (e.g. homes, libraries, parks and shops) for different purposes and activities
- where they live, described at different scales, including their home or school, road, village, town or county, and Northern Ireland
- that the world is divided into different countries and that people may travel to other countries for different reasons
- that weather varies across the world and that some places experience very different weather from Northern Ireland

Pupils should:

- visit places in the school grounds or local area
- express their feelings about places they know, including parts of their school grounds or local area

Human and physical geographical knowledge

Pupils should learn:

- about some human features (e.g. home, road, school, shop) and some physical features (e.g. grass, hill, stream, tree) of places that are part of their daily experience
- simple descriptions of the weather (e.g. fog, hail, snow, rainy, sunny, windy) and how local weather changes with the four seasons

Geographical skills, enquiry and fieldwork

Pupils should learn:

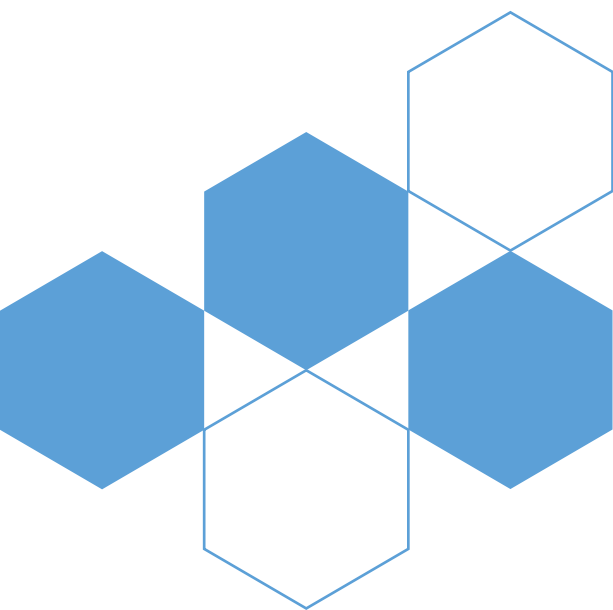
- that geographers can find out about a place by noticing, capturing and sharing information about what they observe around them (e.g. by using photographs, maps and tallies for counting)

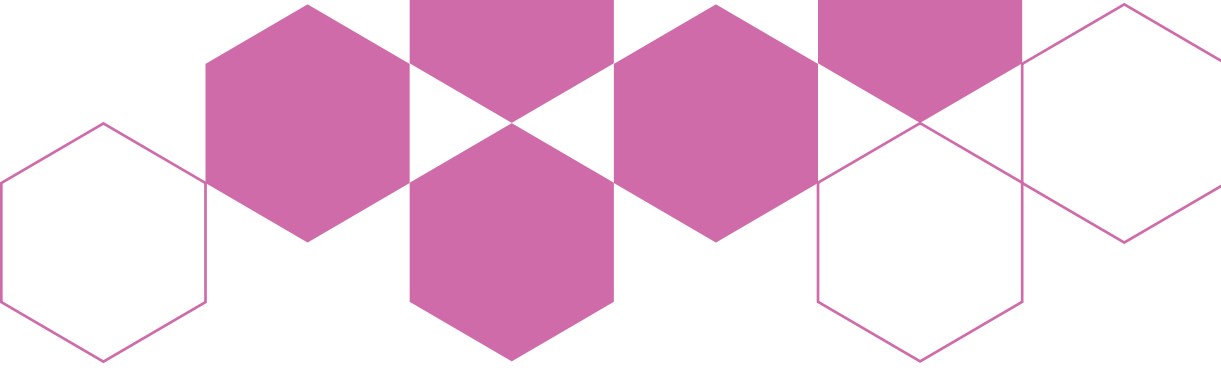
Pupils should learn to:

- use simple positional language, including, inside and outside, left and right, near and far
- represent places using pictures and simple symbols

Pupils should:

- observe features (e.g. buildings, weather, vegetation) in outdoor spaces, engage in sensory activities (e.g. what sounds can we hear? what can we smell?) and ask questions about what they hear, feel and see when outside





Key Stage 1

In Key Stage 1, pupils begin to study places at a range of scales, from their local area and Northern Ireland to the British Isles and the wider world. They learn to locate and name places using maps, atlases and globes, and begin to understand how places are shaped by both physical features and human activity. Through local fieldwork, pupils develop geographical skills, including using simple directions and representations, and asking questions to help them understand some connections between people and environments.

