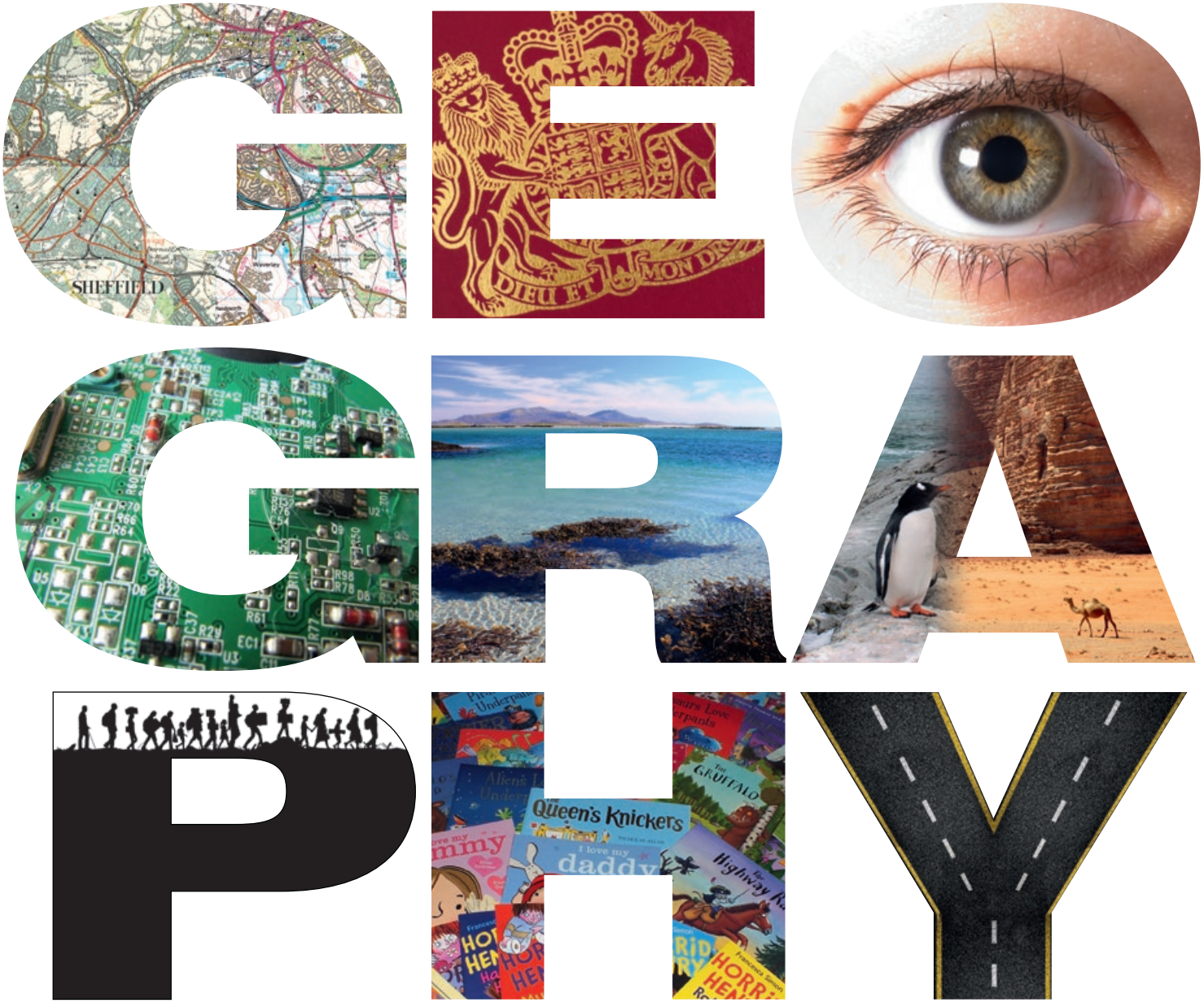
PRIMARY GEOGRAPHY

Focus on adapting geography

Number 97 | Autumn 2018



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FORTHCOMING ISSUE
Spring 2019: Leading geography

EDITORIAL

RICHARD HATWOOD

Guest editor, Richard Hatwood. Photo © Richard Hatwood.

Change is the only constant

Change is something that affects us all at some point in our lives, and is something that we cannot avoid. How teachers and other school staff respond to change and how we adapt has such an impact on the children in our care; the American actor and singer Jimmy Dean encapsulated the concept of change and role of teachers perfectly with his quote: 'I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination'. As teachers, our job is to help and guide our pupils to adjust their own sails to ensure they are prepared for the world of tomorrow.

By its very nature, change can create uncertainty, and uncertainty can breed a feeling of fear. Resilience is a popular word in education currently, but helping our pupils to manage change effectively and to adapt to new scenarios, information and expectations can develop them as resilient citizens, both on the local and the global stage: 'Those with higher resiliency are more likely to thrive in learning and less likely to suffer from social or psychological health problems' (Benard, 2004). Preparing for change therefore not only promotes learning, but also the wellbeing of our pupils.

It appears that as news becomes much more easily accessible, and as technology continues to develop at a rapid speed, the scale and pace of the change that we are experiencing, both within the education sector and the wider world, will continue to grow. In my daily teaching, I often feel that the world is becoming 'smaller' and much more connected, yet at the same time much more disconnected and much 'larger'. Our challenge, as teachers, is to adapt to the changes we are experiencing and to use them to best prepare our pupils for the future.

Within the education world, we are in a situation where we are teaching and preparing our pupils for a future world that we do not know. We do not know of the jobs that our pupils will pursue, we do not know how technology will continue to develop and change, we do not know how our climate and environment will change and we do not know how stable or unstable our planet will become politically.

The British Council 'Connecting Classrooms' scheme (see web panel) was developed with a focus on core skills. These are critical thinking, creativity, communication, leadership and digital literacy; transferrable skills that teachers who have undertaken the training have used across the curriculum. Having a focus on skills that are more transferrable can support development of a curriculum that is pupil-led and one that prepares our pupils for the challenges and changes that they may encounter in the future.

Across the United Kingdom, our curricula are becoming ever more varied and diverse. Approaches in the countries that make up the United Kingdom appear to be moving in varying directions; this is a challenge for teachers, particularly in border regions. This issue of *Primary Geography* focusses on how teachers and schools are adapting to support change and to instil confidence in the future for our pupils. I have personally enjoyed editing this issue of the journal as it has allowed me to reflect on my own practice and to take away and try new ideas and approaches in my classroom.

Through their articles, practitioners explore how they are adapting their planning, teaching and resources to ensure that geography has a leading role and that the subject supports the development of the transferrable skills that our pupils will need in the future to succeed in whatever role they end up taking.

Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks to everyone who has supported and contributed to this issue of *Primary Geography*; to the *Primary Geography* Editorial Board for their insight and useful discussions, and to Professor Graham Donaldson who made time in his very busy schedule to meet with me to be interviewed.

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Benard, B. (2004) *Resiliency: What we have learned*. San Francisco, CA: WestEd. Cited in Cahill, H., Beadle, S., Farrelly, A., Forster, R. and Smith, K. (n.d.) *Building resilience in children and young people: A literature review for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development*. Available at: https://www.education.vic.gov.au/documents/about/department/resiliencelitreview.pdf (last accessed 18/7/2018).

WEB RESOURCES

British Council Connecting Classrooms: *https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/about-programmes/connecting-classrooms*

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The start gallery

ADAPTING TO CHANGES

RICHARD HATWOOD

Richard offers ideas to help pupils learn about change and adaptation – in every sense of the word!

Talk about change

The terms 'change' and 'adaptation' describe a whole array of things in terms of education, the natural world, and human responses to the environment. Pupils may find change difficult to cope with, for example, when they move schools or classes; similarly, for staff taking on new roles, or for families experiencing changes due to circumstances beyond their control (see Owens, pages 30-2 this issue).

Taking the opportunity to talk about change is the best way to prepare pupils for it. The same goes for teachers – providing a platform for discussion and collaboration can really help everyone to adapt and manage change more effectively (see Elsom and Collis, pages 24-5, and Christie, pages 18-19 this issue).

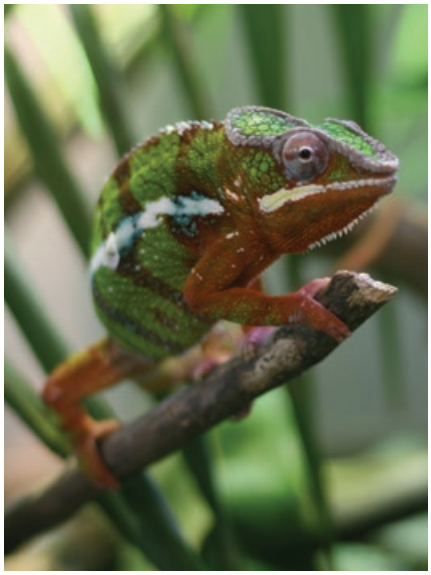

Figure 1: A chameleon is just one example of natural adaptation to change. Photo © Garrett Rooney.

Focus on the natural world

Investigate adaptation in the natural world: study how a chameleon camouflages itself (Figure 1). Use a series of photos to explore how animals and plants have adapted to changes in climate, habitat and food chains over time. Allow pupils to compare different plant species to see how the natural world adapts to change over time. Photos in the natural context can engender pupils' sense of awe and fascination and motivate them to achieve extraordinary things (see Reardon, pages 16-17 this issue).

Evaluate responses

As part of the PSHE curriculum (and with the support of the Subject Leader), explore physical change as part of pupils' maturation. In geography use photos of and stories about natural disasters as a focus for discussing human responses to them (see Holbrey, pages 20-1, and Morgan, pages 10-11 this issue). Pupils can evaluate responses to a particular disaster and/or compare responses in more economically developed countries with those in less economically developed ones and provide reasons why.

Use the local area

The local area is great for learning about environmental and other changes (see Hill, pages 6-7, and Hussain, pages 8-9 this issue). Allow pupils to use online mapping tools, photos and reference books before embarking on fieldwork to investigate changes in building use or open spaces in the local area.

Such investigations provide excellent opportunities for pupils to share their findings, engage with stakeholders in the wider community and develop as responsible local citizens. As most pupils are familiar with the local area, they have the background knowledge to support decision making and investigative work. They could also draw on family, friends and other local sources of knowledge, thus fostering their sense of belonging and connection (see Graham, pages 22-3 this issue).

Global change in the news

The news is an excellent way to learn about change and how people and things adapt to it in other parts of the world. Sources such as BBC Newsround (see Dalton, page 15 this issue) and *First News* (see web panel) allow pupils to access up-to-date information on change and how people are responding to it. Fostering their sense of wonder is an exciting way for pupils to learn about the world around them, and by reflecting on what they have read or heard in the news pupils can develop their critical thinking skills.

Focus on pupil voice

It is imperative that in exploring and investigating change we take account of the pupils' voice – both in the classroom and at school level. We should make opportunities to reflect on the 'pupil voice' and its impact on our approach to teaching and learning in geography (see White, pages 12-14, and Biddle and Davies, pages 26-7 this issue). Working with pupils, teachers could consider the effectiveness and impact of the school council and any changes it has on school life.

WEB RESOURCES

BBC Newsround:
https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround
First News:
https://www.firstnews.co.uk/

Richard Hatwood is Geography Subject Leader and Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Co-ordinator at Ysgol Esgob Morgan, St Asaph, Wales. He is a member of both the *Primary Geography* Editorial Board and the GA's Governing Body.

ADAPTING GEOGRAPHY TO BEST SHAPE THE FUTURE

JESSICA HILL

Demonstrating the relevance of geography teaching in the 21st century, Jessica looks at how Alwoodley Primary School adapts geography to meet emerging trends and to ensure it can respond to new curricular demands as they arise.

At Alwoodley Primary School, I am passionate about reinforcing a subject hierarchy that gives geography equal importance to the core subjects. One way in which I achieve this is by keeping our curriculum fluid: adapting it to respond to the needs and interests of the pupils or to topical issues in the news.

Starting points

A useful starting point is to consider what we believe to be the building blocks for curriculum making. National Curriculum requirements set out what needs to be covered, but this should just be the starting point for schools when they are considering what is best for their pupils. We should remember that the National Curriculum does not tell us how to teach; with this in mind teachers have the flexibility of delivering relevant, exciting and challenging geography.

Halocha (2010) mentions the idea of moving away from fixed blocks of planning where historically teachers have felt bound to half-termly units. This concept sits alongside that of 'adapting' geography because when teachers adapt a lesson (or series of lessons) it will impact upon time.

Out in the field

To my mind, as leader of the subject it is important that I lead by example. Over recent years I have advocated fluidity in the curriculum by sharing the successes of lessons with other staff. In evaluations of teaching and learning in geography at our school, I recognised that the most memorable and enjoyable education for pupils was the learning that had involved them. Where pupils are active participants, they have 'bookmarked' the learning in their memories. This is something I value greatly because pupils will be able to draw on these experiences for many years to come and, therefore, have a solid foundation of geography. With staff, I regularly refer to the inspirational quote attributed to Benjamin Franklin: 'Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn'. With this in mind, I approached our year 3 local area unit slightly differently this year. The unit is one that pupils always enjoy because they have a purpose to their learning. From the outset, pupils are told at the end of the unit they will produce a calendar to celebrate the wonderful aspects of our local area. This in itself professionalises the task and helps pupils to appreciate the importance of geography. With the mission clear in their minds, we set off to the local woodlands. The pupils were keen to record physical and human features with cameras and through field sketches (Figure 1). Part way through the field visit, pupils noticed relics from the past: old gate posts, derelict buildings and neglected walls. Naturally, this led to a discussion about how our local area had changed over time. It seemed the perfect way to generate a meaningful enquiry and exploit some additional learning.

