

Geography Curriculum Intent

What the curriculum is designed to do

The curriculum for Geography aims to ensure that all pupils:

The Geography curriculum at Tibshelf Community School is unapologetically ambitious. It aims to equip students with powerful geographical knowledge, enabling them to make sense of both the physical and human world and the systems that shape it.

Our curriculum focuses deliberately on core geographical concepts — including place, space, scale, and interdependence — rather than trying to cover ‘everything’. This ensures that students develop deep and expert knowledge of the most significant themes in geography.

It is designed to be rooted in real-world relevance. Golden threads such as sustainability, inequality, and globalisation run consistently across all key stages, allowing students to revisit complex ideas in more sophisticated ways over time. Place knowledge and locational awareness are taught explicitly, acknowledging that understanding where things happen is just as important as knowing why.

We aim to develop students’ cultural capital by ensuring they leave us confident, curious, and equipped to think geographically about major 21st-century challenges — from urbanisation to climate change — and their role within them. This supports their progression into future education and employment as informed, analytical citizens.

How we deliver the curriculum

The implementation of our curriculum is driven by carefully sequenced units that build both substantive knowledge (such as ecosystems, development, and resource management) and disciplinary knowledge (such as field enquiry, evaluation of sources, and spatial reasoning).

We introduce GIS and spatial analysis early and embed them meaningfully throughout all key stages, helping students interrogate data and visualise patterns that underpin global systems.

Our teaching uses engaging and varied resources, designed to provoke thought, challenge misconceptions, and foster extended discussion. Map skills, data interpretation, and extended writing are taught through structured tasks and explicit modelling. Retrieval practice and regular formative assessment are built into lessons to consolidate learning and address gaps.

All students study Geography in Years 7 and 8. In Year 9, students complete a short course and have the option to select a Pre-GCSE Geography route, which leads naturally into GCSE study in Years 10 and 11.

Fieldwork is not an optional extra — it is integral to how we teach geography. Students have opportunities to engage with field enquiry at both KS3 and KS4, applying disciplinary methods to investigate local and wider environments.

How we assess students

Assessment is carefully designed to consolidate understanding, identify misconceptions, and inform responsive teaching. Formative assessment is embedded through lesson starters, questioning, and structured tasks. Summative assessments occur at the end of key units to test knowledge, skills, and conceptual understanding.

At Key Stage 3, students complete mid-topic hinge assessments as well as assessments at the end of a scheme of learning, incorporating a range of questions including multiple choice, short-form knowledge recall, geographical skills, and extended case study responses.

At Key Stage 4, students are prepared for the three terminal GCSE exams:

- **Paper 1 – Our Natural World** (Physical geography and fieldwork)
- **Paper 2 – People and Society** (Human geography and fieldwork)
- **Paper 3 – Geographical Exploration** (Synoptic paper)

How it benefits students' learning and personal development

Students are challenged to think geographically and engage with the major issues of our time. They gain the ability to critically analyse information, interrogate data, and articulate their ideas with academic confidence.

The curriculum encourages cumulative learning, helping students make connections between different ideas and apply their understanding to new and unfamiliar contexts. Our focus on academic language, spatial reasoning, and structured argument supports their literacy development and prepares them for both exams and life beyond school.

Above all, students leave with the knowledge, skills and mindset of a geographer — someone who can question, investigate, and think critically about the world they live in.