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Geography Curriculum

Intent

Curriculum Vision

Geography plays an important part in all our lives: from where we live to the resources that are available to us, physical and human geography is woven throughout society at a local, national and global level. Through studying Geography at greater depth, students learn to look beyond the immediate situation and carefully consider the ecological and sociological factors it influences. Students learn to recognise the increasingly complex links between human and physical geography, and the impact they have on decision-making processes.

Throughout the course students will follow both human and physical geography topics. Physical studies of the coast and of hazards such as tectonic processes are investigated and the processes involved explored so that students can understand the links between the natural world and human interaction with it. Human geography topics look at the changing shape of urban areas, and consider how these areas respond to changes in both human behaviour and technology. Overarching these topics is the process of globalisation and how this is having a major impact on the earth in terms of climate and human behaviour. Students will be encouraged to recognise that the choices they make have major impacts on both the human and physical processes followed.

Geography equips students with a mature awareness and understanding of relevant issues facing the 21st century globalised world, uniquely positioning them to recognise and respond to these challenges. Students are given the freedom to investigate an area of their interest, and are encouraged to consider unusual and imaginative methods of data collection. Through academic research and evaluation, combined with real-life application and fieldwork, students are prepared for a range of careers across a diverse array of disciplines.

Concepts and Skills

The overarching concepts for Geography are:
Causality: understanding of processes in both the human and physical sphere, recognising the impact these have upon the world.
Systems: students need to recognise the interconnectedness of processes in both physical and human contexts.

Inequality: varying levels of development across the world lead to inequality; students develop their analysis of data in order to recognise the reasons for this and the nature of change needed to create an equilibrium.
Identity: recognising identity of culture, ethnicity and religion on a variety of scales and the impact this has on places.
Globalisation: the world can be seen as an interconnected system of trade and people which has a major impact upon 21st century living.
Interdependence: relationships between countries depend on a variety of connected systems; at KS5 these connections are paramount in understanding the workings of the world.
Sustainability: using resources and global commons in a sustainable way in order for them to be available to future generations.

The overarching skills we aim to develop in Geography are:
Using geographical data sources: understand the nature and use of different types of geographical information, including qualitative and quantitative data, primary and secondary data, images, factual text and discursive/creative material, digital data, numerical and spatial data and other forms of data, including crowd-sourced and 'big data.'
Independent analysis: collect, analyse and interpret such information, and demonstrate the ability to understand and apply suitable analytical approaches for the different information types.
Critical thinking: undertake informed and critical questioning of data sources, analytical methodologies, data reporting and presentation, including the ability to identify sources of error in data and to identify the misuse of data.
Communication: communicate and evaluate findings, draw well-evidenced conclusions informed by widertheory, and construct extended written argument about geographical matters.
Core skills: use visual stimulus such as Ordnance Survey maps at a variety of scales, field sketches and photographs in order to be able to describe places and the changes that are happening within them.

Disciplinary Literacy

Disciplinary approach

In Geography we support the development of disciplinary vocabulary and the students' ability to read, write and communicate at an academic level so that they master the nuances of the curriculum. Students have access to a range of texts from a variety of sources, particularly the Geographical Association and the Royal Geographical Society; these focus on a variety of case study examples, enabling students to understand the impact of an event holistically.

Interdisciplinary approach

To understand the depth of Geography it is vital to explore the organic connection to other disciplines. These include interdisciplinary links with Science, Business Studies, History, Politics and Mathematics.

Intellectual autonomy

In order to develop intellectual autonomy and confidence, we foster the willingness and ability of students in Geography to comprehend challenging texts, assimilate key concepts and synthesise them with prior learning. Students are equipped to think critically and apply strategies independently so that they can form their own cohesive conclusions and be able to express that in writing. This is facilitated by using up to date examples, often from recent current events, so that students are able to recognise the impact these are having on them and reach valid conclusions to their lines of enquiry.

