Thomas Mills
High School & Sixth Form

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW: Geography

'Geography makes a vital contribution to our knowledge of the rapidly changing environmental and social challenges facing us and how we should tackle them. A geography education has never been so relevant.' Royal Geographical Society

The Thomas Mills High School & Sixth Form Geography curriculum aims to give pupils a broad understanding of the processes that shape the world around them and depth of geographical knowledge of people in the world and how they interact. Our topics and assessments are designed around the Geographical Associations key concepts of Place, Space, Earth systems and Environment as well as covering a range of geographical skills. This is structured to support the two key areas outlined by OFSTED:

- Disciplinary knowledge – the knowledge of how to use geographical skills: 'knowing that', 'knowing how' and 'knowing how to apply'
- Substantiative knowledge- the established facts about the world- 'knowing about'

Our Key Stage Three curriculum provides a variety of physical and human geography topics to inspire pupils to be curious about the world around them and explore enquiring questions about their surroundings. It allows them to develop a range of geographical skills and creates critical thinkers who can analyse and evaluate key concepts reaching sound substantiated conclusions and opinions.

Year 8 Term	Topic	Knowledge and Skills	Useful Links
1a	**Population**	**Knowledge:** Pupils will explore how populations grow, change, and move. They'll study population density, distribution, and urbanisation, and learn how these patterns vary around the world. Using the Demographic Transition Model, they'll understand how population growth changes as countries develop. Pupils will also examine ageing and youthful populations, population policies, and international migration—looking at the causes, challenges, and impacts. To make learning interactive,	National curriculum summary: National Curriculum - Geography key stages 3 and 4 Population and migration: Population and migration - KS3 Geography - BBC Bitesize China population policies: How is China changing? - KS3 Geography - BBC Bitesize

		they'll take part in the Jelly Baby Game, which helps explain the key factors behind population change. These topics build global awareness and critical thinking in a fun and engaging way. **Skills:** • Use maps to interpret population data • Use of population pyramids to analyse population change	
1b	**Ecosystems**	**Knowledge:** Pupils will study a range of ecosystems, focusing on their global locations, climates, and environmental importance. They'll explore the unique features and management of polar regions and coral reefs, and examine the structure and role of the tropical rainforest. Pupils will also learn about the Yanomami people, the impact of deforestation, and take part in a rainforest development debate based on Papua New Guinea. These lessons help pupils understand the balance between environmental protection and human needs. **Skills:** • Locating ecosystems on world map, understanding biome location.	Global biomes: Global biomes - KS3 Geography - BBC Bitesize Savanna adaptations: Plant and animal adaptations in tropical savanna grasslands Tropical rainforests: Tropical rainforests guide for KS3 geography students - BBC Bitesize Yanomami tribe: Yanomami
Assessments		Population: **Standardised Assessment 1: Factors affecting population change** (Space) **Standardised Assessment 2: International migration-decision line task** (Space)	

		Ecosystems: **Standardised Assessment 1: Animal adaptation task** (Earth systems) **Standardised Assessment 2: Human impacts on coral reefs** (Environment)	
2a	**Plate tectonics**	**Knowledge:** Pupils will explore the powerful forces that shape our planet. They'll begin by understanding the structure of the Earth and how plate tectonics cause natural events like earthquakes and volcanoes. Through real-world case studies—including the 2010 Iceland volcanic eruption, the Haiti earthquake, and Hawaii's volcanic hotspots—pupils will investigate the causes, impacts, and responses to these dramatic events. This unit helps pupils understand the dynamic nature of Earth and how people adapt to living with natural hazards. **Skills:** • Interpret plate boundary map. • Apply plate movements to world map and understand safety considerations • Active volcano hazard mapping	Plate tectonics theory: Plate tectonics - BBC Teach Earthquakes and tsunamis: Tectonic hazards - earthquakes and tsunamis guide for KS3 geography students - BBC Bitesize Haiti earthquake: 2010 Haiti earthquake | Magnitude, Damage, Map, & Facts | Britannica Hawaii hotspots: A Chain of Islands: Hawaiian Hot Spot
2b	**Development**	**Knowledge:** Pupils will deepen their understanding of global development by learning how we measure development and use indicators like income, education, and life expectancy to compare countries. They will examine the stages of growth in Rostow's model and explore the development gap between richer and poorer nations. As part of their focus on the environment, students will explain how sustainable	Development theory: Development - KS3 Geography - BBC Bitesize Development and aid: Development and aid - a help or a hindrance? - Why some countries are richer than others - OCR - GCSE Geography Revision - OCR - BBC Bitesize

		solutions—such as the Annapurna micro hydro dams in Nepal—can support local communities. They will also evaluate the role of aid in helping countries develop, considering both its benefits and limitations. This unit encourages thoughtful discussion about fairness, sustainability, and global progress. **Skills:** • Locational knowledge of world's countries and features	Micro hydro dams in Annapurna, Nepal: Sustainable Energy Case Study: Nepal's Micro-hydro Plants | AQA GCSE Geography | Energy 7 - YouTube
Assessments		Plate Tectonics: **Standardised Assessment 1:Haiti earthquake impacts significance essay** (Environment) **Standardised Assessment 2: Plate tectonics and case study test** (Earth systems and Environment) Development: **Standardised Assessment 1: Causes of poverty decision answer** (Space) **Standardised Assessment 2: Sustainability report** (Environment)	
3a	**Rivers and flooding**	**Knowledge:** Pupils will identify the key stages of the water cycle and understand how rivers shape the landscape through their upper, middle, and lower courses, forming different landforms along the way. They will investigate real-life examples of flooding, including the Boscastle and Brisbane floods, using a decision-making exercise to explore how people respond to these natural events. Pupils will explain the physical processes behind flooding and evaluate different flood management techniques, considering how effective and sustainable they are. This unit helps pupils connect	River processes and landforms : Rivers are part of the water cycle. Learn about river processes and landforms in this geography guide for students aged 11 to 14 from BBC Bitesize. - BBC Bitesize River erosion processes: River erosion processes River transport processes: River transport processes River management: River management guide for KS3 geography students - BBC Bitesize Boscastle flash flood: Boscastle Floods - Met Office

3b	**Climate Change**	physical geography with human responses to environmental challenges. **Skills:** • Decision making exercise. Map skills **Knowledge:** Pupils will identify how our climate has changed over time and understand both the natural and human causes behind these changes. They will investigate the wide-ranging impacts of climate change on people and the environment, and explain how different communities and countries are responding to these challenges. Finally, pupils will evaluate a range of solutions to climate change, considering how effective and sustainable they are. This unit encourages pupils to think critically about their role in protecting the planet and the importance of global cooperation. **Skills:** Invention task. Global issues.	Climate change theory: Climate change - KS3 Geography - BBC Bitesize Natural causes of climate change: Natural causes of Quaternary climate change Human causes of climate change: Human causes of climate change Climate change theory: Climate change resources: Key Stage Three - RGS Effects of climate change: Effects of Climate Change on the Environment - Geography: KS3
Assessment		Rivers and Flooding: **Standardised Assessment 1: Landform information sheet** (Earth systems) **Standardised Assessment 2: River processes and flooding case study test** (Earth systems and Environment) Climate Change: **Standardised Assessment 1: Impacts of climate change information sheet** (Earth systems) **Standardised Assessment 2: Earthshot invention task** (Environment)	