

Geography Curriculum Principles

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

By the end of their all-through education, a student of geography at Dixons Kings will:

- Know a wide range of geographical concepts about our human and physical world and how these change over time in significant places at a variety of scales.
- Understand their place in the wider world through thinking geographically to understand our planet in new ways.
- Be able to better explain and understand the natural and social worlds, be equipped with the knowledge and understanding required to engage in current debates of significance and go beyond the limits of their personal experience (Richard Busitn in Powerful Geography by Mark Enser).

In order to truly appreciate the subject and create deep schema, topics within geography have been intelligently sequenced with the following rationale:

- At Key Stage 3, the Year 7 and Year 8 curriculum is aligned with the Trust’s Curriculum Principles to ensure all students study topics that instil curiosity and fascination about our planet, as well as allowing all students to access the powerful knowledge needed in our increasingly connected world. The combination of physical and human geography topics equips students with a range of perspectives of the world and to develop thinking and knowledge beyond their everyday experience, as well as preparing learners for GCSE study. The curriculum is also designed to allow students to link geographical concepts with multiple opportunities for synoptic thinking and interleaving.
- In the Year 7 Cycle 1 topic Geographical understandings, fundamental principles and skills are covered before introducing other concepts in depth as these ideas can be applied to all subsequent topics. For example, it is essential that students understand the geographical cycles (the rock cycle, nutrient cycle and water cycle) as this knowledge underpins the GCSE topics of tectonic hazards, ecosystems and river environments. As place is a key concept in geography, students are therefore expected to develop their awareness of globally significant locations before moving on as knowledge of places, through detailed case studies and shorter examples, is a key element at GCSE geography. In Year 8, the nature of the curriculum design builds on the knowledge and understanding of Y7 and applies this to new learning which allows for retrieval practice. In Cycle 1 of Year 8 students study volcanic eruptions as part of the Risky Earth topic. This requires an understanding of the rock cycle and subsequent revision of key terms and ideas from Cycle 1 in Year 7.
- At GCSE, which is studied from Year 9, the complex physical concepts of coastal and river landscapes are introduced at the beginning of study in order for this knowledge to be revisited regularly through spaced learning. It is common for these physical geography topics to be unfamiliar to children of urban areas which may make it difficult for students to commit learning to long-term memory if they have little real life experience of these landscapes. This is also supported through fieldwork to the coast in Year 10 to connect learning in the classroom to real-life contexts.

The geography curriculum at Kings has been influenced by:

- Michael Young’s work on powerful knowledge which can ‘enable students to acquire knowledge that takes them beyond their own experiences’.
- Mark Enser’s book Powerful Geography: A curriculum with purpose in practice (2021). Enser states that schools ‘aim to teach geographical knowledge which should transform the way our students see the world’ and allow young people to see the way the world was shaped and how it continues to be shaped by human and physical processes. In addition, ‘pupils should develop disciplinary knowledge to be able to interrogate geographical claims, or claims about geographical issues, and not take assertions on face value’.



Our geography curriculum ensures that social disadvantage is addressed through:

- Demonstrating the importance of place when learning about a new region or country using maps and images. It is important for students to have knowledge of significant local, national and global locations so that they can connect events that occur in places beyond their own locality to their own lives.
- Helping to build the cultural capital of our students through understanding the world around them. Students learn about how globalisation has, and is, changing life in the UK, how their lives are different to those living in countries at different levels of development, and are encouraged to act on global environmental issues to change our world for the better.
- Exposing students to knowledge of the world they would not experience in everyday life. This achieved by showing short videos, for example a large container ship when studying trade and globalisation, or news footage after a natural disaster to illustrate the damaging effects on people and the environment.
- Raising aspirations by encouraging students to understand their role as global citizens, for example by making informed choices on what they buy through an awareness of unethical trade and food miles.
- Opportunities to connect classroom learning to real-life contexts through on-site fieldwork at Key Stage 3, and a coastal fieldtrip in Year 10.

We fully believe geography can contribute to the personal development of students at Dixons King by:

- Allowing students to think about their locality in a different way through the development of cultural understanding that promotes community cohesion in a multicultural city.

Our belief is that homework is used for deliberate practice of what has been taught in lessons. We also use retrieval practice and spaced revision to support all students with committing knowledge to long term memory.

- At Key Stage 3 students are set a variety of homework tasks at the start of each cycle to reinforce learning in lessons. Tasks are spaced throughout each cycle to allow students to forget the learning and to support with revision.
- Homework at GCSE is based on similar principles to Key Stage 3 with tasks set a mix of videos, exam-style questions and Seneca Learning. Further learning resources for Key Stage 3 and GCSE are available to all students on the Dixons Kings Academy Padlet website and provide materials to support students struggling with learning, and challenge those who aspire to excel in geography.
- In addition to homework, regular low stakes quizzing in the form of Do Nows at the beginning of all lessons and formative assessments are used to help students retrieve key knowledge.

Opportunities to build an understanding of social, moral and ethical issues are developed alongside links to the wider world, including careers:

- Geography is a subject that naturally explores spiritual, social, moral, and ethical issues. Students are exposed to a range of cultures from around the world in order to promote British values by developing mutual respect and tolerance. Learning about other cultures provides opportunities for students to understand their role in society by considering different viewpoints, values and attitudes different from their own. For example, when teaching about tropical rainforests a video of a hunting scene featuring indigenous tribes is shown to students.
- Geography lessons are linked to current issues and events in the news to demonstrate to students that 'geography is everywhere' and is relevant to their everyday lives. Relevant news articles are shared with students who show an interest in studying Geography beyond GCSE on the school Padlet website.
- Links to other subject areas are referred to in lessons to demonstrate the cross-curricular nature of geography. In Year 10, students learn about colonialism as a historical cause of uneven development which is covered in Year 8 History lessons. When learning about human causes of climate change in Year 9, reference is made to the moral issues and personal choices made by individuals – both key themes studied in RE lessons. There are many links to Science lessons including carbon footprints, Earth's resources, fieldwork, atmospheric pollutants, biodiversity and deforestation.
- Students are encouraged to reflect and act on the challenging issues facing our world today such as population growth, climate change, and the development gap. Many lessons inspire awe and wonder of

the natural environment, for example when learning about the formation of waterfalls discussing internationally famous features such as Niagara Falls and Angel Falls.

- An after school 'geog-umentary' club is offered to Key Stage 3 students to enhance their understanding of lessons and broaden their knowledge of the world through watching popular documentary series such as Planet Earth 2, Earth: the Power of the Planet and David Attenborough's Dynasties.

Remote working in our subject supports students to access the full curriculum in the following ways:

- Home Learning lessons are in place for students who may have to self-isolate or are absent from school but are able to access work. These lessons mirror the content taught in school to ensure that students learning from home receive the same high-quality lessons as students in school.
- Geography lessons will continue to follow our long term plans and where appropriate, students will be directed to online resources such as Oak National Academy lessons to help reinforce and embed key learning ideas.

Further information can be found in:

- Long term plans
- Dixons Kings Geography Padlet website <https://padlet.com/dixonska/resources>
- Oak National Academy <https://classroom.thenational.academy/subjects-by-key-stage>
- Internally produced GCSE revision guides (Y9-Y11)
- Knowledge Organisers