Geographical Enquiry and Fieldwork

How we plan and carry out fieldwork at Lawn, from EYFS to Year 6

Fieldwork

Fieldwork combines knowledge with skill and requires children to think about what places are like and why, where places are and why, and how they connect to other places. Good fieldwork:

- Allows pupils to enquire about places at first-hand.
- Requires pupils to use and practise a range of skills in a variety of contexts.
- Builds core knowledge and a sense of place.
- Has a strong spatial dimension and develops understanding of location.
- Revisits and investigates the same location over time, noting change and different aspects of place.
- Visits a range of places near and far and encourages children to look further and deeper.
- Develops creative and critical thinking.
- Builds on pupils' own questions and ideas.
- Often has purposeful outcomes.

From the Royal Geographical Society website

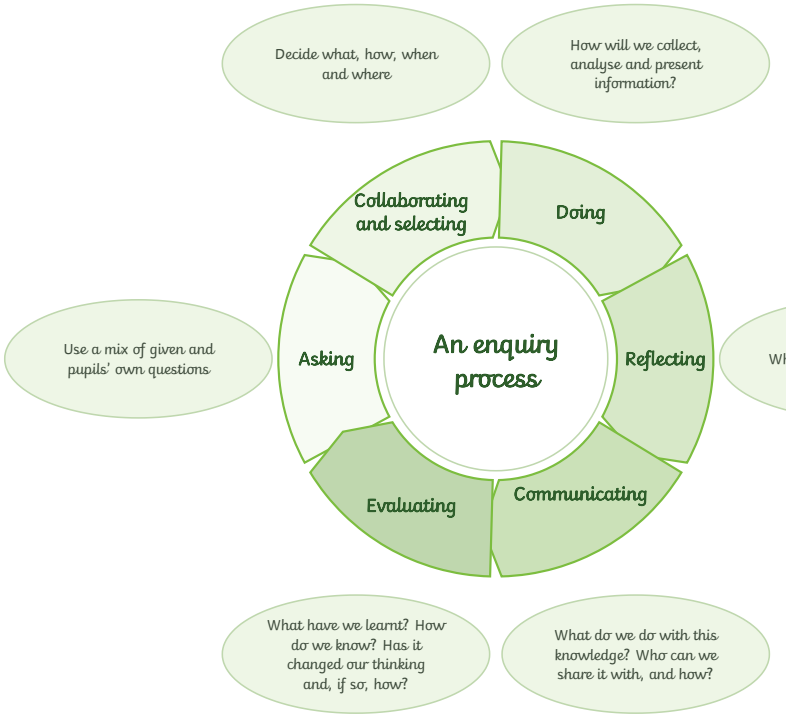
Risk assessments and trips

Geography field trips, even into the local area, are inputted onto **Evolve** and authorised in line with our school's guidelines on risk assessments and ratios.

Our enquiry process

This is the process we follow when conducting fieldwork here at Lawn. It makes fieldwork purposeful and gives children the opportunity to 'think like geographers' through a process of enquiry.

Create a genuine 'need to know' as a starting point



Our fieldwork process

1. Start with questioning
2. Plan how to answer this question
3. Collect your data
4. Analyse your data
5. Present your data
6. Communicate your results
7. Evaluate your enquiry

EYFS Fieldwork experiences in the Early Years Foundation Stage (ages 3–5 years)

EYFS pupils should have plentiful opportunities to freely explore their EYFS setting and outdoor area, and to make visits to places in the immediate vicinity of the school (e.g. local streets, park, shop, church or mosque). They can become familiar with these places through first-hand sensory exploration, observation and talk. They should have opportunities to ask questions and follow their own interests. These early experiences will provide opportunities for language development as pupils name and describe what they see in discussion with peers and adults.

Young pupils should be provided with opportunities to:

- explore their setting's outdoor area, noticing and naming its features (e.g. play equipment, different areas and surfaces, flower beds)
- experience different weather conditions and their impact on the environment
- examine and discuss natural objects (e.g. leaves, twigs, stones)
- explore the immediate local area through walks and visits to selected sites

During and after their explorations, pupils should have opportunities to record what they observe and notice by:

- using small world play or the role-play area to represent a visited place
- making drawings (e.g. of their favourite place in the outdoor area, what they saw at the park)
- taking digital photos (e.g. of a collection of natural objects, buildings in the locality)
- sequencing photos to recall features seen on a visit or short walk
- drawing a map (e.g. of the outdoor area)
- counting (e.g. cars parked at the start/end of the day)
- expressing their feelings about places they visit, saying which features they like/dislike

EYFS fieldwork starting points

- What natural objects can we find in our environment?
- How can we help someone new find their way around our classroom?
- Which is the favourite front door colour on our school's street?
- How many cars fit in our school's car park?
- How does the weather affect our playground?