Students are encouraged to engage in additional independent reading to deepen their geographical understanding. Recommended texts and websites include: *Geofiles* case studies (various); *AQA Geography A Level: Physical Geography* and *AQA Geography A Level: Human Geography* textbooks (Oxford Publishing); Geography Association: various resources and *GeogPod* podcasts; and the Royal Geographical Society lecture series.

Application of Mathematics

The curriculum recognises the need for students to be able to apply mathematics effectively. In Geography students use and develop their knowledge of descriptive statistics of central tendency and dispersion to apply these to primary data collected. This requires students to identify what data they need to collect and use a variety of statistical measures to analyse it such as Spearman's Rank correlation or Chi-square test.

Independent Study

In Geography students undertake both directed and self-directed independent learning activities that support the strengthening of long-term memory and retrieval. Independent study helps our students achieve mastery in Geography and prepares them to work at an undergraduate level.

Directed independent learning tasks set in Geography can include background reading to build knowledge and deeper connections to the existing frame of learning, or responding to interlocking questions on a given topic across more than one text source. Self-directed independent study in Geography involves retrieval practice which is a crucial component of mastery. As students encounter challenges and learn to wrestle with demanding concepts and texts develop not only their knowledge and understanding but also resilience through perseverance.

Instead of revision being perceived as something that is crammed into a few weeks, independent study supports spaced practice throughout the curriculum. By repeatedly returning to content covered, students' knowledge has time to 'rest and be refreshed.'

We recognise that not all students process material at the same rate. Students who need extra support to achieve mastery are supported by targeted intervention in Geography where a staged or 'scaffolded' process is used to enable students to move from being dependent learners to autonomous ones.

All students have access to our Academy library where a wide range of academic texts, journals and other resources are available.

Implementation

Overview Statement

The curriculum in Geography is sequenced coherently so that knowledge, concepts and skills are rigorously developed over time. This supports all students, including the most disadvantaged, and those with high levels of need, especially SEND. Planning is informed by Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction and Cognitive Theory which support students in building secure schemas.

Interdisciplinary links and the application of mathematics are explicitly referenced and exploited in order to deepen understanding. Vocabulary is developed in Geography using the principles outlined in the Frayer Model and students are equipped to be able to read, write and speak like a geographer. This is done by using the latest geographical research and topical news stories from authors such as the Royal Geographical Society and the BBC.

Through the use of independent study resources in Geography, students learn at greater depth so that they can become masters in Geography and in the skills required to be intellectually autonomous. This is implemented by retrieval-based tasks, questioning of sources and also debating the impact of a topic.

Regular retrieval-based activities strengthen long-term memory and aid fluency, as do our cumulative mid-term and end-of-year assessments.

Technology is employed via podcasts, online material and fieldwork apps to strengthen learning.

As students reflect on the ever-changing geographical national landscape, they develop awareness of the impact this has on them and their locality. Learning character is developed through their increased understanding of international human geographical issues, where they learn to be empathetic to the plight of others, and recognise the challenges faced by members of their society.

As students unite with others to work collaboratively, they seek to find solutions and solve problems facing this and future generations.

Impact

The Key Stage 5 curriculum builds upon students' initial understanding, extending their knowledge in the areas of urbanisation and globalisation. Through developing their knowledge of urban growth, they are able to understand how and why urban areas change in response to movement of people and changes in technology, and recognise the impact this will have on their lives; they are also able to develop arguments both for and against these changes. Students develop their knowledge of physical hazards, recognising the impact these have on the physical landscape and how such events can be managed to ensure the impact on human life is minimalised. Students also develop an understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of their studies and this is supported though explicit cross-curricular links in Business Studies, Science and Mathematics.

Students use their knowledge of cognitive theory to recognise and use the most impactful methods of revision and retrieval practice.

Academic progress in Geography is recognised through the A-level Geography qualification, which acts as a benchmark of mastery; this provides students with the national currency needed for access to higher education and apprenticeship courses and prepares them for a career in any workplace.