



## 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 *Primary Geography Quality Mark (PGQM)* was launched by the Minister for Education as an important strategy for developing high quality geographical education in 2006, initially through the DfES funded Action Plan for Geography, jointly led by the Geographical Association and RGS-IBG.

#### What is the 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.

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.

#### 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, creative and cross-curricular primary curriculum.

#### 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. *The PGQM Audit Checklist Document is available online at:*

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

#### 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. This is fully documented in other guidance.

To summarise:

- The co-ordinator will need to read through the Audit Checklist and Self Evaluation framework of the three standards - Bronze, Silver and Gold, to determine the level at which the school is currently working.
- On the basis of this audit the subject leader 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 the co-ordinator will complete the PGQM Application Form and produce annotated evidence illustrating how the school has achieved each section of the form. Additional guidance about amount of evidence is provided on the form. You are also invited to submit an illustrated short account (around 500 words) about how Geography as a subject has developed and prospered during the lead up to your submission.

### **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 could contribute significantly towards a TLA accreditation assessed at level 2 or possibly level 3 of the TLA award Please visit the TLA website for further information <http://www.teacherlearningacademy.org.uk/>

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

Your school can start working towards the award at any time during the school year but you must follow the registration and submission deadlines below. Your preparation time before registration may take up to a year.

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

*The award process from registration to award notification takes 16 months*

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

The subject leader will have access to a password protected website (PGQM VLE) where they will be able to take part in online discussions with other PGQM schools, view previous schools exemplar applications and read guidance notes. The PGQM VLE is available to all members of the Geographical Association. For a username and password please contact [jbeattie@geography.org.uk](mailto:jbeattie@geography.org.uk).

The GA's PGQM Co-ordinator Wendy North is available via email [wnorth@geography.org.uk](mailto:wnorth@geography.org.uk) to give professional advice. A regional moderator will also be allocated to each school and will be available via email to answer your questions.

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

Submissions will be assessed by a GA nominated moderator and then reviewed at an annual moderation meeting by the full national PGQM moderation team before schools are notified.

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 moderator. *(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 moderator. 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 GA, the school and geography subject leader will both receive PGQM certificates verifying their achievement. They will also receive brief written feedback.

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

The PGQM Audit Checklist 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).

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

- three issues of *Primary Geographer* journal
- three issues of *GA Magazine*
- a 30% discount on publications and other resources ordered from the GA
- discounted entry to 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.

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

### **What have some of the recently awarded schools said about the PGQM?**

On the whole the experience of applying for PGQM has been enjoyable and challenging. Once my new initiatives and ideas have had a chance to be fully embedded I will then be able to evaluate the effect they have had on the children's understanding and enjoyment of geography.

*Louise Seaton, St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Billericay. Bronze*

The profile of the subject has been raised and clear subject leadership linked to an effective review system ensuring that strengths are celebrated and weaknesses identified and planned for. As such, standards and expectations as well as enjoyment in the subject will continue to develop further.

*John Farrell, Lanesfield Primary School. Bronze*

The PGQM has developed us both professionally as subject co-ordinators, broadening our knowledge and understanding of the Geography curriculum and building our confidence in leading Geography within our school.

*Sarah Wilson and Olivia Chadwick, Norbury Hall, Stockport*

After I discovered that I could apply for the Geography Quality Mark....that was when the development of geography really took off! There has been no looking back and I have found this process an excellent tool to enable me to see geography progress in the direction I envisaged in my school.

*Sian Cooper, Springwood Primary, Cardiff*

Over the past two years, there has been an increase in awareness about the subject of geography, due to the application for PGQM. Lancashire Cluster meetings have led into staff meetings, which have in turn linked with the creative curriculum and then into individual planning

*Jill Baehren Farington Primary, Preston*

Others found that participation helped 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/pgqm](http://www.geography.org.uk/pgqm) for the most up to date information about the award.