Useful websites

- Royal Geographical Society – Primary fieldwork (rgs.org)
- Research review series: geography (gov.uk)
- A summary of Ofsted's geography research report for primary teachers and leaders (marcrhayes.com)
- Geography: learning to make a world of difference (Ofsted report)

Key Stage 1 Years 1 and 2

Fieldwork opportunities

Pupils in Key Stage 1 should be provided with opportunities to:

- investigate the physical and human features of the school and school grounds: naming and describing what they see (e.g. different areas including playground, car park, field, wildlife area) and how these areas are used; routes around the school site, people's jobs, places that have been/could be improved, and so on
- investigate different weather conditions through observation and by making and using simple measurement devices (e.g. to record wind direction, to measure rainfall)
- observe and record seasonal changes (e.g. to flowering plants and deciduous trees) in the school grounds and local area
- explore the local area of the school to investigate the range of buildings, roads, green spaces and other local features
- visit some local facilities (e.g. shops, a library, a health centre) and talk about what happens there and investigate why people go there
- take a short journey by bus, tram or train to investigate a slightly more distant site that contrasts with the immediate local area
- visit a park or local green space to observe its physical and human features and investigate how people use and enjoy it
- investigate environmental issues (e.g. lack of play facilities, where litter collects, road safety issues) in the school grounds or local area

Fieldwork techniques

Pupils should have opportunities to plan and conduct geographical investigations that include fieldwork, and to develop skills in using a range of simple techniques for collecting, analysing and presenting what they learn through fieldwork, including:

- using small world play, model making, or the classroom role-play area to represent a visited place (e.g. a shop, the library or health centre)
- adding details to a teacher-prepared drawing (e.g. doors, windows and other features to the outline of a house)
- making annotated drawings to show variations (e.g. in a row of houses in a local street)
- drawing a freehand map (e.g. of the school grounds, local street or park)
- relating a large-scale plan (e.g. of the school grounds or a local street) to the environment, identifying known features
- marking information on a large-scale plan (e.g. of the school grounds or a local street) using colour or symbols to record observations
- using a simple compass and cardinal compass directions (north, south, west, east)
- taking digital photos (e.g. of buildings in the locality, things seen on a bus journey)
- making digital audio recordings when interviewing someone (e.g. shop worker, librarian, nurse) about their job
- collecting quantitative data (e.g. to create a pictogram of favourite places to play or how pupils travel to school)
- using a questionnaire (e.g. to find out the most popular options for improving playtimes)
- collecting and sorting natural objects (e.g. leaves, twigs, stones) to investigate their properties
- using a simple recording technique (e.g. smiley/sad faces worksheet) to express their feelings about a specific place and explaining why they like/dislike some of its features

Year 1 fieldwork starting points

- Which parts of our school are used most?
- Which is the quickest route from our classroom to the playground?
- What changes can be seen on our site through the seasons?
- How can we let visitors know where things are in our school?
- Where is the quietest area of our school?
- Which direction does the wind blow in most of the time?
- What different jobs do people do in our school?

Year 2 fieldwork starting points

- What different types of transport use our road?
- Where do our pupils come from and how do they get to school?
- What effect does our school have on our street?
- What types of building are in our community?
- How can we let visitors know where things are in our local area?
- Can a street survey help us understand our street?
- What are the predominant sounds in our local area?

Lower Key Stage 2 Years 3 and 4

Fieldwork opportunities

Pupils in lower Key Stage 2 should be provided with opportunities:

- *to use the school and its grounds as a site for studying aspects of physical and human geography* by investigating questions such as 'Where does the water go when it rains?', 'How do we travel to school?' and 'Where does the food for school dinners come from?'
- *when learning about the water cycle, weather and climate,* to investigate and record different weather phenomena through observation and by using standard measurement devices (e.g. thermometers, rain gauges and anemometers)
- *when learning about biomes and vegetation belts,* to visit a woodland to study the trees, plants and animals, as an ecosystem
- *when learning about land use,* to investigate local buildings, land use and local facilities and explore issues of environmental quality and value (e.g. by investigating which spaces or places are valued by the local community)
- *when learning about economic activities,* to investigate local shops (e.g. to find out how far people travel to them and why) or investigate local journeys and routes, including road safety, public transport provision and more sustainable travel choices
- *when learning about natural resources,* to explore issues of sustainability in everyday life (e.g. energy generation and use, water supply and use)
- *take fieldtrips to more distant places* (e.g. farm, water treatment plant, botanical gardens) to investigate their physical and human geography, as appropriate to the curriculum plan