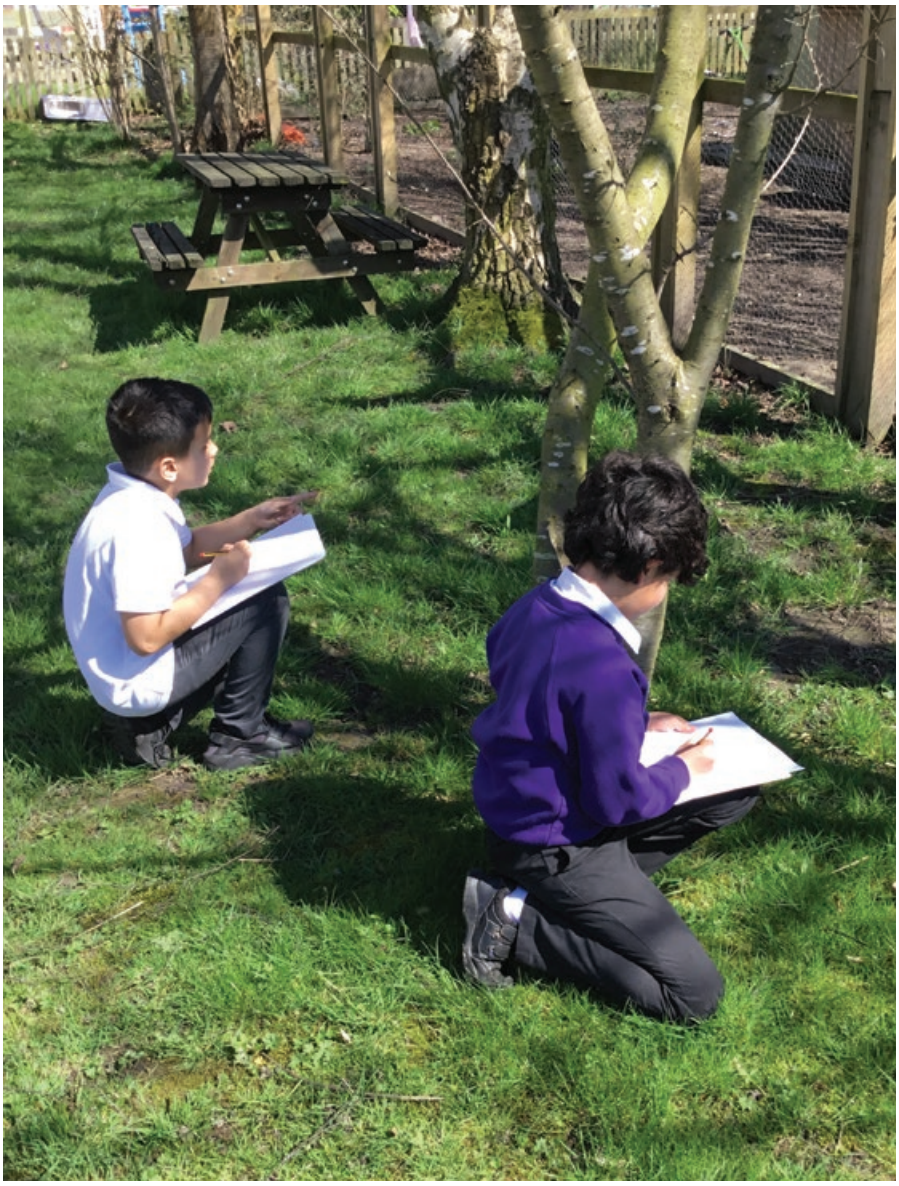

Figure 1: Pupils made first-hand on observations and recorded physical and human features with cameras and through field sketches. Photo © Jessica Hill.

Adapting in the classroom

Back in the classroom, I provided pupils with historical photos and excerpts of remembering from past residents. They used these to answer the enquiry question that they had generated: 'How has Alwoodley changed over the past 100 years?' In my vision for where the lesson(s) would end up it was important that I was flexible. The pupils decided that they would like to see changes that had occurred in our area on maps. As a result, we moved on to using Digimap for Schools (see web panel) and used the date slider to support their thinking. Their investigations led the pupils to understand that the local area had once been farmland and open moors. This explained the gates, derelict buildings and walls they had encountered in the woods. Over a series of lessons, the pupils gained an appreciation of how the landscape and people have changed over time. An unplanned outcome was pupils developing an appreciation that people have influenced the changes in the landscape. The value of this knowledge is substantiated when we remind ourselves that, 'the important thing ultimately is that people should understand people, and in the primary school a significant contribution may be made to this end' (HMSO, 1967, p. 235).

Moving forward

Since completing the unit of work, I reflected on the reasons behind its success. Although the initial ideas were planned by me with the pupils to follow, very quickly the tables were turned and the pupils took the lead. Being open to adapting my ideas meant that enjoyment and achievement rose and the pupils' final pieces of work were testament to this. Pupils deepened their skills in using maps, photos and in developing lines of enquiry. One consideration needs to be that when a unit is adapted pupils may need additional resources, quickly. The one resource that we always have is our local area. 'Using local geography as a resource to support learning… is a fantastic way to motivate pupils because the learning is real, relevant and exciting' (Owens, 2007). Reinforcing this message to my colleagues has empowered them to adapt units across school. In EYFS, where provision areas constantly change in response to pupil-led interests, one example occurred when the pupils were learning about the UK. Their curiosity about London increased over the week and teachers noted numerous models being made by pupils (see Figure 2). Subsequently, the staff developed a role-play area to fuel this interest, thus showing a willingness to adapt their ideas in favour of a pupil-led approach. It is important that as practitioners we recognise that 'Teachers have an important role in creating room for geographical thinking that can emerge from playful interactions' (Witt and Clarke, 2018).

Figure 2: An example of a model of London made by Reception pupils. Photo © Jessica Hill.

Final thoughts

A static curriculum can become a stale one. We should remember that, 'Curriculum making is the creative art of interpreting curriculum specifications and turning it into a coherent scheme of work… it is a creative act that lies at the heart of good teaching' (Action Plan for Geography, cited in Owens, 2010). The world is constantly changing and, to my mind, geography ought to adapt and respond to these changes.

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HMSO (1967) *Children and their Primary Schools*. London: HMSO.

Owens, P. (2007) 'Why fieldwork matters to every child', *Primary Geographer*, 63, pp. 12–14.

Owens, P. (2010) 'Re-making the curriculum', *Primary Geographer*, 72, p. 8.

Witt, S. and Clarke, H. (2018) 'There's no play like gnome', *Primary Geography*, 95, pp. 10–14.

WEB RESOURCES

Digimap for Schools:
http://digimapforschools.edina.ac.uk/

Jessica Hill is currently a year 3 teacher and Assistant Head at Alwoodley Primary School, Leeds. For many years she has led geography across the school, and, in 2013, successfully put together the School's application for a PGQM Bronze Award, which was subsequently re-validated to Gold in 2017. Jessica has also acted as consultant to the Geographical Association for more than five years.

ADAPTING GEOGRAPHY THROUGH TOPIC-BASED TEACHING

HINA HUSSAIN

Here, Hina offers practical examples of how adapting geography through a topic-based approach can support and develop the delivery of high-quality teaching of the subject.

Our approach

When thinking about geography, I believe Michael Palin best describes the subject: 'geography explains the past, illuminates the present and prepares us for the future. What could be more important than that?' (Palin, 2007). In addition to describing geography, I see the above statement as a blueprint for teaching high-quality, and, more importantly, relevant geography. This drives everything we do in geography at Kensington School in London.

Within topic-based teaching, it is important that we do not dilute the skills being developed for the individual subjects. Work that encompasses history, science, mathematics, PSHCE and technology provides strong cross-curricular links and opportunities for teachers to think differently in responding to changing curriculum demands.

Use of ICT and digital tools is a key part of our approach to topic-based teaching. Using Digimap, an interactive mapping tool (see web panel), has given real emphasis to developing pupils' ICT skills in the context of geography and topic-based teaching. In developing our topic-based planning at school, we have found that geography is able to give context to most areas of learning.

My motivation to lead geography

In this article, I outline the ways in which our school has adapted the geography curriculum to support the development of high-quality topic-based learning, while helping to contextualise both the subject and topic-based approach in the process.

Although there are times when it is necessary to teach standalone lessons, most of the time geography can be taught through and alongside other areas of the primary curriculum. An example of this is teaching geography alongside history to look at eastern London before and after the Second World War. We used Digimap, imagery and other forms of maps to investigate the physical changes to the landscape in the East End of London caused by the bombing.

During my first year as geography and history subject leader, we applied for the Primary Geography Quality Mark (PGQM). This was daunting at first, but it turned out to be a fantastic way to get a better picture of where we were with geography at Kensington School. It proved an insightful tool, and achieving the Silver PGQM highlighted our strengths – one of which being topic-based learning. The Award has provided me with a clear idea of what will help us to further develop geography at Kensington.

Local post in Early Years Foundation Stage

In our Early Years Foundation Stage, geography is taught within the Understanding of the World Area of Learning. It is often taught discretely with a heavy emphasis on context. For example, learning about 'People Who Help Us' and talking about the postal service. As part of this work, the pupils look at the journey that a letter or parcel takes. Rather than stopping there, we build on the excitement pupils have for the topic, taking our extremely excited four- and five-year-olds to the post box across the road from school. Here they all get to post their beautifully made Easter cards to their home addresses (Figure 1). This brings the learning back to real life and helps them see an outcome from their learning in school as well as strengthening links between school and home.

Before we set off on this adventure, we look at where everyone lives on Digimap. This brings the digital skills and ICT link in and shows how we adapt our teaching and learning to meet the needs of the 21st century. As we label our map we talk about how far pupils travel to and from school. At this stage, we address misconceptions about how the postal system works; and pupils use the tools on Digimap to help calculate the distances travelled.

Stories in Key stage 1

In key stage 1, our pupils explore 'Hot and Cold Areas of the World'. To add context, the topic is linked to one of our core texts: *Handa's Surprise* (Browne, 1995), a story that gives pupils a solid base from which to investigate further. This approach provides a strong link between literacy skills and geography. Pupils work to investigate and then describe the climate in the text. Further links are made with maths, as the pupils measure and investigate temperature, trends and patterns.

Following this, pupils develop their literacy skills to write their own profile

In KS2 pupils are taught map and compass reading skills. Photo © Jeff Moser.

Figure 1: Starting their Easter card's journey through the post to their home address. Photo © Hina Hussain.

of another locality using the language and key words developed from *Handa's Surprise* (Browne, 1995) and the geographical skills used throughout the topic. They also have opportunity to incorporate the numeracy skills developed into their work; creating a truly cross-curricular approach.
This is essentially, as Geiger *et al*. describe, numeracy as a cross-curricular skill and one that is required throughout life: 'Numeracy is the capacity to make effective use of mathematics in contexts related to personal life, the workplace, and in exercising civil responsibilities' (Geiger *et al.*, 2014).

Local area in key stage 2

In key stage 2, local fieldwork studies link to our topic 'Our Local Area'. Pupils are taught discrete skills (map reading, using grid references and a compass), which can then be applied to their study of the local area. Links are made with maths as the pupils work with directions, co-ordinates and varying numbers. Being able to get out of the classroom, and use their map reading skills practically, allows pupils to embed these skills. It also provides us with a purposeful opportunity to assess their understanding in both geography and the supporting subjects, such as maths.

Here, we further develop map reading skills using both traditional maps of the area and digital tools (such as Digimap) to record the learning taking place and to help the pupils to pose new questions to drive their learning forward.

Empowered teachers of geography

As I am sure most practitioners appreciate, it can be a challenge to oversee teaching and learning in a subject that you lead across different phases, especially if you are class-based.

In order to lead geography successfully, I believe it is vital for the whole school to value the importance of the subject. At Kensington this is very much the case and it was demonstrated by our submission for the PGQM. As a group teaching across the school, we aim to constantly improve, revise and adapt planning to suit different cohorts, teachers' and pupils' own interests and developments in the news. We do this through taking regular feedback from teachers and pupils to improve medium-term planning, and giving pupils greater say over what they want to learn.

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Geiger *et al*. (2014) cited in O' Sullivan, K., O' Meara, N. and Conway, P.F. (n.d.) *Teaching Numeracy as a cross-curricular subject in post-primary school*. Available at: https://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/smec/pdfs/2C%20Kathy%20O%27%20Sullivan%20Teaching%20Numeracy%20as%20a%20cross%20curricular%20subject%20in%20post-primary%20school.pdf (last accessed 27/6/2018).

Palin, M. (2007) cited in 'Celebrating the Action Plan for Geography', *GA Magazine*, 8, pp. 22-3.

WEB RESOURCES

Digimap for Schools:
http://digimapforschools.edina.ac.uk/

As well as being a teacher for the past two years, Hina Hussain is Geography and History Subject Leader at Kensington School. Since qualifying in 2001, she has taught across the primary age range and currently teaches in the Early Years Foundation Stage in Reception.

SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

GARETH MORGAN

Adapting geography to teach controversial issues is possible: here Gareth describes how his school's annual Refugee Week involved pupils developing their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Refugee Week is an annual event that celebrates the contribution of refugees to the UK and encourages people to develop a deeper understanding of asylum. I determined that taking part in Refugee Week would be an ideal opportunity to develop my pupils' critical thinking skills and enhance their global awareness, build on partnership working and allow me to teach geography through a cross-curricular approach.

Due to time constraints all the activities described in this article took place in a single 90-minute lesson. Later, in my evaluation, I decided the learning would be more effective to spread over a sequence of lessons.

Questioning photos

I began by sharing a range of photos on the interactive whiteboard with the pupils and using a 'What can you see?' PowerPoint (ActionAid, 2016 – see web panel). I provided no further information in order to avoid giving away the title ('Refugees') or leading the learning in a specific direction. Next, I handed out cropped versions of a series of photos to the small groups of pupils. As their printed images showed only a part of the original photo, groups were given sticky notes to record their responses to questions, including:

- What can you see?
- Where are these people?
- How are these people feeling?
- What is happening outside the edges of your photo?
- What question would you like to ask the people in the photo?

The groups had to stick their answers around the photo. We then discussed their responses and predicted what the whole photo would show. We looked at the uncropped images on the IWB and compared the groups' ideas with what the actual photo revealed. This allowed us to look at common themes and iron out any misconceptions that the pupils had.

