



## The Geography Department at St Mary's Catholic school

We take great pride in our work as a Geography department and work very hard collectively to help students to love studying geography. There are currently 4 members of staff in the department of whom 3 are full time and 1 works 3 days per week. There is a Head of Department and all staff are qualified Geographers with at least a 2:1 in geography and a huge amount of teaching experience exists within the department. Indeed, 3 teachers in the department have held the role of Head of Department. The department boasts impressive accommodation - the department occupies a suite of 3 classrooms and every teacher has their own classroom, with the exception of one member of staff who moves between the 3 Geography rooms. Each classroom is equipped with state of the art Smartboards linked to desktop computers and this is linked to a classroom speaker system. There is also a standard whiteboard in each room. In addition to this the department has 2 sets of portable netbooks available to staff on a booking basis and has lots of textbook resources and Atlas for use in lessons. We also has extensive schemes of work, shared lesson resources and its own internationally known website

(<http://www.coolgeography.co.uk>)



### Setting arrangements

The students are setted in different ways within the department. Setting arrangements in year seven students are not set but do Geography in their tutor group. For the rest of the Key Stage 3 course the students are grouped by ability based upon their performance in history and Geography in Year 7. For the GCSE programmes in Key Stage 4, the students are also broadly grouped by ability. Sets are reviewed every term and updated using students' performance in assessments. Class size in KS3 are typically 30 pupils in sets 1 and 2, 25 in sets 3 and 4 and 15 in set 5. GCSE classes follow the same pattern. We currently have one A level group of 5 students and 16 at AS level. Take up for AS and GCSE has really risen in the past 3 years, and should continue to do so. Geography is a sustainable subject with healthy numbers in the school. We offer a huge range of trips and fieldwork experiences to all students at all ages.

### Curriculum

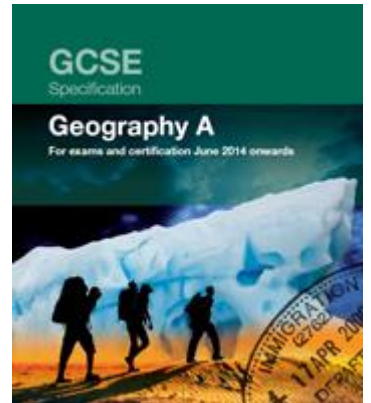
Year 7 and 8 provision is currently 3 x 1 hour lessons per 2-week cycle and there are comprehensive schemes of work and resources for all topics covered. Year 9 are moving towards an option system which will see them have 2 hours of Geography a week if they opt for it. Each SoW provides for structured learning and regular assessment. Students are encouraged to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of Geography using varied approaches to learning.

- In Y7 students study 4 topics, namely Tectonics, map skills, settlements and climate
- In Y8 students study 4 topics, namely ecosystems, impossible places, Energy and resources and Brazil
- In Y9 students study 4 topics, namely France, Development, and Risky Earth, plus field work on Transport issues
- There are mid unit written assessments and at the end of each topic students complete an end of unit test and are given a level.
- 3 times a year there is a formal assessment level marked with levels reported home.

## **KS4 and 5**

Key Stage 4 provision for Years 10 & 11 is currently 9 x 1 hour lessons per 2-week cycle. We follow the AQA A Syllabus and the topics studied are The Coastal Zone, Restless Earth, Water on the Land, Tourism, Population and Development Issues. We will continue with AQA next academic year but on the new syllabus

- Students sit 2 exams: Paper 1 is 1 hour 30 minute written paper worth 37.5% covering Physical Geography, Paper 2 is also 1 hour 30 minutes worth 37.5% and covers Human Geography. Paper 3 is the controlled assessment worth 25% which is based upon fieldwork
- Assessment is on-going with students sitting a mock exam in Y10 and 11 with grades reported home.
- There are comprehensive schemes of work and resources for all topics covered.
- Each SoW provides for structured learning and regular assessment.
- Students are encouraged to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of Geography using varied approaches to learning.



Key Stage 5 provision is currently 9 or 10 x 1 hour lessons per 2-week cycle per subject. The department offers both AS and A2 level Geography and we follow the AQA A syllabus. Again, we will switch to AQA's new syllabus in September 2016. Currently;

- Students sit 4 exams: Paper 1 is a 2 hour theory paper worth 35%, Paper 2 a 1 hour skills paper worth 15%, Paper 3 a 2 hour 30 minute paper on theory worth 30 and Paper 4 is a fieldwork exam worth 20%
- Assessment is on-going with students sitting a mock exam in Y12 and 13 with grades reported home.
- There are comprehensive schemes of work and resources for all topics covered.
- Each SoW provides for structured learning and regular assessment.
- Students are encouraged to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of Geography using varied approaches to learning.

## **Fieldwork**

Fieldwork underpins a lot of the work that we do in the department. At KS3 we run local fieldwork so that ALL of our students can access that work. Year 7 do a microclimate project around the school, year 8 look at the clone towns concept locally and year 9 do a local traffic project. At GCSE we offer trips covering rivers coasts and tourism, and ran a residential to Boggle Hole this year. At KS5 we take advantage of lower group numbers to expand our fieldwork offer. This year we have visited York for flood defences, Newcastle upon Tyne for urban regeneration, and Northumberland settlements, whilst offering a residential to the Lake District for glaciation and river studies. A visit to Edinburgh is also in the pipeline.

