

## Key Stage 3 Geography Rationale

The KS3 geography curriculum is based on the only safe assumption that a teacher can make: that the pupil might go on to study the subject at university, require particular subject knowledge in their future career, or need particular subject knowledge or skills to enable them to be active members of society. As a result, the curriculum has been designed to be fit for that purpose.

There are three units per year, allowing pupils to dive deeply into the topics. Experience shows that pupils are indeed able to absorb and process very rich geographical knowledge, and then write meaningfully about what they have learnt. The themes in the more traditionally physical geography topics spiral subtly, where pupils build continually on their knowledge of geographical processes, landforms, causation, impact and response. These “ways of seeing” allow pupils to apply disciplinary-specific skills to new concepts and use their prior knowledge to make sense of new knowledge. For example, Weather, Climate and Ice follows Plate Tectonics in Year 7, so that pupils can immediately revisit their knowledge and understanding of large scale processes affecting the physical environment and thus the human environment. The curriculum supports pupils in anchoring these processes into their long-term memory, so that it becomes knowledge they can always access. This synergy is further explored in the Tropical Rainforest unit and in all of the Year 9 units. The Year 9 units intentionally draw on both physical and human geography, to support pupils in understanding how the elements are inextricably linked. The Year 9 units also pave the way for various topics that can be studied as part of the GCSE curriculum.

Pupils in Year 7 study People, Cities and Wealth, and then in Year 8 they study The Development Gap. Pupils' ability to engage with the themes in the unit on poverty and development is greatly enhanced by the grounding in Year 7 in themes surrounding population, urbanisation and wealth. These concepts are also capitalised on in Year 9, where pupils are able to explore how various global inequalities exacerbate the impacts of certain natural and human processes.

Fieldwork is a really important part of the geography curriculum and we have incorporated it into the Year 8 scheme so that pupils have had further exposure before conducting fieldwork at GCSE in preparation for their exams and so that pupils can apply some of their geographical knowledge and skills to a local environment. It is important to pupils to know that they can also create new geographical knowledge, even when still at school, just as researchers create new geographical knowledge at university.