Developing through hot seating

Next, we studied a photo of an inflatable dinghy landing a group of refugees on the shore in Lesvos, Greece (Figure 1). I asked one group of pupils to adopt the poses of randomly selected people within the photo. The other pupils put a series of questions (e.g. What are you doing? How do you feel? Where are your belongings? Where have you come from? Where are your parents/family?) to those posing in the mocked up 'photo'. Pupils swapped around so that everyone had the chance to take on the role of a refugee. This very powerful activity led to some interesting

Figure 1: Refugees getting off a dinghy that has landed at a beach in Lesvos, Greece. Photo © George Makkas/Panos Pictures/ActionAid.

Refugees

They have no need of our help
So do not tell me
These haggard faces could belong to you or me
Should life have dealt a different hand
We need to see them for who they really are
Chancers and scroungers
Layabouts and loungers
With bombs up their sleeves
Cut-throats and thieves
They are not
Welcome here
We should make them
Go back to where they came from
They cannot
Share our food
Share our homes
Share our countries
Instead let us
Build a wall to keep them out
It is not okay to say
These are people just like us
A place should only belong to those who are born there
Do not be so stupid to think that
The world can be looked at another way

(now read from bottom to top)

Figure 2: 'Refugees' by Brian Bilston. Reproduced here with kind permission of the author.

questions and ad-libbed solutions. If the pupils were able to research case studies of refugees in advance, they may have been better able to give fuller 'answers'.

Moving to philosophical questioning

Pupils were asked to respond to the question 'Should we allow refugees into the UK?' in a 'secret poll'. To take part pupils placed their heads on the table, closed their eyes and put up their thumbs if they thought 'yes'. This enabled me to gauge their initial responses and for the pupils to share their immediate response without being influenced by their peers.

After this poll, the pupils had to answer the same question in groups. I explained that they were to explore their thoughts on the issue. I suggested one pupil start by giving their opinion, and then, moving clockwise around the table, the others could offer comments so that everyone had a chance to speak. On circulating around the room during their discussion, I heard the following comments:

'They'll take benefits off our government.'

'Where will they stay? We haven't any spare houses.'

'I'd like someone to let me stay if I was them.'

'Terrorists use refugees as cover.'

'It's not safe in their countries.'

Using background knowledge

Using a second PowerPoint (from various sources – see web panel), we focused on the history of migration as a class and I questioned them: Have you ever lived somewhere else? If so, why did your family decide to move? How did they feel when you were moving to a new home? Do you know someone from a different country? Next, we looked at how and why birds migrate (e.g. RSPB Migration Route Map) and discussed how and why people migrated in the past (referring to the Romans and Second World War evacuees). We explored the differences between a refugee and a migrant; at this point I was keen to address any common misconceptions the pupils might hold about people on the move.

To put this in context, we compared data of net migration to and from the UK. Then I asked the pupils to list 12 things they would take if they had to leave the country immediately. I quickly dropped the number of items to 10, then just five. We compared the pupils' choices with those chosen by child refugees shown in photos by James Mollison (see web panel).

After recapping on the difference between a refugee and a migrant, we held another secret vote to gauge if our investigations had changed the pupils' views.

I finished the session by reading Brian Bilston's poem 'Refugees' (Bilston, 2016; see Figure 2). The poem is meant to be read from top to bottom and then in reverse, thus revealing diametrically opposite views about refugees. The class enjoyed the poem's cleverness and how it was structured (providing an excellent cross-curricular link to literacy for subsequent lessons).

In this ever-changing world in which people are moving with increasing frequency, I felt it was important to provide the pupils with a clear understanding of what it means to be a refugee or a migrant, the history of migration and where it fits into the bigger picture. This session was intended to empower the pupils to become the responsible global citizens of tomorrow.

WEB RESOURCES

ActionAid 'What can you see?': *https://www.actionaid.org.uk/school-resources/resource/ks1-and-ks2-refugee-crisis-resources*
RSPB Migration Route Map: *https://ww2.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-kids/games-and-activities/online-games-for-kids/migration-route-map*
Migration Maps: *http://migrationsmap.net/#/GBR/arrivals and http://www.iom.int/world-migration*
James Mollison images of refugees: *http://jamesmollison.com/photography/timemagazine/*
Brian Bilston poetry: *https://brianbilston.com/2016/03/23/refugees/*

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ADAPTING TO LIFE BEYOND LEVELS

EMMA WHITE

In this article, Emma explains how the need to adapt to assessment without levels requires time and effort. However, creating an assessment tool has resulted in an effective, accessible, supportive system.

The move away from the levels assessment systems and changes to the National Curriculum in 2014 (DfE, 2013) could be seen as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, teachers were given more autonomy and were able to tailor their curriculum to better meet the needs of their pupils' interests and needs. On the other hand, teachers had developed confidence in their ability to assess pupils' progress and attainment to identify what levels 'looked like', and a new way of assessing would undermine this. At Curwen Primary School (CPS), the changes to the curriculum were fully embraced, but (as with many schools) assessment without levels was not quite as straightforward. Yes, a lot of support was on offer, but creating an assessment system that would best suit the needs of the school would be a long process. Although CPS addressed the assessment of every subject, this article outlines how we created an assessment tool specifically for geography.

The challenge

Where to start? Well, several questions were identified as key to the process of developing an effective assessment tool:

- What are the expectations of the National Curriculum?
- What do the expectations 'look like' in each year group?
- Where do the pupils need to be at the end of KS1 and KS2?
- What will non-specialist teachers and pupils need to be able to assess progress and attainment?

Having a geography 'expert' (I have experience of teaching both primary and secondary geography) gave CPS a good understanding of the expectations of where pupils need to be in relation to their geographical knowledge and skills. It was clear from the outset what the pupils needed to know to allow them to become good secondary school geographers. (Incidentally, since moving into the primary field, it has become obvious that pupils know and can learn far more geography than secondary teachers think they can – but that's a whole other article!) The knowledge of where pupils need to be to get them ready for secondary geography education was evident. The National Curriculum also outlined the requirements of knowledge, understanding and skills required to meet expected standards for key stages 1 and 2. The challenge lay in creating an assessment tool that supported non-specialist teachers and pupils in being able to accurately assess these areas – specifically, the expected knowledge, understanding and skills-base for every year group.

Inspiration

At CPS, geography, alongside all other Foundation subjects, had been assessed for several years. However, this is not the case for all primary schools. For the first year of 'assessing without levels', it was decided to continue with the assessment system that the school subscribed to at that time. However, it became apparent that the system did not fully meet our needs; the expectation descriptors for each year group were neither specific enough nor did they enable clear progression of knowledge, understanding and skills to be shown. We searched for guidance as to which path to take via different providers of teaching resources, including the Geographical Association (GA, 2014), Royal Geographical Society (Owens, 2016; RGS, 2017) and others, and chose 'Rising Stars'. Rising Stars is a freely available progression framework, which provided our starting point. It has descriptors of expectations for KS1, lower KS2 and

Year group	Working towards expected: What to look for	Working at expected: What to look for	Working at greater depth: What to look for
5	The pupil can name and locate some physical environments in the UK, e.g. coastal environments, the UK's significant rivers and mountains	The pupil can locate and describe some physical environments in the UK, e.g. coastal environments, the UK's significant rivers and mountains	The pupil can confidently locate and describe a variety of physical environments in the UK, e.g. coastal environments, the UK's significant rivers and mountains and suggest how they change over time
5	The pupil can locate the UK's regions	The pupil can locate the UK's regions and major cities	The pupil can confidently locate the UK's regions and major cities
6	The pupil can locate and describe some physical environments in the UK, e.g. coastal environments, the UK's significant rivers and mountains	The pupil can locate and describe several physical environments in the UK, e.g. coastal and mountain environments, and how they change	The pupil can locate and describe a range of contrasting physical environments in the UK, e.g. coastal, river, hill and mountain environments, and how they change
6	The pupil can locate the UK's regions and major cities	The pupil can locate the UK's major urban areas, knowing some of their distinct characteristics and how some of these have changed over time. The pupil can recognise broad land-use patterns of the UK	The pupil can locate, with accuracy, the UK's major urban areas, knowing their distinct characteristics and how they have changed over time. The pupil can identify broad land-use patterns of the UK

Figure 1: Knowledge, understanding and skills were clearly defined as expectations for each year group (shown here for years 5 and 6), ensuring they could be 'mapped' to show progression.

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upper KS2 (Rising Stars, 2015a,b,c). We felt that these alone would provide us with a means to assess pupils in the confidence that if they met the expectations the pupils would be well equipped for secondary geography education.

Making it our own

As mentioned above, it was important that the assessment tool supported non-specialists. This meant that we needed to break down the Rising Stars descriptors further to provide a progression framework tailored to each year group. A clear set of unambiguous statements, that both teachers and pupils could understand and use to assess attainment and progress, was required. With this as a focus, we created a set of 'I can…' statements for each year group under the headings 'Geographical knowledge', 'Geographical understanding' and 'Geographical skills'. Putting 'knowledge' and 'understanding' under separate headings may be of concern: you cannot have one without the other. However, the two can be separated, for example, a pupil may say that 'volcanoes are found along plate boundaries', but not understand the process that leads to them being there; or point to hot and cold places on a globe without understanding why they are so. In relation to the 'I can…' statements we wanted knowledge, understanding and skills to be clearly defined as expectations for each year group, to ensure they could be 'mapped' to show progression from one year to the next (Figure 1). Furthermore, knowing that every pupil is an individual and that some would not meet an expected attainment while others would exceed it, we also needed to adapt the descriptors to support teachers in assessing pupils at different ability levels.

To develop this further and ensure it could be utilised as a whole-school assessment system, we needed to incorporate assessment for EYFS and pupils working on P Scales. We identified key strands of Development Matters' Early Learning Goals and Characteristics of Effective Learning, which link to geography. Much of this came from 'Understanding the World' (ELG 13, 14 and 15) – you can find details and exemplification materials on the DfE website – and the relevant P Scales statements were incorporated (Department for Education, 2014a; 2014b). This resulted in an assessment tool that we can use to map expected progress from Reception to year 6, including links to P Scales (Figure 2).

Where we are now

The current version of the assessment tool consists of three parts. The first is a comprehensive progress assessment overview, giving details of what to expect from a pupil that is 'Working towards', 'Working at' or 'Working in greater depth' in relation to expectations of knowledge, understanding and skills, for each year group. This tends to be used by Year Group Leaders, who need a more in-depth understanding of expectations.

We adapted the overview to produce the second part: a checklist for pupils to use as a self-assessment tool. The checklist is pasted on the inside cover of every pupil's Topic book and is used by them to assess their own progress against 'Working at' year group expectations. It is composed of a list of 'I can…' statements that the pupils traffic light, depending on where they think their progress is at for that statement (see Figure 3).

GEOGRAPHICAL UNDERSTANDING: Understanding places and connections	
ELG/CoEL	The pupil makes observations of animals and plants, explains why some things occur, and talks about changes
P Scales	The pupil shows some understanding of environmental awareness and how it relates to their own lives
Year 1	The pupil can make observations about and describe a physical or human feature of the local area
Year 2	The pupil can make observations about, and describe, the connections between the physical and human geography of the local area
Year 3	The pupil can describe differences in human and physical environments of the UK and suggest where the environments are found
Year 4	The pupil can understand the physical and human geography of the UK and its contrasting human and physical environments The pupil can explain why some regions are different from others
Year 5	The pupil can understand how a region has changed and how it is different from another region of the UK
Year 6	The pupil can know information about a region of Europe, its physical environment and climate, and economic activity

Figure 2: Our assessment tool is used to map expected progress from Reception to year 6 (including links to P Scales), here for 'Understanding places and connections'.

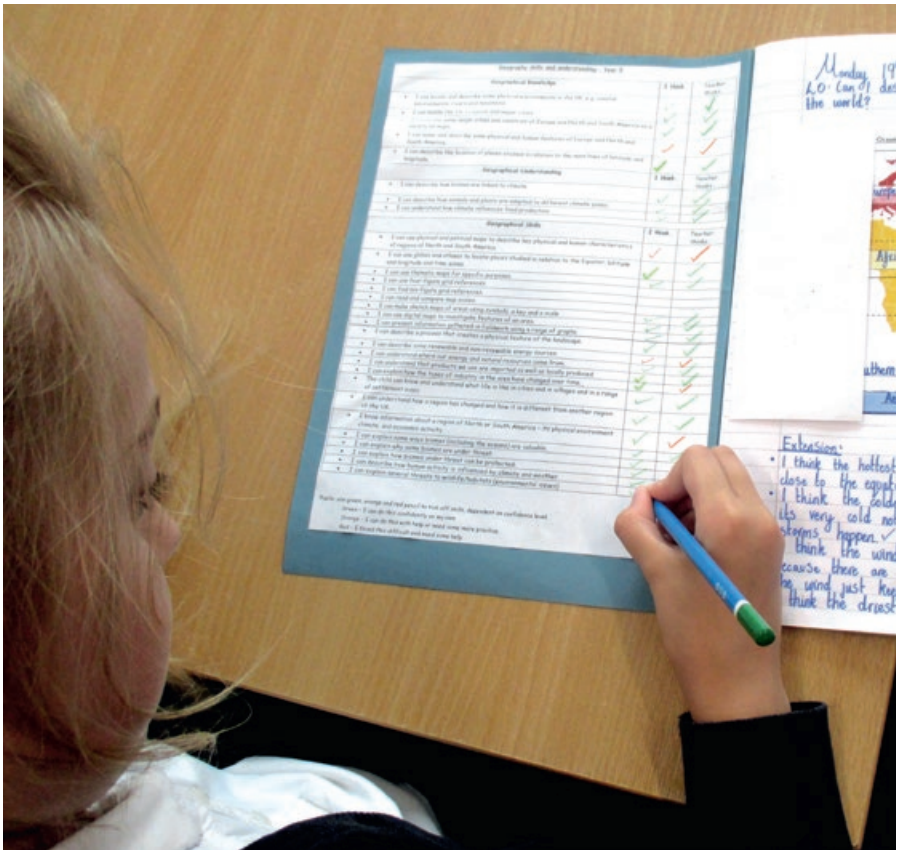

Figure 3: Pupils traffic light their progress on the 'I can…' statements. Photo © Emma White.

