

# English Martyrs' Geography Department: Curriculum Statement [2021-2022]

## Our Intention:

Geography is the integrated study of the earth's places, peoples, environments and societies. At its core lies the understanding of the relationships and impacts between people and the environment. It is unique in bridging the social sciences (human geography) with its understanding of the dynamics of societies, cultures and behaviour, and the earth sciences (physical geography) in the understanding of physical landscapes and the dynamics of environmental processes. Geography puts this understanding of social and physical processes within the essential context of places and regions - recognising the great differences in cultures, political systems, economies, landscapes and environments across the world, and the links between them.

At English Martyrs we intend to help students gain a better understanding of their locality and enable them to appreciate the varied physical and human environments found throughout the world, thereby equipping them to take an informed place in society, as global citizens.

## Geography – Serving *all* students equally:

The department aims to: provide a rich and challenging curriculum that stimulates every student to fulfil their potential whether the student is a high prior attainer or has difficulties in geography; maintain high but achievable expectations of each student; as well as emphasise and celebrate student achievements through displays, EPrise, Homework Exhibitions and communications with parents.

Differentiation to meet the individual needs of students in the geography schemes of work are broadly achieved: by task, where students are directed towards 'must, should or could' activities dependent upon individual ability; by engaging students through different stimuli such as video, audio files, photo's or articles which can then lead to varied learning activities such as problem solving exercises and mysteries such as 'Why do people (like Ky) take long and dangerous journeys to the UK?' centred on the Migrant Crisis; role-play and decision-making exercises as a basis for discussion about contemporary issues such as the 'Climate Crisis'. Lesson objectives and completed resources are provided for teaching assistants to use and refer to when supporting students in the classroom.

The department uses the (S)tructure of (O)bserved (L)earning (O)utcomes framework. The intention is to use this taxonomy as a visual tool for all students to self- or peer assess their level of progress; and as a language for learning. It also allows *all* students the opportunity to take risks; as well as afford greater independence for all students to work at their own pace. For instance, a range of 'SOLO Stations' activities have been integrated in to SoWs across Key Stages, allowing students to choose from a carousel of scaffolded activities to help them achieve 'Extended Abstract'.

Access to revision materials, homework and related worksheets; as well as recommended 'geography in the news' internet links are accessible to all through the English Martyrs Geography Department website: [www.livegeog.wordpress.com](http://www.livegeog.wordpress.com), which is intended to encourage greater independent learning.

Fieldwork is an integral part of the Geography Curriculum, and is [where possible] offered to all across the Key Stages. In addition, (P)upil (P)remium students are also able to use their funding to attend these visits, with access to revision resources and workshops guaranteed.

## Core Message – Sequential Approach

Transition activities are completed in Induction classes between Year 6 and Year 7 to develop students' knowledge of place on entry to English Martyrs School. Initial SoWs in Year 7 also serve to consolidate the 'geographical skills and fieldwork' aspect of the KS3 National Curriculum at the earliest opportunity, through topics such as a 'Geographer's Toolkit' and applied through familiar contexts such as the 'Where I Live' SoW, that focuses on Leicester and the students' personal geographies. At this point, increasingly complex concepts such as interdependence are introduced and placed within a wider context of place knowledge. For instance, when comparing the responses and management of flooding between areas of Mozambique and the UK when investigating 'Dangerous Places', the role of international aid agencies are discussed and compared.

Likewise, in Year 8, human processes of migration are also explored within a local and wider context of place by studying the impact of migration on multi-cultural Leicester and the possible and preferable futures for those involved in the on-going 'Migrant Crisis'. The interconnectedness of places are developed further through the study of, for instance, 'Climate Chaos?' and 'Can the Earth Cope?' SoWs. This allows students to synoptically explore the links between topics studied throughout Key Stage 3 and to focus on the physical and human processes on these landscape systems given the demands of an increasing population and the perceived impacts of climate change; so that by the end of this Key Stage, students have been exposed to some of the fundamental challenges facing our planet, and to our responsibilities, as global citizens.

In transition to Key Stage 4 in Year 9, the understanding of these physical and human processes are examined further by, for instance, students studying global fashion and the process of globalisation and global interdependence. Here, students consider the interconnectedness of places through market access and regional trade agreements; as well as the impact of uneven development and access to basic human rights. Students also consider the probable and preferable outcomes for a sustainable future through transition to the (S)ustainable (D)evelopment (G)oals (2016-2030).

