

The power and relevance of geography education

A key question, it seems to us, is whether we need a framework for geography to share and inform the community of practice. This would not be to 'unify' geography or geographical thought, but to articulate its main characteristics – perhaps for political reasons as much as educational motives. There are some interesting subsidiary questions that are stimulated by such a move:

- how detailed should such a framework be?
- how stringently should it be adhered to?
- whose geographies should be included in such a framework?
- what is meant by 'subject knowledge' (a term favoured by the Teacher Training and Development Agency)
- does such a framework change with the maturation of the learner? (ie can we have a single framework that works for 5 year olds and 19 year olds?)

The responsibility for the quality of the educational experience in geography (as with any subject) resides mainly with school teachers (see Morgan and Lambert 2005). This is because it is they who are in a position to design and create appropriate curriculum and pedagogic experiences (content selection, materials production and choice of learning activity). It is they who use the subject resource to create productive teacher-learner relationships.

It is desirable that teachers' professional responsibilities in this regard are underpinned with a clear sense of purpose. This enables specialist geography teachers to undertake their task 'carefully'. Teachers need a sophisticated concept of geography and what it means to learn with geography. It is probably this sense of purpose that transforms a series of lessons to an enriching *curriculum* experience.

There could be several possible frameworks to choose from. The following is one used by the GA over the last year or so. Learning of geography is concerned with:

The physical world: land, water, air and ecological systems and the processes that bring about change in them. This may involve spiritual dimensions.

Human environments: societies and communities, and the human processes involved in understanding work, home, consumption and leisure. This may involve economic, social, cultural, moral and ethical dimensions.

Interdependence: spatial manifestations of interaction such as trade, migration, climate change: involves, crucially, linking the 'physical' and 'human' and the emerging concept of 'sustainable development'

Place and space: the 'vocabulary' *and* the 'grammar' of the world, developing knowledge and understanding of location and interconnectedness.

Scale: the lens through which the subject matter is 'seen'. Emphasises the significance of local, regional, national, international and global perspectives.

Pupils' lives: using pupils' images, experiences, meanings and questions can introduce an explicit futures orientation into lessons and 'reach out' to pupils as active agents in their learning.

The next two years are crucial. The dialogue surrounding public geographies, of which this symposium forms an essential part, has the potential to influence the programme. We would therefore like to end by inviting your responses to the following questions, framed to enable us to exploit the potential of geography in education, and the role of the subject association in civil society.

- Does the public face of geography need re-presenting?
- How best do we support teacher and student voices concerning geography education, to be diverse, inclusive, thoughtful (careful?) and informed?
- Is it helpful to move towards a concept led curriculum for geography education?
- How can greater engagement between the geography education community and 'knowledge –makers' be facilitated?

GA / DfES Press Release
Major Boost for Geography in Schools

Schools Minister Andrew Adonis today announced a new package of support of nearly £2 million to boost Geography in schools. The extra money will help fund the biggest ever programme of activity and support for the subject in both Primary and Secondary schools.

Andrew Adonis also announced the appointment of Rita Gardner, Director of the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers), and David Lambert, Chief Executive of the Geographical Association, as expert Geography Advisers to the Secretary of State.

Geography remains a popular option at GCSE - however it does face some specific challenges. The extra investment announced today will help teachers to further enthuse their pupils and put Geography firmly on the map.

The Department for Education and Skills has worked with the Geographical Association and the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) to develop an Action Plan for Geography, which includes:

- A Geography Ambassadors Scheme - bringing geographers from business and universities into the classroom to show young people how relevant geography is today. This will be supported on-line by prominent Geography Ambassadors such as Nick Crane from the BBC's "Coast" and Nick Middleton from Channel 4's "Surviving Extremes" ;
- A national website for Geography teachers bringing together for the first time an on-line bank of all existing and new resources to support teaching;
- Fieldwork and Leadership training, Quality Marks for schools and chartered geography status for teachers and additional resources for

teachers of the Key Stage 3 curriculum. These resources will help to tackle relevant contemporary issues from Globalisation and Climate Change through to the 2012 Olympics.

To mark the launch of the Action Plan every secondary school in England will be receiving a copy of Michael Palin's "Himalaya", to inspire teachers and pupils with the landscapes and peoples he encountered on his journey. This will go to schools together with details of the Action Plan for Geography.

Schools Minister Andrew Adonis said:

"Geography matters to everyone. It is the gateway to understanding the rich variety of landscapes and different cultures around the world. This is why I am delighted to announce the biggest ever programme to boost Geography in schools. Our investment will give teachers more support and professional development opportunities, to make geography teaching more inspirational and relevant

"We want pupils to enjoy geography and to develop their analytical skills by exploring and questioning the world around them. To mark the launch of the Action Plan for Geography every secondary school in England will get a copy of Michael Palin's "Himalaya", an exciting read for pupils providing a wealth of opportunities for further discussion

"I am also delighted to announce the appointment of Rita Gardner and David Lambert as Geography Advisers. Their knowledge and expertise will be warmly welcomed."

Speaking on the announcement today and their appointment as advisers,

Rita Gardner said:

“I am delighted the Society has been able to work with the geography community and the government to produce this excellent Action Plan. This is a fantastic opportunity to put high quality geography lessons firmly on the map in all schools.”

David Lambert said:

“I think this is a significant moment for geography in schools. This is a subject of enormous potential to help young people grapple positively and constructively with all manner of issues that will affect their future lives. I am looking forward to working with school teachers on developing new curricula and in particular in developing the new school geography Quality Marks.”

Michael Palin who is supporting the Action Plan for Geography has said:

“You can travel the seas, poles, and deserts and see nothing. To really understand the world you need to get under the skin of the people and places. In other words, learn about geography. I can’t imagine a subject more relevant in schools. We’d all be lost without it.”

Notes to Editors:

1. The DfES will provide £961,000 in 2006-07 and £975,000 in 2007-08
2. The Action Plan for Geography came from intensive discussions and consultations with the wider geography community carried out by the Geography Focus Group in 2005. The group was set up to develop a strategic approach to the challenges facing geography in schools including addressing weaknesses in teaching at primary and Key stage 3 identified by OFSTED, and boosting GCSE and A-level numbers. The group which has met on several occasions with Schools Minister Andrew Adonis was made up from teachers, Heads, universities, business, media and other people who use geography in their careers. It identified six key themes – fieldwork, communication,

public engagement, teacher training and development, networks and links, curriculum development and some cross cutting issues like sustainable development and using ICT.