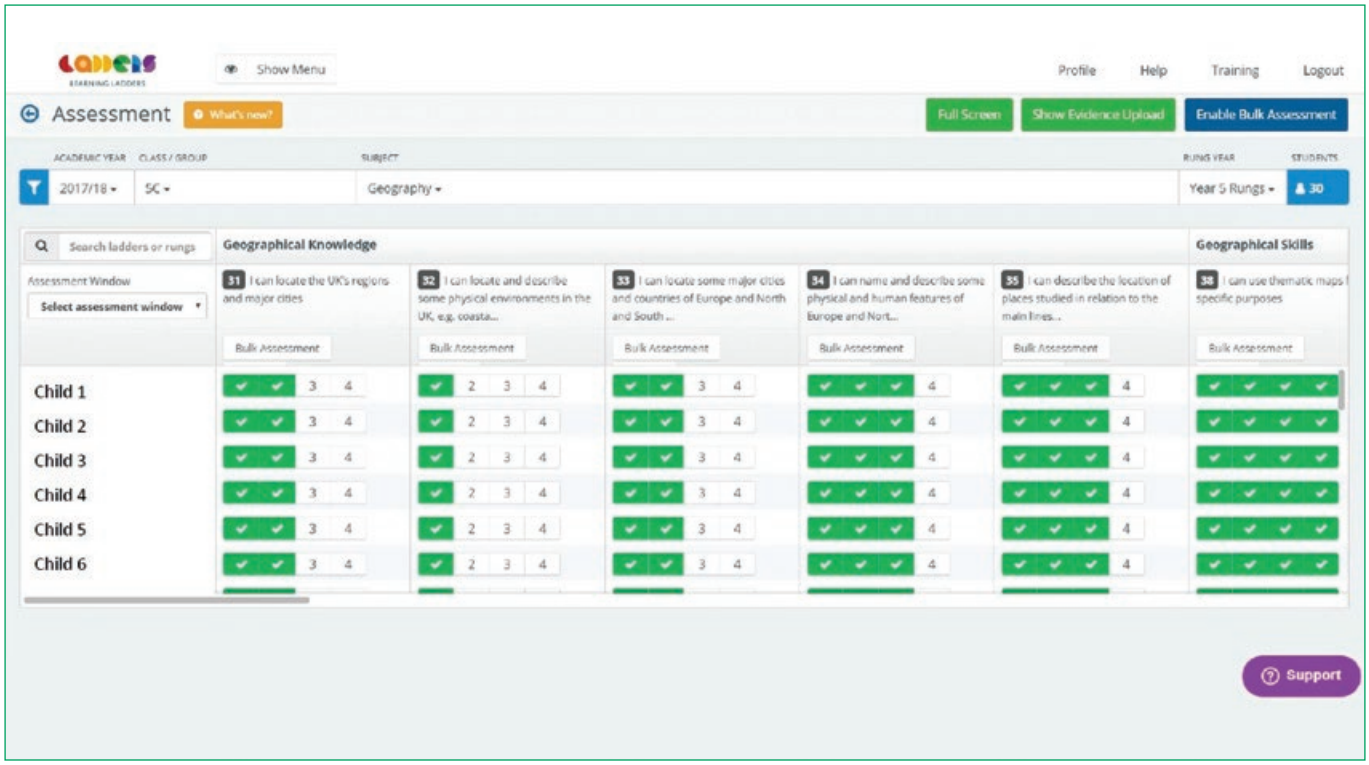

Figure 4: Assessment statements are programmed into the Learning Ladders system and used to assess progress and attainment in geography.

These statements were then reworked into a set of criteria for our new online 'Learning Ladders' assessment system (Learning Ladders, 2018). Learning Ladders, which replaced our previous online assessment tool, is the third part of our system. Although we are still in the early stages of implementing it, so far it has been successful. Key elements are the fact that we can program the tool with personalised assessment criteria (Figure 4) and it shows progression through year group 'ladders'. The package enables us to analyse progress and attainment of different groups of learners (e.g. class group, year group, Pupil Premium group). Teachers utilising the assessment criteria 'ladders' in their lesson planning have grown in confidence in delivering and assessing all areas of geography. They do so in the knowledge that they are providing pupils with a sound base on which to develop as geographers. Finally, the data generated through Learning Ladders provides our Geography Subject Leader with information on year groups' progress and attainment and possible areas for curriculum development.

A worthwhile process

The time and effort invested in creating our assessment tool has been worthwhile: we now have in an effective, accessible, supportive assessment system. Beyond this, and perhaps more importantly, it has ensured that teachers once again have confidence in both what they are teaching and how they are assessing it. They are giving our pupils the best possible start in geography at secondary level.

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WEB RESOURCES

Early Learning Goals: *www.gov.uk/government/publications/eyfs-profile-exemplication materials*

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EXPERIENCED GEOGRAPHY

LORRAINE DALTON

Here Lorraine explains how she used her personal travel experiences to adapt year 6 geography and offer an experience-led curriculum to inspire and engage the pupils.

For many years, I taught about France as part of my year 6 geography. This unit of work, planned several years ago by a group of humanities co-ordinators, met all of the requirements of the National Curriculum, but I felt teaching it year in, year out, was not the right thing to do

At the start of my career, I was fortunate to travel and teach in Hong Kong for three years. During that time, I learnt a huge amount about the geography, culture and people. I wanted to share my passion for the place with pupils and decided to adapt the France unit to focus on Hong Kong.

Our school has adopted a skills-based scheme of work: we map out skills development from the curriculum and then plan the range and content. The geography subject leader completes the medium-term planning and we incorporate 'pupil voice' throughout, allowing the pupils to drive the direction of the learning. I mapped out the skills that I wanted to cover and then built my ideas around what the pupils could learn about Hong Kong.

The unit started with what the pupils know about their local area. We recapped on the physical and human features of St Asaph and wider area: Denbighshire and Wales. This enables pupils, over time, to compare and contrast life in their area with that in Hong Kong. I wanted to re-focus on the local area initially because pupils' knowledge of it appears to be diminishing. The increased use of cars and public transport can limit pupils' 'knowledge about the scale and characteristics of the landscape between their home and school' (Scoffham and Owens, 2017).

Next, we planned how they would travel to Hong Kong. This provided excellent opportunities to develop numeracy and ICT skills. After 'arriving' in Hong Kong, I used a range of photos, maps and artefacts to bring the learning to life.

At this point, the pupils posed questions about Hong Kong based on what they had learned so far. This ensured that they were fully engaged in driving the direction of learning – as Estyn (2016) notes 'when pupil participation is strong, pupils make a valuable contribution to school improvement by influencing decisions on… learning experiences'.

Lorraine built a unique unit on Hong Kong that engaged and motivated the pupils. Photo © Rad Radu/Shutterstock.com

As the unit progressed, the work really became pitched to challenge and stretch the pupils. They learnt about push and pull factors, population density, physical and human hazards, climate, and the pros and cons of living in such a densely populated area. The pupils rose to these challenging geographical tasks, probably because this was a new and unfamiliar topic.

The work linked with the literacy genres, such as report writing and explanation texts, and provided opportunities for the pupils to write with purpose in the context of their understanding. I planned the work to enhance their numeracy skills through opportunities to handle data, develop line and bar charts, calculate distances, convert between units, and read and write larger numbers. I was pleased to see the high-quality geography in the pupils' work, but also the high-quality numeracy and literacy skills they developed.

I was keen to incorporate developments in the news on Hong Kong. The pupils used online materials, e.g. BBC Newsround, to explore emerging situations in the locality and discover their impact on people in Hong Kong and the wider region.

Through my passion for Hong Kong and by listening to the pupils' perspective and questions, I was able to build a unique unit that engaged, motivated and inspired the pupils to achieve. My top tip for adapting units of work is be bold and be brave: share your passion and the journey with the pupils. It is fantastic what you can achieve together!

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WEB RESOURCES

BBC Newsround: *www.bbc.co.uk/newsround*

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BUT FIRST, LET ME TAKE A SELFIE!

JOE REARDON

Joe reports on how he adapted geography with technology, employing 'selfies' to help children develop and explore their place within the local environment.

The power of selfies for geographical enquiry

'Selfies' (a photo you take of yourself usually using a hand-held device) are a modern-day phenomenon that can be used to capture children's geographical imaginations and their emotional attachments to local places. Children like to be photographed and know how to use some of the most up-to-date technology. Indeed, as this technology is part of their everyday life they can often teach us a thing or two! Selfies as an enquiry tool offer a playful, exploratory and multisensory approach in geography. The strategy described here recognises the value of home-centred geography, focusing on the local and often most meaningful places to children.

After talking to some pupils in schools, it became apparent that, while they may be able to tell you about the wonders of the Amazon rainforest or the vast expanses of the Sahara Desert, often they cannot describe the woodlands, brooks and rivers on their doorstep. However, using selfies children can recognise that they are a part of their place and can begin to value and appreciate it.

Into the woods!

I am very fortunate to have three younger siblings – Tia, Jacob and Matthew – who are willing to try out new geographical ideas for my classroom. One weekend we went for a wander in a woodland near our hometown of Uckfield. We have a special connection with this place: we call the woodland 'Pop Wood', because we used to walk there with our Grandad.

With promise of a hot chocolate on our return, I asked Tia, Jacob and Matthew to take three selfies in places that were special to them. They had to think carefully about how they took the photos and to offer reasons for their choices. This encourages a use of geographical vocabulary and ability to communicate their observations and feelings about the locality. I did not want the walk to become solely focused upon the photography; instead they were to engage personally and experientially with the natural environment. They were encouraged to use the camera only when taking a photo, for this reason I limited the number to three. On reflection, I believe my restriction boosted their critical thinking over their choices. Back at home we worked co-operatively to piece the selfies together to make a messy map of our journey through the woods.

Tia's observational approach

Tia is six and she approached the project excitedly. Thinking carefully about the places in which she took her selfies, Tia provided geographically rich reasoning for her choices. She made thoughtful observations about her local environment and was naturally inquisitive about the locality. A wide vocabulary was elicited from Tia's observations and soon she was bursting with creative and imaginative ideas (Figure 1).

Tia has shown that she was able to use basic symbols, e.g. an X to symbolise 'no entry' and footprints to indicate her route. She also used locational language such as 'up' and 'down'. She identified features of the environment that intrigued her (including 'the cat scratching tree') and offered answers as to why the tree looks the way it does, e.g. a 'lightning strike or a fire'. Tia created a meaningful and personal map, which clearly illustrates her route and highlights what was important to her (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Tia was bursting with imaginative ideas.

Jacob's embodied approach

Jacob is eight and, initially, was more reluctant to join in. He was more focused on the walk itself than taking selfies. To help him adjust to his surroundings, I invited Jacob to familiarise himself with the camera; he soon threw himself into the activity and thoroughly enjoyed it. Jacob interacted with the environment in a very different way to his younger

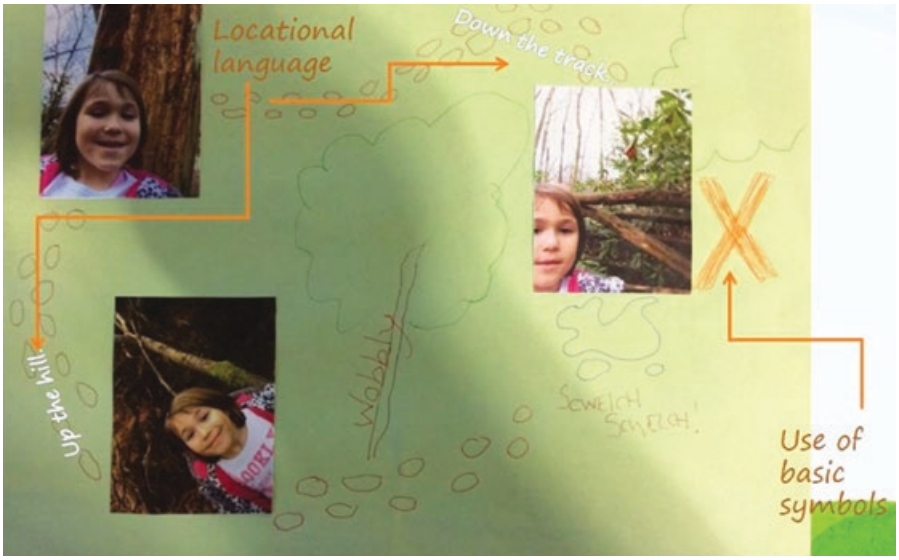

Figure 2: Tia created a meaningful and personal map.

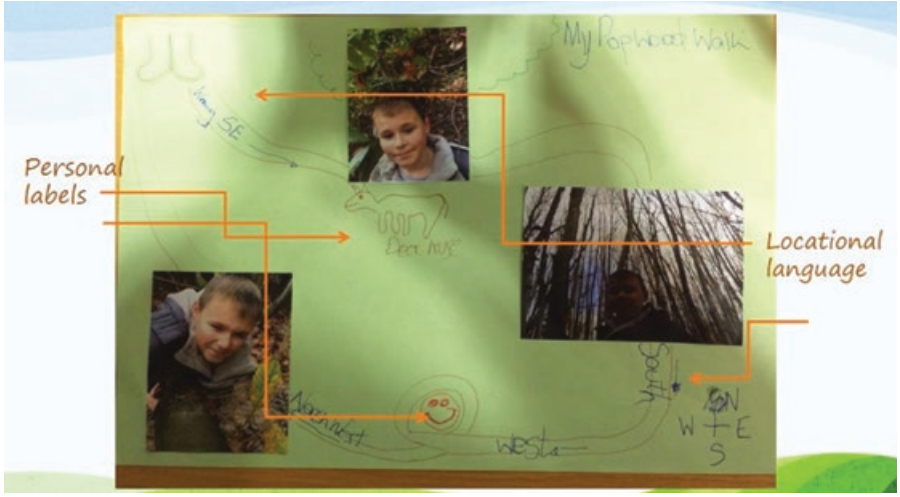

Figure 3: Jacob's embodied approach built on his innate curiosity about this place.

sister. He immersed himself and became part of the environment, for example, he climbed a tree 'like a sloth' and delved deep into the shrub to see 'what it would be like as a deer sheltering from the rain' – his assessment was that 'it was very cosy' Jacob's embodied approach clearly demonstrated a 'find out and see' attitude, which built on his innate curiosity about this place. The 'deer house' selfie prompted Jacob to engage in a self-initiated enquiry where he followed deer trails into the shrubs to investigate the animals' movements (Figure 3). After his exploration, Jacob suggested that the deer 'seemed to stay away from the road' because they were 'obviously scared of the cars'. This immersive approach demonstrates the potential of selfies to stimulate children's questioning and promote actions leading to problem solving. I believe that on this occasion, his selfies prompted Jacob to recognise that he was an active part of the environment.

