

# Exploring where we play

Open spaces provide the context for map making, route planning and exploration.

## Geographical enquiry and skills

- enquiry – asking and answering questions, planning investigations and fieldwork
- fieldwork – observation, photography and collecting items
- map work – using a map to plan a route and to recognise human and physical features, making a collage map, using symbols and a key
- using aerial photos
- using and understanding geographical vocabulary
- evaluating play facilities

## Geographical knowledge and understanding

- features of the local area – parks and open spaces
- recreational activities in parks
- the value of parks and open spaces



See page 8 for advice on risk management.

To access extra resources from the Everyday Guides web page, see page 2.



Young children often value parks and open spaces as areas for play and exploration or as peaceful surroundings. As pupils are naturally drawn to parks, such places offer opportunities to study aspects of physical geography (including the landscape, plants and animals) and human geography, including land use and recreation. You can capitalise on pupils' wealth of experiences of open spaces – be they of the school grounds and local area or of more distant open spaces (such as National Parks) during day trips or holidays.

## Talk about a local play area

Ask pupils where they prefer to play; they will probably name several places, including open spaces and parks in the local area. Establish what they like about these places and what they do there. Use Google Maps to look at a satellite image of the local area on the interactive whiteboard. Invite each pupil in turn to identify a key feature (the school, a main road, a pathway, a shop, a post box, etc.) to help them make sense of the image. Once everyone has had a turn, find the nearest park/play space and explain that they are going to find out more about it by doing some fieldwork there.

## Teaching activities



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### Our walk to the park

Working as a class, use Google Maps and/or local street maps to plan a route to the park. If pupils are more familiar with local roads and footpaths than you, invite pairs to suggest routes. Encourage them to study Google Street View images and identify potential risks along the way (e.g. the safest places to cross roads, what to do on very narrow footpaths). Together, agree a safe route.

As they walk the route, encourage pupils to take photos and to name and describe what they see. Back at school, pupils sort prints of their photos into the order they were taken and write a caption describing each image. Relate the photos to an OS street map or large-scale plan and create a display about the walk.

### My ideal play space

At the park, encourage pupils to think about how they feel about the play facilities: which things do they like most and least? How could the play area be improved? Back in the classroom, invite pupils to create a model or draw a picture of their ideal play space. Once the models and pictures are complete, organise a 'show and tell' session. Display the work and provide sticky notes for pupils to add their thoughts on what makes a good play space.

### Collage map

Look at a large-scale OS plan of the park and invite pupils to say what they see. Visit the park, providing pairs or small groups of pupils with copies of the OS plan. Help them relate it to what they see. As they walk around the park, pupils can match such features as paths, flowerbeds, ponds, buildings and sport facilities to the OS plan. Discuss what is and is not shown on the plan. They could also collect materials such as fallen leaves and twigs (provide protective gloves and paper bags).

On a large-scale plan, create a class collage map of the park. Invite pupils to think about how they can show what they found out. Suggestions may include using different coloured paint or materials for the grass, paths, flowerbeds, and so on. The collage can incorporate pupils' photos and items they collected in the park, and a key.



Photo © Tony Pye

### Teddy's adventure in the park

Before the visit, discuss what other people may use parks for and record pupils' responses. Explain that the pupils are to take a teddy, or other favourite toy, on a visit to the park. Invite small groups of pupils to plan a special activity/adventure for the class and their teddies to do in the park. They may suggest singing, playing games, or a treasure hunt.

Visit the park and carry out as many of the pupils' suggested activities as time allows. Take plenty of photos to share with pupils later.

Afterwards, reflect on the visit as a class. Discuss the value that people place on open spaces in the local area. Discuss the teddies' adventures and compile a chart of what worked well and what could have been better. Invite pupils to draw or paint a picture of what they liked best and to explain why. Create a class book about the toys' visit to the park.



Photo © Bryan Ledgard

# Investigating our School

Pupils investigate their school using photos, large-scale plans and a toy.

## Geographical enquiry and skills

- enquiry – asking and answering questions, planning investigations and fieldwork
- fieldwork – observation, photography, responding and making judgements
- map work – using large-scale plans to record and present information, using symbols
- using aerial images to recognise features
- using and understanding geographical vocabulary
- using and understanding locational and directional language

## Geographical knowledge and understanding

- features of the school grounds
- jobs in school



See page 8 for advice on risk management. You may want to limit the area used for the Barnaby Bear activity.