Fieldwork is an essential part of the geography curriculum at English Martyrs School and is a compulsory part of all examination courses. The aim of our department is to ensure that opportunities for fieldwork are provided across all Key Stages to help students develop their geographical skills and enjoyment of the subject.

## Core Message – Teaching Approaches

The department actively seeks ways to enhance learning and teaching. For instance, we have used the (S)tructure of (O)bserved (L)earning (O)utcomes framework to encourage students to self- and peer-assess their work with greater frequency and accuracy. This has meant that students are increasingly confident about assessing their progress and steps for improvement. The use of graphic organisers linked to the SOLO framework has also provided further support for students to organise their thoughts and ideas cogently; and complements our literacy strategy. Likewise, the use of additional resources linked to the SOLO framework has provided students the opportunity to make broader and deeper connections between geographical processes. For instance, the use of hexagons in lessons encourages students to make a wide range of links. An example of this is in solving mysteries, as it provides a context for students to realise that outcomes can be interpreted differently and encourages them to think in an increasingly abstract way. Observations and outcomes following the application of this framework in the department have been shared via workshops, an article, and co-authored book with Pam Hook [an educationalist, based in New Zealand].

## English Martyrs' Geography Department: Curriculum Statement [2021-2022]

At Key Stage 3, the department has particularly focused on an **enquiry-based approach** to learning, which is mirrored in the Homework Projects the students complete throughout this Key Stage. For each enquiry, students are asked to devise their own geographical questions for investigation, critically evaluate sources of information and reach substantiated conclusions from their research.

In transition to Key Stage 4 in Year 9, students are asked to research 'How safe is my street?', consolidating AO4 skills in selecting, collecting and analysing primary and secondary data with greater independence drawn from geographical skills developed through the Homework Projects at Key Stage 3.

Enquiry activities such as **decision-making**, also extends to other Key Stages. For instance, students in Year 10 complete a group decision-making exercise focusing on the coastal management of Medmerry in West Sussex. Students can choose and complete a range of differentiated tasks to evidence their understanding and progress.

Other teaching and learning strategies aimed to improve long-term memory are either developed or developing within the department, such as: 1. **Spaced practice** i.e. knowledge is rehearsed for short periods over a longer period of time; 2. **Interleaving** i.e. mixing practice of topics; 3. **Retrieval practice** i.e. students encouraged to recall something they have learned in the past and bringing it back to mind e.g. low stakes short [skills] tests; 4. **Elaboration** i.e. describing and explaining something learned to others. Involving questions that require connections between ideas; 5. **Dual coding hypothesis** i.e. presenting information both visually and verbally e.g. creatively sequencing coastal landforms using cameras and cake; 6. **Cognitive Load theory** - involve teaching in small chunks to avoid overloading; 7. **Expertise reversal effect** – i.e. application of enquiry based approaches for HPA students; 8. **Teacher actively presenting materials** e.g. asking questions and giving feedback 9. **Effective questioning** –e.g. differentiating between low- to high-order questioning and tactfully addressing misconceptions; 10. **Group activities / paired work** clearly structured so every student has a clear, distinct and scaffolded role; 11. **Adapting teaching** i.e. providing focused support for students who are not making progress. To this end, the development of **blended learning** resources has been a recent focus, particularly for students who have been self-isolating.

All of these teaching and learning strategies address the schools' '**Guiding Principles of Teaching and Learning in our Lessons**', that is: **Challenge** to encourage the development of a students' growth - rather than fixed mindset; **Review of Prior Learning** through employing 'Make it Stick' interleaving and retrieval practise; **Clarity of Instruction** through clear and precise lesson titles and objectives; **Manageable Cognitive Load** together with spaced practise through chunked tasks and revision; **Checking Understanding** through effective questioning; **Pace** to foster sustained engagement at the students' 'learning edge'; **Guidance and Example Modelling** through [A]ssessment [f]or [L]earning, modelling, elaboration and exemplification; **Revision, Reiteration and Retrieval** through regular low stakes testing, discussion and feedback.

### Core Message – Development of the Whole Child & Contribution to the Catholic Ethos of English Martyrs' School

English Martyrs School derives its traditions and values from a belief in, and the love of, the Gospel message. These are values that Christ exemplified and so they are important in our school.

