

## GEOGRAPHY

### INTENT

‘Geography is a living, breathing subject, constantly adapting itself to change. It is dynamic and relevant. For me geography is a great adventure with a purpose. Geography is a subject which holds the key to our future’ (Michael Palin)

Geography speaks directly to young people’s curiosity, wonder and concern for the world around them. It is a subject that can provide them with the knowledge and competencies they need to understand and contribute to the world they live in.



At Beech Grove Primary, our geography curriculum has been ambitiously designed by our school geography leadership team in conjunction with The Geographical Association and reflects the very latest in educational research.

At Beech Grove Primary, we promote curiosity, creativity and critical thinking about the world that will equip our children to make their own way through it. We aim to broaden the horizons of our children through a curriculum which moves outwards from the familiar to the less familiar. We aim to break down barriers of limited experience and spark an enthusiasm in the world beyond the children’s immediate surroundings.

Our ‘big picture’ of expectations and outcomes is informed by our understanding of how pupils progress in geography: moving from concrete to abstract thought that develops in ever more complex ways. As pupils’ knowledge and understanding of geography grow, their vocabulary and reasoning become more complex: they become more able to link ideas together, make reasoned arguments and investigate and analyse at different scales of enquiry.



Pupils begin by learning about their locality in EYFS and KS1 and continue to in more depth at KS2, while also gaining a sense of the wider world. Gradually they begin to fill in the gaps of their mental world map like pieces of a jigsaw. As pupils develop the ability to think more critically and at a range of scales, the planned learning offers them opportunities to apply and connect their knowledge.



## A curriculum interwoven with substantive and disciplinary knowledge

Our curriculum develops substantive knowledge alongside a growing understanding of geographical concepts and a developing competence in geographical practice and application is what gives learners the capability to think and work like geographers, rather than just accumulating world knowledge. This is because knowledge of the world must be shaped by disciplinary approaches in order to become geographical knowledge. In the same way, geography's disciplinary knowledge and approaches are only meaningful to learners when they are applied and developed in the particular geographical contexts of places, environments, topics, issues and exemplars studied.



## A curriculum built around geography's key concepts.

See Appendix 1 for examples of how we have interwoven key concepts (Geographical Association) into our curriculum in an appropriate and progressive manner.

## Geography's key concepts



Place- what its like, what happens there, how it changes, emotion response



Space- location, distribution, patterns and network connections, layout



Environment- physical & human processes, actions and features, change



Scale- local, regional, national, continental, global



Environmental impact- interactions, change, usage, sustainability, effects, response



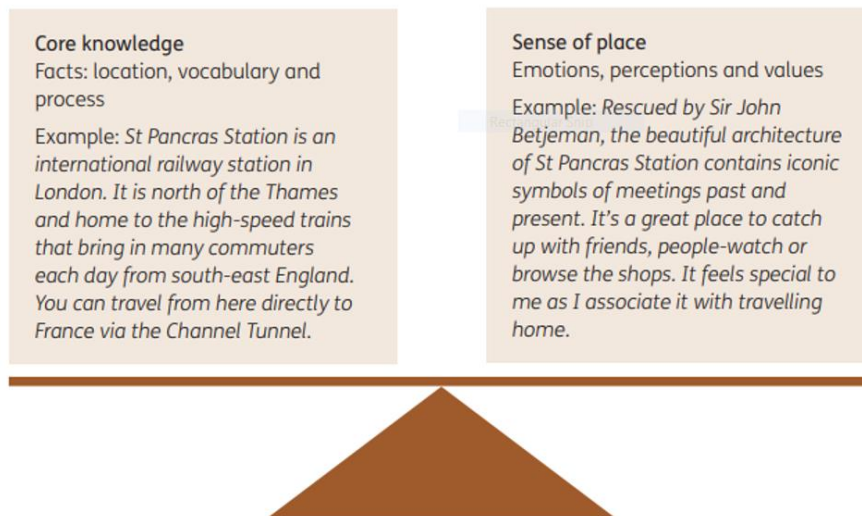
Cultural awareness- diversity, disparity, connections, social identity, values



Interconnections- links between features, places, events and people

## A curriculum where children think and act like geographers

Opportunities for children to think like and act like geographers are interwoven into fieldwork opportunities where children record and analyse their findings on a progressively designed template bespoke to each key stage. As a school, we promote a 'sense of place' in our annual place studies. This puts their geographical learning in context: *"allowing greater awareness of people, the environment, the relationships between them and the child's place in this relationship. This sense of belonging is recognised as being significant in children's social and emotional development and in preparing them for more formal learning."* (Ofsted Research Review Series.) See place knowledge below for further planned opportunities to think and act like a geographer.



