



## An introduction to the Primary Geography Quality Mark for Subject Leaders/Co-ordinators



### Interested in leading your school through the Primary Geography Quality Mark?

#### **Background**

The PGQM was launched in 2006 as an important strategy for developing high quality geography in primary schools.

#### **What is the Primary Geography Quality Mark (PGQM)?**

The PGQM is an externally validated quality mark against which schools can measure whether they have reached a recognised standard in the teaching and learning of primary geography.

Each stage of achievement, i.e. bronze, silver and gold, represents stages that a school might go through when seeking to embed geography across the whole school.

At **Bronze** level the award is in recognition of a school's commitment to 'ensuring lively and effective learning in geography'.

At **Silver** level the award is in recognition of the implementation of whole school approaches that support excellence in geography.

At **Gold** level, the award is in recognition of the school's capacity to embed excellent and innovative geography throughout the school.

#### **How does the PGQM support development in the school?**

It is a process leading to a formal recognition of schools and co-ordinators who successfully use geography to motivate and interest children. It will be used as a tool by schools that want or need to support further developments of geography as a curriculum resource. It provides support for using geography as the lead foundation subject when schools are working towards a more coherent and integrated approach to the primary curriculum.

Check out the preview of the 2009 self-evaluation framework at:

<http://www.geography.org.uk/eyprimary/primaryqualitymark/self-assessmentframework/>

#### **How does the PGQM relate to school self-evaluation?**

The PGQM indicators are referenced to the relevant headings of the OFSTED Self Evaluation Form (SEF). The PGQM will assist schools preparing their SEF and is being used by some primary schools as an informal subject SEF.

#### **What will I as the co-ordinator need to do?**

The co-ordinator/ subject-leader will be the key person who leads the school through the process of achieving the award.

To summarise:

- First read the guidance notes at:  
<http://www.geography.org.uk/eyprimary/primaryqualitymark/gettingstarted/>
- If you decide that you want to work towards the award you need to request membership of the password protected PGQM VLE: <http://pgqm.geography.org.uk>. This website showcases the work of schools from previous rounds of the award and gives you access to current documentation and guidance. Once your school has membership of the GA you can ask for a password for the VLE from [jbeattie@geography.org.uk](mailto:jbeattie@geography.org.uk)
- You will need to read through the self-evaluation framework and study the indicators for the three standards - Bronze, Silver and Gold, to determine the level at which the school is currently working.
- On the basis of this audit you will apply for the appropriate level of the award. The identified gaps will then be incorporated into the development plan for geography and the school will work to achieve these actions over the next two and a half terms. It is expected that the majority of schools will achieve a silver award before they apply for gold.

Towards the end of the period you, as the co-ordinator/ subject-leader will compile the evidence illustrating how the school is meeting the criteria for the award and showing how Geography as a subject has developed and prospered during the lead up to your submission. Additional guidance about length and form is provided in the application notes.

When you are ready to submit, your application will be sent to the Geographical Association National Moderating Team for final assessment.

***Are there opportunities for personal accreditation?***

Subject Leaders who are managing the award can gain personal accreditation through the TLA (Teachers Learning Academy – GTC) if they keep a brief ‘learning journal’ to document the work in progress. Working to achieve the PGQM award would entitle you to apply to be assessed at level 2 or possibly level 3 of the TLA award, see [www.gtce.org.uk/tla](http://www.gtce.org.uk/tla) Please contact the GA if you are considering personal accreditation with the TLA.

***What is the time frame for completing the PGQM award?***

You school can start working towards the award straight away. There are two periods of registration, submission of evidence and moderation each year.

Register by:	Submit evidence by:	Moderation during:	Notified of award by:
End of October	End of May (first week in June)	June/ July	October
End of March	End of December (first week in January)	January/ Feb/ March	April

(N.B Registration will close when the full quota of schools for the period is filled)

***What support will be given?***

The subject leader will have access to a password protected area of the Geographical Association website to discuss ideas with other teachers who are working to gain the PGQM.

