

Introducing the Geographical Association

The Geographical Association (GA) is a subject association with the core charitable object of **furthering geographical knowledge and understanding through education**. It is a lively community of practice with over a century of innovation behind it and an unrivalled understanding of geography teaching. The GA was formed by five geographers in 1893 to share ideas and learn from each other. Today, the GA's purpose is the same and it remains an independent association.

What the GA does

The GA is the leading subject association for all teachers of geography. It is a registered charity whose core activities are financed principally by membership subscriptions, but also by the sale of educational resources, conference and CPD event delegate fees, and externally funded curriculum development project work.

GA vision: ***Providing a trusted voice for geography education.***

Strategic aims:

- ***Meeting professional and educational needs.*** The GA provides support and guidance for geography educators (principally in the UK but with members across 60 countries), grouped under the following subheadings:
 - (i) Professional development events and networks
 - (ii) Publication of resources
 - (iii) Provision of geography 'quality marks'
 - (iv) Bespoke consultancy services
- ***Demonstrating the value of geographical education.*** The GA maintains close relationships with UK central government and directly advises on curriculum matters. It engages with key stakeholders to influence public debate and policy towards geographical education. The GA also works in partnership with other organisations to ensure that geography's contribution is maximized and well understood, including through educational research, and it has strong links with geographical organisations in the North America, Asia/Pacific and Europe.
- ***Using our resources efficiently and sustainably.***

Underpinning GA values:

- Geographical education enriches the lives of all young people
- A dynamic subject community is built on participation and innovation
- An independent association demands stable finances

The GA's ***Manifesto: a different view*** is an important reference document for the organisation as it sets out a number of principles for geographical education - <http://www.geography.org.uk/resources/adifferentview>.

The GA's reach

The reach of the GA across the geographical education community internationally is one of its key strengths.

- The GA has around 6000 memberships including both personal and institutional members. These include primary and secondary teachers, beginning teachers, teacher educators, academics, geography students, infant, primary and secondary schools, colleges, universities, academies, libraries, societies, museums and businesses. Teachers join the GA for the professional support and materials they need for the classroom. Most use its extensive website and many take part in face-to-face or electronic networking opportunities. The GA regularly communicates with its members and further afield through

email updates and social media such as Twitter and Facebook. Some members enjoy closer involvement by volunteering for special interest groups or sharing their skills and experiences at events. Membership is an expression of support and helps the GA in its key mission to ensure geography continues to contribute effectively to the education of all children and young people

- The Association's website www.geography.org.uk is visited by in excess of a quarter of a million individuals in over 200 countries annually, who together make up over 1.5 million page views.
- The GA provides professional development through formal face-to-face CPD events, involving more than 1000 teachers per year and including the UK's largest gathering of geography educators at GA Annual Conference. Other CPD activities include a huge range of regional CPD days, network events, local Branch activities and virtual networking, through the GA online professional network (the 'Ning').
- The GA's social media presence has also growing rapidly over recent years. The GA has in excess of 6000 recipients of its fortnightly e-newsletter, over 8000 Twitter followers and 2500 Facebook likes.
- In terms of publications and teaching resources, our suite of termly professional journals (*Geography*, *Teaching Geography* and *Primary Geography*) and *GA Magazine* are prime sources of curriculum and pedagogical ideas, debate and news within the subject community. The product range of over 300 titles – with comprehensive teaching Handbooks at its core - produces sales of more than 14 000 items per year.
- The GA also enjoys an impressive track record in partnership working and project delivery. It was an equal partner, with the Royal Geographical Society, in the successful development and delivery of the DfE-funded Action Plan for geography (2006-11) – a multi-million pound project which engaged nearly 3000 schools across England and Wales. During this period, the GA also worked alongside CfBT and the DfE to launch the new secondary curriculum in schools. For the past three years, the GA has worked strategically with partners including the Ordnance Survey, Field Studies Council and ESRI(UK) to enable these major organisations to reach schools and teachers and embed effective support. More recently, the GA has worked with DfID on the Global Learning Programme (England) as part of a consortium on this five year, £17 million programme.

How the GA is run

The GA has a single 'Headquarters' building at 160 Solly Street in Sheffield which it purchased in 2010. The GA existed as an unincorporated association from its formation in 1893 until 2010, when it was incorporated as a private company limited by guarantee. The GA has a dedicated body of professional staff that runs its day-to-day operations from the Sheffield HQ, under the leadership of its Chief Executive.

At its heart the GA is a 'membership organisation'. Its activities are often driven by members, many of whom freely volunteer their time and expertise in support of the GA. The GA is overseen by two main volunteer committees, which provide strong representation to the membership. These committees are the Governing Body and the Education Group:

- Governing Body (GB) – This committee, chaired by the current year's GA President, has overall responsibility for the GA and its current and future well-being. As charity Trustees and company Directors, the 14 Members of the Governing Body are responsible for the prudent stewardship of the GA's financial resources in accordance with current law and the GA's charitable objects.
- Education Group (EG) – This committee formulates the educational policy of the GA and ensures that provision is made for all aspects of geographical education. It oversees three Phase Committees, along with a number of other Special Interest Groups and Communications Boards.

The GA also welcomes the guidance of its Honorary Vice Presidents (Professor David Lambert, Dr. Vanessa Lawrence CBE, Professor Doreen Massey, Hetan Shah and Professor Iain Stewart) and the support of its current Strategic Partners - the Ordnance Survey and the Field Studies Council (FSC).

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