Identifying the foundational knowledge - Primary and Secondary

By Emily Maule

Foundational concepts and knowledge are the building blocks to any scheme and in geography. When planning the Year 7 Plate Tectonics scheme, I created a knowledge organiser, which included the foundational concepts and knowledge the pupils would need. I selected these by writing out the key things that I needed pupils to know by the end of the scheme. These are the things that if pupils didn't learn them, I would feel they had been short changed.

For example, foundational knowledge included the structure of the earth and how the crust is broken up into segments that are constantly moving. This knowledge is fundamental to this scheme but also to their future learning in the subject and so I need to ensure that pupils finish the scheme confident on this concept. Another example is that in geography, pupils are often required to think through cause, effect and response. These appear throughout the subject and so I needed my pupils to be secure in these concepts by the end of the scheme. For example, for a volcanic eruption, the cause is the set of tectonic processes that lead to the rise and eruption of magma, volcanic gas and other volcanic materials and the effects are the results of that volcanic eruption, such as deaths, injuries, water pollution from the ash, and the destruction of buildings and communication systems. Finally, we look at how people respond to the disaster, including actions like search and rescue, rebuilding works and environmental restoration programmes.

The foundational knowledge also included specific examples of tectonic events, where pupils are able to study the causes, effects and responses to particular tectonic events. In this scheme pupils look particularly at the Fuego Volcano eruption in Guatemala in 2018. And detailing this information on the knowledge organiser means that the pupils and I have a clear picture of the core knowledge, concepts and skills pupils need for successful learning.