

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**From: Geographical Association**

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**National survey reveals most young people think not enough time is spent learning about the wider world in school.**

***Geographical Association's manifesto, A different view, is launched today.***

- 93% of young people think it is important to learn about issues affecting people's lives in different parts of the world.
- 92% of young people think it is important to learn about where the things they use, such as food, energy and water, come from.
- 63% of young people think that not enough time is spent learning about the wider world in school.
- Geography is the subject in which young people have most often learnt about important local and global issues, and the one in which they would most commonly expect to do so.
  
- *A different view* re-affirms geography's place in the curriculum.
- It makes a forward looking and compelling case for geography in education.
- It re-states the value of free-thinking, specialist secondary teachers who are passionate and engaged with the discipline and its potential to educate.

A national survey, conducted by Ipsos MORI and published today by the Geographical Association, found that 93% of 11-14 year olds believe it is important to learn about issues affecting people's lives in different parts of the world, yet nearly two-thirds of young people think that not enough time is spent learning about the wider world in school.

Over 90% of young people believe that it is important to learn about people, societies and cultures in other parts of the world, how and why changes to the world may occur in the future, and where resources such as food, energy and water come from.

The survey also shows that geography is the subject in which young people have most often learnt about or discussed the big issues they believe to be affecting their local area and the wider world today. These issues include crime and anti-social behaviour, the economy and jobs, war and terrorism, the environment and

climate change and poverty and hunger. Furthermore, geography is the subject in which schoolchildren would *expect* to learn about these issues.

And yet, these findings come at a time when geography is being increasingly marginalized within the school curriculum at both primary and secondary levels. Thus:

- although geography appears secure in the proposed new primary curriculum (under the Area of Learning called “historical, geographical and social understanding), new primary teachers can spend as little as four hours on geography during their entire initial teacher training
- in secondary schools it is alarming to see geography in key stage 3 being lost in ‘generic skills’ or cut out altogether in curtailed two-year programmes designed to enhance league table positions.

The Geographical Association (GA) believes that there are few things more fundamental than learning about ‘the earth as our home’ and that geography is essential to the education of every child. To support this belief, the Geographical Association has produced *A different view*, a challenging manifesto for school geography.

*A different view* re-affirms geography’s place in the curriculum. It makes a forward looking and compelling case for geography in education. It re-states the value of free-thinking, specialist secondary teachers who are passionate and engaged with the discipline and its potential to educate.

*A different view* is launched today by Professor David Lambert at the Geographical Association’s Annual Conference at the University of Manchester. *A different view* is a two-year programme, delivering a wide range of materials to support geography teaching and touching every school in the UK. It is based around eight stunning visual ‘doorways’ and seven themes which cover the GA’s core beliefs and priorities.

It consists of:

- a fully-illustrated and informative 32-page booklet containing the manifesto itself which will be sent to all secondary schools in April 2009
- a leaflet detailing *A different view* which will be sent to all UK schools, also in April 2009
- a poster which will be sent to all UK schools in September 2009 and
- a whole suite of online supporting resources, including photographs for use in the classroom, supporting activities and ideas on ways to use the manifesto ([www.geography.org.uk/adifferentview](http://www.geography.org.uk/adifferentview)).

## **Viewpoints**

‘There is something dreadfully wrong with an education system that claims to be personalised and listen to young people, which aspires to be world class, seeking to nurture successful learners, confident individuals

and responsible citizens, but which has allowed the curriculum to be so utterly distorted that learning about our place in the world (and its future) is considered to be marginal in comparison to the mundane “learning skills”. Let us lift our sights. We need to trust teachers again to engage with the discipline and young people to create a curriculum for the future: exciting, relevant and with a heart.’ *Professor David Lambert, Chief Executive of the Geographical Association and Professor of Geography Education at the Institute of Education, University of London*

‘From very early childhood we all experience the world directly. We get to know our local place. In addition we are bombarded through the media with information about our complex world. I think young people are entitled to an education that helps them make sense of these experiences and all this information. Geography can contribute to this: it helps young people make sense of the world and can enrich their experiences of it. It can inform the way they participate in the world as local and global citizens. I think it has an essential role in the curriculum.’ *Margaret Roberts, President of the Geographical Association*

‘*A different view* will help schools to consider the contribution that geography can make to the wider curriculum. It is a succinct and attractively presented publication that provides a “punchy” read. It will be a useful tool for all people leading schools as well as geography teachers.’ *Martin Shevill, Headteacher of Ossett School and Sixth Form College, Wakefield*

‘Curriculum innovation, initiated through the curiosity of all learners within our schools, will be supported and extended through the new manifesto of the Geographical Association. It provides a vital focus for children, teachers and school leaders to discover their own personal, local and global geographies.’ *Helen Martin, Headteacher of Graffham Infant and Duncton CE Junior Schools, West Sussex*

## **GA Annual Conference**

The Geographical Association’s Annual Conference 2009 opened yesterday with a public lecture by Harriet Lamb, Director of the Fairtrade Foundation. The three-day Conference for 700-plus teachers has a busy programme of field visits and over 100 lectures and workshops including a Presidential Lecture on ‘Investigating Geography’ by Margaret Roberts, which is followed by the launch of *A different view*. On Saturday there is a Keynote Address by Professor Iain Stewart entitled ‘Un-natural Hazards’. Other topics include ‘Ugly Beautiful: Counting the cost of the global fashion industry’, ‘Geography using Google Earth’ and ‘Teaching About London’s 2012 Olympics’.

The event is the biggest exhibition and CPD event of its kind for geography teachers in the UK.

**Ends**

## **Notes to Editors**

For further information contact: Ricky Buck [rbuck@geography.org.uk](mailto:rbuck@geography.org.uk)

*A different view* website: [www.geography.org.uk/adifferentview](http://www.geography.org.uk/adifferentview)

The Conference programme website: [www.geography.org.uk/conference](http://www.geography.org.uk/conference)

## **About the Survey**

The World Issues Survey, undertaken by Ipsos-MORI questioned 598 young people aged 11-14 years and was carried out between 15 and 22 January 2009.

## **The Geographical Association**

The Geographical Association (GA) is a subject association with a mission to further the teaching of geography and to communicate the value of learning geography for all. The GA was founded in 1893 and has around 6,000 memberships including teachers in primary and secondary schools and further education, academic geographers, universities and teacher educators and trainers. For more information visit

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