## A curriculum designed to meet the needs of the children in our setting.

Beech Grove Primary is in an area of high social deprivation; many of our children have very limited life experiences and have often not left their local area. It is essential then that our curriculum is designed to enrich our children's lives through visits to rural settings and coastal locations to extend their horizons (this is part of our school mission statement)

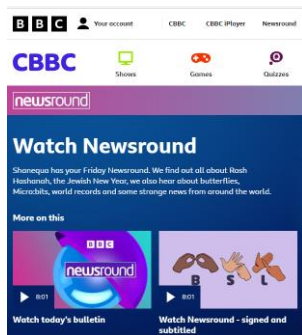


In addition to extending horizons, we also feel it is crucial for children to reflect on their local area and strive to make a contribution to it. We want our children to have a sense of pride in where they come from and so each year group studies the local area in a fieldwork project annually. We link up with community organisations to help children feel empowered to improve their local area e.g. through visits to recycling centres. We have worked closely with Thirteen housing and our Year 5 children have named the new estate opposite school after reflecting on the local history of the area. Year 3 are also sending each new home a welcome postcard explaining why they love where they live and to promote a sense of community

## A curriculum that teaches children about current world issues and promotes critical thinking in preparation for their next stage in education

*“The educational value of geography can be enhanced by developing young people’s capabilities as human beings, to enable them to use their geographical understanding to live in harmony with others and to share responsibility for the well-being of the planet. aims to ensure that young people are geographically informed, morally and ethically aware, and able to develop their own values and potential as citizens in the 21st century.”* Geographical Association

In geography at Beech Grove Primary, pupils draw on, address, challenge and think beyond their current experience and views of the world. By regularly watching Newsround, KS2 pupils use contemporary issues and events in the news to apply their learning in a more open-ended debatable context.



In addition to national curriculum objectives, we have introduced a strand of Environmental learning through the curriculum. Children learn about issues that are important to them and are empowered to make changes in their own lives. They learn about how physical and human geography are dependent on each other and the consequences for when there is an imbalance preparing them for future learning in KS3

Enabling pupils to learn about and debate such concerns, including examining the facts critically and offering their views, engages them in constructing fuller and increasingly deeper senses of the world. Equally, it helps them begin to recognise the limits of their knowledge and understanding. It can foster their involvement and potential contribution as citizens.

Developing critical thinking skills prepares them to be independent learners, able to reflect critically on what they read, make informed decisions and in turn contribute their own ideas in a clear and rational way.

**A curriculum which promotes our next-door neighbour qualities on a global scale.**

*‘The study of geography is about more than just memorizing places on a map. It’s about understanding the complexity of our world, appreciating the diversity of cultures that exists across continents. And in the end, it’s about using all that knowledge to help bridge divides and bring people together’ (US President, Barack Obama).*



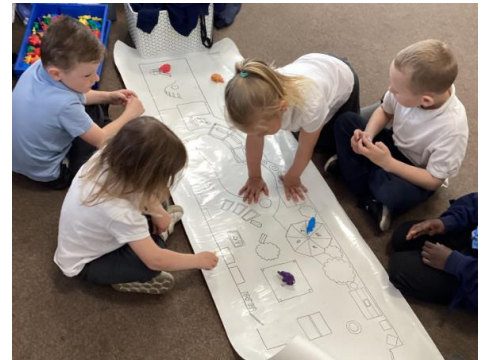
Our next-door neighbour qualities of tolerance, respect and kindness are lived and breathed in our geography curriculum, which also promotes British Values. Our project on migration in Year 5 teaches children the many reasons why people move countries and explores what the terms asylum seeker and refugee mean. Our environmental learning strand and local area studies promote what it is to be a good next-door neighbour on both a local and global scale.



## **PROGRESSION IN THE GEOGRAPHY NATIONAL CURRICULUM**

### **Locational Knowledge**

The local area is prioritised in our curriculum through an annual fieldwork project. We use Digimaps (recommended by the GA) in addition to globes and atlases to deliver our mapping skills and follow their progression document for each year group. An integrated and contextualised use of maps is in place across the curriculum to help pupils identify and cement understanding of key concepts.



