

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching of Geography at Magdalen Court School. This policy reflects the school's values and philosophy to the teaching and learning of Geography. As with all policies at Magdalen Court School, it should be read in conjunction with our Teaching and Learning policy.

The importance of Geography in the curriculum

Imagine a School whose Geography lessons foster in pupils a sense of wonder in the planet they live in, through the study of place, space, environment, climate and culture. Through their work in Geography, pupils learn about their local area and compare their life in this area with that in other regions in the United Kingdom and in the rest of the world. Through their growing knowledge and understanding of human geography, pupils gain an appreciation of life in other cultures.

Geography provokes; raises and answers questions about the physical and human environments in a broad range of locations and at a variety of scales. It develops knowledge of the world around us, our relationship with the natural world and each other, as well as enhancing the ability to understand and interpret data from maps, graphs, diagrams, photographs and fieldwork.

Geography is a valuable medium through which pupils are encouraged to ask questions, develop viewpoints and discuss these with others on a range of local, regional, national and international issues.

Geography is also a focus within the curriculum for understanding and resolving issues about the environment and sustainable development. As pupils study Geography, they encounter different societies and cultures and this helps them to realise how nations and people rely on each other. It inspires pupils to think about their own place in the world, their values, rights and responsibilities to other people and their environment.

Our staff will provide a safe environment in which students' views and personal aims are valued. Staff will encourage students to actively participate in their well-planned and differentiated lessons. Through the careful formulation of lesson objectives, progress should be judged periodically allowing students to become very aware of their own progress and areas which they can work on to improve. Through a diversely taught course, deep and lifelong learning can be achieved, as students are prepared for life beyond school and understand the world them.

Aims and Objectives

At the Magdalen Court pupils learn how to draw and interpret maps and they develop the skills of research, investigation, analysis and problem-solving. Fieldwork and school trips will be integral to the Geography curriculum, and pupils will be encouraged to develop their investigative skills and their understanding of the human and physical worlds. Geography teaching also motivates pupils to find out about the physical world and enables them to recognise the importance of sustainable development for the future of mankind.

The aims of Geography are:

- to enable pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of places in the world;
- to increase pupils knowledge of other cultures and, in so doing, teach a respect and understanding of what it means to be a positive citizen in a multi-cultural country;
- to allow pupils to learn graphic skills, including how to use, draw and interpret maps;
- to enable pupils to know and understand environmental problems at a local, regional and global level;
- to encourage in pupils a commitment to sustainable development and an appreciation of what 'global citizenship' means;
- to develop a variety of other skills, including those of enquiry, problem solving, ICT, investigation and how to present their conclusions in the most appropriate way.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

We use the document "Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage" to inform planning in the Nursery and Reception classes. As the Reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum,

we relate the geographical aspects of the pupils' work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) which underpin the curriculum planning for pupils aged three to five. Geography makes a significant contribution to the ELG objectives of developing a pupil's knowledge and understanding of the world through activities such as collecting postcards from different places, or singing songs from around the world.

The EYFS covers geography topics through the specific learning area of Understanding the World. The corresponding learning goal, "Children talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another", is met through units of study such as All About Me, Under the Sea, and All Creatures Great and Small. These topics explore the similarities and differences between their own homes and those of others: including mini beasts and underwater creatures. Spontaneous learning opportunities include: providing stories that help children make sense of different environments, providing resources to create and explore maps and plans, paintings, drawings, and models of observations of known and imaginary landscapes, and giving opportunities to design practical environments.