3. Geography ambassadors will be both undergraduates and those using geography in the workplace. By the end of the two years of investment we aim to have at least 500 ambassadors and at least 500 schools involved in the programme

The scheme is currently being piloted in 2 areas: **Reading & Maidenhead** (with University of Reading) - 10 schools with 10 undergraduate ambassadors and 10 work place ambassadors: and **East London** - 10 schools with 10 undergraduate ambassadors and 10 work place ambassadors e.g. examples of workplace ambassadors include individuals from Morgan Stanley, Groundwork (charity), and an official from Fraud Squad – these are all either geographers or those who use geography in the work place. The scheme is proving very popular with pilot schools.

4. There will be a new website for Geography teachers – bringing together for the first time all the resources and information that already exists to support teaching and professional development. Teachers will have an easy to use web service and can also contribute to the new support, guidance and resources that will be on offer.

5. We will also provide additional Key Stage 3 resources based around selected key curriculum topics, and will tackle relevant contemporary issues from Globalisation and Climate Change to the impact of the 2012 Olympics. The resources will include ‘celebrity’ starters – for example, video footage of celebrities exploring different geographical regions, and will also introduce a fresh new range of case studies.

6. Fieldwork is a key part of geography for pupils of all ages. There will be a virtual fieldwork centre and training to help teachers take up the wealth of learning opportunities on their doorstep. It will combine expert advice, best practice and guidance on up to date resources and using new technologies. It will link with the Education outside the Classroom Manifesto – first announced by Ruth Kelly in Feb 2005. A consultation on the Manifesto vision and aims has recently concluded and

results will appear shortly on the DfES consultation website. A launch with Manifesto partners is planned for later in the summer term.

7. Primary and Secondary Geography Quality Marks' (accreditation for schools and departments)- roll out from Sept. '06. Linked to OFSTED Self Evaluation Framework. These will help teachers and subject leaders identify quality criteria for geography. Bronze, Silver and Gold status will be obtainable. The Geography Development Fund has supported the trial of the Primary Quality Mark with 25 schools and the Secondary Quality Mark has been prepared for piloting.

The Action Plan for Geography

Executive Summary

The proposed Action Plan for Geography consists of three interlinked and mutually reinforcing activity programmes, within which are eight two-year projects.

- **Communication** - raising awareness, disseminating outcomes and information, enthusing and encouraging pupils, teachers and a more general audience
 - Geography Teaching Today (website)
 - Geography Ambassadors
 - Geography Advisers
- **Support** - providing tools, guidance and training opportunities designed to raise levels of professional competence and confidence
 - Geography resources for KS3
 - Fieldwork and local learning virtual centre
 - Geography subject leadership
- **Development** - ensuring long lasting impact through stimulating and valuing innovation and recognising subject focussed professional advancement and standards
 - Geography curriculum development
 - Professional recognition in geography

Among the key objectives of the Action Plan for Geography are that it should:

- Improve for *all* pupils the quality of the educational experience through geography
- Promote and support the development of a modernised curriculum for geography
- Raise and recognise the professionalism of geography teaching,
- Enthuse young people with the relevance of geography to employment and citizenship
- Raise the profile of geography in the education sector, and in particular its central contribution to address several national policy concerns such as sustainable development, global dimensions, cultural and social inclusion, using and understanding technology, and in imparting a wide range of skills sought after by employers

The Action Plan addresses directly a number of concerns identified in recent years by Ofsted and QCA, and referred to in the 2005 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper. It is underpinned by the outcomes of the Geography Focus Group which met four times (2004-5) under the Chairmanship of the Schools Minister. The overarching Goal is as follows:

To ensure that a clear vision for geography's educational potential and its relevance to the skills agenda and to life in the 21st century are understood by all, including the subject teaching community and educational policy makers at all levels, and that teaching professionals are enabled and equipped to realize this potential with pupils and to engage them with geography in an enjoyable way that they value.

Introduction

The Action Plan for Geography has been formulated in response to a number of concerns:

- Repeated findings by Ofsted and QCA in recent reports of the lower quality of teaching in geography in relation to the other core and foundation subjects, especially in primary and key stage 3
- Associated concerns over the curriculum being out of date, and teaching in some instances being repetitive and lacking progression and creativity
- Difficulties in delivering high quality fieldwork experiences
- A substantial number of geography lessons in the lower secondary years taught by non-specialist teachers
- The insufficient level of subject focussed preparation of primary teachers
- A sense of inertia in the Awarding Bodies in relation to embracing changes within the discipline

Recognising these issues, the need for action to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in geography¹ was highlighted in the 2005 *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper

‘Following QCA’s advice we will work with subject experts and leading teachers to develop better guidance and training for geography teachers. We want to help them to teach the curriculum in a way that engages and excites pupils, increasing progression by developing their skills and understanding’
(from the Box ‘Improving the geography curriculum’, p33)

Few would dispute the potential of geography in education at the turn of the 21st century. Its potential (see Appendix 1 for more details) arises from:

- Its relevance to understanding the world, how and why it is changing and how our behaviours as individuals influence that change
- Its ability to link local and global scales and to study the interconnections between them
- Its content matter relates directly to the impact of economic, societal and environmental issues on our daily lives and our prospect for a sustainable future
- Its ability to convey an understanding of the causes of change in our world through the knowledge of underlying environmental, social and economic processes
- Its focus on real places and landscapes; on understanding their identity, differences and diversity, and the importance of location
- Its ability to link learning in class with young peoples’ “real” experience of their locality and to extend that through fieldwork
- Its ability to add value to the teaching and learning of cross curricular themes, most notably, education for sustainable development, global perspectives, cultural understanding and citizenship.
- Its delivery of an impressive range of skills including a substantial ICT contribution through the use, for example, of Geographical Information systems

¹ Geography, as a Foundation subject, is compulsory for all pupils to the age of 14, and optional thereafter. There is a statutory entitlement for young people to be able to study geography, if they opt to do so, between the ages of 14-16. Geography remains a popular GCSE and A/AS Level option, although numbers opting to study it at GCSE have fallen by 25% in the past 10 years.