Jacob labelled his map clearly with locational language using eight compass points and highlighted areas that were special to him with a smiley face, such as wobbly tree that kept him entertained for a good 10 minutes.

Matthew's enquiry approach

Matthew is 10, and was very excited about taking selfies in the woods. Being a little older, Matthew is more culturally aware – he immediately knew what a selfie was. He made observations about how the woodland had changed since his last visit, which is reflected in the selfies that Matthew chose. He was very good at reading the environment, suggesting that the branches in his first photo were a gateway inviting visitors and animals into the woodland, and that the puddles were an 'invitation' to play 'stuck in the mud'. These are fantastic examples of a landscape 'speaking' to children. Matthew recognised that he was an active part of the woodland and it was clear that he felt that the place interacted with him too.

Matthew spoke of concern about environmental quality. He was annoyed at the amount of litter he encountered in the woodland. He made observations about where the litter was found and marked it appropriately on his map using an unhappy face (Figure 4). Through his investigations, Matthew noticed that the litter seemed to follow human activity, either on the pathways or by the roadside. He was able to deduce that the further you moved away from the road into the woodland, the less litter was found. Matthew was of the opinion that the litter was coming from the cars driving past. He stated that he believed 'the dense bushes acted as a kind of barrier, preventing lots of litter from getting deep into the wood'. Matthew was working on answering his own question through this simple, self-initiated enquiry.

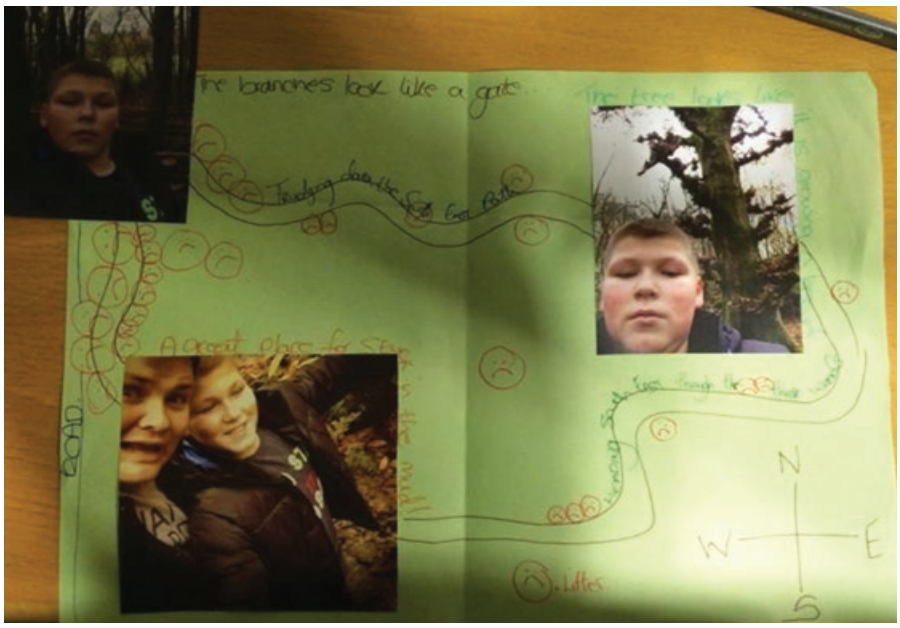

Figure 4: Matthew marked litter appropriately on his map using an unhappy face.

Reflections

To summarise, in this pilot, selfies encouraged the children to:

- recognise the significance of their emotional connection with the local environment
- delve deeper into their locality by asking questions and seeking answers
- investigate and explore places that are familiar to them
- voice their own personal geographies
- ask questions about the local environment and answer them through self-initiated enquires.

For teachers considering the 'take some selfies' approach, I recommend allowing pupils the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the photography equipment before venturing out. Bear in mind that the children involved in this pilot study had already built up a personal connection with the woodlands on regular weekend visits. Visiting a woodland for the first time with your pupils may not elicit such rich and personal response, so be persistent and patient. It is through regular fieldwork opportunities in a place that children can develop and sustain an affinity with a place.

Acknowledgement

With thanks to Sharon Witt at the University of Winchester.

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GLOBAL LEARNING: A CROSS-CURRICULAR APPROACH

DR ANDREW CHRISTIE

Andrew details how one school incorporated the Global Learning Programme (GLP) into its curriculum to meet pupil needs and how the school will continue to explore global themes as it adapts to life after the GLP.

At Whitehill Junior School we believe that global learning content is more effectively embedded when a cross-curricular approach is taken. At Whitehill, this is facilitated via the International Primary Curriculum (IPC), which enables teachers to make relevant and meaningful connections with local and global issues. This helps pupils to develop an international mind-set alongside their awareness of their local identity. The merits of this whole-school approach were recognised in 2015 when Whitehill was shortlisted as a finalist in the International category at the TES School Awards.

Meaningful integration

Even with such a conducive environment, we still faced challenges in integrating what we felt to be meaningful global learning content. In 2015, we began to work on our application for the Primary Geography Quality Mark (PGQM) and during this process it became clear that pupils were largely unaware of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs – see web panel and Figure 1). The SDGs are one of the best ways to increase pupil knowledge and understanding of poverty, sustainability and development issues. Therefore, we made this a priority when taking on the role of a GLP Expert Centre in 2016. At Whitehill, the SDGs became an overarching theme across the IPC topics taught in each year group and our approach (and the perceived merits) was shared with our GLP partner schools.

To add fun and a competitive element, each class was challenged to identify an initiative that the school could undertake to address poverty, development and/or sustainability issues. Pupils from each class pitched their ideas to a 'Dragons' Den' panel (made up of global learning experts and members of the public). This approach proved very successful in raising the profile of the SDGs across the school and was subsequently expanded across our GLP partner schools.

Early in 2017, our GLP Local Advisor encouraged us to reach out to other local GLP Expert Centres with a view to developing and delivering a GLP event at a regional level. Whitehill School took the lead role, working closely with three secondary schools to deliver a global learning conference for GLP schools across Hertfordshire. The team invested significant time and effort in the conference, but it was worthwhile because it provided the opportunity for like-minded teachers to learn from each other as well as from organisations such as the British Council, Oxfam and UNICEF. Close to 30 teachers attended and feedback from the event was very positive.

Figure 1: The Sustainable Development Goals. Source: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015.

Engagement and action

One of the biggest learnings from working on the GLP has been the importance of going beyond a charity mentality to one of social justice. This enables young people to find meaningful ways to engage actively in global issues such as poverty and inequality. The Dragons' Den events were set up at Whitehill to help pupils identify where they could take action on global issues.

Whitehill pupils were encouraged to take direct action through an educational charity set up and run by a former pupil. The charity highlights the challenges facing the Agta people from the Philippines – one of the last hunter-gatherer groups in the world (see web panel). Whitehill has been a driving force in forging links between local pupils and those from the Agta tribes. Presented at the Hertfordshire GLP Schools' conference, the charity's (AgtaAid) educational work was well received, with several schools expressing an interest in getting directly involved. Subsequently, the project was expanded to include five other Hertfordshire schools.

Through our involvement in the PGQM scheme and, more recently, the GLP, we discovered that pupil engagement levels can be heightened when the teaching content is based on meaningful global issues and information is presented in a visually engaging way. Today's young people are bombarded with digital stimuli from multiple sources. Short films (video clips), for example, are used to capture pupils' interest. With this in mind, we developed short films to highlight the challenges the Agta people face (see web panel).

By engaging with the wider world, global learning helps pupils to develop their thinking and engage with a range of values, such as tolerance, mutual respect, liberty and responsibility. We identified the overlap between our own school's core values and those of the GLP and kept these at the forefront of pupils' minds through a specific link in the Dragon's Den events. This approach was shared with our GLP partner schools at a twilight training session on values led by Oxfam.

A great cross-curricular example, which encompasses many of the GLP core values, is the beautifully illustrated story, *The Journey* (Sanna, 2016). Its simple narrative introduces a powerful and moving perspective on migration for readers of all ages. *The Journey* offers ways for teachers to open discussions about refugees as well as what it would be like to live through such a harrowing journey. The book addresses many other questions and encourages critical thinking about home, war, fear, change and safety, which can only help to change perceptions of the current refugee crisis.

The Journey **encompasses many of the GLP core values. By Francesca Sanna © 2016 Flying Eye Books.**

Pupils gained from their involvement in 'The Memory Project'. This project invites schools to create portraits for pupils from around the world who have faced substantial challenges, including neglect, loss of parents and extreme poverty. Whitehill pupils painted portraits of pupils from the Philippines with the hope that it would help the latter feel valued – to know that people care and to act as meaningful pieces of personal history for them in the future. For our pupils, it was a great creative opportunity to practice kindness and global awareness. As part of the project, our pupils are to hear directly from an ex-pupil who has just returned from the Philippines, where she is training to be a nurse.

The journey forward

From a personal point of view, I feel as though my global learning journey has only just begun. To be shortlisted for the Global Educator of the Year Award in 2017 was a real honour. Meeting and hearing what the other finalists had achieved has inspired me to push on with my global learning efforts. I also found the process of gaining accreditation as a GLP Lead Practitioner a valuable experience because it provided a framework and structure to support my professional development.

As a global educator, I believe it is my role to help pupils grow to become independent thinkers who are able to make sense of what can sometimes seem a crazy world. I advocate sharing with pupils what is happening in the real world. The common thread that runs through my lessons, regardless of the subject being taught, is making links with real-life events to help the pupils build on their understanding of the wider world.

The GLP is drawing to an end, and at the time of writing, the Government's plans for increasing global citizenship in the UK through education remains unclear. Personally, I am optimistic they will seek to put further weight behind the UN's SDGs; particularly Target 4.7, which aims 'to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development'. This will give schools more cross-curricular opportunities to enhance pupils' global learning in the years to come, so that we can prepare young people to be responsible local and global citizens today and tomorrow.

Reference

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WEB RESOURCES

AgtaAid educational charity: *www.agtaaid.org*
Challenges the Agta people face: *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c7i_2pGrNWs*
Global Learning Programme (England): *https://glp.globaldimension.org.uk/*
The Memory Project: *https://memoryproject.org/*
UN SDGs: *www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html*

Passionate about developing children's understanding of our place in the world and the key global issues that we currently face, Dr Andrew Christie was an Expert Centre Co-ordinator on the Global Learning Programme. He was shortlisted for the Global Educator of the Year Award in 2017, and subsequently gained accreditation as a GLP Lead Practitioner.

EXPLOSIVE STORYTELLING

CHRISTINE HOLBREY WITH ADAM HOWARD

Christine reports on a joint project developed between Leeds Beckett University and Alwoodley Primary School, Leeds, which adapted stories to teach geography and for which Adam produced resources that engaged and motivated the pupils.

In the beginning

As part of a final year module 'Becoming Subject Co-ordinators', a group of geography electives embarked on a project with Alwoodley Primary School. The day coincided with World Book Day and, inspired by *The Everyday Guide to Primary Geography: Story* (Tanner and Whittle, 2013), the project was entitled 'Geography through Stories'. Students were tasked with independently planning and delivering an engaging and challenging geography session. Their session had to encompass a cross-curricular, creative and inclusive approach to geography teaching and learning.

Students were introduced to Uri Shulevitz's *How I Learned Geography* (2009) and explored how stories can provide a safe learning environment for pupils to embrace their natural curiosity about different places and the people who live in them. They investigated how stories can be used to encapsulate feelings and teach emotional aspects of geography, encouraging pupils to be responsible informed citizens of the future. The students reflected on how stories can be a powerful tool for enhancing learning, promoting geographical thinking and encouraging pupils to understand the interactions between people, place and the environment (Dolan, 2017).

We then read *A Balloon for Grandad* (Gray and Ray, 2002), which reveals the delightful journey of a red balloon accidently released in suburban England and carried over mountains, across seas and deserts all the way to Northern Sudan. We then discussed the key stage 1 and 2 geographical knowledge, understanding and skills (DfE, 2013) that might be investigated through this story, effective approaches to sharing stories, and possible teaching activities that could be employed to consolidate and further extend pupils' geography thinking.

One trainee, Adam, planned and delivered a particularly engaging and exciting session. In it his story provided a fantastic stimulus for pupil activities, which captured their imagination and fuelled some excellent cognitive gains. He worked with a mixed-ability year 3 class that had previously looked at the features of a volcano. Adam's lesson was intended to foster a better understanding of the impact of volcanic eruptions.