Place knowledge

Pupils should learn:

- where Northern Ireland is located within the United Kingdom and in relation to the Republic of Ireland
- the names and locations of the capital cities in the British Isles, and the surrounding seas
- the names and locations of the world's continents and oceans
- key human and physical features of their local area and of at least two contrasting areas of comparable size, one within Northern Ireland and one outside the British Isles

Human and physical geographical knowledge

Pupils should learn:

- names and characteristics of settlement types including, hamlet, farm, village, town and city
- about some human features (e.g. bus stops, hospitals, playgrounds, railway stations) and some physical features (e.g. beach, forest, mountain, valley) ensuring a blend of those in everyday experience (e.g. street, field) and those beyond everyday experience (e.g. airport, volcano)
- that physical features affect people (e.g. settlements grow around rivers; forests provide shade; beaches attract tourists) and people affect physical features (e.g. people farm land, build houses, cut down trees, build dams in rivers)
- examples of human activities (e.g. farming, recycling, tree planting) which affect habitats and living things

- that temperatures vary around the world with hotter regions near the Equator and colder regions near the North and South Poles
- about daily and seasonal weather patterns in Northern Ireland and their local area

Geographical skills, enquiry and fieldwork

Pupils should:

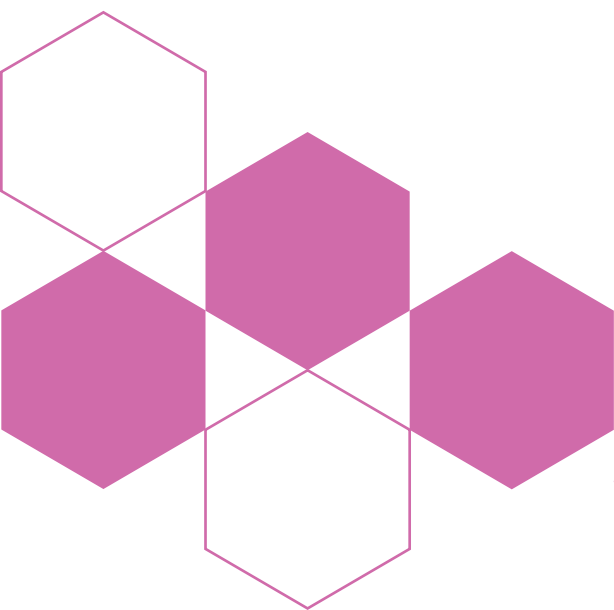
- observe and record aspects of the world changing over time (e.g. on a classroom chart of weather changing across a fortnight)
- observe and describe similarities and differences between places with appropriate geographical vocabulary (e.g. barn, house, school; beach, forest, valley; busier or quieter, flat or hilly)

Pupils should learn to use:

- maps, atlases and globes in order to locate oceans, continents, selected countries and cities
- the four main points of the compass (north, east, south, west) in order to give and follow simple directions on a map
- ground photographs and aerial photographs in order to identify simple human and physical features

Pupils should undertake:

- fieldwork in their local environment, including the school grounds, noticing what is around them, asking simple questions and making observations about human and physical features





Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2, pupils develop the breadth and depth of their geographical knowledge by building their locational frameworks and extending their knowledge of human and physical characteristics of geographically diverse places at local, national and global scales. Diverse places for study within and beyond Europe should be selected for their value in developing knowledge of geographical processes and interconnections. Pupils use this knowledge to explore how physical features, climate, ecosystems, economic activity and population shape places and influence people's lives. Pupils learn how human and physical processes interact to create change over time.