This plan – its overarching objectives and its proposals for implementation - have been strongly guided by the six priority themes identified by the DfES sponsored Geography Focus Group which met regularly in 2004-2005. The Group comprised senior representatives from the geography communities spanning research, teaching, applied geography, international development, business, and the media. They were unanimous in their view that substantial action was needed to enhance geography learning and teaching at school and to liberate its full potential for all pupils. The priority themes, which encompass the issues raised in the White Paper (2005), are as follows:

- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Initial Teacher Training (ITT)
- Cross Cutting Themes
- Curriculum Development
- Fieldwork and Outdoor Learning
- Networks and Links
- Public Engagement

Each of the priority themes contains recommended areas for action under the headings of communication, policy and intervention. A summary of each of the priorities and action areas is found in Appendix 2. The themes and areas for action were endorsed by 98% of those who responded to a community consultation in September 2005.

Goal

Taking note of the concerns, the educational potential of geography, and the recommendations of the Geography Focus Group, a single overarching goal for the APG can be expressed as:

To ensure that a clear vision for geography's educational potential and its relevance to the skills agenda and to life in the 21st century are understood by all, including the subject teaching community and educational policy makers at all levels, and that teaching professionals are enabled and equipped to realize this potential with pupils and to engage them with geography in an enjoyable way that they value.

From the point of view of the pupil this goal can be translated into:

To raise pupils' achievement in geography, and wider educational aspiration, by means of an improvement in the quality of geography teaching, a modernisation of the curriculum, and the demonstration of geography's relevance to their lives and future.

Principal objectives

The overarching objectives of the Action Plan for Geography are to:

- Improve for *all* pupils the quality of the educational experience through geography, both in the classroom and through fieldwork, and in doing so to help prepare them for their future lives as socially, culturally and environmentally aware citizens and employees.
- Promote and support the development of a modernised curriculum for geography and encourage the Awarding Bodies to fully support the modernisation process.
- Raise and recognise the professionalism of geography teaching, and ensure that quality training, resources, support and guidance is available to help achieve this.
- Enthuse teachers and pupils about the relevance, value and career opportunities afforded by studying geography in the classroom and out of doors; and enrich the learning experience by improving the interaction locally between geography in schools and in HE and the wider world.
- Raise awareness of the support that currently exists for teachers of geography and strengthen the capacity of the two subject organisations to lead, support and promote the Action Plan for Geography, working in partnership.
- Raise the profile of geography in the education sector, in particular its central contribution to address several national policy concerns such as sustainable development, global dimensions, cultural and social inclusion, using and understanding technology, and in imparting a wide range of skills sought after by employers
- Secure in the minds of policy makers, professionals in education, and the wider public the nature of contemporary geography in providing relevant, worthwhile and enjoyable education.
- Arrest the decline in the post-14 pupil take up of geography in the short term, and in the longer term to increase substantially the opportunities for pupils of all backgrounds and circumstances to experience high quality geographical components in their education

Towards implementation: a rationale

The objectives set out a broad agenda for the geographical community. The breadth of the agenda reflects the subject community's agreement that action is needed on several fronts to address current issues. There is no single fix.

There are clear synergies and links between many of the objectives and current, wider educational policy agendas. This has been an important consideration in formulating concrete proposals for action. So too has been the desire to formulate actions that not only clearly relate to the goal and objectives, but also gain from links between them. The Action Plan will make the biggest difference when taken together, as a whole. The most relevant wider policy agendas are:

- The reviews of Key Stage 3 national curriculum and A and AS level criteria that are being led by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
- The employability and skills agenda within the Department for Education and Skills and the Sector Skills Councils
- The emerging subject professionalism focus at the Teacher Development Agency
- The Out of Classroom Learning Manifesto within the Department for Education and Skills
- The 'Every Child Matters' agenda within the Department for Education and Skills

- The widening participation agenda in the Higher Education Funding Council for England and all universities

The Action Plan for Geography has been formulated with an implementation framework of 2006-2010; divided into two phases: 2006-2008 and 2008-2010. Mindful that resources are limited and not readily predictable into the future, the implementation plan concentrates on an integrated package of **communication, support and development** for 2006/7 and 2007/8. These three strands are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, each adding value to the other. Each contains no more than three concrete actions, many of which build upon recent and current pilot projects. We believe this carefully selected package will make the biggest difference over a two year time frame while at the same time being achievable and building capacity to sustain actions in the longer term.

All of these three strands are essential to the success of the Action Plan.

1. **Communication** raises awareness, disseminates outputs widely, enthuses with relevance, and proffers expert advice.
2. **Support** provides tools and training on key identified areas of weakness in geography teaching, enhancing the learning experience and raising levels of professional competence and the confidence.
3. **Development** helps to secure the future through essential curriculum reform, stimulating innovation and raising expectations, and by providing subject-based recognition and professional accreditation.

Taken together, these actions will deliver on the needs identified in the 14-19 White Paper. They will undoubtedly “*make use of subject experts and leading teachers to develop better guidance and training for geography teachers to help them to teach the curriculum in a way that engages and excites pupils, increasing progression by developing their skills and understanding*”; and they will build capacity to enable this impetus to continue into the future.

The **communication** strand focuses on exciting, informing and advising people about geography in education, and on being actively involved in the Action Plan: teachers, pupils and other key stakeholders. To get the most value for money we need to involve and support as many teachers as possible and to engage the wider business and HE communities effectively in demonstrating the relevance of school-based learning. That is the essence of the communication strand. It currently does not exist; either as a core website or as a role model (ambassador programme).

We are proposing three elements:

- **1.1 ‘Geography Teaching Today’ website: the key communication and marketing tool** The GTT website will operate for the APG as a whole. It will ensure, for the first time ever, that all teachers are easily aware of what already exists to support their teaching and professional development; how to use and get involved in the new support, guidance and resources that will be on offer through the APG programme; and how to appreciate the curriculum as a ‘joined’ up whole within a conceptual framework. It will provide an interactive forum for sharing nationally the ways in which teachers have adopted, adapted and embedded the various APG support and development activities. It will further maximise engagement by co-ordinating and sharing the existence and activities of ‘local groups’, rather than create multiple overlapping groups of schools and teachers involved in different APG elements. It will raise awareness among other stakeholders of the contribution of geography.

