

# a different view

a manifesto from the Geographical Association



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## Early Years & Primary

*'Informed and active future citizens need to understand how their lives are connected to others and are both shaped by and impact on the environments they inhabit if they are to make responsible choices for the future'.*

*- GA Magazine, summer 2008*

*A different view*, with its emphasis on children's real, everyday geographies, is a key document for all those teaching geography in the early years and primary phases.

Everyday geography is fuelled by real, living contexts for learning – such as the spaces we inhabit and share in our school and neighbourhood. Children can engage with the factors that shape these places through an enquiry approach: What is this place like? How do I feel about it? What do I/don't I like, and why? How is it changing, and why? How does it link to the wider world? Why does it matter to me? How can I make a difference?

Enquiring about real places through active fieldwork offers a host of opportunities and draws on many skills:

- Using and making maps and diagrams
- Using ICT through GIS, photography, video or audio clips
- Describing, reporting and annotating using relevant vocabulary
- Using and making images
- Measuring and scaling

It also demands collaboration with others – appreciating that they may have conflicting views and needs. For example, some pupils may want to develop part of the school grounds as a vegetable garden – others would rather have a larger football pitch. How can real issues like these be resolved? Enquiring, researching, dreaming, deciding and doing are what real, living geography is all about.

In our interconnected world, living geography is also about pupils appreciating and beginning to understand how they are part of a wider, global community and having opportunities to compare lives and settings at different scales. Living geography asks important questions about the way the world works such as:

- Why might having more concrete play areas increase flooding?
- How will planting trees improve our environment?
- What is the relationship between our everyday actions and global warming?
- Where does our food come from and why?
- Why do people migrate – what's their story?
- How and why are places connected?
- Why should we embrace and value diversity and difference?
- What informed choices can I make?

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In this way, quality geography relates local, everyday experiences to the wider world through the notion of interdependence – yet in doing so, strengthens a sense of personal identity.

Let's think about attitudes and values too: understanding important environmental relationships and making decisions that impact on changes for the future are powerful contexts for self esteem, motivation, care, concern and responsibility. Genuine involvement such as designing, building and locating new play areas, gardens or habitats offers pupils a real sense of achievement as they become informed and critical thinkers, collaborators and doers. Geography gives us this lens for viewing the world and our place within it and, through developing understanding and action, offers our young children a sense of hope for the possible futures ahead. So do more than just teach geography – live it!

## WEBLINKS

<http://www.geography.org.uk/projects/younggeographers>

Find out more about teachers working with Young Geographers

<http://www.geography.org.uk/projects/primaryhandbook/mapsandstories/4-7>

Understanding everyday lives through maps and stories

<http://www.geography.org.uk/projects/primaryhandbook/mapsandstories/6-9>

Investigating changing environments through maps and stories

<http://www.geography.org.uk/projects/primaryhandbook/mapsandstories/8-11>

Exploring landscapes through maps and stories

<http://www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk/primary/primary-handbook-extension-project/>

View sets of resources created by teachers building on themes found in the *Primary Geography Handbook*

<http://www.geography.org.uk/pgqm>

Celebrate excellent geography in your school through the Primary Geography Quality Mark

<http://www.geography.org.uk/eyprimary/squareone>

<http://www.geography.org.uk/eyprimary/squaretwo>

The *Geography from Square One* (and *Two*) projects provided exciting and enjoyable activities and resources

<http://primarychampions.ning.com>

Join the Primary Champions network and link with a group near you for free CPD and online resources ...

<http://geographical.ning.com/group/earlyyearsandprimarypractitioners>

... or the Early Years and Primary Practitioners group on the GA Network

[www.geography.org.uk/adifferentview](http://www.geography.org.uk/adifferentview)