

## Subject Curriculum Intent: Geography

### Definition of Subject

- *"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, 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States

- Geography is the subject that allows students to understand their lived experiences as they interact with their surroundings, both natural and human. It is the subject that allows them to decode and make sense of their environs. It is a well-established maxim that people fear what they do not understand. So not being able to understand your local, regional and even national surroundings is a particularly upsetting prospect. Geography gives students the base constructs, and more importantly, the investigative tools to explore and make sense of their environment and thus, their lives in a general sense. No one likes to think they haven't received their fair share so helping students comprehend why some people/areas/countries don't have equal access to water, food, shelter, wealth etc... allows them to accept these realities and then find solutions to them.
- At Ark Blake we will seek to create global citizens. Students who will understand their place in London, the UK and the world. They will understand how they came to be there in both a physical and human sense and how they can improve the situation of our environment and fellow people.

### Nature of Subject

- Geography at its most base is easily split into 2 elements; physical and human. The reality of the world is far more complex. The 2 overlap with varying degrees in almost every topic we teach. Geography literally translates from the original Greek as *Geo*, "Earth" and *-graphy*, "field of study." However it is not that simple. Geography today, as we will study it in Ark Blake, is the study of the interaction between humans and the earth; our dynamic relationship.
- There are three core aspects of knowledge that are taught. Place knowledge, understanding processes and applying skills.

Place knowledge is discovering the unique characteristics of a place and investigating why some places might be different to others. For example, Antarctica is world's largest cold desert. It is a wilderness with no indigenous human settlement. The Arctic is also a cold desert however, it is not a wilderness.

Understanding processes is explaining how physical landscapes were formed and have changed more recently. For example, Croydon looks very different today than it did 30 years ago. What were the social, economic and political processes that made Croydon change size? Physical appearance? *Height?*

In terms of applying skills we know that maps are one of the best ways of recording information about places. Today GIS (Geographical Information Systems) has enabled geographers to manipulate and present data in more sophisticated ways. Google Earth is an example of a GIS. On this programme we can use tools such as a ruler to measure distances between two locations and add additional layers such as cloud cover and population density.

- The students at Ark Blake will study a range of very relevant topics for students living in a modern city. The topics are designed to all pass through two main threshold concepts:
  1. That our world (on all scales) is controlled by the physical Geography around us. For example India and China share a 4,000km border and yet have no overlapping cultural or social norms, because that border is the Himalaya mountains and normal people can't get past it.
  2. That we can impact and physically change our world at every scale. For example the cars we drive in London can make a noticeable impact on climate change, affecting people in Bangladesh 8,000km away.

### Purpose of Subject

- The main purpose of geography is to see and understand patterns in our world. From the local scale (why are the houses in South Croydon bigger than the house in East Croydon?) to the global (Why are most of the big global companies concentrated in the UK and US?). To understand the spatial organisation of society and see order in what often appears to be random scattering of people and places. By harnessing this body of knowledge and interpretive skills, pupils will develop skills that will enable them to decipher new, unknown places and people. They will do it with such ease that the unknown will cease to be intimidating. The unknown will become something interesting and an opportunity to explore.

Joseph Nye once said, "The national interest is predetermined by the geography and politics of a country. Important leaders never just followed their interests, they follow the national interest. Our students will be able to discern the most important and relevant issues they face as UK and global citizens and know the component parts and elements that drive those issues. The knowledge and proficiencies we teach will mean that Geographers that leave Ark Blake will be uniquely equipped to become the next generation of leaders.

### Design of Subject

- At Ark Blake we will use the Ark Geography Mastery Curriculum. Mastery's mission is to enable all learners to become great geographers. Great geographers make sense of the world, beyond their local surroundings and everyday experience to comment on the significant matters of our time. Geography also inspires a curiosity and wonder about the world around us. To achieve this, we need to master; place knowledge, understanding processes and applying skills.

- Geography Mastery implements these principles in three ways. 1. The curriculum authors specify and sequence knowledge. 2. The learners master knowledge before moving on. 3. Teachers raise the quality of their practice.
- The curriculum authors select the most important knowledge for KS3 called the residual knowledge. The first unit in Year 7 revises KS2 material to ensure all learners are caught up and then introduces a diverse set of landscape around the world. Year 7 and 8 units are foundational to GCSE, whilst many Year 9 units are foundational to the A Level curriculum. They also select the most relevant place examples. For instance, the 2018 eruption of the Volcano de Fuego in Guatemala is the most recent and significant example of a composite volcano with pyroclastic flows.
- In Geography Mastery learners complete a mastery quiz twice per unit and an extended writing task once per unit. We privilege independent practice by creating 20 minutes independent tasks that are guided by our bespoke text book. Scaffold resources are provided such as dual-coded glossaries, sentence starters and worksheets and stretch opportunities are included in every lesson to achieve ambitious learning outcomes.
- The third aim is raising the quality of teaching practice. Crucially here is the intellectual preparation document. This defines the residual knowledge and identifies the purpose of each lesson phase. There are lots of helpful tips on the delivery including how to check understanding and misconceptions to watch for. The six-part lesson structure makes clear how the I-We-You cycle is guiding the lesson. Exemplar answers are provided so we know what great looks like and we can then plan to address potential misconceptions. New to the programme is an exposition enhancer a script for the 'I' phase of the lesson which can support new teachers.

### Extension of Subject

- It goes without saying that Geography by its very nature lends itself to learning outside the classroom more than most subjects. To that end a school based in London is inimitably placed to take full advantage of this fact.
- Y7 – Royal Observatory Greenwich:  
A chance to expound the use of map skills set against an area of particular importance to English history and culture.  
Y7 - Stratford Olympic Park regeneration:  
An opportunity to study the immense success of the 2012 London Olympics and the enormous impact it had on the urban area in what was, previous to that, the second poorest borough in England.
- Y8 – Canary Wharf:

Economic Geography is a key subset of the subject. Completing investigations in Canary Wharf allow students to study the spatial element of money, investment and wealth.

Y8 - Durdle Door Dorset

Coastal Geography is a process driven topic and a great chance for our students to get outside of London and see some beautiful, unique British scenery as well as a UNESCO world heritage site.

- Y9 - Thames Barrier

Geography is about seeing patterns to help people interact safely and prosperously with their environment. Flooding is a common threat to London and the UK. Here is a fieldtrip to study one of the greatest feats of flood engineering on the planet.

Y9 - Croydon Regeneration Fieldwork

A warm up for GCSE but also a great chance for students to put the array of investigative skills and knowledge they have accumulated over the 3 years to investigate the success of regeneration attempts in their home town.

- What does your subject lead to university study-wise?

Before the list was abandoned Russell Group Universities had included Geography on its facilitating subjects list. It is a subject that incorporates a valuable set of academic skills that open up a huge range of University courses. Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, extended English writing, debate, fieldwork and ICT all play integral parts in the KS3 and 4 schemes of learning.

University courses that geography directly relates to include: Engineering, Design, Management, Business, Economics and Politics.

University courses that geography indirectly relates to include: Law, Social Work, Pre-clinical Medicine, Computer Science.

- What does your subject lead to careers-wise?

The types of careers Geographer pursue are remarkably varied. Jobs directly tied to Geography include Cartographer, Commercial/residential surveyor, Environmental consultant, Geographical information systems officer, Planning and development surveyor, Secondary school teacher, Town planner

Jobs where Geography would be useful include International aid/development work, Landscape architect, Logistics and distribution manager, Market researcher, Nature conservation officer, Political risk analyst, Sustainability consultant, Tourism and Transport.