- **1.2 Geography Ambassadors’ programme: to enthuse pupils with the relevance of studying geography.** It will provide positive role models from all ethnic backgrounds – undergraduates and those using geography in the workplace – that will bring the practice and university study of geography alive. Pupils from all cultural backgrounds will be enabled to experience and appreciate at first hand the excitement, topicality, relevance and contribution of studying geography to life in the 21st century and to employment. This face-to-face young ambassadors’ programme will also help to improve and embed the links between schools, HE and geographers in the wider world and thus enrich the learning experience. A supplementary ‘ambassadors’ online’ resource will be provided through the GTT website and linked to careers information.
- **1.3 Specialist geographical advice: to champion the Action Plan and to provide expert advice** to government and relevant education and training agencies, including QCA, and to the Awarding Bodies. Advice will focus on how geography can contribute to, and best be involved in, new and developing wider educational agendas; and how to modernise the geography curriculum and specifications to be relevant to the 21st century, inspiring to all pupils, and progressive in their learning. Both are *essential components* of the Action Plan for Geography and will draw on the Department’s joint advisors for geography.

The **support** strand is to provide resources, guidance and training for teachers, targeted to those phases and curriculum areas that have been identified by the QCA, Ofsted, the Focus Group and by the DfES as particularly in need. There are recurring themes, namely the uninspired, stale and non-specialist key stage 3 teaching, missed opportunities to engage and enthuse through fieldwork and learning about the local area, and subject leadership that should be capable of developing a thoughtful and progressive programme of teaching at primary and secondary levels. It includes some identified wider policy agendas, and is particularly aligned to engaging and exciting pupils in learning geography. To maximise outreach in a cost effective manner, and taking note of the constraints that currently exist for teachers taking time out of class, we are proposing a combination of online and face to face support that is delivered in a mutually reinforcing way and which encourages embedding, feedback and sharing of ideas through the GTT website. The integrated package of support addresses each of these three issues directly and in ways that are consistent with the nature of the identified problems.

We are proposing one overall support scheme with three elements that are predominantly focused on Key Stage 3 and Primary phases:

- **2.1 Inspirational geography resources for Key Stage 3: responding to the lack of excitement and engagement at Key Stage 3** and aware of the impact of non-specialist teaching, we propose to create a set of ‘cool’, fun, up-to-date online resources, accessible and ready to use but also easily adaptable, for all teachers. Based around selected key curriculum topics, and with ‘celebrity’ starters, they will also introduce a fresh new range of case studies. Online help and face to face CPD opportunities will be on offer to guide teachers in embedding and getting the best out of the resources and the GTT website will enable sharing of teacher-developed classroom exemplars in their use.
- **2.2 Virtual fieldwork and local learning ‘centre’: responding to declining standards of field teaching, less than exciting use of the local area, and to new data and technologies (including GIS)**, we will provide guidance and resources as part of the GTT website to help teachers to make the most of geography in the local area through fieldwork and local learning. It will combine tips, expert advice, teacher-developed best practice exemplars and guidance on up to date resources and using new technologies. It will be supported by CPD in regional face-to-face courses and as exemplar field days.

The aim is to improve, nationwide, the breadth and quality of fieldwork and local learning as ways of linking geography with pupils' experiences in the real world.

- **2.3 Geography leadership CPD: responding to issues of subject leadership and the need to develop in more teachers the ability to plan the curriculum**, to focus on local circumstances and needs, and to build in progression and personalised learning opportunities, we will provide innovative CPD packages for potential and existing subject leaders. There will be programmes for both primary and key stage 3 phases and each will train participants in leading geography within the wider context one of three cross cutting orientations – ICTs, citizenship, or sustainable development. Participants will experience a face to face episode, followed by an 'applied' phase of classroom practice which will be supported through follow up activities, some face to face guidance and online help through the GTT website.

The **development** strand is intended to build capacity now in order to enhance teaching and learning of geography for the longer term. We seek to encourage and facilitate teachers to be professional in delivering an exciting and relevant curriculum into the future. While the proposed two-year programme (2006-2008) of support and raised levels of communication will go a long way towards energising improvement in teaching and learning in the short term, there need to be ways of *sustaining* the impetus if the impact is to be a lasting one. The key elements for this relate to continuing innovation in the way the curriculum is taught, and to developing national roll out of the subject-based routes that recognise sustained individual professional development (Chartered Geographer) and whole school (primary) or departmental (secondary) achievement.

The APG achieves these aims by:

- **3.1 Curriculum development project: involving innovator teacher groups in identifying and developing new approaches to teaching selected aspects of the curriculum.** In particular it will 're-purpose' both primary and secondary National Strategy materials through the geography subject lens, deliver practical outcomes and extensions from the suite of *GA Handbooks*, and deliver two new CPD-led curriculum development projects linked to the Pilot GCSE. The outcomes, some of which will harness new technologies (including GIS) and adventurous teaching strategies, will be models and exemplars that will be disseminated via the GTT website.
- **3.2 Recognising and accrediting professional achievement and standards: building capacity to roll out complementary, nationwide subject-based schemes for schools/departments and individuals** by means of the 'Quality Marks' (for schools and departments) and Chartered Geographer professional accreditation (for individual teachers). Both schemes aim to be self funding after two years and both are building on successful pilot phases; both need to boost their marketing and administrative support in the short term to achieve long term sustainability. A supplementary aspect of the capacity building is a feasibility study into the possibilities of offering joint membership of both subject bodies to teachers in the future.

The implementation will rest jointly and equally with the GA and the RGS-IBG, working in close partnership to provide strong leadership and effective management. The proposals draw on the complementary strengths of the two organisations. Some activities, most notably the advisory roles and most of the communication functions, will be *jointly* managed; others will be led by one or other of the organisations. An Advisory Board will bring valuable expertise to bear to the implementation overall, and to the engagement of key stakeholders within the DfES, the education agencies, and the wider geographical community. In particular, the specialist knowledge and expertise of both Rita Gardner and David Lambert will be drawn

upon. All outcomes of projects and resources funded by the DfES will be fully and freely available to all teachers in England through the GTT website.

Top level outcomes

In delivering the proposed actions we will aim to achieve the following outcomes.

