



Our Lady's Catholic College

Geography Curriculum Intent

Our Lady's Catholic College, Morecambe road, Lancaster, La12rx

“Geography is a living, breathing subject, constantly adapting itself to change. It is dynamic and relevant” Michael Palin

Geography has an impact upon all student lives, regardless of their interests, background, career choice or future. It is everything that is around them, whichever town, city, countryside they decide to visit or live in. Geography will have an impact upon their lives, whether it be travelling to places, regeneration/decline of their home area, government policies, flooding risks to name but a few. Within our students lifetime the Geography of our world will change dramatically due to climate change with glaciers disappearing, habitats being permanently destroyed or even large, well known cities being flooded. It is therefore imperative that students are aware of their role within our ever changing world, learning about the natural and human environments that they interact with on a daily basis, albeit subconsciously.

The study of Geography is underpinned by three key concepts, which are the focus and structure of our curriculum. Students are taught the importance of these through engagement in topical issues, development of key geographical skills and application to case studies at a variety of different scales. The key concepts are:

Sustainability – As global citizens it is vital that we consider the needs of future generations and ensure that we live with this in mind.

Dynamic – Geography is ever changing and students need to be aware that the interactions that take place between human and physical elements have impacts upon the world. We must therefore be adaptive to these changes in order to conserve, manage and preserve both human and natural environments.

Our shrinking world – The way that the world is now connected in changing, due to developments in technology and transport. This is leading to an ever increasing ‘borderless world’ where countries are more interdependent than ever.

Recently the challenge that Geography poses students has been recognised, with it being stated as one of the most desirable facilitating subjects that Russell group universities consider. This is down to the number of transferrable skills students develop throughout the key stages, as well as the cross curricular links with other subjects, in particular Maths, English and Science. Our curriculum challenges students to use the skills and knowledge that they have learnt in order to apply them to practical fieldwork experiences, relevant case studies and also synoptic links between various elements within Geography.

“Curriculum aims

We aim to ensure that students:

- Enjoy learning, make progress and achieve their full potential.
- Are aware of their responsibilities within the world, becoming global citizens.
- Become confident in using a number of transferrable skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.
- Foster an interest in current global issues.

To promote this the curriculum:

- Is based around the main geographical concepts of sustainability, globalisation and the impact of geographical processes.
- Is balanced between human, physical and environmental geography.
- Adapted to teach current world events.
- Encourages students to use evidence to formulate an opinion regarding a geographical issue.
- Considers different groups of stakeholders.
- The role of change and being adaptive is taught to students.
- Encourages the development of problem solving skills.
- Embeds locational knowledge.
- Uses primary fieldwork wherever possible.
- Uses case studies from various scales.
- Promotes cross curricular links – particularly in Maths, Science and English.
- Promotes the Catholic ethos of the school.
- Enhances the viewpoint that Geography is vital in preparing them for their future.

“The study of Geography is about more than just memorising places on a map. It’s about understanding the complexity of our world, appreciating the diversity of cultures that exist across continents. And in the end, it’s about using all of that knowledge to help bridge divides and bring people together”

Barrack Obama

In the Geography department all staff are enthusiastic about the subject and this enthusiasm is infectious to the students. They model best practice when discussing and debating geographical issues. Staff are constantly adapting the curriculum and case studies to reflect current world events students have been forming an evidence based opinion about migration policies, deforestation in the Amazon and current planning applications in Lancaster.

Academic Aspiration

The main focus of the department is to ensure that all students make outstanding progress, which enables them to have as many opportunities as possible in their future. In order to achieve this, it is our belief that students need to be enthused and engaged with the subject. Therefore contemporary, relevant geographical issues and case studies will be delivered which highlight the relevance of geography in their lives and future. As well as developing their wider geographical knowledge, it is vital the key geographical skills are taught such as problem solving, formulating an opinion, map skills and resilience. All of these skills are transferrable and desirable in further education, as well as many career options.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork is essential in geography to develop the students understanding of the enquiry process but also allow students to experience a sense of awe and wonder at visiting new environments. It is our firm belief that students' experiences in the field embed knowledge that has been taught within the classroom. The department uses the school grounds to ensure that all students in every year during key stage 3 have the opportunity to undertake fieldwork, collecting their own primary data. This is alongside the fieldwork that takes place at different locations, across all key stages. In previous years the department has taken students to Chester Zoo, Liverpool One, the Lake District and the River Wyre.

Ethos

Preparing global citizens is at the heart of the curriculum that we deliver, linking this to the Catholic ethos of the school. Laudato Si is used to model the need for sustainability, highlighting the responsibility of the students to respect and care for their environment and also community. As a department we support the school ethos with:

- Learn** about the importance of our planet at a local and global scale.
- Live** as one, showing solidarity with others in our global community.
- Love** our planet with sustainable growth and development.

We also develop students understanding of the main issues currently affecting people such as refugees from Sudan, political policies, areas affected by a natural hazard, the impact of desertification on communities. Throughout all of this we want students to develop empathy for others, as well as realising the role that they have as global citizens.

Context of location

Students will be taught Geography at a variety of scales, from local to global. However, it is paramount that students realise how Geography affects them and their lives. Therefore, wherever possible local examples will be used, with links to the impact upon them being made explicit. Students will study how regional Geography has an impact on the local economy and also the careers that are available in the local area. It is vital that students gain an insight to different cultures around the world and also the UK, this promotes British values and allows them to learn about areas outside of their own. Many of the students in school have little or no experience of other places in the UK and it is therefore the role of Geography to develop this empathy and understanding.

Leadership

Throughout each year group students are encouraged to formulate their own opinions towards contemporary geographical issues, these much be evidenced based but allow the students to reflect on their personal beliefs and opinions. Being able to justify these opinions is a key skill required at GCSE and is therefore taught and developed with every topic delivered. In addition, the department aims to arm the students with as many skills as possible in order for them to become independent learners, who are resilient and problem solvers, skills which will not only benefit them in school but many career paths in the future.

Assessment

The department uses a variety of both formative and summative assessments to inform staff of students understanding and progress. The component knowledge of each topic are assessed using Multiple Inadequate Glances (MIGs) to formatively assess the understanding of the component and allow for responsive teaching before moving on. These are common across the department to allow for consistency, highlighted on the schemes of work and a common logo on the teaching resources.

SEND

The department supports the SEND students by reducing the cognitive load needed within lesson by using the visualiser in order to model work and answers. The cognitive load is also considered when producing lesson resources, eg. Using colour to break down text. Consideration of scaffolding is also planned to provide extra support and guidance for students, ensuring that there is quality first teaching. Modelling by staff and carefully structured tasks allow students to become confident with the skills, knowledge and literacy before working more independently. Reciprocal reading is an area that also supports the teaching and learning, to support students in extracting information from key text, as well as the use of subject specific terminology.