Cornwallis Academy
Ambitions for All

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Geography

Curriculum Intent

At Key Stage 4, Geography follows OCR GCSE Geography B (Geography for Enquiring Minds) J384. The curriculum is enquiry-led and builds deliberately on the substantive and disciplinary knowledge developed through KS3. Students deepen their understanding of how physical and human processes shape places, environments and societies, while becoming increasingly independent in the use of evidence, geographical skills and extended reasoning.

Across Years 10 and 11, physical and human geography are deliberately connected through recurring concepts including place, scale, change, interdependence, inequality, sustainability, risk and human-environment interaction. Students learn to retrieve and apply secure knowledge, explain geographical relationships through logical chains of reasoning, interpret unfamiliar maps, photographs, graphs and statistics, and evaluate evidence, stakeholder perspectives and management strategies before reaching justified conclusions.

Year 10 establishes the main GCSE foundations through Distinctive Landscapes, Urban Futures, Sustaining Ecosystems and Dynamic Development. Students apply detailed place-specific knowledge including the River Tees, Swanage/Jurassic Coast, London, Lagos and Ethiopia. Physical and human fieldwork are integrated into the course through enquiries at Herne Bay and Coxheath, allowing students to plan enquiries, collect and present data, analyse patterns, reach conclusions and evaluate methods.

Year 11 completes the course through Global Hazards, Changing Climate, Resource Reliance and UK in the 21st Century before moving into cumulative skills practice, synoptic revision and examination preparation. Students are expected to make increasingly sophisticated links between topics and transfer knowledge to unfamiliar contexts. This progression prepares students for all three OCR components and provides a strong foundation for A-level Geography and other post-16 study.

The GCSE course is organised as:

- Component 01 – Our Natural World (35%): Global Hazards; Changing Climate; Distinctive Landscapes; Sustaining Ecosystems; physical fieldwork and geographical skills.
- Component 02 – People and Society (35%): Urban Futures; Dynamic Development; UK in the 21st Century; Resource Reliance; human fieldwork and geographical skills.
- Component 03 – Geographical Exploration (30%): synoptic geographical skills and a decision-making exercise drawing together physical and human geography.

Assessment, Marking and Feedback

Assessment is cumulative and increasingly mirrors OCR GCSE Geography B. End-of-unit assessments, PPEs and examination practice combine low-, medium- and high-tariff questions and assess knowledge, application, geographical skills, analysis, evaluation and judgement.

Students are assessed through a range of question types, including:

- knowledge and retrieval questions testing accurate terminology, processes, places and case-study evidence;
- resource-response questions using maps, photographs, graphs, tables, statistics and unfamiliar geographical information;
- mathematical and geographical skills, including percentage change, averages, range, interquartile range, proportional reasoning and appropriate graphical techniques;
- extended responses requiring developed explanation, application, assessment and evaluation;
- fieldwork questions assessing enquiry design, data collection, sampling, presentation, analysis, conclusions, reliability, validity and evaluation;
- Paper 3 synoptic and decision-making tasks requiring students to connect topics, weigh evidence and stakeholder perspectives, and justify conclusions.

Assessment information is used diagnostically. Teachers identify gaps in substantive knowledge, case-study precision, geographical skills and examination technique, then use feedback, retrieval practice and targeted intervention to address them. Students are increasingly expected to act on feedback, improve responses and use personal learning checklists to direct revision. Year 11 revision is cumulative rather than simple repetition, with regular practice in selecting relevant knowledge independently and applying it to unfamiliar contexts.

Homework

Homework supports retrieval, consolidation, independent study and preparation for terminal examinations. Tasks are designed to revisit previously taught content as well as strengthen current learning so that knowledge is retained over the two-year course.

- retrieval quizzes and knowledge organisers to secure key terminology, processes and case-study evidence;
- exam-style questions with a focus on command words, structure and use of place-specific evidence;
- revision activities using Personal Learning Checklists, flashcards, self-quizzing and spaced retrieval;
- geographical skills practice involving maps, graphs, statistics, photographs and numerical calculations;
- fieldwork follow-up tasks involving data presentation, analysis, conclusions and evaluation;
- independent correction and improvement of assessed work using teacher feedback and model responses.