### **Place Knowledge**

Each year group conducts a place study annually. This is an opportunity to learn about a place in depth and to think and act like a geographer. Children are encouraged to be curious and think about a sense of place progressively. We have developed our own Beech Grove template to help frame the progression and encourage older children to act like geographers through the analysis of data.

- Where is this place?
- What is it like?
- How is it changing?

### **Human and Physical Geography**

Learning has been carefully sequenced to promote reinforcement and progressive development of human and physical geography. Composite knowledge such as climate, latitude and longitude are studied in LKS2 before composite knowledge such as biomes in Year 5. The interconnectedness (key concept) of human and physical processes are emphasised in all teaching e.g. settlement beside the River Nile. Before studying food or trade, it is important to know how climate patterns vary and the impact this has on global farming and produce; and before studying river processes in detail, it is helpful to understand the role of the water cycle.

### **Fieldwork**

Beech Grove Primary follow the GA's progression document for fieldwork building in opportunities for exploration and enquiry. EYFS pupils have plentiful opportunities for free exploration of their setting and outdoor area and visit places in the immediate vicinity. They become familiar with these places through first-hand sensory exploration, observation and talk. Pupils have opportunities to ask questions and follow their own interests. An initial focus on their own locality gives pupils an opportunity to develop fieldwork skills in a familiar environment. This is applied further afield as the pupils progress through school and addresses the inexperience's of many of our children; it also informs their study of contrasting localities. What is learned locally through fieldwork is revisited and explored in different contexts with increasing complexity in KS2. Learners ask and answer



increasingly more complex geographical questions and use increasingly specific vocabulary to name and describe the features they observe. They employ an increasingly sophisticated range of techniques to collect, analyse, evaluate and communicate geographical data.

*“Progression in fieldwork is concerned with pupils’ competence in geographical enquiry, and the development and application of their skills in collecting and presenting fieldwork data.”*  
(GA, 2020).



EYFS

What is special about our school grounds?

YEAR 1

How can we make our area better?

YEAR 2

What wildlife visits our area?

What is unique about where we live?



YEAR 3

How is the land used in our local area?

YEAR 6

Which trees are planted in our local area and why are they important?

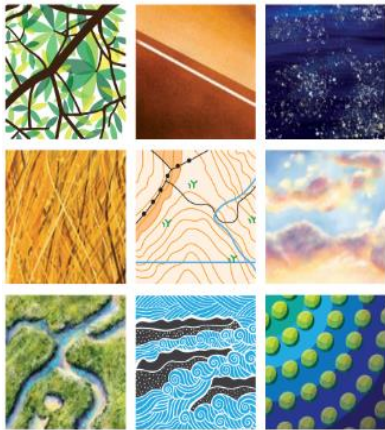
YEAR 5

Who lives here and why?

YEAR 4

How has our area changed?

## IMPLEMENTATION



Geography lessons in KS1 and KS2 will begin with a question linked to prior knowledge and vocabulary associated with the learning context. Every lesson will have an element of mapping in context of the place/location that is relevant to the learning. Human or physical processes often inform lesson content and their interconnectedness is made explicit.

Each year group conducts fieldwork twice a year: once through a local lens and secondly in a contrasting environment. Fieldwork is recorded on a template, which progresses in complexity through each key stage.

The school's subject leadership team attend regular CPD from The Geographical Association and this knowledge is shared with staff. Newsletters and regular contact with the GA ensures the subject's content and pedagogy are continually up to date.

High-quality resources such as Digimaps are often used in lessons to bring learning alive. In KS2, opportunities for debate are utilised. Providing opportunities to debate conflicting viewpoints, question the validity of evidence, embed deeper thinking and engage in meaningful and evidence-informed debate creates a learning environment conducive to teaching critical thinking.

Children's geographical knowledge and skills are assessed continuously in the short term through answers to lesson starters, class work produced and discussion. End of topic quizzes test key substantive knowledge and fieldwork responses help assess geographical skills and thinking. Place study work enables children to demonstrate a depth of knowledge in context and provides opportunities to act and think like a geographer. GA benchmarks for each key stage are also considered when assessing a child's geographical knowledge and skills.. Adaptions to following lessons are considered in response to assessment.