Using their growing knowledge of environmental systems, migration, resource use and trade, pupils learn how the places that they study are connected. They learn how decisions made locally and globally can influence the future of such places. Through geographical enquiry, pupils use maps, digital technologies, including GIS, and fieldwork, to collect, analyse and communicate geographical information. In these ways, pupils develop their geographical skills and understanding of the interconnected nature of people, places and environments.

Place knowledge

Pupils should learn:

- the names and location of the counties of Northern Ireland
- the human and physical characteristics of selected places in rural, urban, coastal and inland areas of Northern Ireland and the British Isles,
- the names and locations of major cities and key physical features (e.g. mountain ranges, major rivers) of countries studied
- the names and locations of the major lines of latitude and longitude
- key human and physical characteristics of two contrasting areas of comparable size, one within the British Isles and one outside Europe
- that places are experienced and valued differently by different people and groups
- that decisions made today shape a place's future, and that local characteristics are connected to wider global systems including climate and trade

Pupils should:

- describe particular places using geographical vocabulary, including agriculture, coast/coastal, cultivation, economic activity, ecosystem, environment, estuary, habitat, hill, industry, infrastructure, land use, mountain, peak, plain, river mouth, settlement, summit, tourism, trade, transport network, valley, vegetation

Human and physical geographical knowledge

Pupils should learn:

- about the role of rivers in the simple water cycle, applying the basic vocabulary of the water cycle, including precipitation, groundwater, run-off¹
- simple river and coastal processes, including erosion, transportation and deposition, and examples of the landforms they create (e.g. beach, cliff, V-shaped valley, waterfall)
- the basic structure of the Earth and that the movement of tectonic plates produces hazards such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions
- about two world climate zones and their associated biomes
- about living and non-living parts of an ecosystem, how they interact and how people affect them
- the difference between climate and weather, how weather is measured and tracked over time to identify patterns that inform daily life
- about the natural greenhouse effect, how human activities enhance it and how this contributes to recent climate change; the impacts of climate change on people and the environment; and some of the ways individuals and organisations address it
- about sustainability and sustainable development in different geographical contexts and applied to at least one local and one global geographical issue (e.g. resource use, tourism and transport)
- about the demography of Northern Ireland and British Isles, including:
 - population density, population distribution and population change
 - the factors affecting these population characteristics in Northern Ireland and the British Isles
- about agriculture and food production, including:
 - the different types of farming, including arable, pastoral and mixed
 - how food is produced, processed and transported

¹ Some of the vocabulary necessary for learning about the water cycle is taught in Key Stage 2 science, where changes of physical state in heating and cooling are addressed, namely evaporation and condensation.

- about the changing characteristics of rural and urban areas in Northern Ireland and one contrasting place outside Europe, including:
 - economic activity
 - the impact of economic activity (e.g. growth of cities, diversification of rural economies through tourism)
- about migration between places, including interactions between people, communities and environments
- about globalisation and its impact on people, economies and the environment in Northern Ireland and on one contrasting place outside Europe
- about renewable and non-renewable resources, including:
 - how people use them for energy, materials and everyday life
 - why these resources need management
 - the impact of using these resources on people and the environment

Geographical skills, enquiry and fieldwork

Pupils should learn:

- that geographers ask questions about:
 - past, present and future change in places and environments
 - diversity across places, spaces and environments
 - interactions within and between places and human and physical environments
- how the process of geographical enquiry works, including asking simple geographical questions, collecting and analysing data from fieldwork and/or secondary sources, and communicating findings

Pupils should learn to:

- use maps (e.g. atlases, Ordnance Survey maps) and digital maps, including GIS in order to:
 - locate places studied
 - identify human and physical features (e.g. forest, reservoir) and describe their relative positions (e.g. the valley lies northeast of the reservoir; an area of cultivation lies southeast of the river; the industrial estate is southwest of the motorway)
 - display spatially located data

- describe places and their locations by using:
 - eight-point compass directions
 - four-figure grid references
 - one method of showing height (e.g. contours or spot height)
 - map symbols
- identify human and physical features studied, using:
 - ground level photographs
 - aerial and satellite imagery

Pupils should:

