

Press Release

Reading and writing the world: the future of school geography

The Geographical Association is launching a nationwide public consultation to help decide what our children should be taught in geography. We want to be in a strong position to advise the government on the new geography curriculum under consideration in 2012.

Do British children “have limited knowledge of some of the best sights in the UK, with 17% thinking the Angel of the North is a star, 1 in 20 believing Stonehenge is in Egypt and 6% claiming the Outer Hebrides is a planet”? According to research conducted on behalf of a hotel chain they do.

Another recent survey said that one in five children couldn't point out the UK on a map of the world. However, a live text test for BBC's *Newsround*, in which some 3,700 people took part, found that nearly 90% of children could point out Britain. Maybe the findings depend on what questions you ask and whether or not you are trying to sell atlases or hotel rooms!

What's the true picture? The government's National Curriculum Review wants to revitalize the curriculum by emphasising the essential, core knowledge of subjects. Geography covers the whole world. The extent of geographic information is potentially infinite. So what is geography's 'core knowledge'? What should our children be taught in school geography lessons?

The Geographical Association (GA) has launched a consultation on this question. It asks:

What is a better school geography and what geography should be taught in schools?

A special online Presentation, devised with the GA's strategic partner **ESRI (UK)** helps to stimulate thought on these questions and in particular the nature of core geographical knowledge.

The GA has also provided some Curriculum Proposals for consultation.

The consultation will run from July to October 2011. Responses will be collated and a final report written by December 2011. This will assist the GA in refining and developing the advice it provides for phase 2 of the National Curriculum Review in early 2012, when the statutory programme of study for geography will be devised.

The Presentation and Curriculum Proposals can be viewed from 12.00 noon on Friday 15th July 2011 on

www.geography.org.uk/getinvolved/geographycurriculumconsultation

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For further information

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The GA is the leading subject association for the teaching and learning of geography in schools. Established in 1893, it has a membership of over 6000. It publishes a range of classroom materials and professional guidance (www.geographyshop.org.uk), three Journals and a termly news magazine. It leads various curriculum projects and runs a highly successful conference and events programme for teachers of geography. It has a head office in Sheffield and over 30 local branches.