In Geography we attempt to practice these values. It is intended that by helping students to develop their knowledge and understanding of other places, they will develop sensitivity and tolerance to other cultures and societies. This underpins the gospel message and promotes good citizenship. Notwithstanding their GCSE Option choices, students will continue to be exposed to the existential concerns and fundamental concepts of Geography. For instance, all students will attend a Retreat Day to Mount St Bernard's Abbey, where they will experience rural landscapes and consider the key environmental message of Pope Benedict's encyclical '*Laudato Si'*'. Equally, during the school's July festival, all Year groups will experience a full Geography programme of activities that will incorporate a wide range of fundamental geographical concepts such as: development; quality of life; hazard management [including mitigation, adaptation, resilience & vulnerability]; and to consider the sustainability of our actions for our planet by 'thinking globally and acting locally'.

The department appreciates that students learn in a variety of ways and our lesson plans and schemes of work ensure that visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners have the opportunity to access differentiated activities to succeed. The continued development of differentiated SOLO resources and, for instance, Key Stage 3 homework projects has integrated many of the skills required by students to become independent learners through supporting writing frames, techniques in analysing data and the use of ICT to identify trends and relationships, through associated websites such as GapMinder and ArcGIS online. It is pleasing to see that as students progress through these projects, students grow in confidence both in terms of the geography studied and the way in which they express their opinions verbally and in writing. This confidence in expressing ideas is an essential requirement at Key Stage 4; particularly for the extended 6- and 9-mark questions, which need to address command words such as 'Evaluate' and 'To what extent ...', which relies upon students to be able to successfully write in a discursive style. Equally, this provides a foundation for the skills and demands of Higher Education and employment.

### Core Message – Focus for Change

We have successfully achieved the Geographical Association Secondary Geography Quality Mark [with Centre of Excellence] since September 2013 and our current re-application for SGQM status in 2022 has sought us to review our existing provision at Key Stage 3 and sequencing of SoWs at Key Stage 4. To this end, during 2021-2022, we will be introducing human and physical processes and key concepts such as sustainability at an early stage [Autumn term of Year 7] through the study of 'Amazing Places' that will allow additional opportunities to feed forward and backwards geographical skills and ideas through subsequent units of study. This will also allow students to equally develop a sense of place and begin to identify similarities and differences between regions within Asia and Africa, which mirrors aspects of the Key Stage Three National Curriculum. In addition, activities linked to 'Dollar Street' to the Dangerous Places SoW will be developed to help students visualise and contextualise the key differences in development and quality of life within and between countries; as well as introduce a new 'blended learning' SoW - 'Liquid Gold' – to allow Year 7 students the opportunity to begin to make synoptic links with 'Dangerous Places' and develop greater independence in their learning. Further amendments to Year 8 will be made during 2022-2023.

In light of persuasive evidence of retrieval-based practise for enhancing meaningful learning [Karpicke, J, 2012], we aim to embed retrieval practise this academic year through low stakes testing in each lesson and across each Year group to complement the schools' 'Accelerate' programme. In addition, the integration of differentiated SOLO-based learning activities will continue, in order to help meet the needs of all students, especially supporting HPA students through an enquiry-based approach.

## **English Martyrs' Geography Department: Curriculum Statement [2021-2022]**

### **Geography – How do we know we are meeting our Curriculum Intention?**

Detailed external examination analysis; together with a review of Assessments A-C are accounted through: SLT exam review meetings; Curriculum Area reviews; Progress 8 & Department meetings; as well as meetings with School Governors. Whole-School and Department priorities are discussed and the extent to which the Department is meeting these targets. This is particularly important at a time of recovery following lockdown and continued instances of student self-isolation.

The quality of teaching is assessed through: lesson observations [SLT & CL]; Homework and Folder reviews throughout the year; and student reviews and feedback [i.e. response leading to shorter-structured Homework Project Booklets]. From this, Professional Development priorities are identified and are reviewed mid-cycle and at the end of the academic year.

Throughout all Key Stages, classes are mixed in ability to allow effective peer-tutoring and assessment and engender an inclusive working environment.

Homework is centred on enquiry-based projects at Key Stage 3, with weekly homework set at Key Stage 4. Here, there is an increasing focus on weekly testing of knowledge and understanding using the principles of interleaving and retrieval practice to consolidate longer-term memory and provide regular feedback on progress.