



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)* is a Geographical Association (GA) initiative and was launched by the Minister for Education as an important strategy for developing high quality geographical education in 2006, initially through the government funded *Action Plan for Geography*. 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 'developing 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?

The PGQM is a process leading to a formal recognition of schools and subject leaders (SLs) who successfully use high standards of geography teaching and learning to motivate and engage children.

The PGQM::

- is focused on supporting the 'process' of curriculum development;
- raises the profile and quality of geography teaching across the school;
- is sensitive to current and new curriculum demands;
- supports evaluation of existing practice and achievable Action Plan development;
- ensures rigour when using geography as part of a coherent, creative and cross-curricular primary curriculum;
- draws on and supports Ofsted criteria, reinforcing evidence of good practice and school improvement;
- *provides evidence of achievement for whole school accreditation with the government's five year [Global Learning Project \(GLP\)](#). SLs who achieve the PGQM can also use this evidence as part of their submission for '[Leading Practitioner](#)' status should they apply for it as part of the Global Learning Programme*

What will I as the coordinator need to do?

The SL 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 SL is the key person who leads the school through the process of achieving the award.
- The SL will need to read through the Audit Checklist and Self Evaluation framework of the three standards - Bronze, Silver and Gold, to determine the best-fit 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 Bronze and / or Silver award before they apply for gold.
- Towards the end of the period the SL 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 gain a personal certification of their leadership that lasts for three years and which becomes part of their professional portfolio. It is evidence from the GA of the SL's ability to lead the subject well. This accreditation is portable unlike the school accreditation which remains with the school for three years.

SLs who achieve the PGQM can also use this evidence as part of their submission for 'Leading Practitioner' status should they apply for it as part of the Global Learning Programme (see link below).

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 – pre registration may take up to a year.

Academic Year				Next Academic Year	
Register by:	Submit evidence by:	Moderation during:	Notified of award by:	Certificates and feedback received	Invited to attend GA conference for presentation
End of October	April	July	End of July	September	Following Spring

(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 GA website (PGQM VLE) where they can view previous schools exemplar applications and read guidance notes. Subject leaders can also join the [Geography Champions](#) network 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 schools who are members of the GA and who have registered for the Mark. For a username and password please contact [Julie Beattie](#) as this is different to your GA member number.

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 member of our National Moderation Team, a group of GA appointed experienced teachers, advisors and lecturers, 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](#).

The school must be a [member](#) of the GA.

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 the link to GA membership below.

What about if I want to use the PGQM framework just to assess where we are without going for the Award?

As a non profit organisation the GA needs to recoup the costs of managing the PGQM framework including intellectual development work, professional moderation and administration, therefore we can only share the full framework with PGQM registered schools

What have some of the recently awarded schools said about the PGQM:

'I feel the Primary Geography Quality Mark has been very supportive in moving Geography forward at our school. It has identified key areas for improvement and celebration of success in the school. The children have had much more input into their own learning following the guidance set out on the GA website. The action plan and application process has ensured that I maintain focus and encouraged staff that there is recognition for their hard work and dedication to the subject.'

Selwyn Primary School, London

'As a person with limited subject leader experience in geography, I have found the application process for the Quality Mark incredibly useful. I have undertaken extensive research and feel that I now have a much better grasp of what is required for an effective geography curriculum and my confidence to lead the subject has grown enormously.'

Jane Gilmore, The Hall Primary School, Leicester.

'this process has been a pleasure for us all .. and an inspiration too.. we enjoy Geography, and this applications has been the shot in the arm we needed.'

Gill Wilson, Lady Lane Park School, Bingley

Others found that participation supported them to:

- raise the profile of geography and whole school approaches within the local and often wider community;
- be recognised as a local centre of excellence for the subject, supporting networking
- 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

Find out more about GA membership http://www.geography.org.uk/login_join.asp

Find out more about the PGQM www.geography.org.uk/eyprimary/primaryqualitymark

Find out more about the Global Learning Programme <http://geography.org.uk/projects/globallearningprogramme>

Find out more about the GLP Lead Practitioner <http://globaldimension.org.uk/glp/page/10544>

Find out more about the PGQM charges www.geography.org.uk/pgqm

The PGQM VLE <http://pgqm.geography.org.uk/>

Geography Champions <http://geographychampions.ning.com/>

Contact Julie Beattie jbeattie@geography.org.uk