

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 pupils to learn. We aim to prepare pupils 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 is divided into KS3 and KS4. In KS3 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 Africa and Asia. At KS4 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 KS3 are designed to develop students extended writing as well as data presentation, source analysis and evaluation skills. This is developed further into KS4 through regularly exam practice and decision-making exercises using a range of resources.

Across KS3 and KS4 prior learning is revisited through various methods including mind maps, revision clocks and regularly 'memory joggers' knowledge recall quizzes. KS3 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 fieldwork opportunities offered to students. At GCSE level there are two compulsory fieldwork trips focused on our local area while at KS3 there is a PD Day focused on the environment with a chance to visit Marwell Zoo to study endangered animals and conservation. There is also the opportunity to visit the Bay of Naples in Italy to study the tectonic and coastal 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 students acquire a full understanding of the subject taught. Key concepts are interleaved across different topics and 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 student's books 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, creative writing and revision tasks. 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.

The use of Chromebooks will become an integral part of our Schemes of learning. There will be opportunities to use them for knowledge retrieval quizzes, interactive games focused on current topics and for research purposes. Students will be able to access all lesson power points and resources as well as updating Personal Learning Checklists to ensure they are aware of gaps in their knowledge and prepare for exams. Independent Learning will also provide opportunities for the use of Chromebooks.

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, data presentation and analysis and decision-making exercises. Often exam-style questions are used which are designed to develop student's literacy and numeracy skills as well as the use of sources ready for the demands of the GCSE. There are also regular 'memory geogger' knowledge recall tests to help students maintain knowledge as well as marked reviews to assess knowledge at the end of topics.

Feed forward is 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 ensure grades reports are as accurate as possible.