1. Raised quality of geographical teaching and learning – in the classroom and in the field- and reflected in the achievements of young people.
2. Addressed the key areas of identified weakness in the current provision of geography.
3. Developed a focused online ‘home’ for the geography teaching community over which they can feel a sense of community ‘ownership’ (Geography Teaching Today website).
4. Enhanced the professional development of teachers through focussed CPD activities, curriculum development opportunities, and the recognition of their individual and departmental expertise.
5. Improved the appreciation by DfES and other stakeholders of the importance of geography in supporting pupils’ learning, employability, and understanding of key environmental, social and cultural issues.
6. Embedded the geographical subject expertise of the GA and the RGS-IBG, alongside the wider geographical community in HE and the business world, in the delivery of the APG.
7. Enhanced enjoyment and appreciation by pupils of the relevance of geography, and greater knowledge of the skills and career/employment opportunities it unlocks and its contribution to informed citizenship.
8. RGS-IBG and GA partnership and capacity is enhanced for the future benefit of teachers and pupils of geography

Success criteria

The joint Subject Advisers for Geography will ensure the implementation of this Action Plan, on budget and on time. In assessing the effectiveness of the Action Plan, the following ‘success criteria’ will be applied:

1. That there will have been demonstrable improvements in the quality and standards of geography teaching.
 - We will discuss with colleagues at Ofsted how best this can be reported beyond the two year time frame of the APG. During the APG lifetime we will develop evaluation mechanisms to involve teachers and their pupils in providing qualitative feedback on their experiences.
 - In terms of ‘take up’ of geography in schools (at both GCSE and A level) the implementation period is not of sufficient length for a reasonable judgement to be made. This is also a very complex matter, with numerous causalities – some of which lie outside the remit of the APG. However, the Plan aspires to be able to at least arrest the decline in the popularity of geography (post 14) experienced over recent years.
2. The areas of identified weakness will have been addressed through the following:

- KS3 resources. All teachers will have the opportunity to access the resources. Knowledge and regular use of the KS3 curriculum materials by a minimum of 800 secondary schools (aspirational target of 1600 schools) each year. Associated CPD will involve at least 400 teachers over the two years. The online resources will be targeted to include hard to reach and non-specialist teachers.
 - Fieldwork. All teachers will have the opportunity to access the new guidance and resources. We will aim to engage a minimum of 800 secondary schools each year in enhancing their field and/or local teaching. A survey of participants will be undertaken after 18 months to provide a basis for judging the extent of newly developed, or enhanced, fieldwork practice in schools. Associated CPD will involve at least 300 teachers over the two years.
 - The subject leadership CPD programme will engage 150 secondary and 150 primary teachers during each year. Participants will be required to apply a curriculum innovation in school, working with colleagues, and so we anticipate the programme having indirect impact on teachers significantly beyond the planned participant level, influencing whole primary schools and secondary school geography teams.
3. The establishment and regular use of the Geography Teaching Today website. Its success will be measured against the following criteria.
 - It will be updated weekly once established, and is expected to have in the region of 3000 *visits* (15 minutes) per week, by the end of its first year of existence. This represents 10% of the cohort of primary and secondary teachers of geography in any one week. We aim for teachers to make repeat visits to the site on a regular basis.
 - A survey of teachers after 18 months will provide the grounds to judge the website's 'visibility' – we expect that 75% of secondary teachers and 50% of primary teachers will *know about* the GTT website. The survey will also offer intelligence on *how* it is being used.
 4. With regard to development.
 - All teachers of geography will have new opportunities to engage with curriculum development via a combination of the GTT website and face to face occasions (in addition to existing opportunities via the subject organisations).
 - In addition, by the end of the implementation period (two years) it is anticipated that significant steps will have been made to establish professional recognition and accreditation for good practice in geography teaching and professional development. Capacity will have been established to run these programmes and mechanisms in place to ensure their sustainability. There will be at least:
 - 350 specialist teachers achieved or in the process of achieving C.Geog status
 - 150 primary schools with the Primary Quality Mark
 - 300 secondary geography departments with the Secondary Quality Mark (KS3)
 5. Geography will figure more prominently as an example in relevant DfES documents and will be sought out as a contributing subject early on in appropriate new and developing agendas.
 6. We expect to have enrolled and inducted a significant number of volunteer Ambassadors and schools – at least 500 of each; and to have Ambassadors involved from across HE, business and voluntary sectors. All Ambassadors will be actively involved in partnering schools and enthusing pupils.
 7. We will explore quantitative and/or qualitative methods of recording pupils' satisfaction and enjoyment of their geographical studies and their perceptions of the relevance of this subject to their lives.

8. As a result of the successful implementation of the Action Plan, both organisations anticipate a significant growth in membership, achieved by the successful nurturing of confidence in, and commitment to, participation in a dynamic and successful subject community and through working together to support each other.

Implementation Plan

Communication Programme

1. *'Geography Teaching Today'*. A newly developed website 'Geography Teaching Today' will be developed to provide a single point of web-based communication and information sharing. It will be the focal point for teachers' engagement with the Action Plan and a signpost for them to other resources, advice and guidance, as well as an information point for wider stakeholders. GTT website will aim to create a feeling of ownership among the teaching community and will also serve to emphasise the existence of the Action Plan in their minds. Freely accessible to all and with a distinctive identity, its purposes will be:
 - a. to raise awareness of what support already exists to enhance teaching and learning in geography;
 - b. to profile and share the development of progressive and distinctive geographical study across the educational phases, supported by conceptual framework(s) for geography and, in due course, framework exemplars of course structures developed and used by teachers for delivering KS 1, 2, 3 and particular specifications at GCSE, A/AS level;
 - c. to make available the outcomes of the APG to the widest possible specialist audience;
 - d. to serve as a source of information to education managers and leaders, and to the wider public, to raise awareness of what geography contributes to education;
 - e. to provide a medium for coordinating and sharing the activities of groups and networks of geography teachers.

In standing outside, yet being complementary to (and acting as a signpost to) the existing websites (eg of the TDA, Becta, DfES, QCA, as well as the GA and RGS-IBG) the GTT Website has the potential to both communicate with, and be owned by, the fullest extent of the community.

