

The Geography Department.

The Geography Department at Valentines is an innovative department, with an excellent record of academic success. Attainment at all Key Stages is well above the national average. Students are provided with an outstanding learning environment which allows them to achieve high levels of attainment. Progressive and engaging teaching methods are employed to enhance student understanding and enjoyment of the topics studied. The members of the department pride themselves on developing stimulating resources and a challenging curriculum. Opportunities are provided for teachers to advance their own CPD through in house provision training as well as via external providers. The school has Teaching School status, which offers increased options for advancing one's professional development.

Structure

The Geography Department consists of a Head of Department, a second in department and two other members of staff who are Geography specialists. All members of the department are expected to teach across the full age and ability ranges. Every member of the department is also expected to contribute to the development of the curriculum and resources within Geography. Maintaining high standards of lesson preparation, teaching, marking, assessing, record keeping and reporting student progress are integral to the effective running of the department.

The Department has excellent teaching resources and is based in four specialist teaching rooms. Each class room has an interactive whiteboard and the department has its own IT suite. All resources are available to students and staff via the school's learning platform, Firefly. They are regularly updated and improved to keep them topical, relevant and to meet the needs of the new KS3 curriculum and recently introduced GCSE and A level specifications. The schemes of work are regularly reviewed and where necessary amended and improved. The department is committed to fieldwork as an essential component of the geography curriculum. In Year 8 we study coastal management at Abbots Hall Farm in Essex. At GCSE we will be studying urban changes in East London and rivers within Epping Forest, as part of the fieldwork element of the new GCSE exam paper and in Year 12 students travel to Slapton Ley in Devon to study issues such as regenerating urban and rural areas and changes in coastal environments.

Geography classes are taught in their Houses in year groups, throughout Key stage 3 and in mixed ability groups at GCSE. Geography is a popular option at GCSE. This year there we have 96 students studying the subject in Year 11. We follow the new Edexcel B specification which is issues based. At A level we teach the new Edexcel A level specification. In 2018 75% of the students achieved 9-5 at GCSE with 38% gaining 9-7. Students at A Level also achieved excellent results; in 2018 students achieved 100% A*- C grades, with 50% achieving A*-B.

The Department works in a collaborative manner, where all members are expected to participate in the development of Schemes of Work and resources and share good practice to ensure that outstanding teaching is consistently delivered in lessons.