

**McAuley Geography – We’re going places!**

**Department Information for Prospective Candidates**

**Introduction**

At the McAuley Catholic High School, Geography is a large and high performing subject. We teach the subject at all key stages (3-5) and also offer Travel and Tourism at KS5. Our underpinning approach is that we develop enthusiastic learners of Geography who see the world in all its awe and wonder whilst reflecting on its fragile nature. We strive to make our learners resilient and independent in all that they do, and equip them with the skills to succeed in their public examinations and in future geographical careers well beyond school.

Staff work collaboratively and in full support of one another to develop innovative practice in all aspects of teaching and learning. Opportunity for leading and developing an aspect of geographical teaching is actively encouraged and as such a team approach is fostered strongly within the department.

Outcomes in the department are strong and this has been consistent for a number of years, as a result uptake is large and continues to expand. We have very high expectations of all students we teach, around effort, independence, presentation of work and responding to and improving assessed work.

Our motto is ‘McAuley Geography – We’re going places!’ This is presented as an aspiration to our students, to enthuse them to constantly strive for excellence. It also emphasises the key role of the subject in opening students’ eyes to the ‘world out there’. As such we offer an extensive range of field work – both compulsory and optional. In previous years and currently we have run residential trips for KS5 to Iceland and North Yorkshire and residential trips at KS4 to Italy. Day trips also are run to conduct fieldwork in the Peak District.

We sincerely hope that you are excited by the opportunity of joining our team and meeting the students in our school. We are very proud of the work we have done so far and are constantly striving to develop it further. We look forward to welcoming your application and hope that any questions you may have are addressed in this booklet.

Kind Regards

Graham Green

Curriculum Leader for Geography

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**Staffing**

Geography is currently taught by six very experienced and dedicated members of staff, most of whom have worked in the department for their entire teaching careers, ranging from 16 years to 4 years’ experience. The department is led by Mr Graham Green and he is supported by two TLR holders; Mrs Joanne Thornley (second in department) and Miss Becki Quigley. Mrs Frances Knowler, Mr Barry O’Neill and Miss Clare Manning complete our team.

Excerpt from most recent Department Evaluation

“This is a highly effective Department where high achievement is sustained across all learning phases and where the needs of pupils of all abilities are met. The quality of teaching is typically outstanding/good with high expectations, challenge and rapid student progress, behaviour is typically exemplary and as a consequence achievement and progress is very good. A ‘joy’ of learning is pervasive in the learning experience in a subject where many examples were provided for students to reflect on the beliefs of different cultures and where learning experiences developed a curiosity in learning. Leadership in the Department consistently reflects high aspirations for students and expectations of staff and the Department ensures best practice is spread and drives further improvement.”

Support within the department is exemplary and all colleagues assist each other in all that we do. This is a very strong ethos within the department.

**Facilities**

The Geography Department is housed entirely at the ‘Lower School’. We have a specialist suite of 5 teaching classrooms. We are also very lucky to have a dedicated computer room in the department, and have over 50 computers available in the Geography classrooms, to assist with research and GIS based work. We also have a departmental office with dedicated space for each teacher in the department to use as their base for preparation and marking.

ICT is used routinely in lesson preparation and delivery and facilities such as these and the knowledge that each room has a teaching computer, projector, visualiser and interactive whiteboards serves to enhance the variety of learning experiences offered. We have a full range of textbooks and other learning resources housed within the departmental office and subscribe to the Geographical Association and Digimap for Schools. We have also worked on the school’s VLE platform – ‘Moodle’ over the last couple of years to provide learning resources for KS4 students. Continued work on this in line with the new specifications and embedding GIS in KS4 teaching are priorities for us moving forward.

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**Curriculum**

We deliver KS3 teaching to Years 7 and 8. This has been significantly remodelled in the last two years in line with changes to the National Curriculum framework and to equip our students with the skills that would inevitably follow in the revamped KS4 and KS5 programme of studies.

We have devised schemes of work around four core skills which we look to embed in our early teaching with our geography students, to prepare them for future study at KS4 and KS5. The core skills which we focus on are map work, using data, extended writing and investigation. All lessons and SoW revolve around these skills.

In Year 7 students study: Where in the World? Map Skills, Into Africa, Ethical Geography, Weather and Climate and Rainforests.

In Year 8 students study: Fire, Ice, Impossible Places, Coasts and BRIC countries

We offer the new AQA specification to Y9-10 (beginning September 2016). Y9 will complete this course in three years and Y10 will complete the course in two years. Y11 are completing the legacy AQA B Specification in 2016. In recent years we consistently have had GCSE cohorts in Y11 of 100 - 120 students.

At KS5 we follow AQA Geography. Our KS5 Geography provision has expanded in the last 18 months and we now run two geography classes in both Y12 and Y13. Uptake is strong and growing and retention of students from AS to A2 is very high. Many students go on to study geography or geographically related degrees at university.

We follow OCR Travel and Tourism at KS5. Numbers for this course are continuing to increase and outcomes have been very strong.

**Student Outcomes**

Student outcomes in public examinations are consistently excellent and significantly above national averages. In 2016 35% of students (from 112) achieved A\*-A and 85% achieved A\*-C. Nationally 25% of students in Geography achieve A\*-A and 66% achieve A\*-C. 78% of geographers at McAuley made at least 3 Levels of Progress, compared to the national figure of 61%.

At KS5 A2 results were also good in 2016 with 44% of students achieving A\*-B, and 100% achieving A\*-D. AS results were outstanding with 44% achieving grade A, 68% A-B and 96% A-C. Continued development in this key stage is expected over the next couple of years to accelerate us further away from national figures.

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**Assessment**

Assessment is a regular feature in all that we do in the department and our approach complements the approach of the school. At all key stages students have regular formal assessments built into their course. Beyond this books are marked regularly and assess competence and development in the four key skills we have identified. A key focus to our assessment approach is around asking students to feedforward on their assessed work to improve it. To this end ‘Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time’ (DIRT) is built into lessons where assessment guidance is given to students.

**Extra-Curricular Provision**

The department has significant experience of running core fieldwork to supplement exam specifications and ‘enrichment’ fieldtrips to inspire awe and wonder amongst our students. We firmly believe this is one of the best ways for our students to develop their understanding of the four core skills in Geography that we aim to instill. We would like to continue to develop our fieldwork opportunities over the coming years and the new exam requirements allow for this over the next 12-18 months.

At KS4 we run fieldtrips to the Peak District. We also run a trip to Sorrento and Naples in Italy for KS4 to look at tectonic landforms and impacts by visiting Mt Vesuvius and Pompeii among other places. This trip has run successfully four times and most staff in the department have experience of either leading or going on this trip.

At KS5 students visit North Yorkshire where they have traditionally collected river data for their examination. We also look at settlement studies and coastal geomorphology and coastal management, to assist in the teaching of the KS5 content. In the past we have also run a residential to Iceland looking at tectonic processes. This is being reintroduced this academic year for KS5.

Additional extra-curricular provision in all of its forms is something that we are keen to develop moving forward.