As a complementary part of 'knitting together' the school-based education community we will share knowledge and co-ordinate, through the GTT website, existing and emergent local groups of collaborating schools and ensure clear lines of communication with them so as to avoid establishing complex and multiple overlapping networks of schools and schools groups. This activity should facilitate interested groups to participate in a range of activities on offer through the Action Plan, whether led by the RGS-IBG or the GA or indeed others. The GTT website will be a joint GA and RGS-IBG activity.

2. *Geography Ambassadors Programme*. This programme will draw on advocates for geography – including both individuals from a schools locality and also those with a high profile – to acts as ambassadors for this subject. The aim will be to demonstrate to pupils (and by extension to teachers and careers advisors) the value of geography to employability and to further study. Ambassadors will be drawn from business, Higher Education (including students) and the voluntary sector. They will be involved alongside teachers in supporting a range of activities, such as from homework and after school clubs to talks about careers and university life. They will promote links between a school and its local community, employers and universities and also provide an invaluable source of

expertise to enhance the study of, and fieldwork in, a schools locality. Such links will be explored in relation to developing sustainable models for the future.

We will also seek, through engaging positive role models from the black and ethnic communities, to demonstrate geography's relevance to all and to encourage BME students to study geography beyond the compulsory years.

The programme will link with SETNET who will provide CRB checks and on whose register the geography ambassadors will also be recorded. The RGS-IBG will work with HE departments across England, geography graduates in the workplace, and geography-trained individuals with a national public profile. The project builds on the current pilot study which is being warmly received; it extends it to a minimum of 500 participating schools and ambassadors across at least two English regions and creates a supplementary online Ambassadors presence linked to careers information accessible to all through the GTT website. This programme will be an RGS-IBG led activity.

3. *Geography Advisors*. The successful delivery of the Action Plan proposals will require dedicated champions who will play an active role representing the Plan and its activities to the teaching community, to wider stakeholders, and to the DfES and relevant agencies. Part of the role will be to raise the understanding of the potential contribution of geography to wider educational agendas within the DfES and to provide advice to the DfES as to the options that exist for enhancing the contribution of geography for the benefit of education as a whole. This will be supported by (a) an Action Plan Advisory Group that will include representatives from the key agencies, relevant DfES departments, and senior figures from the geography community; and (b) termly update meetings with the Minister responsible for
4. *Geography*. Part of the role will be to take responsibility for meeting outcomes and targets in the Plan and reporting on them to DfES. This will be a joint RGS-IBG and GA activity.

Support Programme

1. *Inspirational geography resources for KS3.* We will develop an inspirational series of new resources to enthuse KS3 pupils with the relevance and importance of geography and enhance the teaching and learning of geography at KS3. Delivered online these resources will unpack key geographical issues, provide exemplar activities for the specialist and non-specialist teacher, and highlight the connection of geography to the environment, society and the economy using contemporary examples from across the world. Curriculum linked modules (supported by teachers notes and guidance) will be introduced by appropriate nationally known role models, such as from the media, HE, the sports world, and business, who will share their geographical enthusiasm and understanding 'first hand' with pupils. The key aim will be to provide relevant, dynamic and compelling resources, that are fun and 'cool' for pupils, to connect KS3 pupils from all cultural backgrounds with geographical perspectives ranging for example, from the climate change to cultural diversity, from globalisation to the 2012 London Olympics, from Europe to the rapidly developing parts of Asia. Resources will be freely available via the GTT website and in their development we will be mindful of ensuring effective transition to KS3 and of new developments in the KS3 national curriculum following the current reviews.

Designed to be easy to adopt for non-specialists and to adapt for specialists, the resources will include content for interactive whiteboard use, links, and ideas for pupil follow up activities. To embed the use of these resources in the classroom, build confidence among non-specialist KS3 geography teachers, and provide teacher-developed extension activities the online resources will be supported by an inservice CPD training programme targeted to teachers in underperforming departments, with the CPD programme being focused especially in the second project year. This project will be led by the RGS-IBG.

2. *Virtual fieldwork and local learning 'centre'* The first hand experience of the world 'for real' is one of geography's defining characteristics, linking learning in the classroom with pupil's experience of their local area (and beyond) and deepening both in the process. The experience of high quality fieldwork is often one of the most memorable and engaging aspects of geography at school; however, this demands a sound understanding of the local context. It can leave a lasting legacy in a pupil's understanding of, and engagement with, their local environments and communities and the wider world. In addition, fieldwork enables young people to work in a team, analyse an issue for real and present their findings – skills which all enhance their future employability. We will establish a *virtual field work and local learning centre* as part of the GTT website. It will draw together expert advice; top tips from teachers; best practice exemplars of field teaching; a guide to the resources, information and new technologies available for teaching about local areas in England and how to make best use of them in the curriculum; and guidance to training and best practice in health & safety and risk management. It will highlight and exemplify where geography fieldwork supports work towards citizenship (through the active participation of young people in their local area), sustainable development (such as local Agenda 21) and the use of locally-based ICT information linked particularly to Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and GPS. The 'centre' will be supported by a CPD training programme to help teachers in underperforming schools embed the learning within their practice, and to establish field courses and networks promoting good practice that are contextualised to specific regions and localities.

The project, led by the RGS-IBG will draw on expertise from leading practitioners (including those identified by Ofsted and the GA), higher education, and selected

providers, including the LEA field centres and the FSC as well as on the RGS-IBG specialist unit for fieldwork planning.

3. *Geography subject leadership* Innovative CPD programmes will be provided for geography subject leaders in both Primary and Secondary schools. These will be coordinated by two full-time Curriculum Development Consultants (with administrative and clerical support). The goal will be to train 150 subject leaders per year in each of the secondary and primary phases. The courses will be innovative in both their content and construction. In terms of content, the courses, which will be available nationally, will provide a choice of three 3 orientations in line with the 'cross cutting themes' identified by the Focus Group. Thus, participants will be able to choose to develop subject leadership knowledge and skills through the 'lens' of a particular range of broader educational goals – ICTs, citizenship or sustainable development. In terms of construction, courses will contain three elements, beginning with a key, day-long face-to-face episode. This will be followed by a period of school based, teacher-led curriculum innovation. This second stage will provide 'light touch support' from the Course Development Consultants and the GTT website, which will be oriented to help support (or create) local support groups and networks. The Living Geography groups, piloted through the 2005-6 Geography Development Fund, may act as model in many cases, intersecting wherever possible with other appropriate and related initiatives such as enterprise education and Specialist Schools outreach work. The third element of the courses will be a large scale evaluation conference, at which geography subject leadership in primary and secondary schools can be celebrated, and outcomes shared and disseminated. A separate, but strongly linked, strand of this CPD proposal is continued support for the Pilot GCSE, specifically to maintain the GCSE newsletter, to develop further the online support and the wider conference opportunity being piloted in 2005-6.