## IMPACT

At Beech Grove Primary, children will know more and remember more by revisiting and consolidating key knowledge in lesson starters, which feature retrieval questions and key vocabulary relevant to their current learning.

Children are taught to think critically through enquiry led teaching approaches and debate their opinions developing their own values and promoting our school next-door neighbour qualities on a global scale.

Learning geography at Beech Grove Primary gives pupils the skills to make connections between contemporary geographical issues, the academic subject and their experiences.

Children feel connected to other people and places in the world. They think about their future and want to shape it with optimism and hope. Children understand more about where they live and the world around them so they can help look after it.

Geographical knowledge and skills prepare children for secondary school and beyond.



## APPENDIX 1

### KEY CONCEPTS IN GEOGRAPHY AND THEIR SPIRAL COVERAGE

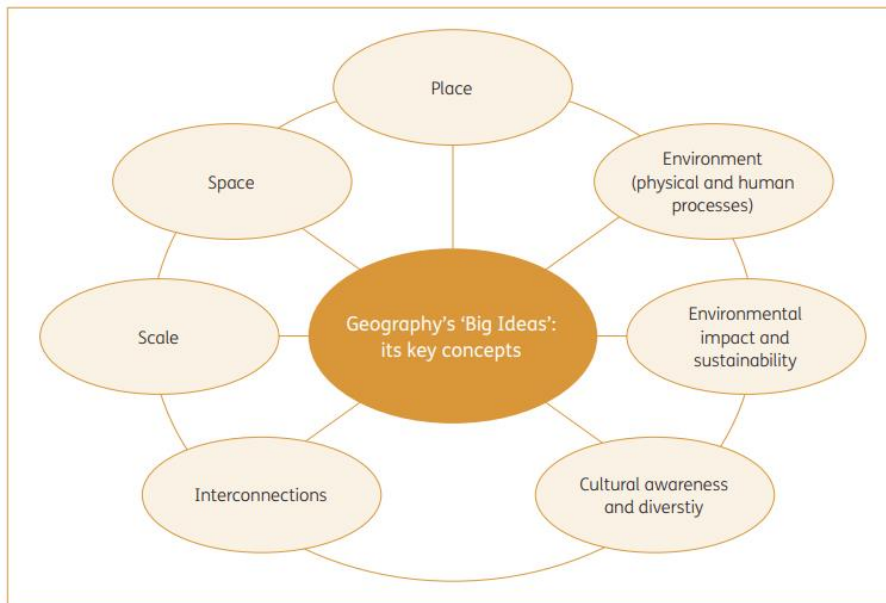


Figure 5: Geography's 'big ideas' or key concepts (after Catling and Willy, 2018, p. 35).

### Geography's key concepts

	Place- what its like, what happens there, how it changes, emotion response
	Space- location, distribution, patterns and network connections, layout
	Environment- physical & human processes, actions and features, change
	Scale- local, regional, national, continental, global
	Environmental impact- interactions, change, usage, sustainability, effects, response
	Cultural awareness- diversity, disparity, connections, social identity, values
	Interconnections- links between features, places, events and people

### KEY CONCEPT COVERAGE AND PROGRESSION

KEY STAGE	KEY CONCEPTS COVERED				
EYFS	PLACE				
KS1	PLACE	SPACE	SCALE	ENVIRONMENT	
LKS2	PLACE	SPACE INTERCONNECTIONS	SCALE	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	
UKS2	PLACE	SPACE INTERCONNECTIONS	SCALE	ENVIRONMENT IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY	CULTURE AND DIVERSITY

## PLACE

*Refers to what is in places and what happens there, ways places change and develop, their character and what they are like, how we conceive of and respond to places, whether we prefer them to stay the same or evolve. Place is multifaceted, involving cognitive and affective understandings of places. (Geographical Association)*

Children's place knowledge develops from a secure understanding of their school grounds in EYFS expanding to their local and surrounding area through explorative and investigative fieldwork. Children are given first hand experiences of contrasting environments to their own urban setting by visiting rural countryside, forest and beaches. Despite their proximity, many of these areas are rarely visited by the children's families and so these experiences are essential. Learning about our local area is prioritised at Beech Grove Primary and is revisited annually by every year group as a way of living and breathing our school's next-door neighbour qualities and promoting active citizenship.