The teaching of Geography across the Key Stages at Magdalen Court School will:

- Develop geographical enquiry and skills
- Develop knowledge and understanding of places at a variety of scales
- Develop an understanding of patterns and responses
- Develop an understanding of environmental change and sustainable development and its importance for humans

It is our intention that our pupils at Magdalen Court School will learn and develop

- a strong interest in their own surroundings and location and in the physical and human aspects which have shaped it
- an understanding of some of the relationships between people and their environments
- their geographical knowledge both of the United Kingdom and the wider world
- their ability to describe places geographically, explain why places are as they are and predict what changes may occur
- empathy with places, people and cultures
- a wide range of geographical skills through active participation in enquiry, map work and fieldwork
- how to observe and describe geographical features using appropriate terminology and vocabulary
- the skills to acquire geographical information from a wide range of resources
- further geographical skills through the use of ICT
- their knowledge and understanding of their local and national environment and other parts of the world in a geographical context

Geography teaching at Magdalen Court School will embrace the following skills

- map reading and orientation
- collecting data and conducting surveys
- observing – making accurate observations
- enquiring – asking and answering geographical questions
- measuring – effectively using appropriate equipment
- recognising patterns – seeing relationships between processes and actions
- predicting – applying knowledge to differing contexts
- interpreting – drawing conclusions by analysing evidence
- communicating – speaking, listening, reading, numerical and graphical
- organisation and study – the ability to plan and present work, study independently (in the case of children in KS3&4) and make good use of time

How Geography will be taught at Magdalen Court School

Geography is a subject based around enquiry. It is therefore essential to employ teaching methods that maximise the potential for pupils to find out and communicate about their world, locally, nationally and internationally.

A balance is sought between imparting information and encouraging pupils to become active enquirers and between class, group, paired and individual work. Within KS1 and KS2, the teaching of geography may be taught

alongside other subjects in a cross curricular approach. At the senior school geography will be taught as an explicit subject looking at a mixture of human and physical geography.

In addition to the use of books and appropriate worksheets, extensive use will be made of visual aids, ICT and class discussion to reflect the nature of Geography as a live and active subject.

As well as an expectation of a high standard of written work, pupils will also be encouraged to gain experience of display and practical research work. Good teaching encompasses a balance of different methods and there must not be overdependence on worksheets as a means of recording work.

Equality of Access

At KS1, 2 and 3 (Years 1 to 9), the department is committed to every student having equal access to the curriculum and to have the same opportunities to achieve success. Within this provision there is flexibility to engage in extension work for those students who are capable of dealing with it. These extension activities are highlighted in the schemes of work and should be made available at all times as students are taught mainly in mixed ability classes. However, within reason, all students should be given the same academic opportunities; however the work may be paced differently.

There are minimum standards which all students are expected to achieve at all key stages and the work of the department will be focussed on ensuring that every student reaches his/her potential and that success is celebrated for each individual at every opportunity. During Years 10 & 11 all students have access to the full GCSE curriculum.

The contribution of Geography to teaching in other curriculum areas

English

Geography makes a significant contribution to the teaching of English in our school because it actively promotes the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. We ensure that some of the texts that we use in English are geographical in nature. Reports, letters and recording information will all develop pupils' writing ability. We also use environmental issues as a way of developing the pupils' writing ability by asking them to record information and write reports and letters.

Mathematics

Geography in our school contributes to the teaching of mathematics in a variety of ways. We teach the pupils how to represent objects with maps. The pupils study space, scale and distance and they learn how to use four- and six-figure grid references. They also use graphs to explore, analyse and illustrate a variety of data.

Information and communication technology (ICT)

We make provision for the pupils to use the computer in geography lessons where appropriate. We incorporate ICT in our geography curriculum planning at Key Stage 2, and we use it at Key Stage 1 when appropriate. Pupils use ICT in geography to enhance their skills in data handling and in presenting written work. They research information through the Internet, and libraries of digital images (aerial photographs, for example). We also offer pupils the opportunity to use the digital camera.

Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) and citizenship

Geography contributes significantly to the teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship. Firstly, the subject matter lends itself to raising matters of citizenship and social welfare. For example, pupils study the way people from different countries and cultures live and compare this to how we live in our country as we are surrounded by many cultures. Secondly, the nature of the subject means that pupils have the opportunity to take part in debates and discussions.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

We offer pupils in our school many opportunities to examine the fundamental questions in life through the medium of geography. For example, their work on the changing landscape and environmental issues leads pupils to ask questions about the evolution of the planet. We encourage the pupils to reflect on the impact of mankind on our world and we introduce the concept of 'stewardship' in relation to sustainable development. Through teaching about contrasting localities, we enable the pupils to learn about inequality and injustice in the world. We

help pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of different cultures so that they learn to avoid stereotyping other people and acquire a positive attitude towards others. We help contribute to the pupil's social development by teaching them about how society works to resolve difficult issues of economic development. Geography contributes to the pupil's appreciation of what is right and wrong by raising many moral questions during the programme of study.

