

Incorporating elements of the geopark into the formal school curriculum in the Oki Islands Global Geopark, Japan

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The Oki Islands Global Geopark area contains four inhabited islands and over 180 uninhabited small islets with a population of around 21,000. The isolated geographical setting and small population size of the islands means that the islands do not have any facilities for tertiary education. Around 98 percent of senior high school graduates leave the islands to continue their studies or seek employment. Previously, prior to leaving the islands the majority of these students have not had any opportunity to learn about the Oki Islands. As a result, they are unable to talk about and have little pride or attachment to their hometown. Spurred by the origin of the Oki Islands Geopark in 2009, attempts were made to incorporate geopark themes into educational initiatives. However, these attempts were sporadic and lacked of a systematic approach. Following the inclusion of the Oki Islands Geopark into the Global Geoparks Network in 2013, the students of Oki Senior High School began learning about the precious heritage of the geopark, including the geological heritage, nature and culture throughout the year. These activities aim to enable students to understand about their home soil as well as foster pride and love toward the region. This presentation will use examples from Oki Senior High School to highlight methods of incorporating elements of the geopark into the school curriculum.