

## The Geography Curriculum at Our Lady's Catholic High School

"Geography explains the past, illuminates the present and prepares us for the future. What could be more important than that?" - Michael Palin. Actor, writer and television presenter.

Geography is a hybrid discipline that spans both the natural and social sciences. We believe that Geography helps to provoke and provide answers to questions about the natural and human aspects of the world. Our students are encouraged to develop a greater understanding and knowledge of the world, as well as their place in it. Geography is, by nature, an investigative subject, which develops and understanding of concepts, knowledge and skills. Our KS3 and KS4 curriculum is designed to provide students with the following:

- new ways of thinking about the world using 'big ideas' such as Place, Space and Interconnection.
- powerful ways of analysing, explaining and understanding the world.
- The opportunity to participate in debates in significant local, national and global issues.
- develop opinions based on evidence and researched facts.
- Takes them beyond their own experience.
- develop knowledge of the world contributes strongly to students' general knowledge.

The Geography curriculum at Our Lady's Catholic High School enables children to develop knowledge and skills that are progressive, as well as transferable to other curriculum areas and which can be used to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. We seek to inspire our students to have a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people.

We find that there is a very broad baseline when students enter at Year 7. Many of the topics from the KS2 and KS1 National Curriculum are unfamiliar to some, whilst for others they are relatively confident. Despite this broad baseline our curriculum builds from the knowledge students arrive with effectively to ensure that despite the range in starting points they can all experience a high level of success in the subject.

Our KS3 curriculum follows the National Curriculum taking students through a range of physical and human topics using an enquiry based approach to investigate them. Through the teaching of each topic, geographical skills are developed along with integrating literacy and numeracy. Frequent opportunities are given for student to reflect on the knowledge and skills developed, and students are encouraged to create synoptic links between topics and issues. At KS4 we follow the AQA syllabus which again is taught using an enquiry based approach and encourages students to develop a curiosity about the world around them as well as develop their transferable skills.

Significant thought has gone in to the sequencing of the curriculum which is reviewed annually. This is based on how knowledge and skills can build through the Key Stages and to allow maximum interleaving. Thought has also gone into when it would be appropriate to do fieldwork (weather and calendar considerations) and this has also been a consideration in the sequencing of the curriculum. Sequencing and curriculum documents can be found separately for the department.

The curriculum and its case studies are reviewed and refreshed annually to ensure that the most current knowledge in the field is taught. This also allows teachers to ensure the curriculum remains relevant and every opportunity to promote further study or careers is exploited.

A structured assessment programme is followed across KS3 and KS4 and through formative and summative assessments students encouraged to learn from mistakes made and develop their knowledge, skills and application of content.

Curriculum vocabulary is very important and is highlighted on powerpoints and white boards by teachers. It is also used around the classroom. Teachers consistently use subject specific language in their verbal as well and written instructions and encourage students to do so also. The department subscribes to Geography Review and these articles are scanned into the shared area and used in lessons. Students at KS3 have a literacy task for every homework.

Each student is taught as an individual and their needs are catered for in lessons and extra-curricular support. The teaching is skilfully matched to the ability of the child so that each child experiences the full range of the curriculum and is not restricted based on their ability. All extra-curricular opportunities are open to every single child. Through the department we run the Duke of Edinburgh Award at all levels, Fair Trade group, take the lead in organising Refugee Week (which is a whole school event in June), invite in guest speakers to speak to year as well and organising numerous field trips both local and international.

In addition to lessons, students have several opportunities to develop their geographical understanding outside the classroom. Fieldwork promotes geographical knowledge and understanding by bridging the divide between the classroom and the real world. Students will have the opportunity to visit places such as Liverpool, Italy and the River Wyre as well and undertaking local fieldwork around school.

Students are also encouraged to partake in additional activities outside of their lessons including the Fairtrade Group, drop in sessions for extra support and the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

As a department we meet once a fortnight for 1 hour 45 minutes. Whilst the entirety of the meeting is usually focused around teaching and learning the first section is explicitly dedicated to sharing ideas and supporting each other meet our T and L targets. This is in the form of discussing recent books (which the department regularly purchases), articles or topics raised at whole school development time or Principal Teacher meetings. One of the members of the department is a member of CAWG and ideas are shared from that to the department and ideas from the department are shared with the rest of the school.

For our performance management staff have to work towards at least 1 T and L target. At the start of meetings staff update, each other on how they are getting on, ask for support or share ideas of things that are proving to be successful.