The Geography Department

**Introduction**

The Geography Department at The Morley Academy is an exciting and progressive subject area which has developed rapidly over recent years to become one of the most successful departments in the school. We are keen to continually explore new teaching methodologies which inspire students and help them to understand the relevance of Geography in a dramatically changing and challenging world. To achieve this, we are continuously striving to ensure that our young people understand the impact that geographical issues will have on them in the future. Consequently, and in line with changes to the National Curriculum, we have recently embraced new topics such as ‘The Geography of the UK’ within our Key Stage 3 schemes of work to give students an understanding of the local and national issues that may affect them. In the wider world, students also study topics related to the varied ‘Geography of the Americas’, including the extreme environments of the Arctic in Alaska and Canada, deserts in Nevada and rainforests in Brazil. Students also study the socio-economic and cultural differences between India and Japan where we focus on developing students Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) understanding. In terms of traditional Geography, students also study Coasts, Rivers and Plate Tectonics in order to prepare them for GCSE level. The Geography department follows the new 9-1 AQA GCSE specification in line with the other academies in The Gorse Academies Trust.

**Staffing**

The Department is staffed by a hard-working and close knit team who are committed to ensuring exceptionally high standards of achievement for our students. We believe that we are a friendly, enthusiastic and open-minded group of people who enjoy sharing ideas to develop our teaching collaboratively.

Team Members:

Jamie Bates: Curriculum Leader of Geography.

Michael Cornfoot: Vice Principal with responsibility for Teaching and Learning.

Andria Sharp: Teacher of Geography and Head of CIAG. .

Dominick Clark: Teacher of Geography.

Chlöe Robinson: Teacher of Geography. Head of Global Learning and Be Smart/PSHCEE co-ordinator.

Robert Abrams-Cohen: Teacher of Geography.

**Curriculum**

**Key Stage 3**

Students at The Morley Academy have two 60 minute lessons of Geography in Years 7 and 8. Students who choose to study Geography in Year 9 and beyond have three 60 minute lessons every week. In Year 7 Geography there is an emphasis on developing basic geographical skills including Ordnance Survey map skills. Students study how the physical geography of India and Japan have influenced the human geography in these countries. Therefore, students begin to understand interactions between people and the environment. The department retain close links with History and Year 7 students study the impacts of the Industrial Revolution on the environment. This increases students’ awareness of environmental issues. Subsequently, students then go on to study Energy and the investigate solutions to the problem of global warming.

Our curriculum in Years 8 and 9 continues to progress and develop in this ever changing world; however the principle aim is still to ensure that our young people experience a mix of human, physical and environmental topics. Year 8 students study ‘The Geography of the Americas’. This includes the causes and impacts of; tropical storms in the USA and deforestation in the Amazon Rainforest. In the summer term, Year 8 students study ‘The Geography of the UK’ topic which focuses on physical topics such as Rivers and Coasts and human topics such as population distribution and migration. Year 9 students study a unit of work mainly focussed on Africa which aims to address students’ misconceptions and teach them about measuring development and the causes of poverty. We believe in a high level of challenge, and as a result, we now teach Global Atmospheric Circulation to Year 9 so they understand why biomes are located in certain places in Africa. Students also complete iterative examinations throughout Key Stage 3 in order to prepare them for linear GCSE exams.

At Year 7 and 8 all pupils are taught in mixed ability form groups, and in Year 9 students are taught in mixed ability GCSE classes. Year 9 students study Key Stage 3 Geography for the first half of the year and they commence the AQA GCSE specification in January.

**Key Stage 4**

GCSE uptake in Geography has gone from strength to strength in recent years; we currently have 109 students studying the subject in Year 11 and 153 in Year 10. As an academy we expect these numbers to continue to increase in coming years as a result of the continuation of the English Baccalaureate and the expansion of the academy.

The Geography Department follows the new AQA GCSE Geography specification which consists of **three** units:

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| **Unit** | | **Topics** |
| 1 | **Paper 1: Living with the physical environment (35%)** | * Tectonic hazards * Tropical storms (Weather hazards) * Physical landscapes in the UK: Coasts and Rivers * Living world: ecosystems, rainforests and deserts |
| 2 | **Paper 2: Challenges in the Human Environment (35%)** | * Urban issues and challenges: Mumbai as a city in a Newly Emerging Economy and Leeds in a High Income Country. * Economic: development, reducing the gap, Nigeria’s economic development, economic change and future of the UK. * Resource management: water |
| 3 | **Paper 3: Geographical applications (30%)** | * Section A: Issues based paper around a pre-released booklet released in March. * Section B: Fieldwork. |

**Exam Results**

The Department has an excellent record which reflects the success of the school as a whole. In 2015-16, 70% of students achieved A\*-C and 22% of students achieved A\*-A. In 2016-17, the department achieved its best results on record with 91% of students achieving A\*-C and 29% of students achieving A\*-A. We remain committed to evaluating our performance and working hard to find new strategies to raise the attainment of our students further.

**Accommodation and Resources**

Geography is taught in four specialist rooms. There are two large storerooms and a well-appointed Geography Office. The department takes great pride in constantly updating displays in order to keep the learning environment interactive and contemporary.

There has been considerable investment in the Department’s resource base during the past five years. All rooms have sound-enabled interactive whiteboards and ‘visualiser’ technology. At Key Stage 4 modern and up to date textbooks have been purchased for the new GCSE specification. All rooms have a set of modern atlases. Access to computer suites is done through a sophisticated booking system whilst all departments have access to notebook laptops at their request and assuming availability.

**International Trips**

As well as providing all KS4 with compulsory fieldwork trips we also have a successful reputation for providing students with outstanding opportunities to visit other countries. In the last 5 years we have run trips to Dorset, Barcelona and Tenerife. In April 2016 the department took 37 students to Sorrento, giving students the opportunity to visit Mount Vesuvius and Pompeii. This year 44 students will be going on an exciting trip to Iceland, the dream destination of all Geographers.