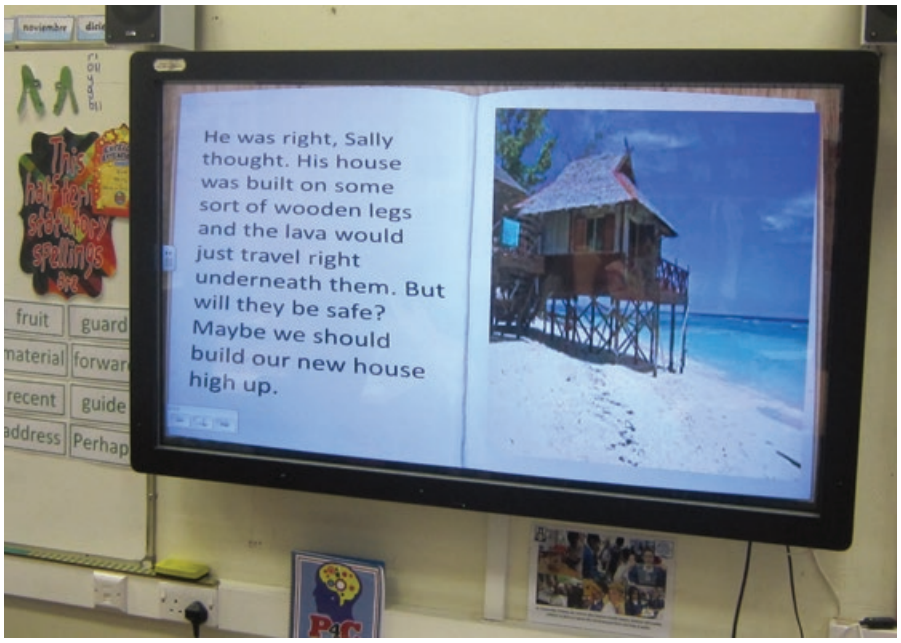

Figure 1: *Sally and her Search for a New Home* focused on a little girl's journey, following the destruction of her home from a volcanic eruption. Photo © Christine Holbrey.

Sally and her search for a new home

The session began with a video of a volcanic eruption and Adam posed the question 'Can anyone tell me what this might be?' He used the opportunity to explore and reinforce key geographical terminology (including 'blasts', 'lava' and 'flow') and introduced ideas around force and viscosity. Adam then showed an image of Hawaii and asked the pupils 'Can anyone take a guess where this is?' Pupils were overly enthusiastic in their responses, so Adam used the evidence in the picture to carefully steer and delve deeper until pupils made the connection between the video and the image: Hawaii as a volcanic island.

Adam then read a self-penned story, *Sally and her Search for a New Home*, while displaying the text and pictures on the whiteboard. The story focused on a little girl's journey, following the destruction of her home from a volcanic eruption, to the other side of Hawaii to find a new place to live. On her route Sally passes a number of houses, all differently designed, which might make them safe from lava in the event of another eruption (Figure 1). (Adam chose to write the story, introducing ideas of ground level, protective walls and water barriers as possible lava minimisers, when he could not find a suitable book to support his work!)

The pupils listened intently and enjoyed interacting with the deliberate questions in the text, such as when Sally asked the first house owner 'What makes you think this one will make it through the next eruption?' The questions provided excellent scaffolding for pupils to recall short extracts of the story and check their interpretation and understanding of the concepts.

The skilfully-led discussion at the end of the story, concentrating on Sally's emotions and feelings during her journey, encouraged a flurry of comments and viewpoints. A real sense of place began to emerge as pupils evidenced a growing empathy with Sally's situation and the conditions in which she was living, which were very different to their own. The pupils were captivated by Adam's story. It provided a meaningful context for them to positively engage with geography and explore the connections between people, place and the environment.

An explosion of Lego!

The class were then asked to use their knowledge from the story to design a house capable of withstanding a volcanic eruption, annotating their designs to emphasise key construction elements. Groups were allocated by the teacher, but a lack of understanding of class dynamics and individual characteristics meant that some groups progressed more rapidly, and cohesively, than others.

Lego was provided for groups to build their designs, with advanced notification that their buildings would be subjected to a real volcanic eruption! Although Adam emphasised to pupils the importance of design, not aesthetics, there was some deviation from the task as pupils added unnecessary parts to their houses. In the spirit of creativity this was not overly discouraged, but Adam did recognise that clarity around the learning intentions for the session and of verbal instruction were crucial elements to both pace and outcome.

The practical experiment – a volcanic eruption (created in the playground using an empty drink bottle, bicarbonate of soda, food colouring and vinegar) was an exciting and fun culmination to the construction task. It brought the activity to life. Further questioning throughout the explosion helped the pupils focus on the on what was happening and reinforced some of the basic concepts of volcanic eruptions, as well as making judgements on which design was best. Back in the classroom the pupils reflected on the safety of their model and determined what further improvements could be made to their house in light of the volcanic explosion.

Essential evaluation

When asked about the best bits of the story, 'the destruction of Sally's house', 'her journey to find a new home' and 'the building designs *en route*' all featured positively in the pupils' feedback. Interestingly, one pupil remarked they 'did not feel comfortable with the disaster focus of the story as it made them feel sad'.

There was unanimous agreement that Lego and the playground explosion were the best activities (Figure 2). However, individual pupils remarked on 'not enjoying the construction task' and others 'not enjoying drawing'.

Mixed comments were made about group work, with some pupils relishing the opportunity and others finding it difficult. When asked to comment on whether using stories to teach geography was a good idea, pupils talked about geography being 'more exciting' and 'fun' and many commented on feeling that they had 'learnt more' with one pupil stating 'you can think it in your head like live'.

Figure 2: There was unanimous agreement that Lego and the playground explosion were the best activities. Photo © Christine Holbrey.

In his evaluations, Adam reflected on how positively the pupils had responded to the activities. He also mentioned how they helped embed key features of volcanoes, clarifying geographical terminology as well as helping develop an understanding and empathy with the impact of a volcanic eruption and its effect on people. Adam acknowledged the difficulty that some pupils had with collaborative learning. However, he noted that this improved as they became more task-focused and less influenced by social dimensions.

Kate Wighton, the year 3 class teacher, remarked: 'It was wonderful! It was well organised, exciting and captured the pupils' imagination from the word go. It was certainly a new way of delivering and learning elements of geography for the pupils, and they were engaged from start to finish. The ending was very exciting and brought all their learning to life, by demonstrating a small volcano erupting near houses to see which ones could withstand the lava, and while we couldn't actually be in Hawaii, where the story was set, seeing a small volcano made it feel like we were there! I will certainly promote the use of stories where possible within geography lessons as is captivates the pupils' imaginations. Wonderful! Thank you very much'.

Despite his initial apprehension about the project (describing it as 'daunting'), Adam was keen to emphasise the benefits of the experience, including his growing confidence, sense of accomplishment and thorough enjoyment.

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Acknowledgements

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GEOGRAPHY IN AN ISLAND SCHOOL

ANNE GRAHAM WITH STAFF AND PUPILS OF SGOIL BHAILE A' MHANAICH

Anne explains how an island school in the Outer Hebrides has adapted geography to a bilingual island setting to offer the pupils the best possible opportunities.

Sgoil Bhaile a' Mhanaich is renowned for providing high-quality learning experiences in an inclusive environment. The photos here give a flavour of just some of the pupils' learning experiences outdoors and in. Photo © Kirsty Brennan.

Sgoil Bhaile a' Mhanaich is a non-denominational school situated in the village of Balivanich on the island of Benbecula in the Outer Hebrides. It offers primary education through Gaelic and English Medium. The school is a Health Promoting one, has Fairtrade Status, is a Crofting Connections School, and an Eco School with a third Green Flag. We aim to be a learning institution capable of continuous improvement – one that is renowned for providing high-quality learning experiences in an inclusive environment, where pupils are supported to achieve their potential.

The school curriculum is, of necessity, based on Scottish schools' 'Curriculum for Excellence' (CfE) and geography lies within the 'Social Studies, Science and Technologies' section (see web panel). Through CfE we aim to help prepare our pupils and young people with the knowledge and skills they need in a fast-changing world. In embracing the CfE, Sgoil Bhaile is committed to providing pupils with a broad and balanced bilingual curriculum while ensuring each individual's needs are met. Social studies, like science and technologies, is planned and delivered through interdisciplinary topics, or as a discrete subject. Our refreshed curriculum rationale was created with input from all staff, pupils and parents. We also updated our vision, values and aims to highlight the confidence we have as a school in our ability to learn creatively to influence our community and the wider world.

In Sgoil Bhaile a' Mhanaich we use a three-year curriculum plan; this covers a balance of social studies, science, technologies and enterprise contexts. Through these contexts for learning we encourage pupils to engage in activities that foster an interest in their local environment, allow them to explore the local community and provide an awareness of the world around them. Topics expand to the real world with learning opportunities within our local community from infant level upwards, where appropriate. In other words, our curriculum is focused on bringing real life into the classroom and taking lessons beyond it.

Photo © Kirsty Brennan.

Social studies

Through social studies, pupils develop their understanding by learning about other people and their values in different times, places and circumstances. They also develop their understanding of their environment and of how it has been shaped. We cherish links with partners, including international ones, and value diversity in relation to the local and global community.

Sciences

Within the sciences, pupils develop an interest in and understanding of the living, material and physical world. They engage in a range of collaborative investigative tasks, which allow pupils to develop enquiry and discovery.

Technologies

The technologies framework includes challenging activities that involve pupils in research, problem-solving, exploration of new and unfamiliar concepts, skills and materials, and the rewards that often result from creating products that have real-world applications.

These three curricular areas offer a rich context for the development of all four capacities (listed on our website – see web panel) and for developing the life skills that are recognised as being important for success in the world of work.

The role of geography in cross-curricular work

As a school, we recognize that geography can be creative and engaging, reaching in to every stage of a pupil's development. As social studies, science and technologies are all integral to geography, cross-curricular work with these areas is rewarding and valuable. Staff plan contexts and learning experiences collaboratively and pupils are involved throughout this process. Pupils' views are taken account of: we draw upon their prior knowledge and understanding to ensure that they can continually demonstrate and develop their life skills. Active Learning is embedded throughout all topics and activities. To this end, we employ strong community links via regular visits beyond school as well as welcoming visitors from the local and international community into school.

Our three-year curriculum plan highlights not only cross-curricular links and contexts for learning, but also any local and global links. Learning for sustainability is a critical part of our school ethos and is most evident in the pupils' engagement in outdoor learning.

Citizenship helps pupils to understand their own and others' rights and responsibilities. It covers how society works and how they can play an active role in society. At Sgoil Bhaile a' Mhanaich we aim to empower pupils with the knowledge, understanding and skills to play an active role in society. Through citizenship, they become informed, interested, empathetic and critical individuals who are socially and morally responsible. Global citizenship lies at the core of geography, so, by giving pupils opportunities to use their enquiry and communication skills within global citizenship, we ensure they can take responsible action. We link pupils' learning in the classroom with what is actually taking place in the school, the community and the wider world. This approach provides pupils with the confidence and awareness they need in order to act with others, to influence and to make a difference in their communities.

Photo © Kirsty Brennan.

Sgoil Bhaile a' Mhanaich has achieved the International School Award (ISA) (intermediate level). The scheme provides recognition for teachers and schools working to embed a global dimension into pupils' learning. Over the years, we have fostered links with other schools (both nationally and internationally), most recently in Kenya and Ghana. In 2018, we will continue to build on these links through history, geography and science. We recognize that the global dimension naturally gives rise to work on human rights and sustainability; this then improves pupils' understanding of these key issues.

We have an ambitious curriculum that nurtures our pupils' ability to show respect for themselves, each other and the world around them and are confident that our cross-curricular work will continue to enhance geography within our school.

Photo © Kirsty Brennan.

WEB RESOURCES

Scottish Government 'Curriculum for Excellence' (pdf): *http://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/226155/0061245.pdf*

View Sgoil Bhaile a' Mhanaich's curriculum is in section 3 of the handbook: *www.balivanichschool.co.uk*

Mrs Anne Graham is Head of Sgoil Bhaile a' Mhanaich in the village of Balivanich on the Island of Benbecula in the Outer Hebrides, Scotland.

USING OBSERVATION AS AN ASSESSMENT TOOL

KATY ELSOM AND SIMON COLLIS

Here, Katy and Simon demonstrate just how powerful assessment through observation can be. They evaluate a pilot study, which was then rolled out across the school as it adapts assessment to life beyond levels.

When discussing assessment in primary schools there is a grim inevitability that the conversation will turn to English, maths or, perhaps, science. From there, talk may progress to discussions of tracking; i.e. examining the progress and attainment within assessment systems, rather than the assessment of learning itself. When asked to look at Emmaus Catholic CE Primary School's assessment of cross-curricular topics, the latter was very much in focus.

We wanted to create a system that was pupil focused; one that would give teachers greater insight into pupils' understanding. It had to be flexible enough to adapt to each topic, regardless of curricular subject. To be acceptable to staff, it needed not to significantly increase their workload, and it must have a clear benefit for the pupils. To keep its distinctiveness, the system must not replicate a literacy or maths system. We wanted to maximise the opportunity and keep the focus on assessment rather than on a tracking system. We tried to avoid a content-based system that measured how much of the curriculum had been covered by pupils. Finally, to celebrate the progress that our school has made in its recent past, we wanted a system that built on and adapted existing practises within the school.

Figure 1: A pilot study used the rocks and volcanoes topic. Photo © Yinghai.

Designing a cross-curricular assessment system

One of the most meaningful assessment records for the pupils is our 'Come and See' once-a-term books. Come and See is our RE programme (Hummell, 2012) in which, once a term, pupils complete an assessment in a book, which follows them throughout school. The pupils enjoy tracking their progress from Foundation Stage – looking at photos and the development of their writing and drawing. Keeping a yet more longitudinal record would give pupils increased opportunities to reflect on their progress in the longer term. Also, it could be used as a celebration or record of achievement in the foundation subjects.

However, it needed to be more than a collection of good pieces of work – we wanted to offer teachers the opportunity to gain an insight into pupils' understanding, which could lead into a meaningful discussion about their current attainment in the foundation subjects. To try and accomplish this Simon discussed 'learning journeys' (Carr, 2001) with Foundation Subject colleagues, who use them to record meaningful learning encounters. They include photos of the pupils during their ongoing activities and teacher commentary includes quotes and references made to the 'characteristics of effective learning' (Department for Education, 2012). This looked promising – the photographic record was valued by the pupils and their families, and led on to improvements in learning through carefully chosen next steps.

