

Geography

The Humanities department is designed to encourage students to be creative, instil a curiosity about the world, develop empathy for different cultures and societies, and to grow as independent thinkers.

How is the curriculum planned?

Geography is the study of the world around us. It looks at the relationship between humans and our amazing planet. It has a huge breadth of subject matter with few boundaries, and it is this breadth and the relevance of the subject that makes it so important and interesting to teach and for students to learn. We aim to prepare students for the world after 16, both as members of society and as confident, resilient lifelong learners. Geography trains individuals to think and to question what is happening to them, their city, their country and their planet. It introduces them to the role of governments and individuals as decision-makers and catalysts for positive change.

The knowledge and skills required from the National Curriculum (NC) are divided into Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.

In Key Stage 3, students are given an introduction to Geography through a study of map skills before beginning a range of topics that cover both human and physical geography. This includes economic geography, resources, population and locational studies focused on Asia, Russia and the Middle East.

At Key Stage 4, we follow the AQA exam board which again looks at a mixture of human and physical geography as well as geographical applications. Students are assessed on their knowledge and understanding as well as their application of knowledge and skills.

Assessments across Key Stage 3 are designed to develop students' extended writing as well as data presentation, analysis and evaluation skills. This is developed further into Key Stage 4 through regularly exam practice and decision-making exercises using a range of resources.

Across Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, prior learning is revisited through various methods including Personalised Learning Checklists (PLCs), revision clocks and regular "memory joggers" knowledge recall quizzes. Key Stage 3 also introduces knowledge necessary for GCSE which develops a foundation for more progressively demanding concepts. Assessment also becomes progressively more difficult in line with the GCSE criteria and removal of scaffolds for exam questions.

Learning in Geography is planned and linked explicitly to other subjects in order to cement key vocabulary and core knowledge and skills. For example, the study of plate tectonics, ecosystems and the greenhouse effect links to the Science GCSE. Numeracy skills now account for 20% of the GCSE, so we have worked with the Maths department to ensure these skills can be delivered in the same way and built on for the future.

All students need to acquire the cultural capital to help them be more successful in the future and so an awareness of geography and the world around them is integral to this. We aim to focus on topical geography wherever possible as well as explore key concepts including development, migration and the atmospheric circulation model.

Cultural capital is further emphasised with the variety of fieldwork opportunities offered to students. At GCSE level there are two compulsory fieldwork trips focused on our local area while at Key Stage 3 there are a variety of fieldwork opportunities that make use of the school grounds as well as other local areas such as the New Forest. There are also opportunities to visit the Bay of Naples in Italy to study the tectonic landscape.

How is the curriculum delivered/taught?

Pedagogical approaches in Geography focus on the development of knowledge, understanding, application and skills. All lessons will use elements of these strands so that the student acquires a full understanding of the subject taught. Key concepts are interleaved across different topics and consistently revisited to allow for deeper understanding. Targeted questioning also helps to strengthen students' knowledge.

Lessons incorporate literacy skills in a range of forms including the use of glossaries in all students' books, skimming and scanning and extracting information from a variety of texts. Sources are also analysed in line with GCSE exam questions and students are encouraged to present two-sided arguments and offer conclusions when looking at geographical issues. Numeracy skills are equally as important and are developed through data presentation and analysis and data manipulation such as calculating averages and percentages.

Students are regularly given skills specific feedback detailing how they can improve and time within lessons to reflect on this. Independent learning is used to further embed knowledge and skills through various mediums including research, revision tasks and use of Doodle to help with progression. Students are also encouraged to watch the news and read newspapers to keep up to date with any current geographical events or issues. These are also shared via the @ALNSGeog Instagram page to make students aware of topical geography.

How is the curriculum assessed?

Assessment in Geography is regular and helps to inform us of student's progress. This can take several forms including exam-style questions, group work, data presentation and analysis and decision-making exercises. More often than not exam-style questions are used which are designed to develop student's literacy and numeracy skills ready for the demands of the GCSE. There are also regular 'memory geogger' knowledge recall tests to help students maintain the knowledge needed for the GCSE.

Flight paths and trackers are regularly updated in students' books to allow them to clearly see the progress they are making. Feedforward is also built into lessons to allow students time to reflect and improve on their work. Assessment outcomes then inform future planning. Misconceptions are addressed to ensure student understanding is secure and to sure grades reports are as accurate as possible.