Blatchington Mill School
Involvement, Achievement & Care

Geography - Year 7

Autumn Term

In Year 7 we are very conscious that our students joining us from primary feeders have a widely differing experience of Geography at Key Stage 2. Some students will have had a basic introduction to some initial geographical techniques & issues, whereas others will have had virtually no exposure at all. We aim to give a broad & balanced introduction to Geography – including both human & physical aspects of the subject. We also feel that as Geography is the study of the world around us, we should give students topics which are both relevant to their lives now & in the future. Therefore the 5 topics chosen in Year 7 reflect that ethos – **1) Map Skills: 2) Population & Migration: 3) Water & Flooding: 4) Weather & Climate: & finally 5) Hove Park**.

One aspect we are acutely aware of is that students' basic knowledge of the local area, places of interest, and generally a lack of spatial awareness of their immediate environs is worth developing. Students joining BMS have foundation level geographical knowledge of places, both in the UK & throughout the world, and so we try to introduce case studies and locational features wherever possible to increase their understanding.

We therefore start with **'Maps Skills & My Place'**, which gives students a thorough understanding of map skills which can be used all the way up to GCSE level & beyond. We start by giving them experiences of 4 figure grid references, before expanding their understanding by including far more detailed & complex 6 figure work. We teach students how to measure straight line distances, and progress on to more difficult measuring skills. Measuring height on maps is taught to an advanced level, including contouring, layer colouring & spot height recognition, before requiring students to evaluate the complexities of contour mapping & interpret contour patterns relating them to the shape of the land.

One of the underpinning factors throughout KS3 & beyond is the analysis & interpretation of data, and we introduce students to a range of geographical skills through studying maps, articles, websites and texts. These include specific graphical skills, image analysis & data analysis.

Once students are confident at using map evidence and data analysis we then utilise those skills to compare Brighton, Thailand & Zanzibar. We have chosen these examples as they complement future trips at KS4.
By doing this we widen their experience of the world & teach them to develop a richer understanding of global places and how those places experience geographical phenomena differently. This then leads students to appreciate the value of locational importance in informing a country's individual physical & human geographical characteristics.

After the introduction to Map Skills we move on to teaching **'Population & Migration'**, which builds on some of the graphical & data skills learnt in those first few weeks, and specifically looks at interpretation of some unique graphical information particular to Geography including population pyramids.

With the world's population growing at 100 million people per year, we aim to teach students how this can be managed, and look at the specific demographics of where this occurring. We compare & contrast Low Income Developing Countries (LIDCs) with Advanced Countries (ACs), and try to get students to recognise why population is falling in countries like Japan, and look at the impacts of this & how this is just as damaging as rapidly rising populations in LIDCs. Students are encouraged to build transferable skills to help analyse news, internet coverage & social media to overcome bias & misconceptions. These skills are of benefit in life as a whole as much as in geographical study.

Population & Migration is at the forefront of political debate, especially with the political uncertainty affecting the UK at the present, and we therefore look at some of the complex reasons for migration, and whether those are influenced by desire to move or necessity. We aim for students to show empathy & understand the reasoning behind migration in the 21st century, and focus not only on migrants to the UK, but also between other countries, with an emphasis on the current situation between Mexico & the USA.

Spring Term

As we hit the wettest time of the year, and therefore the time that is most prone to flooding, we complement work being taught in Science. **'Water & Flooding'** starts by looking at the teaching of the hydrological cycle & looking at factors that affect the water distribution.

Students are introduced to rivers and river systems, and can build on and expand this knowledge later on in KS4. They are given a thorough knowledge of the features of a drainage basin & evaluate & analyse the differences between river discharge and channel size & features along the rivers' long profile. They are taught an understanding of the geomorphological factors that impact upon physical features of the river valley system, and relate this to geological processes.

Students are encouraged to reflect on the many complex human & physical factors that cause flooding, and, building on the transferable media interpretation skills developed in the previous unit, research, evaluate & analyse topical floods, both here and abroad. Students are expected to look at how humans experience & manage flooding & compare & contrast how this differs according to the level of development of each particular nation. They build on previous experiences with data to monitor flooding and relate this to case studies in the UK, looking in particular at human influences on flooding and the impact this has had on urban areas prone to flooding.

Spring & Summer Term

Following the unit on 'Water & Flooding' we introduce students to **'Weather & Climate'.** This is the first of three weather related units in KS3 which follow a logical progression, moving on to 'Extreme Weather' in Year 8 & then 'Climate Change' in Year 9. As well as being an interesting & engaging topic that will affect our students in their future lives, it gives them an insight into the complexities of weather prediction & forecasting, preparing them for outdoor events, planting seeds, and summer BBQ's!

Further units in KS3 look at the increasing concerns and impacts of weather in the UK and elsewhere, but the Year 7 unit gives our students a basic understanding of meteorological processes. We focus

on the three main types of rainfall that impact on the UK – convectional, relief & frontal – and how these are affected by air pressure & weather systems.

We will use professional Met Office equipment to develop skills in measuring micro climatic patterns around the school, and help to interpret & analyse weather patterns. Students can then relate this back to the previous unit & reflect on how this can impact urban planning – especially in areas of high flood risk.

Students go on to differentiate between weather & climate, and use this knowledge to use & interpret climate graphs from around the world. They can then carry this knowledge and these skills forward to subsequent years, especially when looking at Climate Change in Year 9 – probably the most important topic taught in the department, due to the massive impact it is going to have on our young people.

Finally, we tie all the units together by going back to our local area to look at an introduction to the processes of geographical enquiry by studying the physicality & human influences that have shaped **'Hove Park'**. Many students walk through the park virtually daily, and all have visited – but we try to show them the importance of the park within the urbanicity of our city, and why such spaces are necessary in our lives.

We do this by introducing students to their first experience of fieldwork – a vital skill, not only at KS3 level, but preparing them for the geographical enquiry skills they will need at KS4 & beyond. The fieldwork helps students develop techniques in data presentation, analytical skills, self – confidence & the ability to form a sustained & logical conclusion.

Students look at Hove Park on many levels. They look at the history of the park, and why it was protected as a green space at the turn of the 20th century, and whether those values are still valid, or even more valid today. They learn about the shifting landscape of the park, and how it was seen as a 'green lung' as the city expanded rapidly in the inter-war period. They then look at the management & use of the park, and ascertain whether it is sustainable in the 21st century, before turning their thoughts to the future. They compare the area with Copenhagen's zero carbon ideal, and whether such a future management strategy should be prioritised for the coming years.