



08 December 2009

Professor David Lambert  
The Geographical Association  
160 Solly Street  
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Dear Headteacher

### **Primary Geography Quality Mark**

I am delighted to invite your school to apply for the Primary Geography Quality Mark (PGQM). This exciting initiative, which is seen as an important strategy for developing high quality geographical education, is now in its fourth year. The DCSF have agreed to extend their financial support, which will in effect pay for the central administration costs of the award, and enable us to continue to offer the PGQM to schools at a subsidised rate for the next two years.

Your geography subject leader may have brought it to your attention as a tool for developing the subject, initially by self-evaluation, leading to external validation.

During the last two years we have learnt how schools enjoyed and gained from their involvement in the award. Indeed one subject leader commented by email:

'My entire staff are now working on a version of the quality mark as I have brought it in throughout the school as their school SEF, which has revolutionised subject leadership across all subjects- thanks to your ground breaking and inspirational document.'

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

The attached list of questions and answers covers key information about the project. You can also visit our website at [www.geography.org.uk/cyprimary/primaryqualitymark](http://www.geography.org.uk/cyprimary/primaryqualitymark)

Your subject leader can access all the relevant documents for the award by using this web address.

In order to register for the Award please sign and return the registration form as soon as possible, at the latest by the given dates on the website.

Yours sincerely,

Dr David Lambert  
Chief Executive

### **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.

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

It is a process leading to a formal recognition of schools and subject leaders 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, creative and cross-curricular primary curriculum.

The PGQM Audit Checklist framework document is available online at:

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

### **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 school as an informal subject SEF.

### **What level of award can a primary school achieve?**

The PGQM can be achieved at three levels: bronze, silver and gold.

At **Bronze** level the award is in recognition of a schools 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 schools capacity to embed excellent and innovative geography throughout the school.

### **What will the subject leader/coordinator need to do?**

- The subject leader will need to read through the self-evaluation framework and read the indicators for the three standards - Bronze, Silver and Gold.
- On the basis of an audit the subject leader will apply for the appropriate standard of award. The identified gaps will then be incorporated into the development plan for geography and worked on over the next two terms. It is expected that the majority of schools will achieve a silver award before they apply for gold.
- An action plan pro-forma is provided to help the subject leader analyse and plan what needs to be worked on over the next two terms.
- Towards the end of the period the subject leader will complete the evidence documentation illustrating how the school has achieved each indicator. This evidence documentation is the application for the award and must be sent to the Geographical Association for final assessment.

### **How can you as head and governors support the subject leader?**

Your support for the subject leader is essential and is looked for as part of moderation. The award is about raising the quality of geographically learning across the whole school. Indeed the higher levels of the award cannot be achieved unless quality geography is embedded for all pupils. Essentially subject-leaders will

need your backing to ensure they have the time to work on their action plan and the time to meet with staff and offer appropriate CPD. Though an enthusiastic subject leader will be able to make a fairly independent start on the Bronze award, subject leaders applying for Silver or Gold will need their application to be backed by the school development plan.

### What is the time frame for completing the award?

Your school can start working towards the award straight away but you must register by 31 October to apply for the award.

Register by:	Submit evidence by:	Moderation during:	Notified of award by:
End of October	End of May (first week in June)	June/November	February

(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 special Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) on the Geographical Association website to discuss ideas with other teachers who are working to gain their PGQM. The Primary Projects Leader with responsibility for managing the PGQM will take part in on-line discussions and provide support for coordinators.

### 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 which is then moderated by a Geographical Association nominated consultant. *(We may undertake visits to Bronze and Silver level schools to satisfy our own Quality Assurance procedures. Schools selected at part of these QA visits will not be expected to pay for their visit.)*

**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?

The outline self-evaluation framework is freely available on the main GA website. Further exemplification and documentation is available to GA members on the password protected website.

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.

As the PGQM is an award for the school, the school itself must be a member of the Geographical Association.

Membership entitles the school to:

- three issues of Primary Geographer magazine
- three issues of the GA Magazine,
- a 30% member discount on publications and other resources ordered from the GA
- a discount for the GA Annual Conference
- entry to the GA's community of practice with full access to the GA website including links to specialist groups and local GA Branches.

For further information about membership see: [http://www.geography.org.uk/login\\_join.asp](http://www.geography.org.uk/login_join.asp)

### **What if I need further information before I make a decision?**

Please get in touch with:

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