

Painsley Catholic College – Geography Department Curriculum statement

Intent – What we are trying to achieve?

- The objective in geography throughout KS3-5 is to inform students of the issues and challenges facing the world, but also to enthuse them of the opportunities afforded by the 21st Century
- By the times students leave they should be independent thinkers, able to look at issues from both sides before making a judgement based on the evidence available to them.
- In Key Stage 3 we look at the prescribed NC requirements whilst we have chosen AQA at GCSE as we feel it offers the students the best opportunity to engage in the content and will give them the best chance of becoming all-round geographers if they choose to pursue the subject at KS5. At KS5 we follow the EDEXCEL A level over the 2 years, sitting the exams and submitting NEA at the end of Y13. The values that have guided the department in making these decisions is that these courses are best at highlighting current and relevant issues to our students, expanding their horizons whilst challenging them to think as citizens of the 21st Century inheriting many of the problems but also the positives of the digital age in which we live. The curriculum also reflects the college's aims to enrich students' lives with real life fieldwork experience, taking learning out of the classroom and instilling in students the awareness that geography does not exist in a textbook but is a to be lived experience and therefore is unique in representing a different facet of education to young minds.
- These objectives are shared with students and staff alike and are an important 'core' of the ethos of our department team - and all students are aware of the work that is done to help them to experience geography – it is currently the overwhelming choice for students at KS3-4 transition.
- British Values inform the delivery of our subject content where relevant. For example, we look at migration in KS4 and attempt to balance the views of stakeholders in this emotive issue, but also seek to reinforce the inherent BV of tolerance and openness to other cultures, faiths and experiences. In a similar way we also reflect Catholic beliefs and practices where relevant – for example in the teaching of the impacts of the Chinese One child policy, we emphasise the sanctity of life and the fundamental core values of the Catholic faith when appraising the impacts of this policy on Chinese society.
- We focus on helping all students to achieve, but pay extra attention to cater for disadvantaged and minority groups. Of all the option subjects we believe we ensure that students aren't 'shut out' of pursuing our subject because of too sharp a focus on exam results. Historically we teach the highest proportion of low ability students in geography at KS4.

Implementation – How do we translate our vision into practice?

- Objectives and success criteria are set in the mode of the school's policies on this aspect of education
- KS3-5 have been planned to maximise the potential of students to fulfil their academic potential but also social responsibility and sustainability are core values which we deliver throughout all topics in the College community.
- At present, geography is our only subject but the department has a teaching team that has taught numerous social science related courses in their various guises over the years before the current whole school curriculum was implemented
- We collaborate with our colleagues in other departments and seek to implement curriculum cross-overs when possible – such as with Plate Tectonics teaching with Science and plotting graphs with Maths. As such we also reinforce the message being delivered across the curriculum with regards to Literacy and numeracy. Mrs Allen is the lead for the school for IAG and as such has used our documentation as an example for the rest of the school for Gatsby Benchmark.
- The curriculum is designed over time to maximise the likelihood that students will remember and connect the steps they've been taught – at all stages in the assessment process we include reflective content, current content, skills content and unseen content to facilitate the intention to support students with their progress on 'spiral learning' the content of the geography courses at all key stages.
- The curriculum is differentiated for different abilities of students – all lessons have differentiation and we endeavour to support PP students with extra support in obtaining key materials offered throughout the key stages.
- The department is staffed appropriately – with over 60 years of experience in the 4 core teachers. Staff training helps to support us in our work and we have access to both online, in-school and course based INSET throughout the examination courses we offer.
- In addition and alongside the delivery of content, the department is at the forefront in offering enrichment opportunities for students outside of the classroom through our extensive number of fieldtrips (both day and residential) – local, national and international - which we organise throughout all key stages.

For teachers of geography the following form the basis of our planning for lesson to lesson and half-termly/ termly progress

- What is this lesson being taught?
- How are methods employed to deliver the success criteria?
- How does live marking form a part of the assessment policy?
- How does the lesson fit into the scheme of learning?
- How does the lesson further students' learning?
- How well do the resources match the scheme of learning?
- How is homework used to prepare for new topics or consolidate classwork?

Impact – What is the impact of our curriculum on the students?

- The children learn the content outlined in the curriculum and we assess every half –term to highlight any students needing extra support to secure their target grades.
- Formative (lesson to lesson) and summative assessments are given and inform us of which students need to be supported with appropriate levels of intervention.
- Regular tracking of exam data and professional development assessments are undertaken with particular emphasis placed on monitoring the progress of those students highlighted as being disadvantaged or having low attainment.

For teachers

- We endeavour to secure all key subject knowledge and skills and to consolidate these before moving onto the next topic – all teachers are involved in the planning of these assessments and follow-up tasks from the assessments are based on individual performance rather than generic tasks common to all students.
- We endeavour to test the students regularly in line with whole school policy in order to understand what students remember from what they have been taught.
- As such we seek to be constantly trying to develop and support students' learning habits and learning skills including scaffolding and the extensive use of a wide variety of revision techniques around assessment times
- Teachers then use evidence of students' learning to feed into their planning and adaptation of the curriculum, both collectively and individually.