We decided to trial the ideas using the characteristics of effective learning as an assessment tool with one class. To be successful, the task had to be open enough to interpret in different ways and the pupils needed to work with minimum intervention. First, we asked small groups of pupils to follow a recipe for chilli con carne. As part of a 'Food Glorious Food' topic, they had previously used knives to follow a recipe and chop vegetables safely with adult guidance. This time, they needed to combine these skills while negotiating the different tasks – including preparing vegetables, measuring spices and heating the ingredients – within a small group. It was enlightening in that it made us reflect on how seldom pupils are given a genuinely open and independent task. We could observe the pupils, not just in how they worked together as a group, but also how they observed the world. Pupils used their wider experiences to discuss 'how you could tell the hob was ready' or 'how the oil sizzled as it heated'.

Creating a pilot study in lower KS2

We wanted to see how this worked with other teachers before creating a whole-school system. Colleagues in lower KS2 ran a pilot study using a cross-curricular topic, 'Rocky Road', on rocks and volcanoes (Figure 1). This independent activity would again allow us to assess pupils' prior knowledge and see how they negotiate tasks in small groups. Groups had to sort a selection of different rocks by their properties into hoops. The teacher then asked if any rocks could be placed in more than one hoop, thus creating a Venn diagram. We carried out the activity before the pupils learned about igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rocks and how they are formed. This was because we wanted to avoid a situation where the pupils' tried to anticipate the 'correct' answer, and to see what they could co-construct.

From this we were able to identify several strengths and points for development in the pupils' learning (Figure 2). The pupils readily used their background knowledge when sorting the rocks – i.e. their understanding of previous school learning or their broader experience of rocks. The pupils worked together to come to a consensus, while acknowledging that they did not always agree. We could use their understanding (their senses and background knowledge) as a starting point in subsequent lessons in discussions about different types and common features of rocks.

We identified that the pupils need more support in developing their reasoning – some required prompting that there was more than one way to interpret the task, or to explain their reasons fully. In response to this, the focus of our 'Philosophy for Children' (SAPERE, 2018) sessions was on building each other's responses. We used shades of agreement and disagreement with others to develop the pupils' own opinions.

Participants: L, A, M, S

Teacher: KE

L: The rock is shiny and smooth. You can tap it on the table.

KE: *What sound does it make?*

L: A loud, wooden sound.

A: It's all peachy, like a peachy colour. It's bumpy on one side and smooth on the other.

M: This rock is gold, it looks like one of them chocolates that's called Gold. It feels really hard and looks like Roman numerals. It might be one of them – those pictures made out of squares. I think it's called a mosaic.

S: They're all different types of rocks, some are different colours, some have the same colours on, some are smooth.

L: This one looks like a tiny roof.

M: This looks like a tree – it's brown and looks like a tree trunk.

S: It looks like it's broken from a tree because of the broken bits on the edge.

[Pupils sort the rocks into different groups]

L: We've got them!

KE: *Can you explain the groups to me?*

M: We did them in different colours. S has got the black group, A has got the white and gold ones and L has got the dark ones.

KE: *Are there any that don't fit into any groups? Are there any that fit in more than one group?*

M: Maybe, this one could go with A's because it's also got a bit of white in it.

S: Our groups are all about colours, basically.

KE: *Are there any that fit into more than one group? How could we do that?*

M: We could overlap [the hoops]! We did this in Miss N's class and you put them in both groups.

The pupils show curiosity about the objects. They talk about using their senses to group the rocks. They engage in the activity even though they haven't been given a clear goal and are creative with their approach.

Next step: to expand their reasoning and review how well their approach worked.

Figure 2: Commentary from the rock sorting activity, from which we were able to identify several strengths and points for development in the pupils' learning.

This led into our parent showcase at the end of the topic. The pupils had a co-operative board game that imagined a volcanic eruption in Sheffield. They had to work in groups with their parents to create an emergency plan for the city, taking inspiration from the board game Pandemic (Leacock, 2007). This enabled the pupils to share what they had learned about volcanoes with their families and to develop the characteristics of effective learning. They built on the skills identified in the rock sorting activity.

Evaluating the pilot

One of the main strengths of this assessment approach is that it captures evidence 'in the moment'. It records quotes and photos that show what the pupils are thinking, giving the pupil's voice a value and creating a record of what is actually said, rather than the teacher's perception. This creates a commitment to independent thinking and the tasks are designed around independence. Adapting approaches that are used elsewhere in the curriculum pushed us to reflect on how often this happens: do lessons give pupils opportunities to interpret in different ways? Do we encourage pupils to think and reason for themselves? We designed the parent showcase around the needs of the pupils' learning – rather than as an event that fitted the topic.

A significant limiting factor in this approach is the time it takes to complete the small group work. To be effective, the support and enthusiasm of all teaching staff is vital too. Colleagues need to see it as a meaningful assessment exercise that fits into an already full assessment landscape. Were we to expand this as a whole-school approach, we would take into consideration just how the characteristics of effective learning develop as the pupils move through school. How does 'seeking challenge' in year 2 compare with year 6? How do we develop a learning profile of a pupil without creating an unwieldy document?

There are still many questions and lines of enquiry to develop. However, it has reinforced the importance of observation as an assessment tool. We now use the photo observation sheet regularly and more readily across lower key stage 2 as a way to record the pupils' learning and thinking. Finally, we were prompted to reflect on whether our curriculum values independent thinking as much as it perhaps ought to.

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Katy Elsom was completing her final weeks of placement to obtain her PGCE at Emmaus Catholic and C of E Primary School, Sheffield, where Simon Collis teaches a year 3/4 class and is the Y3/4 phase leader and responsible for developing teaching and learning. Simon is also a member of the *PG* Editorial Board.

DO WE HIT THE MARK?

JODIE BIDDLE AND SARAH DAVIES

After working within a collaboration of schools on a global dimension project, teachers at Ysgol Glan Gele decided to apply for the Primary Geography Quality Mark. Here, Jodie and Sarah explain why they embarked on this challenge and the process of achieving a Silver PGQM while adapting to a changing curriculum picture in Wales.

As a school, Ysgol Glan Gele (a 300-pupil infant school in Abergele, North Wales) has always been passionate about the 'world around us'; it has been an integral part of our teaching. In 2008, the Welsh Government introduced the Foundation Phase, and 'Knowledge and Understanding of the World' took the place of geography, history and science. It was daunting for the co-ordinator, who had to take on the responsibility for what was previously three separate subjects.

Over the years, as a school, we have seen geography develop and have always given the strand 'People and Places' priority because we believe it is an essential element of geography. We have continued to audit, evaluate and enhance the provision we offer to our pupils in this area.

Concurrently, we have become involved in a range of projects that help us teach our pupils how to be effective global and local citizens. Ysgol Glan Gele is a Fairtrade School, an Eco School and an International School (see web panel), and we continuously improve and enhance our teaching and learning in these areas. We embarked on a Comenius project (see web panel), planting trees around Europe with partner schools. Here, all staff had the opportunity to participate through international visits. Subsequently, staff reflected on their own experiences, which had a direct impact on global teaching. In 2013, ours became the first primary school in Wales to achieve the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC – see web panel) Gold Award in recognition of the work we do with pupils outdoors.

For us working outdoors is an effective way of teaching pupils about the world we live in. It also highlights the extensive links we have both in our school and in the wider community in Abergele. Example activities include planting in the local park, Eco committee meetings and contributing to the Fairtrade town status. All of which demonstrates how our school has adapted in order to realise new initiatives, which impacts positively on the well-being and learning experiences of the pupils.

Why we did it…

In 2015, we were invited to join in an exciting new project led by another local primary school. This allowed us to work collaboratively across different age phases while also working with colleagues from other counties. As part of the process we joined the Geographical Association and attended thought-provoking workshops. After completing the self-evaluation and engaging in professional dialogue about ways to improve teaching, it dawned on us that we were already implementing many of the ideas suggested in our school.

Beach Schools and Forest Schools are strongly embedded alongside Outdoor Learning. Photos © Authors.

Once we learnt about the Primary Geography Quality Mark (PGQM – see web panel), we felt we wanted to celebrate our work in this area. Also, we intended to use the opportunity to analyse our teaching and learning in this area in greater detail. As subject leaders, we both had a clear picture of where the subject was, plus a real drive to improve the quality of teaching and standards of provision. Noticeably, everyone in school embraced the initiative with the vision to improve our global teaching. (We are so lucky to work with a team of passionate individuals who rise to new challenges and show adaptability.) As a team we produced an audit checklist, which fed into an action plan that was shared with staff. At this stage we decided to apply for the Silver PGQM.

The PGQM action plan highlighted the need to gather the evidence to support our application (most of the elements were already being covered). Although we felt our fieldwork element was strong, initially we were nervous about it – because ours is an infant school, and when reading about good examples many were at key stage 2. On reflection because Beach Schools and Forest Schools are strongly embedded alongside Outdoor Learning in our school, pupils have the opportunity to develop many of these skills.

Despite our misgivings, we were successful. In September 2016 our PGQM moderator provided very positive feedback and we were delighted to receive a Silver Award.

What next for geography in Ysgol Glan Gele?

The targets given in the PGQM are essential to move the school forward as we strive to improve. Our goals for the future are to continue to achieve high standards in our teaching and learning in the global dimension. One recommendation was that we share our good practice with others, so we now run courses for GwE (The Regional School Improvement Service in North Wales). Here, we invite colleagues from other schools to see our work in Outdoor Learning, Beach and Forest Schools.

We will apply for re-accreditation of the Gold LOtC mark in 2018. As aspects of our application touched on the Gold level PGQM, we also want to look at ways to improve our provision to achieve this accreditation in the future. One way we believe we can achieve this is to improve map-reading skills, in particular through the use of digital technologies.

The PGQM provides an excellent vehicle for our global work and is a robust way of keeping the quality of our teaching at a high standard within a busy curriculum. Our experience clearly demonstrates that by adapting and embracing change teachers can achieve amazing things that have a positive impact on pupils – and that is what it is all about.

WEB RESOURCES

Comenius:
https://www.britishcouncil.org/partner/international-collaboration/track-record/comenius
International Schools:
https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/accreditation-and-awards/isa
Learning Outside the Classroom:
http://www.lotc.org.uk/
Primary Geography Quality Mark:
https://www.geography.org.uk/The-Primary-Geography-Quality-Mark-PGQM

Jodie Biddle and Sarah Davies each have more than seven years' experience of teaching at Ysgol Glan Gele, Abergele. Both strategically lead the development of Learning Outside the Classroom, Knowledge and Understanding of the World and ESDGC in the school.

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THE PRIMARY GEOGRAPHY INTERVIEW

PROFESSOR GRAHAM DONALDSON

Professor Graham Donaldson is a Professor at Glasgow University who has recently carried out a review of the curriculum in Wales as well as teacher education in Scotland. His review has culminated in the *Successful Futures* report, which is deemed to be the most ambitious revision of the curriculum in Wales ever undertaken, and which will see subject areas replaced with six Areas of Learning and Experience.

Could you explain a little about your work to date?

To start with, I have to admit that my background was as a history teacher! After working at various levels in schools in the Glasgow area, I worked nationally and ultimately became head of the Inspectorate for Scotland for eight years. After that, I retired and became a Professor at the University of Glasgow. I have undertaken a review of teacher education in Scotland with all 50 of my recommendations being accepted. I have also done review work for the OECD involving among other things education system reviews in Australia, Portugal, Sweden and Japan.

More recently, I have carried out a review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales leading to my *Successful Futures* report. I am the chair of an Independent Advisory Group as part of the overall reforms in Wales and a member of the First Minister of Scotland's international advisory council. I am also currently carrying out a review of the work of Estyn, the Educational Inspectorate in Wales.

Do you see any differences between the educational reforms taking place in Wales and those that have occurred in Scotland?

Let's start with the similarities first. As a start point, both curriculum development processes started by looking at the purpose of the curriculum. Historically, we have tended to define the curriculum in terms of subjects and content to be covered. However, both Wales and Scotland are looking first at the purposes of the curriculum in order to determine the structures (including subjects), pedagogy and assessment that can best fulfil these purposes. We have identified four purposes of the new curriculum:

- Ambitious, capable learners who are ready to learn throughout their lives
- Enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work
- Ethical, informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world
- Healthy, confident individuals who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Thereafter, in Scotland and Wales, the nature of curriculum and assessment is very different. In Scotland, they have still adopted a system based on levels, whereas in Wales the system will focus more directly on progression. The Scottish elaboration of 'Experiences and Outcomes' can be seen by some as an assessment tool rather than something that supports the purposes of the curriculum. In Scotland there are eight Curriculum Areas, in Wales there will be six Areas of Learning and Experience. The *Successful Futures* report in Wales went beyond curriculum and assessment to recommending how its proposals should be supported in terms of professional development for teachers and constructive systems of support and accountability.

How essential do you view the role of teachers in developing the new curriculum in Wales?

Absolutely essential. This is where the developments in Wales are very different to those in other countries; the changes are being drive by teachers. There are over 170 Pioneer Schools across Wales who are focussing on curriculum and professional development. These schools are at the heart of developing the new curriculum.

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What role do you see geography having in the new curriculum in Wales?

Geography will sit within the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE). All subjects that contribute to make up the AoLE will be essential, but it's about asking professionals to think differently and to think about how subjects support the purposes of the curriculum rather than the subjects alone defining the curriculum. The main focus for teachers is to think about how we can use the expertise that we have across our schools and education settings to support the four purposes of the new curriculum.

Do you see a role for citizenship and global learning to be embedded in the new curriculum?

Absolutely, the four purposes will raise the prominence of these aspects and sustainability and citizenship will be overarching.

What was your most memorable experience at school?

It was a field trip to an outdoor centre on the West coast of Scotland. It brought the learning to life as we went out and carried out practical activities. Practical and applied learning experiences such as these helped me to see my teachers in a different light and for the teachers to see us in a different light.

Where is the best place you have visited?

My daughter recently bought me a scratch map and it was a privilege to see how many places across the globe I've been fortunate enough to visit, be that professionally or personally. For example, I found the culture and experience of visiting Hanoi in Vietnam particularly interesting and it is certainly somewhere I would like to return to.

However, my favourite place is less exotic – rural France. I enjoy the peace, tranquillity and being away from it all. I always really enjoy embedding myself in the culture there with my family and enjoying family time together.

