



## An introduction to the Primary Geography Quality Mark for Subject Leaders/ Coordinators



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. The award is now funded by school registration fees.

### **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 coordinators who successfully use geography to motivate and interest children and it is focused on supporting the 'process' of curriculum development. 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.

### **What will I as the coordinator need to do?**

The coordinator/ 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 coordinator is the key person who leads the school through the process of achieving the award.

- The coordinator 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 (available on the VLE).
- 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 vast majority of schools will achieve a silver award before they apply for gold.
- Towards the end of the period the coordinator will complete the PGQM Application Form and produce annotated evidence illustrating how the school has achieved each section of the framework. Additional guidance about writing the application is available on the VLE. 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, submission deadlines below. Your preparation time – pre 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	Beginning of April	May/September	October

(the award process from registration to award notification takes around 12 months)

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

The subject leader will have access to a password protected area of the Geographical Association website (PGQM VLE) where they can view previous schools exemplar applications and read guidance notes. Subject leaders can also join the Geography Champions network <http://geographychampions.ning.com/> where they will be able to take part in on-line discussions with other teachers and PGQM coordinators. Online and telephone support is also available from the PGQM Administrator.

The password protected area 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)

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

The majority of awards will be achieved on the basis of the submitted application form with accompanying annotated evidence and appendices. This will be moderated by a GA appointed moderator without the need for a visit to the school.

All applications are scrutinised in-house before being passed to the allocated moderator and a rigorous Quality Assurance process ensures that the award is standardised.

Each year the GA undertakes a number of Quality Assurance Moderation visits that take place during the term following submission of evidence. If your school is chosen for a Quality Assurance Moderation visit you will be notified by your allocated moderator. As we only visit a selection of schools, please remember that **our judgements are based on the application that you make, and the evidence that you provide**. The evidence we receive should tell a clear story about the geography in your school and its impact on pupils.

### ***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 and a logo that can be used on the school stationary and website. 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)

The school 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 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.

*Mrs Sarah Wilson and Mrs 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 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.