Fieldwork techniques

Pupils should have opportunities to plan and conduct geographical investigations that necessitate fieldwork, and to develop skills in a range of standard techniques for collecting, analysing and presenting what they learn through fieldwork, including:

- making models, annotated drawings and field sketches to record observations
- drawing freehand maps of routes (e.g. of a walk to a site in the local area)
- relating a large-scale plan of the local area or fieldwork site to the environment, identifying features relevant to the enquiry
- recording selected geographical information on a map or large-scale plan, using colour or symbols and a key
- taking digital photos and annotating them with labels or captions
- making digital audio recordings for a specific purpose (e.g. traffic noise)
- collecting, analysing and presenting quantitative data in charts and graphs
- designing and using a questionnaire to collect quantitative fieldwork data (e.g. to compare how far people travel to different types of shop)
- designing and conducting interviews (e.g. to investigate which spaces/places local people value)
- using simple sampling techniques appropriately (e.g. time sampling when conducting a traffic survey)
- using a simplified Likert scale to record their judgements of environmental quality (e.g. in streets near the school)
- developing a simple method of recording their feelings about a place or site

Year 3 fieldwork starting points

- What can the ages of houses in our area tell us about the growth of our community?
- What facilities are in this area?
- How would a new housing estate change our local area?
- Visit a local construction site. How will this change our area?
- How is land used in our area?
- How do people feel about living in our community?
- How is speeding controlled in our area?
- Where does the food we eat at lunchtime come from?

Year 4 fieldwork starting points

- How is our school different to another school?
- Do we use too much water in our school?
- Is our local river cleaner than the Thames?
- Which would be the best week/month to book a holiday in?
- How has our local area changed over time?
- How is our local area different to a town centre/rural area?
- What is the environmental quality of the streets in our community like?

Upper Key Stage 2 Years 5 and 6

Fieldwork opportunities

Pupils in upper Key Stage 2 should be provided with opportunities:

- *to use the school and its grounds as a site for studying aspects of physical and human geography* by investigating questions such as 'How can our school reduce its plastic waste?' and 'How can we make our school grounds more bee friendly?'
- *when learning about rivers,* to visit a local stream or river to investigate its physical features (e.g. meanders, sites of erosion and deposition) and its use by people now and in the past
- *when learning about settlements,* to investigate how buildings, land use and local facilities have changed over time; and investigate local development plans through visits to derelict sites, empty shops or buildings or places where developments (e.g. road, housing, industrial, retail or leisure schemes) are proposed
- *when learning about economic activities,* to investigate the range and location of primary, secondary and tertiary businesses in the local area
- *when learning about natural resources and trade,* to explore issues of sustainability in everyday life, including how everyday goods (e.g. food or clothing) are produced and traded, as well as consumption, waste and recycling
- *take fieldtrips to unfamiliar environments* to investigate the physical and human geography of those areas (e.g. mountains, rural areas, beaches) as appropriate to the curriculum plan

Fieldwork techniques

Pupils should have opportunities to plan and conduct geographical investigations that necessitate fieldwork, and to develop skills in a range of standard techniques for collecting, analysing and presenting what they learn through fieldwork, including:

- making models, annotated drawings and field sketches to record observations
- drawing freehand maps (e.g. of a site they have visited)
- relating large-scale plans to the fieldwork site, identifying relevant features
- recording selected geographical data on a map or large-scale plan, using colour or symbols and a key
- taking digital photos and annotating them with labels or captions
- making digital audio recordings (e.g. to create soundscapes)
- collecting, analysing and presenting quantitative data in charts and graphs
- designing and using a questionnaire to collect qualitative data (e.g. to find out and compare pupils' views on plastic waste)
- designing and conducting fieldwork interviews (e.g. to establish the range of views local people hold about a proposed development)
- using standard field sampling techniques appropriately (e.g. taking water samples from a stream)
- designing and using a tool to record their feelings about the advantages and disadvantages of a proposed development
- conducting a transect to observe changes in buildings and land use

Year 5 fieldwork starting points

- How does land use differ in _____ and in our local area?
- What is the environmental impact of human actions on our local river?
- How do physical/human features differ in _____ and our local area?
- How do people feel about living in _____? Does this differ from our local area?
- Which areas are more reliant on tourism?
- How have rivers' uses by humans changed over time?
- How can we reduce our plastic waste?

Year 6 fieldwork starting points

- Does our food need to travel long distances?
- Where is locally farmed food sold?
- Do we import more food than we grow?
- Does climate change have an impact on our locality?
- How could our physical/human landscape support tourism in our area?
- What primary, secondary and tertiary businesses are in our area?
- How could we develop a local derelict site?