The PGQM Project Leader will take part in online discussions on the Geographical Association NING website:  
<http://geographical.ning.com/group/primarygeographyqualitymark>

The main website for guidance is at: <http://pgqm.geography.org.uk/> This password protected area is available to all school members of the Geographical Association. To be given a user name and password please contact [jbeattie@geography.org.uk](mailto:jbeattie@geography.org.uk)

### ***How will the award be assessed?***

All registered schools submit their evidence based application by the agreed date. Submissions will be assessed by a Geographical Association nominated consultant.

The majority of **Bronze and Silver awards** will be gained on the basis of the submitted paper/electronic evidence. Each school is initially assessed by a nominated GA consultant and subsequently moderated by the GA National Moderation Team mainly on the basis of their paper submission. *(We may undertake visits to Bronze and Silver level schools to satisfy our own Quality Assurance procedures.)*

**Gold awards** will be open to schools who can demonstrate that geographical learning is truly embedded across the whole school and where the subject leader is contributing to the development of primary geography beyond their school, e.g. by contributing to GA or LA conferences or publications. The award is achieved by the submission of the paper/electronic evidence and a half day moderation visit by a GA nominated consultant. Schools on the silver/gold borderline may also request a visit if they have ambitions to be awarded gold.

### ***What happens to verify the award?***

After undertaking the self-evaluation process, sending in the relevant completed documents for moderation by the Geographical Association, the school and geography subject leader will receive PGQM certificates verifying their achievement. They will also receive brief written feedback.

### ***What will it cost the school?***

Details of the latest charges can be found on the GA website at [www.geography.org.uk/pgqm](http://www.geography.org.uk/pgqm)

Schools that want to achieve the award of PGQM must register by the dates set out in the chart above.

The school must be a member of the Geographical Association. Membership entitles the school to:

- three issues of Primary Geographer magazine per year
- three issues of the GA Magazine per year
- up to 30% discount on publications and other resources ordered from the GA
- discounted entry to the GA Annual Conference and other CPD events
- entry to the GA's community of practice with full access to the GA website including links to specialist groups and local GA Branches.

To join the Geographical association (GA) go to: [http://www.geography.org.uk/login\\_join.asp](http://www.geography.org.uk/login_join.asp)

### ***What have some schools said about the PGQM?***

"Staff are now more confident at delivering the subject and have up-to-date resources to aid the teaching of Geography. They are aware of the expected levels that children in their year group should be working towards and they have had experience of levelling Geography work." *Gig Mill Primary School –Miss H Cooper*

"Working for this award has seen a complete overhaul in the detail of the hours spent on the subject, the scheme of work, planning and assessments. Through this we have become more aware of the need to be more familiar with the level descriptors in the subject and to be more detailed in our planning, yet within a

manageable frame work. As a result we have begun to identify it more to the children as a discrete subject and you are much more likely now to hear the word 'geography' than perhaps, you were a couple of years ago.”  
*Limpsfield C.E. Infant School – Rosemary Moore*

“Geographical thinking has led our development of the whole curriculum. The process of thinking through questions and problem solving has supported each topic as it has been planned. Teaching staff have used the Blooms Taxonomy of Higher Order Questioning Skills to extend thinking, not only for the Gifted and Talented children, but for all learners.” *Shelley Primary School – Helen Martin*

“The information that was needed for the Quality Mark seemed daunting at the time but over the year, events arose to help direct my plans for Geography. The more time I spent learning new ideas and sharing them with staff I got more and more involved within the teaching of Geography and having expectations from both my quality of teaching and from my pupils.” *British School of Bucharest, Romania - Lyndsey Marcu*

Others found that participation supported them to:

- celebrate geography through assemblies and by getting more involved in the local community
- improve governor engagement with the school, particularly when a governor had responsibility for geography
- improve the way that they assessed pupils' work by focussing more specifically on the quality of their geographical thinking

Please visit [www.geography.org.uk/eyprimary/primaryqualitymark](http://www.geography.org.uk/eyprimary/primaryqualitymark) for the most up to date information about the award or email the PGQM Project Leader Wendy North [wnorth@geography.org.uk](mailto:wnorth@geography.org.uk)