	LOCAL AREA STUDY What is unique about our local area?	CONTRASTING ENVIRONMENT
EYFS	What is special about our school grounds?	
YEAR 1	How can we make our area better?	Saltholme: <i>Saltholme is a wildlife oasis, with wildflower meadows, bird-rich pools and lakes, and whispering grasslands to explore.</i> Why do birds choose to visit here?
YEAR 2	What wildlife visits our school?	Coast: Rock pool exploration
YEAR 3	How is the land used in our local area?	River Tees study
YEAR 4	How has our area changed?	Housesteads Roman Fort <i>countryside</i> Sketching maps activity
YEAR 5	Who lives here and why?	Guisborough Forest What are the microhabitats of invertebrates in the temperate forest biome?
YEAR 6	Which trees are planted in our local area and why are they important?	Saltburn beach: Who visits Saltburn and why? (tourism focus)

Each year group studies 'a place' relevant to their geography theme in learning. Substantive knowledge is combined with 'a sense of place' to bring geography learning alive for the children. As the children progress through school, their depth of knowledge about a place expands. In KS1 children focus on the location, human and physical features and the weather of a place. In LKS2, children additionally consider climate and the population of a place and in UKS2 they think about culture and trade in their place study. Children 'think like geographers' when they explore case studies and interpret geographical data in KS2 through place study. They answer investigative questions: What is this place like? What physical and human features does it have? Who lives here and why? How is this place changing and why?

	PLACE STUDY
EYFS	Our local area
YEAR 1	Brasilia
YEAR 2	Bondi Beach and Saltburn
YEAR 3	Grindavik (Iceland)
YEAR 4	Rome
YEAR 5	Mexico
YEAR 6	The Galapagos Islands

## **SCALE**

*Scale provides the lens to look at the world, from very small sites to local, regional, national, continental and oceanic areas, to the whole world. Scale enables many relationships to be identified and particular and wide-ranging patterns and connections to be recognised. Scale supports understanding environmental and place processes and making predictions. (Geographical Association)*

At Beech Grove Primary knowledge extends from the familiar and concrete (local area) to unfamiliar and abstract (world.) For instance when Year 4 learn about volcanoes, they explore reasons for their location globally but 'zoom in' to see the impact of living beside a volcano when studying a region of Iceland - Grindavik. Year 5 learn about global events such as migration and refugees: pupils start with our own school and its catchment area to find out more about where people have come from. They then move on to looking at regional, and then national, boundaries, where people migrate from and to and their many reasons for doing so. In Year 6, children learn on a global scale how carbon emissions are changing climate patterns but then 'zoom in' and make connections to how we can reduce carbon emission as a school and impact change by writing to our MP.

## **SPACE**

*refers to where features and places are located, their distribution, the patterns they form and the networks connecting them. Space describes the formal layout of the natural and human environment and their fluidity and change. It enables us to recognise and explain the processes affecting them. (Geographical Association)*

Children learn how to map a space from KS1 and then begin to link the physical and human geography of a space together when considering why people settled in Middlesbrough and around the River Tees. In UKS2, children look at the concept of space on a larger scale when learning about migration and trade.

## **INTERCONNECTIONS**

*refers to the nature and significance of links between features, places, events and people. It enables recognition and appreciation of interdependence, locally, regionally or globally, whether ecological or socially generated. It examines the importance and impact of maintaining, modifying or breaking interconnections. (Geographical Association)*

At Beech Grove Primary links are continually made between features, places, events and people within geography and the wider curriculum. The interconnectedness of physical and human geography is often explored in mapping activities.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

Environment – human and physical processes.

*relates to the land and oceanic surface of Earth, its geology and its atmosphere. It includes the range of Earth's natural and people-created features, and the natural and human actions affecting the world. It explains the processes that create and change natural, built, modified and social environments. This concept helps us predict and plan what might happen (Geographical Association)*

From KS1, children learn about links between physical and human geography e.g. why people choose to go to the seaside on holiday. Future themes in learning across key stage 2 further develop this: settlement and land use, trade, tourism.