To access extra resources from the Everyday Guides web page, see page 2.



Photo © Bron Kibson

Your school – its buildings, grounds and the people who work in it – is an excellent starting point for geographical work at key stage 1. In these playful activities, pupils use toys and familiar objects and draw on their own experience and knowledge of the school grounds to develop their understanding of geographical concepts. Activities such as finding and relocating Barnaby Bear provide the context for pupils to use geographical skills and act as a foundation for more in-depth studies of the school grounds at key stage 2 (see pages 22–3).

## Talk about your school

Initiate a discussion about your school. What is it called? Where is it? What is its address? What different places in the buildings and grounds (e.g. playground, wildlife area, car park, assembly hall, classrooms, offices, etc.) can pupils name? What do pupils like best about it?

# Teaching activities

## Where is Barnaby Bear?

Take photos of a Barnaby Bear puppet (or your school's equivalent soft toy) in different places in the classroom. Provide each pair of pupils with one photo and ask them to go to the place it shows. When everyone is in place, display the photos on the interactive whiteboard and invite the pairs to describe Barnaby's location when photographed. Encourage them to use precise, locational language, such as 'Our photo shows Barnaby between the sink and the cupboard', '... sitting on the floor to the left of the outside door', '... beneath Natalie's coat peg', '... lying on the cushion on the right in the book corner'.



Photo: © Jane Whittle

In small groups, go outside. Explain that each pair of pupils in turn is to hide Barnaby in the school grounds. Once they have hidden Barnaby, the first pair challenges a second pair to find him. The first pair must provide oral or written descriptions of his location. The finders take a photo of Barnaby and then move him to a new location for another pair of pupils to seek.

Once all of the class has had a turn, back in the classroom invite pupils to look at a large-scale plan of the school grounds and identify all the places Barnaby hid in. Agree a symbol to mark each location. Place the map and the photos on a flat surface and encourage pupils to match each photo to its correct location on the plan.

## Jobs in our School

As a class discuss and list all the jobs people do in school – teacher, dinner supervisor, caretaker, etc. How can pupils check whether their list is accurate? Is it complete? In most schools this will involve checking the display in the school entrance area, looking at the school website, or obtaining a written list from the Office Manager. Check and amend the list. Invite small groups to plan an investigation into one job each. Using the Activity Sheet 'Jobs in our school' (downloaded from the Everyday Guides web page, see page 2), each group records what they already know and what they want to know. Groups should also record ideas on how they can find out (e.g. interviews, taking photos). As a class, decide how to share their findings – this could involve creating a book for the library, or a series of blog entries for the school website.



Photo © Bron Kibson

## Our School in 12 photos

This activity requires a real audience, such as new pupils joining the main school from the Early Years Unit, or pupils in another school with which you are linked. Explain that the class is going to create a set of 12 photos about your school, but they must first decide what they need to show their audience.

Discuss ideas for photos. What do the pupils feel is important about the school? What is special about it? What might the audience want to know? Pupil responses should vary with the audience: younger pupils locally are

likely to want different information from same-age pupils in a school overseas. Record ideas so pupils can refer to them later. Working first in pairs or small groups, pupils create a list of their 12 photos, then as a whole class decide on the 'Top 12'. What do the photos show about your school? What is left out?

Take the 12 photos and discuss and write captions for each. Then send them to the recipients and seek feedback, asking what else they would like to see and know about your school. Use this information to evaluate the 'Top 12'.

## Our School from above



Invite the class to think about what places and features a bird would see if it looked down at the school building and the grounds. Pupils will spontaneously name places they use frequently, e.g. the school gate, playground, field and car park. Encourage them to think of as many features as possible and create a class list. Show a satellite image of the school and grounds on the interactive whiteboard and explain that it is a photograph of the school taken from above.

As a whole class, look at the satellite image and invite pupils to identify all the features they can see. They can refer to the class list for help. Once complete, provide pairs of pupils with a large-scale plan of the school grounds on which they then try to locate the same features identified on the satellite image.

The pupils could draw or paint features from both an overhead and ground perspective and add these to the large satellite image and their plans to make a whole-class display.

# Experiencing today's weather

Pupils experience weather at first-hand throughout the seasons.

