

Geography Department

“Geography is an almost limitless subject for me. It covers so much of what shapes our lives today - where we live, how we live, and most importantly how we shall live in the future... As I travel the world I find myself asking questions that only geographers can answer, and I feel I owe a great debt to all those who've taught me to appreciate what geography has become for me, a sense of wonder fused with the hard truths of science.” Michael Palin, President of the Royal Geographical Society, author, traveller, ex Monty Python funny man.

The Geography department's main aim is to provide a stimulating and rewarding geographical experience and to girls to become thoughtful geographers, independent thinkers and responsible citizens.

Key Stage 3

Girls are taught in form groups for two periods every week. The course aims to give all girls the opportunity to become thoughtful geographers, independent thinkers and responsible citizens. Geography provokes and answers questions about physical and human landscapes and develops a range of vital skills to prepare girls for adult life and employment. The curriculum is stimulating and challenging, developing an appreciation of the breadth of Geography via traditional topics such as rivers, coasts, glaciation, meteorology, economic and population studies but also more contemporary issue-based themes such as topical environmental issues and the global fashion industry. Map and atlas skills as well as fieldtrips are an integral part of the course.

Year 7: OS Map skills, Atlas skills, UK Geography, Settlement, Coasts, UK economy, Global Fashion Industry

Year 8: European Landscapes, the EU, Population and Migration, Trade Issues, Rivers and flooding.

Year 9: Tourism, Uneven Development, Plate Tectonics and Hazards, Global Ecosystems and Climate Change



Key Stage 4

Geography is a popular optional subject for GCSE and girls will receive four periods of teaching per week. The Edexcel B specification is followed:

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/geography/b/Pages/default.aspx>

This is an issues-based syllabus underpinned with a sound academic base of physical and human geography. Topics range from the impact of HIV/AIDS to the use of fossil fuels, sustainable river management to the impact of broadband on rural areas, and the global shift in employment to climate change. It's wide ranging, topical approach keeps the subject relevant as well as interesting and equips girls to be global citizens. Geography GCSE synthesises skills from a range of other curriculum areas and compliments a wide range of other subjects at this level.

Unit 1 Dynamic Planet

Restless Earth, Climate and Change, Battle for the Biosphere and Water World.
River Processes and Pressures and Oceans on the Edge.

Unit 2 People and the Planet

Population Dynamics, Consuming Resources, Living Spaces and Making a Living.
Either Changing Cities or Changing Countryside and Development Dilemmas.

Unit 3 Making Geographical Decisions

This unit assesses the ability to make decisions about geographical issues and justify them. The unit includes the pressures (conflicts), players and options that are involved in making geographical decisions and which are related to sustainable development and environmental issues.

Unit 4 Researching Geography

For this unit girls complete a fieldwork report on rivers which contributes 25% of the final grade.



A Level

Many of our girls go on to study Geography at A Level and university. At A Level the Edexcel specification is followed, favoured by universities for its applied approach and development of independent study skills.

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gce/gce08/geography/Pages/default.aspx>

Topics range from glaciation and periglacial ecosystems to superpowers, the impact of the Olympics on Weymouth and retirement migration to the Spanish coast. There is a strong emphasis on transferable skills for both university study and employment such as independent research, thinking skills, collecting and analysing data, graphicacy, communication of ideas, presentation, finding and interpreting links, decision-making.



Tutorial style lessons with enthusiastic and experienced teachers prepare girls for university teaching. In recent years girls have gone onto undergraduate study of Geography at Nottingham, UCL, Exeter, Durham, Plymouth and Leeds.

AS Level

Global Challenges includes 2 elements: World at Risk and Going Global with an exam in June of the Lower Sixth. This unit focuses on the meaning, causes, impacts and management of global challenges and how we can influence global challenges through our lives.

Geographical Investigations includes the study of Crowded Coasts and Rebranding Places. Fieldwork, research and practical work form an intrinsic part of each topic and their assessment. The examination is in June.

A2 Level

Contested Planet has 6 compulsory topics: Energy Security; Water Conflicts, Biodiversity Under Threat; Superpower Geographies; Bridging the Development Gap and Technological Fix. There is an exam in January of the Upper Sixth which involves two essays and a series of questions on pre released material to assess synopticity.

Geographical Research is an opportunity to conduct research into Cold environments. It is examined in June and provides an excellent introduction to university style research and report writing.



Weekly news quiz

Geography is a relevant and ever changing subject. Knowledge of current affairs is vital for success so all girls at GCSE and A Level have weekly news quiz to keep them on their toes. Girls must equal or beat their score from the previous week. Most groups are alarmingly competitive!

Fieldwork visits and enrichment

"Of all the sciences, geography finds its origin in action." Joseph Conrad (Last Essays).

Our extensive fieldtrip programme enables girls to develop a range of skills and improve their understanding as well as having great fun! Teaching is delivered by the Geography staff. We work with outside agencies to access specific specialist input from local professionals, A Level examiners, Studland Education Officer, Dorset County Council's conservation officer, Snowdonia National Park Education Officer, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust etc.

At present we visit local settlements, the East Yorkshire coast, Much Wenlock and Stratford-Upon-Avon at Key Stage 3. At GCSE girls have 3 days residential fieldwork in North Wales and a day trip to the River Dene. Sixth Form girls go to Dorset for 3 days and have day trips to Shropshire, Snowdonia, North Yorkshire and Brandon Marsh. Optional visits go to Iceland (GCSE and A Level) and Switzerland (A Level). See the News section of the website for details of recent trips.

We are developing our links with schools in Nepal, Ethiopia and the USA to share data and ideas and extend understanding of global issues.

Mrs F Fowles, MSc

Favourite places: Cap Ferret, SW France; Langdale Valley; Swiss Alps

Miss C Bednall, MSc

Favourite places: Norway; Northumbria coastline; western Scotland