- undertake fieldwork in their local area, gaining supported practice in:
 - considering the scope and geographical purpose of a given geographical question (e.g. is it about change over time? patterns of diversity? interaction between human and physical environments?)
 - planning (e.g. choosing appropriate data and data collection methods to answer a specific geographical question)
 - carrying out data collection in the field, using an appropriate method (e.g. sketching and annotating part of river; counting pedestrians or traffic at different points in the day; making a simple land-use map; surveying fellow pupils using simple questions about a local place)
 - interpreting the results of data collection (e.g. analysing results of a traffic count; comparing results across sites or times; describing trends in survey responses such as common opinions about a place)
 - communicating findings (e.g. using maps and graphs, together with annotations and written explanations)



Key Stage 3

In Key Stage 3, pupils strengthen their capacity to make sense of the world as they build complex and connected geographical knowledge. Pupils study a range of places across the wider world, connecting global issues to places in Northern Ireland, the British Isles and Europe. The places should be chosen systematically in order to deepen pupils' knowledge of geographical processes and change and studied in ways that enable pupils to engage with the complexity and diversity within and between regions and countries. Pupils continue to apply the geographical knowledge learned in Key Stage 2 but now extend it within the study of interconnected human and physical systems operating across spatial and temporal scales. Through this, they develop an understanding of interdependence, recognising the social, economic and environmental connections between places, and exploring how these connections can produce uneven outcomes for different people and places. Pupils extend their geographical vocabulary, enabling them to communicate and engage with geographical debates with precision about places, processes and interactions.

Pupils extend their knowledge of human and physical geography through the study of a growing range of geographical processes and environments, including physical processes and systems which shape landscapes and environments (such as glaciation, river and coastal processes, tectonics, weather and climate systems, and biomes), and human processes and change (such as globalisation, population change and urbanisation). Alongside this, they make more explicit use of geographical concepts such as place, scale, systems and sustainability. These concepts enable pupils to explain why places and environments are shaped in particular ways, how they are changing, and how they are connected to wider spatial and global processes, such as flows of people, resources and information, and patterns of climate, trade and urbanisation. As their knowledge becomes more securely organised, pupils become able to see connections between different areas of geography, to move between scales, and to appreciate the complexity of geographical issues in an interconnected world, including how these shape present and future challenges for society.

During Key Stage 3 pupils also develop independence in the use of geographical skills and the geographical enquiry process, supported through fieldwork beyond their immediate locality, including evaluation. Pupils learn about the strengths and limitations of different types of data and evidence and how geographical explanations may be revised as new evidence emerges or different perspectives are considered.

Place knowledge

Pupils should learn:

- about a range of places drawn from across all seven continents, including their diversity, within and between regions and countries
- that the distinctive characteristics of places are shaped by interacting human and physical processes, with reference to places studied in Northern Ireland, the British Isles, Europe and other continents
- the location of places studied and key spatial patterns that connect them (e.g. distribution of earthquakes and volcanoes along tectonic plate boundaries; population density patterns)
- that the flows of information, people and resources connect places and contribute to interdependence and inequality
- that the meanings people attach to location are influenced by perceptions of tradition, identity and control, and that these meanings can evoke a range of emotional responses from individuals and groups of people
- that peoples' experiences of place, and their environmental decision-making, are shaped by data, digital technologies and networks
- how places change over time in the past, present and future due to economic, environmental, social, political and technological factors, and how these changes affect peoples' identities and sense of place, as well as how places are perceived and represented by people and groups

Human and physical geographical knowledge

Pupils should learn:

- the three main rock types, their formation and main characteristics
- that Northern Ireland's physical landscapes have been shaped by the underlying rocks formed over hundreds of millions of years and the influence of past glaciation
- the systems and physical processes operating in coastal and river environments, including:
 - types of erosion, transportation and deposition, and the varied landforms these processes create
 - how people interact with river and coastal landscapes and sustainable management strategies