## Geographical enquiry and skills

- enquiry – asking and answering questions, planning investigations and fieldwork
- fieldwork – observing and recording the weather, taking photos
- map work – using and understanding compass directions, using a globe
- weather observations and measurements
- using and understanding geographical vocabulary

## Geographical knowledge and understanding

- different types of weather
- daily and seasonal weather patterns
- the impact of weather on people
- the impact of weather on the environment



See page 8 for advice on risk management. Avoid extreme weather conditions and remind pupils not to look directly at the sun.

To access extra resources from the Everyday Guides web page, see page 2.



Photo © Bryan Ledgard

As an important aspect of physical geography, pupils will already be aware that the weather affects both people's everyday lives, from the clothes we wear to our leisure activities, and the wider environment, e.g. how plants grow. The activities suggested here enable key stage 1 pupils to experience different weather conditions at first hand whatever the season. Pupils can develop their knowledge and understanding of the weather by observing and recording wind speed and direction, temperature, sunshine or cloud cover, rain or snow.

## Talk about today's weather

From Early Years, key stage 1 pupils will be accustomed to the daily ritual of talking about the weather and completing a simple weather chart. When conditions are suitable for the activities suggested here, ask pupils to discuss 'today's weather' and use this as the springboard for weather fieldwork in the school grounds. As you prepare to go out, encourage pupils to observe how the weather affects our everyday lives including their choice of clothing for different weather conditions.

# Teaching activities

## Windy days

Take the class outside to experience the wind. Invite them to face the wind, turn away from it, and stand sideways into it. How do the different positions feel? When the wind is really strong, encourage pupils to lean gently into it with their coats open. This will help to develop their sense of how powerful the wind can be. Model the correct vocabulary with your questions: is the wind speed constant, or is it gusting?

As you walk around the school grounds, encourage pupils to make observations: is it equally windy on all sides of the school buildings? Which parts are less windy, and why? Provide pupils with strips of ribbon or paper streamers to hold up to discover which way the wind is blowing. Challenge them to use a compass to work out from which direction the wind is blowing. Is the wind direction constant? Does it vary? Encourage pupils to add their observations to the daily weather chart.

## Rainy days

Go outside in the rain with a laminated map of the school grounds. Discuss how to best describe the rain: is it drizzle, a shower, steady, a downpour? Encourage pupils to observe and talk about what happens to the rain when it lands on the ground. Ask them to mark on the map where puddles form. Why do they think puddles form in these locations? Usually there are fewer puddles on the grass or soil. Can the pupils explain what happens to the water here?

On a dry day after a rainy night, explain that pupils are going to observe evaporation in action. Ask pupils to find a puddle and record its extent by chalking around it and measuring its depth with a stick. They should note the time and then return at regular intervals throughout the day to remark and measure, and record any changes. Discuss what is happening to the puddle: their chalk lines and depth measurements should reveal that it is shrinking. What has happened to the water? Where has it gone? On very warm days puddles can evaporate quickly. Pupils can repeat the activity on a colder day and discuss why sometimes puddles take longer to evaporate.

## Snowy days

When snow is forecast, ask the pupils to place empty jam jars at different locations around the school grounds. After a couple of hours of snowfall or overnight, they can measure and compare the depth of snow in each jar. Bring one jar into the classroom to observe what happens, but leave the others outside. With appropriate adult support, small groups of pupils can take turns to go out to record the rate at which the snow melts in each location. When all the snow has melted, compare the depth of snow to the depth of water in each jar. Challenge the pupils to explain the differences.

Provide pupils with hand lenses plus small pieces of black sugar paper that have been stored in a freezer overnight. Stand outside as it is snowing and encourage pupils to collect individual snowflakes on the cold sugar paper. They will

need to quickly study the flakes through a hand lens before the snow melts. What can they see? Back in the classroom, invite pupils to create pictures/models of their snowflakes.



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## Sunny days

As they move around outside on a sunny day, encourage pupils to observe their own and other shadows. Where are the shadows they see? What causes them? Why do shadows lie in the same direction?

Invite pupils to choose one well-defined shadow to observe over the course of a day (e.g. a tree, a cone). They can then photograph the shadow from the same spot at hourly intervals. Provide a compass and use directional language (north, south, east and west) as you explain that, because the planet rotates on its axis every 24 hours, the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. Use a globe and a torch to demonstrate this phenomenon. If it becomes cloudy, draw pupils' attention to the shape, colour and movement of the clouds. What happens to the shadow if the sun becomes obscured by clouds? Back in the classroom, challenge pupils to arrange the photos into a compass-based display and annotate the points with their observations.



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