Reference

Donaldson, G. (2015) *Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales*. Available at: https://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150225-successful-futures-en.pdf (last accessed 18/7/2018).

Favourite places for Professor Donaldson include Hanoi (Photo © David McKelvey) and rural France (Photo © Anna Grandfield).

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A CHAMELEON SUBJECT WITH A RIGOROUS HEART

PAULA OWENS

Here, Paula explores how Digimap was used as a tool throughout a school-based project to make a strong link between geography and history.

Pupils in year 6 had been learning in history about the Second World War and the evacuation of British children from cities at risk during that time. What could geography contribute too? One obvious answer was to look at a map to see where children were evacuated from and taken to, but this seemed rather tokenistic and shallow. Instead, we wanted to enable pupils to really look and think about the issues in more depth.

A chameleon subject

Geography is the perfect subject for adaptation across the curriculum. Need to do some maths? Fine, geography thrives on number, data, patterns and scale. Need to develop language? Great, from annotating images with captions to note-taking, report writing to descriptive settings – geography offers a world of experience, not least the first-hand experience that catalyses the acquisition of geographical vocabulary (Ward, 1998; Scoffham and Owens, 2017). Doing science? No problem; give the investigation of living things and their habitats an extra edge by adding spatial data. Geography has a synergy and energy that provides context for other subjects while using them to enhance its own. Geography adapts itself quite simply because it deals with the real world in the 'here and now'; it is a vibrant, complex, chameleon-like subject with the ability to blend into every landscape. The caveat for making this work however, is to allow geography to keep its rigorous heart (see Figure 1).

Planning context

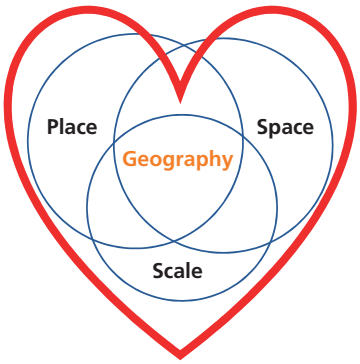
The challenge set by class teacher Lorraine Dalton (see also page 15 this issue) was to devise an activity that would develop the pupils' mapping and ICT skills. The activities had to take account of the new Digital Competence framework for Wales (which is supporting the preparation for the new Curriculum for Wales), and get the pupils to think more deeply about what it meant to be an evacuee. Research into local evacuee stories revealed that during the Second World War many children were sent from Liverpool to St Asaph, where the school is located. This was a good opportunity to use a landscape that pupils were familiar with and make the learning relevant. Written accounts from evacuees are available on the BBC website (see web panel). One evacuee's story describing the journey from Liverpool to St Asaph provided the text for the lesson.

Literacy
Geography gives a real context to literacy, from its vast vocabulary of place names and features to its rich descriptions and issues that require persuasive text. Geography stimulates passion and prose through poetry and storytelling, made all the better through close observation of real landscapes.

Mathematics
Geography gathers data about the world and presents it in a range of media – offering believable and intriguing contexts for an array of mathematical skills. Maps develop knowledge of scale, position and pattern; geographical processes and features can be described and analysed using number and comparative data.

Science
Geography provides science with a real world setting and spatial contexts for conceptual understanding. Both use enquiry although geography can offer broader ways of investigating the world through fieldwork.

Art
Geography can help art look more closely at the world around us and see the processes that signal change. Annotated field sketching, maps as art and photograph analysis are just some of its techniques.



History
Geography helps explain change that has taken place over time and offers reasons why. It adds vital aspects of explanation concerned with human and physical processes.

ICT
Geography gives a motivational context for using ICT through enquiry in the field with GIS and GPS to digital mapping and a host of research and communication techniques.

DT
Geography is a futures-orientated subject that investigates practical design solutions – from owl boxes to solar lights – and seeks to understand how they might help us live more sustainably or how they are impacting on landscapes and lives.

RE
Geography identifies, enquires and celebrates diversity of peoples and cultures around the world. It investigates what makes places special and why, by a closer examination of where, why and how.

Music
Geography enquires about the characteristic sounds of a place and can inform and inspire musical composition through its breadth of landscapes, from rural to urban and the wondrous to the everyday.

Figure 1: Geography adapts to many subjects providing it retains its rigorous heart.

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Figure 2: The pupils were able to make good use of the Digimap present-day and historic mapping layers. Photo © Paula Owens.

The chosen evacuee account was broken down into short paragraphs. Pupils were asked to create a story-map that showed one location mentioned in each paragraph and add a speech bubble summarising that section of the evacuation journey from the point of view of the child telling the story. Digimap for Schools (see web panel) with its layers of present day and 1890s mapping provided the necessary graphics and spatial background (Figure 2). Pupils were provided with a prompt sheet for each paragraph to help them find information on the map (these resources are available for download – see web panel).

Class introduction

In this session, year 6 explored a digital first-hand account of an evacuee leaving their family in the city of Liverpool to travel to the countryside of St Asaph in North Wales. It was important to recap what the pupils had been studying with their class teacher and to introduce the historical source that would kick-start the activity. The class was shown a short presentation with photos and prompts to respond and recall information about evacuees. The pupils were introduced to the specific example of a journey from Liverpool to St Asaph. Pupils were shown how to use map extracts to record stages of the journey and how to use Digimap:

- to find places using the search tool
- to zoom in and out to see places at different scales
- to use the toggle slider to change between current day map views and 1890 views.

The pupils were already familiar with using 'screen grab' to copy and paste an image directly onto a PowerPoint slide and add a caption.

In practice

After the introduction, pupils moved into the computer suite and worked at their own pace to see how far they could get. Some pupils worked alone, but most worked in pairs (Figure 3). Some needed support, especially at the start, but picked up the techniques very quickly.

In summary, the pupils:

- Read and discussed an evacuee's account of leaving Liverpool for St Asaph.
- Looked at the prompt sheet to remind themselves about the links for each paragraph of the journey account.
- Learnt how to use the search bar to find places on Digimap for Schools, to add labels and to zoom in and out to different scales.
- Created a screen grab, trimmed the image, pasted it onto a PowerPoint slide and added a speech bubble with carefully selected and/or edited text.
- Worked at their own pace individually or in pairs to summarise and illustrate with maps each of the paragraphs from the evacuee's account.

Feedback from the pupils was fantastic, comments included:

> 'It's so exciting using computers and digital tools to explore history!'

> 'Linking the past to present day using Digimap was really cool.'

> 'It was really interesting to learn about our local area and how the past shaped today.'

Some learning links

ESDGC

- Developing empathy as the pupils considered the plight of children evacuated from their homes at short notice to travel to unfamiliar places to stay with people they had never seen before – if they were lucky enough to be offered a home.
- Opportunities to discuss modern day refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and the difference in meaning of the relevant vocabulary.
- Learning about the wider issue of international conflict and the events occurring before and afterwards.
- In developing their questions about the journey and why some places were safer, pupils also engaged in critical thinking.

Figure 3: The on-screen work was suitable for pupils to work individually or in pairs. Photo © Paula Owens.

Digital competence

- Thinking about the reliability of first-hand accounts found online and questioning evidence.
- Critical thinking about the reliability of websites used.
- Critical thinking about the maps used, what they showed and why. For example, what has happened to the railway station mentioned in the evacuee's account of arrival at St Asaph?
- Skill development such as manipulating data, taking screen grabs and other picture editing tools.
- Considering electronic presentation of work produced and the intended audience.

Literacy and Numeracy Framework

- Working with paragraphs, creating captions, measuring distance on maps.
- Discussing text.
- Reading aloud.

Geography

- Using and creating maps.
- Investigating places and how they have changed.

History

- Investigating evidence – evacuees' accounts of events in the Second World War.

Outcomes

The pupils carried out the task successfully and discussed how it must feel to be an evacuee. They had a greater understanding of the emotional upheaval of, and the facts conveyed in, such a journey. Pupils were able to extract relevant information from the text, and select then annotate appropriately scaled maps to illustrate specific aspects of the journey. As pupils condensed text into 'call-outs' they reflected on the writer's feelings, and their own choice of words reflected their empathy with the writer. Some pupils worked unaided, producing several slides each. As an extension, some pupils were able to measure and label journey distances using the map tools.

How did we adapt geography?

The question was a historical one, but, as with other curricular areas, geography can sometimes help answer it. The pupils could have extracted information and answered questions about the evacuees just using the text; but, arguably, it would have lacked their attention to detail and empathic reactions. Using their geography skills to closely observe and analyse the journey at a local scale using historical and present-day maps, the pupils began to experience the journey with a greater understanding. While the geography aided the historical understanding, there was evidence of a real growth in geography knowledge and skills too. Pupils were curious about changes captured on the maps and left the lesson deep in discussion about features in their own locality.

Acknowledgement

Thanks to class teacher Lorraine Dalton for handing over her class keen to learn more for the lesson.

References

Scoffham, S and Owens, P. (2017) *Teaching Primary Geography*. London: Bloomsbury.

Ward, H. (1998) 'Geographical vocabulary' in Scoffham, S. (ed) *Primary Sources: Research findings in primary geography*. Sheffield: Geographical Association, pp. 20–1.

WEB RESOURCES

Digital Competence Framework: *http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/digital-competence-framework/?lang=en*

Evacuee resources to download: *www.geography.org.uk/pg*

Dr Paula Owens is a Consultant to the GA and a Primary Geography Champion. She is an accredited provider for Global Learning Wales and member of the *PG* Editorial Board.

PRIMARY GEOGRAPHY IN PRACTICE

This page offers further ideas for using the contents of this issue of *Primary Geography* in practice in your classroom. Share your ideas inspired by this journal on Twitter @The_GA #PriGeogJournal

Article	In practice
The Start Gallery	• Consider what other animals change or have adapted over time • Discuss through PSHE how pupils adapt and change as they move through school, consider physical, intellectual, emotional and social changes
Adapting geography to best shape the future	• Consider how flexible your curriculum is in school and how you can utilise pupils' prior knowledge to enhance learning opportunities • Develop a unit of work around your local area to really empower the pupils to take their ideas forward
Adapting geography through topic-based teaching	• As a staff, discuss which quote summarises your approach to geography • Revisit medium-term and topic planning to re-evaluate the amount of geography being taught: is there scope for further geographical links?
Seeing the bigger picture	• Celebrate Refugee Week in school: *http://refugeeweek.org.uk/* • Investigate the positive impact refugees have had on your locality • Investigate historical migration in your locality, explore how international links have developed over time
Adapting to life beyond levels	• Evaluate current assessment strategies and tools used in school • Ensure a focus on formative and summative assessment • Investigate how assessment tools can incorporate other key milestones and skills across the curriculum
Experienced geography	• Review your current geography planning • Is it making full use of the expertise of all members of staff? • Can it be enhanced by studying somewhere off the beaten track that other schools may not study? • Use British Council Schools Online (*https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/global*) to find and develop new international links
But first, let me take a selfie!	• Can you use 'selfies' and other social media tools to develop a meaningful sense of place? • Can a local study be enhanced using 'selfies' to make it more personal to the pupils?
Global learning: a cross-curricular approach	• Consider applying for the Primary Geography Quality Mark (PGQM): *https://www.geography.org.uk/The-Primary-Geography-Quality-Mark-PGQM* • Use the evaluation tool to drive school improvement • Access Global Learning Programme resources to support curricular development: *https://glp.globaldimension.org.uk/*
Explosive storytelling	• Celebrate World Book Day through geography-themed stories • Map famous authors from around the world • Explore poetry and stories from other cultures • Investigate physical phenomena through practical activities such as making models
Geography in an island school	• Take part in the Fairtrade Schools Scheme: *https://schools.fairtrade.org.uk/* • Take part in the Eco Schools Scheme: *https://www.eco-schools.org.uk/* • Consider how to further enhance the curriculum offering by utilising educational visits • Explore the International Schools Award scheme: *https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/about-programmes/international-school-award*
Using observation as an assessment tool	• Develop a skills-based observation and assessment system in your school • Host an event to showcase a 'project' to parents/carers and the wider community
Do we hit the mark?	• Consider applying for the Primary geography Quality Mark (PGQM): *https://www.geography.org.uk/The-Primary-Geography-Quality-Mark-PGQM* • Evaluate your outdoor provision using the Learning Outside the Classroom Scheme: *http://www.lotc.org.uk/*
The PG Interview	• Evaluate your curriculum in school, what is its purpose? • In Wales, how well are you preparing for the four purposes of the new curriculum? *https://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculuminwales/curriculum-for-wales-curriculum-for-life/?lang=en*
A chameleon subject with a rigorous heart	• Access Digimap to support the development of mapping skills in school: *http://digimapforschools.edina.ac.uk/* • Explore planning to look for further opportunities to develop mapping skills across the curriculum

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Dr Stephen Scoffham,
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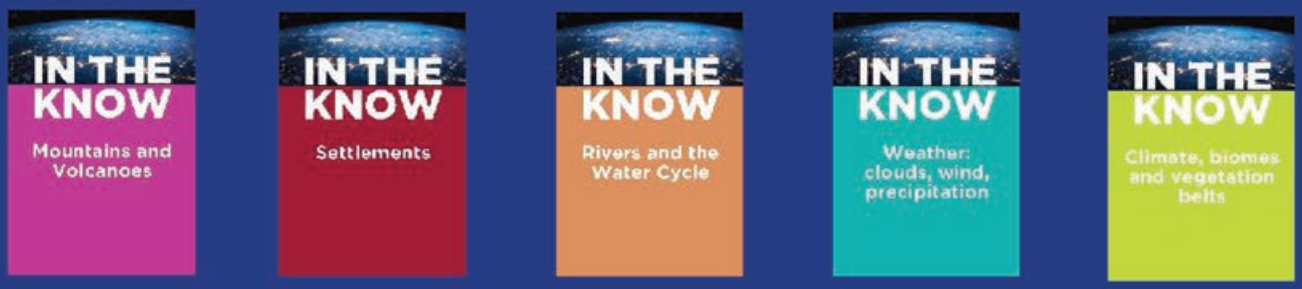

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