- the structure of the Earth (lithosphere, mantle, core) and that the lithosphere is divided into different plates; how plates move by slab pull and ridge push, the different plate boundaries formed by plate movement, and the landforms found there; the global distribution of earthquakes and volcanoes; the impacts of earthquakes and volcanic activity on different groups of people and environments; how countries prepare for and respond to tectonic hazards
- the global distribution of biomes, their climate characteristics and associated ecosystems; how people interact with at least one biome and the impact of this
- that weather is measured, recorded and analysed using instruments and data, and how simple atmospheric processes, including the three types of rainfall, influence weather and climate patterns over time
- the natural causes of climate change over hundreds of thousands of years and how proxies are used to estimate past global temperatures; the evidence for human contribution to recent climate change since the 1800s through the enhanced greenhouse effect; the diverse effects of climate change on people, environments and economies around the world; and how societies respond through mitigation and adaptation at individual, national and international levels, including through global agreements
- the cause, impact and management of at least one extreme weather event, and how weather and climate affect human activities (e.g. agriculture, resource use, settlement and transport)
- the cultural, economic, environmental and political dimensions of globalisation, and their impacts on people, economic activity and environments
- about global patterns of production, trade and consumption, including supply chains for at least one industry
- about global patterns of population distribution and population structure, including:
 - how and why populations change over time
 - the use of population pyramids and geodemographic data to examine economic and social implications of two contrasting population profiles
- about urbanisation and the growth of megacities, including sustainability in urban areas
- about how development varies globally, how it is measured using a range of economic and social indicators, and why it is a contested process
- about patterns of inequality within Northern Ireland and a country outside Europe and the causes and consequences of these inequalities

- about the global distribution of resources (e.g. energy, food, information, minerals and water); how access to resources is influenced by power, political decisions and territory; how cooperation and conflict over resources can be managed (e.g. emissions targets and climate commitments, energy security and trade)
- about how decisions about environmental issues are made at local, national and global scales, including the role of governments and international agreements

Geographical skills, enquiry and fieldwork

Pupils should learn:

- how the process of geographical enquiry works, including:
 - the stages of asking geographical questions
 - forming hypotheses (when appropriate)
 - using sampling techniques to collect appropriate qualitative and quantitative primary data with due consideration of ethical issues
 - drawing upon secondary sources of data
 - analysing patterns and relationships using qualitative and quantitative methods
 - communicating findings
 - drawing conclusions
 - evaluating methods and outcomes
- how geographers use a range of data and evidence and how geographical knowledge is generated, applied and revised as understanding of the world evolves
- how geographers use scientific evidence to understand Earth systems and human interactions (e.g. climate change), and how evaluating new evidence can result in changes to scientific consensus
- how geographers make decisions by analysing spatial data, considering different perspectives, and applying concepts and frameworks (e.g. sustainability and systems thinking) to evaluate the economic, environmental and social impacts at spatial and temporal scales
- that knowledge about the world is selected and presented in different formats (e.g. maps, photographs, advertisements, online posts or videos) by individuals or organisations at certain times and for particular reasons
- why different map projections exist, the distortions they create and how this affects the interpretation of location, scale and spatial relationships and that maps are representations of reality shaped by the choices and values of those who create them

- that GIS maps represent geographical data as multiple layers displayed on basemaps, using decimal latitude and longitude for precise location of points, and include legends and tools that enable users to interpret geographical data²
- that GIS maps have functions including pan and zoom, searching for locations and toggling layers off and on, selecting relevant basemaps, and that users can use tools and adjust features to explore patterns, relationships and interactions³
- that imagery from remote sensing, including satellite imagery, is used to monitor changes or events (e.g. flooding, urbanisation) over time

Pupils should learn to:

- use maps (e.g. atlases, Ordnance Survey maps) and digital maps, including GIS in order to:
 - interpret spatial patterns
 - extract information and meaning from different map types
- locate places, identify landforms, understand terrain and interpret maps by using 6-figure grid references and scale
- use and evaluate a range of geographical materials, including digital sources

Pupils should undertake:

- a full geographical enquiry, including planning, carrying out and evaluating fieldwork to support their geographical learning outside the school's immediate local area

2 Note for purposes of the consultation phase: The intention is that the minimum entitlement to GIS use will be whole-class demonstration by the teacher. This will be explained in later documentation on pedagogy.

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