As students progress through Year 11, homework increasingly supports independent revision and examination preparation across all three components.

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Links to National Curriculum / Syllabus Specifications

Key Stage 4 / GCSE Geography subject content

The KS4 curriculum follows the Department for Education GCSE Geography subject content. It builds on KS3 and develops:

- locational knowledge and understanding of places at local, national and global scales;
- in-depth knowledge of the UK and contrasting countries of contemporary global significance;
- understanding of physical geography, including geomorphic processes, weather, climate, ecosystems and environmental change;
- understanding of human geography, including cities, development, resources, population, economy and global interconnections;
- understanding of interactions between people and environments, including sustainability, management, risk and changing places;
- fieldwork in contrasting environments and the complete geographical enquiry process;
- cartographic, graphical, numerical, statistical, GIS, data interpretation and extended-writing skills.

Department for Education – GCSE Geography subject content

OCR GCSE Geography B – Geography for Enquiring Minds (J384)

- Our Natural World (01): Global Hazards; Changing Climate; Distinctive Landscapes; Sustaining Ecosystems; physical fieldwork; geographical skills.
- People and Society (02): Urban Futures; Dynamic Development; UK in the 21st Century; Resource Reliance; human fieldwork; geographical skills.
- Geographical Exploration (03): synoptic geographical skills and a decision-making exercise connecting physical and human geography.
- Students complete all three components. Fieldwork and geographical skills are embedded throughout the qualification rather than treated as isolated content.

OCR GCSE Geography B J384 – qualification and specification

OCR J384 – specification at a glance

Exam Support & Revision Resources

Students are supported to revise through a combination of department resources, examination materials and high-quality external resources. Revision is structured around retrieval, case-study precision, geographical skills and repeated examination practice.

- Department unit PowerPoints and resources posted in Teams / Files.
- Personal Learning Checklists and topic-by-topic retrieval resources.
- OCR past papers, sample assessment materials, mark schemes and examiner guidance.
- Knowledge organisers, case-study summaries, model answers and exam-question practice.
- Fieldwork and geographical skills resources, including maps, graphs, statistics and enquiry evaluation.
- BBC Bitesize, Kerboodle and Time for Geography videos to reinforce core content.

OCR Geography B – assessment materials

OCR Geography B – planning and teaching resources

Extracurricular and Enrichment Opportunities

Academic interventions

Targeted intervention is provided where appropriate to address gaps in geographical knowledge, case-study evidence, literacy, numeracy, fieldwork understanding and examination technique. In Year 11, diagnostic assessment and PPE outcomes are used to target revision and support before the terminal examinations.

Educational trips and fieldwork

- Physical fieldwork at Herne Bay, applying coastal-process and management knowledge to primary data collection.
- Human fieldwork at Coxheath, investigating settlement growth and its impacts using primary evidence.
- Fieldwork activities can include beach profiles, sediment and coastal-management observations, environmental quality surveys, land-use surveys, traffic/pedestrian counts and questionnaires.
- Place-based learning draws on locations including Swanage and the Jurassic Coast, London and other named case-study places across the GCSE course.

Wider curriculum and enrichment

- Geographical themes can be explored through assemblies and wider-school activities linked to climate change, sustainability, natural hazards, global inequality, migration, resource security and environmental change.
- Students can take part in geographical quizzes, map/flag challenges, photography or mapping activities where opportunities arise.
- Independent engagement with current geographical events is encouraged so students can connect taught concepts to contemporary places, issues and stakeholder debates.

Interested to know more?

To read:

- BBC Bitesize – GCSE Geography
- Royal Geographical Society – Geography resources
- OCR Geography B – specification and student-facing course information

To watch:

- Time for Geography – physical and human geography videos
- BBC Bitesize Geography videos and explainers
- Royal Geographical Society – lectures and educational resources

To listen:

- BBC – The Climate Question
- BBC Radio 4 – Costing the Earth
- BBC World Service – The Inquiry

To visit:

- Herne Bay coast – coastal processes, sediment movement and coastal management.
- Swanage and the Jurassic Coast – distinctive coastal landscapes, geology and management.
- London – urban change, migration, inequality, transport and sustainability.