This programme is led by the GA and is in accordance with the deeply felt need for subject leadership in schools, led through curriculum development. The programme is distinctive from other CPD interventions in the Action Plan because of its concern with curriculum planning and the implementation of effective and well prepared medium term plans

Development Programme

1. *Curriculum development and innovation* Within the Action Plan the curriculum development projects have a more general and a more specific aspect. Measures to encourage subject focussed curriculum development *generally* will be led by the Curriculum Development Consultants (on approximately 20% of their time). These two post holders (amounting to 1.5 FTE, but with administrative and clerical support) will promote practical outcomes and extensions from the current suite of GA *Handbooks* (Early Years, Primary and now Secondary). The *Handbooks*, together with additional materials which have flowed from them (eg Primary *Superschemes*) form core resources, capable of underpinning geography focussed professional development work in schools. Part of the remit will be to support the National Strategies by making explicit links between existing geographical and ‘strategy’ materials and originating new materials where there is a demonstrable need (eg on localised curriculum making activity). These Curriculum Development Consultants will carry significant responsibilities, liaising with National Strategy consultants, Heads and other key personnel, and also produce additional materials for the GTT website. In a very real sense these consultants will help re-purpose, and add value and impact to the excellent Strategy materials through the geography subject lens, helping others to adopt and adapt both these and GA published material, and embed them locally in schools.

In addition, in each year we will lead two curriculum development projects, involving around 20 teachers taken (in the first instance) from the GCSE pilot schools. The projects will involve pairs of teachers from around 10 schools nationally, and will be designed to promote leading edge curriculum innovation focussed on the Pilot GCSE. The model of operation will be that refined by the GA over recent years, sometimes referred to as its ‘local solutions’ model. It has been employed successfully with two ‘Why Argue?’ projects, ‘Where Will I Live?’, ‘Spatially Speaking’ and ‘Reasoning with Biomedical Evidence’. What results from these projects is a firm disciplinary (subject) underpinning for both curriculum and teacher development, precisely what Ofsted and QCA have identified as necessary for the secure development of the Pilot GCSE. Dissemination to date has been mainly through the established GA channels of website, journals, conferences and publications, but in the case of these projects dissemination will also be through the GTT website. This programme will be led by the GA.

2. *Recognising and accrediting professional achievement and standards.* The GA and RGS-IBG have successfully piloted the encouragement and recognition of professional achievement in primary schools and for secondary geography departments (Quality Marks) and the accreditation of professional standards for individual specialist teachers (Chartered Geographer) respectively. These two separate, yet complementary, pilots will be rolled out on the following national basis:
 - a. *Chartered Geographer.* The development of individual teachers through the professional accreditation of their subject specialism via the Society’s Privy Council approved ‘Chartered Geographer’. Chartered Geographer is the national and EU professional accreditation for geographers. It was introduced by the RGS-IBG as the professional body two years ago. It had a specific teacher strand from the beginning, and has recruited a pilot cohort of specialist teachers with C.Geog accreditation. The RGS-IBG proposes to lead a programme of activities to further develop C.Geog as the vehicle for individual teachers’ subject-based professional accreditation and ongoing commitment to CPD. The programme will help to enable national roll out. It will increase awareness of the C.Geog (teacher) accreditation and support teachers with their application for accredited status. It will help those who acquire chartered

status to keep their knowledge of new developments and technologies in the subject up to date and will promote collaboration across local schools as part of C.Geog. activities. This will involve awareness raising; developing a teachers' mentoring scheme; advice over the wide range of CPD opportunities and activities; together with extending the networking activities for Chartered Geographers. The aim is to enable the C.Geog. teacher programme to be self-sustaining after two years so that all specialist teachers feel able to aspire to ongoing professional subject-based accreditation.

b. Geography Quality Marks. To support schools and departmental teams by the establishment of the Primary and Secondary (KS3 in the first instance) Geography Quality Marks, following the developmental work supported by the Geography Development Fund. In both cases the Quality Marks have been conceived as self evaluation tools, and link explicitly to the Ofsted SEFs. They help teachers, and especially subject leaders in schools (but also faculty heads and senior managers) identify quality criteria for geography. The tools will be progressive and have three levels, starting with an entry level based entirely on self assessment and building to a 'gold' level that will necessitate some form of external judgement, possibly based on peer evaluation. The longer term goal (after two years) will be to find a mechanism and appropriate price structure for the Quality Marks to be self sustaining – and to become a sought after professional tool. This initiative will require two 0.5 Quality Mark officers, one for the Primary and one for the Secondary version, plus administrative and clerical support and a budget to enable school visits

(c) A feasibility study will explore the possibilities for joint membership of the GA and RGS-IBG for teachers, as a way of further developing the capacity and the membership of both bodies.

.Appendix 1

In the context of the current reviews of the curriculum, we believe the study of geography at school essentially involves learning about:

Physical and human connectedness. Geography is the subject that refuses to separate natural and human made environments. Humans lead social, economic and cultural lives but ultimately within a physical environmental context, providing opportunities and constraints, and human actions in turn influence that environmental context. This realisation is a powerful way in to developing ideas of **sustainable development**.

Place. Geography is the subject that studies how environmental, social and economic interactions play out on the ground – such as the provision of living space and work and the travel demands between them, or how environmental processes impact on development. Places, and the people within them, are in some respects comparable across the globe, but also often unique in some ways. This realisation is a basis for understanding **diversity and equity** and for realising the importance of **location**

Scale. Geographical study is conscious of the significance of scale, whether the study is local, region, national, international or global in scope. We can choose the scale of study, and the choice influences what kinds of questions are appropriate and what kind of understandings can be developed. But there is more. Geographical study usually seeks to *connect* scales, in the sense that ‘no person or environment is an island’. We all exist locally – and ultimately globally in our consumption of energy for example and our impact on physical systems such as climate. This realization is an essential component of understanding **interdependence**.

