

The purpose and power of the Geography Curriculum

The geography curriculum allows students to realise the knowledge of themselves and their agency to affect the world. The power of our subject takes pupils beyond the limits of their personal, everyday experience, whilst allowing them to gain a sense of personal identity, secure values and beliefs. Through better understanding the natural and social worlds, our students are able to predict, explain and envisage alternative futures, whilst considering their role in influencing them.

Through delivery of propositional and specialist geographical knowledge, we support students in constructing a model of the world which will enable them to make sense of their experience of living in it. Deep descriptive and explanatory world knowledge within the subject considers social formations (e.g. the study of global commons and the impacts of globalisation), physical systems (e.g. the complex interrelationships and interdependence between Earth's cascading systems), landscape and environment. Geography students learn to grasp distinctive big ideas such as space and place, scale and connection, proximity and distance and relational thinking. It is through the coverage of this specialist knowledge, that our students understand how sequences of events and activities in the physical and human worlds lead to change in places, landscapes and societies.

The subject offers a range of opportunities to develop procedural knowledge and gain a range of transferable skills that prepare students for the next stages in their education and/or employment. Within classroom and fieldwork settings, students learn to record, present, analyse and evaluate a range of data (both qualitative and quantitative) in order to reach substantiated conclusions and opinions about the concepts being investigated. At all key stages, students have an opportunity to experience these procedural skills outside of the classroom during fieldwork to London (KS3), the Jurassic Coast (KS4) and a variety of local sites (KS5) as they culminate the skills to prepare for their NEA during the geography A Level and university study.

Powerful geographical knowledge enables students to think and behave in ways that promote freedoms in life. Metacognition and the art of critical thought is an integral part of our curriculum design. Subject knowledge gained throughout the key stages enables young people to engage in debates and discussions; to think in new ways; to discern fact from fiction and have power over what they know. Humanistic and cultural perspectives covered within the A Level topic "Changing Places" are an excellent example of the space given to critical thinking and understanding a range of perspective and experience. The ultimate goal here is to provide the propensity to apply an analysis of alternative social, economic and environmental futures to particular place contexts.

Geography inherently lends itself to the building of cultural capital and the SMSC development of our learners. The curriculum endangers a sense of wonder and fascination with the physical and natural world as we open students' minds to the excitement and inspirations offered by the natural world and human achievements. The curriculum promotes sustainable behaviours and stewardship of the environment in topics such as "Living World" (KS4) and the Water and Carbon topic (KS5). Social issues are a common theme within the curriculum; we explore issues such as poverty (KS3), resource insecurity (KS4) and the moral dilemmas associated with Climate Change throughout most topics. Geography strives to help pupils explore the fundamental principles of fairness and help our students realise how this might apply to complex moral problems around the world [immanence/questioning]. Cultural development is supported by the frequent application of place within our case studies that explore and celebrate diversity, change, interaction, perception and representation as second-order concepts throughout the curriculum.

Our fundamental goal is to create responsible citizens who can go on to make a positive contribution to society. Wherever possible, students are exposed to career links both within and outside of their lessons. Examples include the organisation of virtual work experience with the Met Office; in-school seminars with NGOs (MSF) or smaller charities (ShelterBox), the Environment Agency and local urban planning offices. Our students have already made an impact upon their local environment through workshops with Dorset Council where plans for the Great Field (Poundbury) were changed considerably after consultation with our 6th form students. Student leadership and mentoring exists across GCSE and A Level and is something we look to incorporate across the wider curriculum map (KS1-KS5) as part of our three-year development plan.