	<b>Themes in learning</b>
<b>EYFS</b>	a sense of place
<b>YEAR 1</b>	Weather
<b>YEAR 2</b>	Coast
<b>YEAR 3</b>	Land use, volcanoes and earthquakes, rivers
<b>YEAR 4</b>	Settlement, mountains, oceans
<b>YEAR 5</b>	Climate, biomes, migration, trade
<b>YEAR 6</b>	Climate change, biomes, tourism

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

*concerns the interactions between the natural and human environments and their effects on each other, particularly of change and its consequences. It examines the quality, management and care of environments, places and lives. It considers the responsible and exploitative uses of Earth's resources alongside responses to the degrading of natural and modified environments and damage to people's lives. It considers ways to improve people's futures and Earth, and the ethics of doing so. (Geographical Association)*

Environmental impact is prioritised in Beech Grove Primary as we promote our next-door neighbour qualities through a global lens. In Year 1, children litter pick in their local fieldwork activity. Year 2 read 'The Mess That We Made' when studying coasts, teaching them about pollution in our oceans. Year 3 learn about river pollution, Year 4 the bleaching of the coral reef and Year 6 study the melting of polar ice caps due to climate change.

	<b>Environmental Learning</b>
<b>EYFS</b>	a sense of place
<b>YEAR 1</b>	looking after our local area – litter picking
<b>YEAR 2</b>	Impact of rubbish on the ocean and marine life
<b>YEAR 3</b>	River pollution
<b>YEAR 4</b>	Human impact on the Great Barrier Reef
<b>YEAR 5</b>	Migration linked to natural disaster/famine
<b>YEAR 6</b>	Climate change, biomes, tourism

## **CULTURE AND DIVERSITY**

*encompasses local and global diversity and the disparities in and of people's lives and communities and their connections to the natural world. It encompasses social and cultural interests and the dynamics in shared, common and different ways in which people use environmental resources, adapt places, interact and value and modify or conserve their local and national cultures, places and identities. (Geographical Association)*

The theme of culture and diversity is explored in our migration topic in Year 5. In Year 6, The Galapagos Islands are studied within the context of diversity of animals species and their adaptation to this unique

environment. National Identity is discussed in Year 6 as a sense of belonging to a place and as a way of celebrating cultural similarities and differences within the 4 nations of the UK

Concept	Key questions
<p><b>Place</b> Place is at the heart of geography. According to the philosopher Yi Fu Tuan (1977), places are spaces given meaning; a product of <b>human and environment interactions</b>, redolent of <b>culture and diversity</b>. We can enquire about and measure a vast array of data about 'place', some of which is factual and some emotive. Enquiry about place ranges from the rudimentary, but essential, recognition and naming to the descriptive, comparative, explanatory and analytic.</p>	<p>What is this place like? What physical and human features does it have? What happens here? How does it compare to...? Who lives here and why? What do the people who live here do? How is the place changing and why? How are people changing this environment? What might it look like in the future?</p>
<p><b>Space</b> The 'whereness' of geography matters. Without a spatial element, the learning might be beautiful and relevant and engaging, but it won't be geography. For example, a rich description of the Amazon rainforest without any spatial context is a good piece of prose, not geography – a failing noted by Ofsted inspectors. The spatial element also helps pupils to better understand <b>environmental impact and sustainability</b>.</p>	<p>Where is this place? How can it be mapped? Why is it here and not there? (In the case of rainforests, for example, their spatial location explains how the global climate system functions.) What is special about this location? How does this place connect to other places (<b>interconnections</b>)?</p>
<p><b>Scale</b> The study of geography also requires an understanding of scale. We 'zoom' in and out of places to examine how they are nested inside each other and to discover how we can both generalise and be place-specific. For example, while studying a country in Africa we zoom into the continent, locate the country in question and consider how its location within the continent shapes its characteristics. We can explore country generalities and core knowledge such as the location, and name key geographical features, but by zooming in further to town, village and family level, we can add detail, variety and complexity. Zooming in to contrasting aspects of places avoids the 'single story' and guards against stereotypical representation.</p> <p>Recognising scale enables us to see Africa as a continent, not a country; it allows us to explore differences between local, regional, national, international and global meanings and how they work together. Younger pupils need places near and far explored at a very accessible local scale as well as at a global scale. As their cognitive development allows them to think in more abstract terms, they can start to fill in the complex array of scales in between and discern the arbitrary political distinctions between different places.</p>	<p>How does this place change as we 'zoom' in and out? How do places 'fit' together? What more can we find out by zooming in on a place? How can we identify and explain different patterns by considering different scales? How does scale provide different 'stories' about a place and offer alternative perspectives? How do places on a different scale work together – the local and the regional, or the national and the international, for instance? How can scale enable pupils to relate the local to the global?</p>

**Figure 12:** A checklist for the core concepts or 'big ideas'.