Process. Geography is dynamic. Environments, societies, landscapes and places, and their interactions, are constantly evolving. Contemporary geography is the subject that helps people to understand why and how that evolution is taking place through the study of environmental, economic and social processes and their effects on shaping places and landscapes. A study of process is an essential component to understanding the forces and nature of **change** and to placing local observations in a wider **context**.

Skills. Classroom and field based studies in geography equip pupils with a wide range of skills, applied to the investigation and understanding of the real world. These are **sought after by employers**. Pupils develop skills to observe, to pose questions and to research; to collect and analyse data; and communication skills to present, question and discuss findings. Through decision making exercises pupils can begin to predict alternative scenarios, or futures and to think creatively. Information and communication technology plays a large part in geography classrooms, and the subject is poised to be transformed further through the use of increasingly powerful geographical information and other forms of visualisation software. Fieldwork helps in developing team skills.

Appendix 2

The Six Priority Themes

CPD and ITT

To encourage, support and value a culture of subject-centred professionalism in schools and with individuals throughout their career by:

- working with relevant agencies to encourage subject-based CPD and a culture of subject-based professionalism that stimulates demand for subject-centred CPD.
- implementing a co-ordinated directory of support, including CPD activities, resources and ITT.
- ensuring an enhanced provision of subject-based CPD opportunities to meet the identified needs of teachers (primary, secondary and post-16) , and support the delivery of quality CPD and ITT.
- ensuring there are targeted strands of CPD for key audiences (KS 3 non-specialists, primary teachers and hard to reach teachers) and for cutting edge developments in the subject.
- recognising and rewarding professional development through further developing both the school/department (Geography marks) and individual (Chartered Geographer: teacher) schemes.

Cross-Cutting Themes

To strengthen exposure of pupils to geographical knowledge and understanding through overt subject inputs to other discipline areas and themes, building on geography's unique contributions to science, social science and the humanities

The purpose is to develop and improve understanding of geography as a rich theoretical and practical resource for:

- understanding 'sustainable development'
- building 'global literacy' and global citizenship
- developing intercultural understanding
- understanding the power of technologies, particularly in the field of Geographical Information

We are committed to the following actions:

- creating, as part of online guidance for teachers, a clear statement for both practitioners and for wider audiences on geography's contribution to specific cross cutting themes
- supporting teachers in engaging with geography's contribution to specific cross cutting themes with CPD, resources and guidance
- building on and developing existing project work and support for teachers to embed ICT and emerging technologies, especially GIS and its role in informing pupils about the nature of the communities in which they live.
- working pro-actively with cultural communities to develop the means for geography to engage more effectively with, and to support, intercultural learning agendas
- ensuring that across the breadth of the DfES there is clear understanding of the contribution that geography can make to wider educational goals and policy objectives

Curriculum Development

To ensure that the processes of curriculum development in geography operate successfully, from design specification stage to curriculum making by teachers, in order to capture the relevance, dynamism and topicality of the subject by:

- ensuring that the subject contribution is current: the community, including HE, to play a significant role in shaping the subject design criteria and the interpretation of these into syllabus specifications and vocational programmes
- ensuring that the secondary curriculum is relevant and exciting; by refreshing and refining geography's contribution to the secondary school experience with a thorough and coherent KS3 and 14-19 Review process
- ensuring relevant and exciting opportunities are taken by non-specialist teachers in Primary schools to include high quality geographical learning in their whole school programmes
- creating an online guide for teachers to the conceptual frameworks of the discipline, and support teachers in understanding how these may be used to guide the selection of content, considering progression and to build in relevance in order to engage the experiences of pupils
- championing the value of curriculum development in geography, and providing opportunities for teacher-led curriculum making activity at all levels drawing on both leading edge subject developments and current pedagogies

Fieldwork and outdoor learning

To realise the potential for fieldwork to add significant value and enthusiasm to learning, including local learning, through geography and to build on young peoples' experience by:

- ensuring that wider policy initiatives recognize the importance of geographical fieldwork, notably the Higher Education benchmark for geography and the manifesto for education outside the classroom
- encouraging the use of cutting edge ICT technologies, such as GIS and GPS, to enhance geography fieldwork and in helping to embed ICT in geography
- developing and supporting the provision of CPD opportunities specifically for field teaching, building on current support by both subject bodies, and engage HE expertise and others in the sharing of knowledge about local areas.
- developing an online outdoor learning network of key geography practitioners to share exemplars of good practice in the planning and delivery of fieldwork for both geography and education for sustainable development through geography.
- creating an inclusive fieldwork forum, building on current expertise, to share ideas and to advocate fieldwork for pupils from all backgrounds and circumstances

Networks and Links

To enrich pupils' educational experiences through geography by identifying and strengthening contacts with geographers and geographical institutions in the wider world by:

- piloting, building and supporting a cost effective 'geography ambassadors' network to go into schools and enthuse pupils, building on lessons learned from SETNET and others.
- developing a single definitive and comprehensive source of career advice, predominantly online, building on the existing support.
- establishing and supporting a national geography forum across business, NGOs, community groups and HEIs to champion links between schools and wider communities, and to provide expertise and possible funding for projects.

- providing a source of online guidance on establishing, maintaining and making the best educational use out of links between geography in school and business, NGO, public sector and other users of geography in the workplace or community.
- working with the Specialist Schools Trust to support geographical outreach from schools with a geography specialism; and with HE to enhance school/HE interactions.

Public engagement

To expand and deepen the public understanding of contemporary geography, both its educational relevance and potential and the role of the subject in society as an essential input to widening participation. In addition to teachers and pupils, target groups will include education managers and Heads, policy makers, employers, and parents. To advance public engagement with geography by:

- creating and marketing an exciting and accessible online reference point that explains and illustrates for the general public, including parents, the nature and relevance of modern geography and the contribution it makes to a broad and balanced education at all levels.
- communicating a clear and powerful conceptual statement on geography for educational professionals.
- establishing and nurturing an active geography champions group, including professional geographers and those sympathetic to geography who are leaders in education, media, business and policy.
- raising the profile of geography across government, to ensure geography is mainstreamed in relevant policies of DfES and other government departments.
- illustrating and publicise examples of the applications of contemporary geographical research and knowledge to society, government and business; and work with the media to raise positively the profile of geography across all media.