Teaching Geography to pupils with special educational needs

At Magdalen Court we teach Geography to all pupils, whatever their ability. Geography forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all pupils. Through our geography teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each pupil's different needs. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details, see separate policies: Special Educational Needs; Disability Discrimination; Gifted and Talented Pupils; English as an Additional Language (EAL).

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the pupil may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, and differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the pupil to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the pupil's needs. Where a child requires an Individual Education Plan (IEP); this IEP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to Geography.

We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning Geography. Where pupils are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a field trip, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils. Information and communication technology enhances our teaching of Geography, wherever appropriate, in each key stage.

Assessment and recording

We assess the pupil's work in Geography by making informal judgements as we observe the pupils during lessons. Once the pupils complete a piece of work, we mark and comment as necessary. Pupils demonstrate their ability in Geography in a variety of different ways. Younger pupils might, for example, dress up in costumes from different parts of the world, whilst older pupils might produce a PowerPoint presentation based on a country studied or an environmental issue. Teachers will assess pupil's work by making informal judgements during lessons. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher assesses the work and uses this information to plan for future learning. Written or verbal feedback is given to the pupil to help guide his or her progress. Older pupils are encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own work.

The Geography coordinator keeps samples of the pupils' work in the Geography policy folder which shows what the expected level of achievement is in Geography in each year of the school. Pupils' progress in Geography is reported to parents in the annual report in the Prep School, as well as in the Senior School Interim and Annual written Reports and through regular Parents' Evenings in line with procedures at Magdalen Court School.

At KS3, assessments should be marked using National Curriculum Levels. Written comments should always be made to encourage improvement. Staff assessment records must be available for inspection by the Subject Leader or member of the Senior Team upon request, but should remain confidential between members of staff and the students/parents concerned.

To assist in these principles, the Geography department will inform students of the department assessment criteria particularly the GCSE grade boundaries and expectations. Written comments and grades, where deemed necessary, will be given to all students in order to assist in their personal advancement.

Resources

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to provide high quality teaching and learning in Geography. We also keep a set of atlases for all key stages. Pupils will be encouraged to select information from a variety of resources including:

- Photographs
- Maps, charts, atlases and globes
- Documents, books and newspapers
- Fieldwork and local area studies
- DVDs, TV and radio programmes
- ICT
- Pupils' own experiences

Equal Opportunities (please refer further to our Equal Opportunities / Racial Equality policy)

We believe that every pupil should have the opportunity to achieve the highest possible standards.

We ensure that all pupils, irrespective of their ethnicity, attainment and ability, age, disability, gender or background, have equality of access to learning. The curriculum we offer in the school encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes about themselves as well as to people who are different from themselves. It encourages pupils to empathise with others and to begin to develop the skills of critical thinking. We recognise that pupils have different learning styles, making appropriate provision within the curriculum to ensure each pupil receives the widest possible opportunity to develop their skills and abilities. We ensure that pupils learning English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning.

Fieldwork

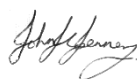
Fieldwork is integral to good Geography teaching and we include as many opportunities as we can to involve pupils in practical geographical research and enquiry. At Key Stage 1 the pupils carry out an investigation into the local environment and we give them opportunities to observe and record information around the school site. At Key Stage 2 the pupils do a study of contrasting localities. Within KS3 & KS4 we provide opportunities for pupils to visit physical geography through trips and residential visits. This also supports pupils completing coursework as part of their GCSE.

Monitoring and review

The monitoring of the standards of pupil's work and of the quality of teaching in Geography is the responsibility of the Geography coordinator. The work of the coordinator also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of Geography, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The Geography coordinator gives the Headmaster an annual summary report in which they evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and indicates areas for further improvement.

Date: August 2016

Signed:



Principle