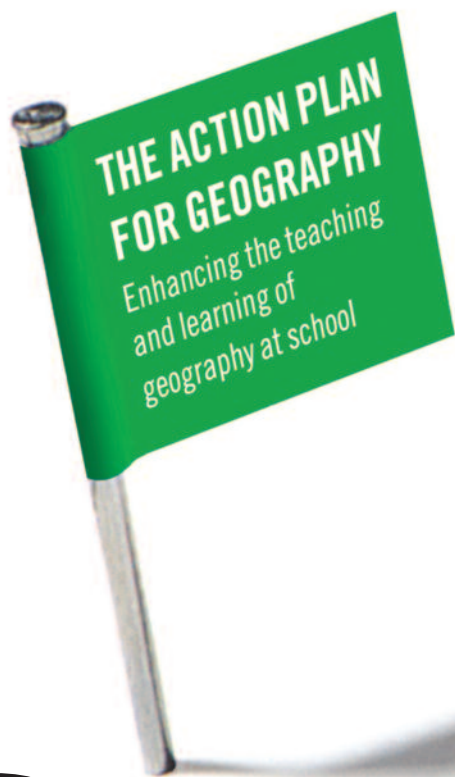


The Action Plan for Geography 2006-2011

Final Report and Evaluation



The Action Plan for Geography

Introduction and context

Today geography retains its position in the 'top ten' of subjects studied at GCSE and A Level. Prior to the Action Plan for Geography (APG) the subject had faced a significant decline in English schools. The number of young people choosing to take GCSE or A Levels in the subject had fallen consistently for a number of years and Ofsted had reported on the need to improve standards and teachers' subject knowledge. In many schools the positive and important contribution that geography can make to a young person's education was being eroded.

In 2005, this was recognised by the then Secretary of State at the Department for Education, Charles Clarke MP, who responded

to a request¹ to establish a Geography Focus Group to review the challenges to Geography and identify how they could be addressed.

The focus group brought together senior academics, business leaders, media figures, head teachers and teachers; as well as senior staff from the Royal Geographical Society (with Institute of British Geographers) (RGS-IBG) and the Geographical Association (GA). After 18 months work, the focus group identified the necessity of a specific subject disciplinary initiative in geography to 'boost teaching and learning' and to address:

- continuing professional development (CPD) and initial teacher training

¹ By the RGS-IBG, who also coordinated the work of the focus group.



Photo: Ruth Totterdell

- the wider educational purpose and themes of geography
- curriculum development
- fieldwork
- networks and links between teachers
- public engagement, demonstrating the value of geography in further study and careers to young people, parents and the public.

At the request of Lord Adonis, the Schools Minister of the time, in 2006 the RGS-IBG and GA jointly presented a proposal to the DfES for the Action Plan for Geography 2006-2008. The aim was to ensure that a clear vision for geography's educational potential is understood by all, including the subject teaching community and educational policy makers at all levels, and that teaching professionals were enabled and equipped to realise this potential with pupils and to engage them with geography in an enjoyable way that they value.

This was the first ever subject specific initiative focused on geography of this scale and the resulting Action Plan for Geography (APG) was led jointly and equally by the GA and the RGS-IBG. It was funded by the DfES initially for two years, 2006-08. After a second tender process funding was extended by the Department for Children, Families and Schools from 2008 to March 2011; from May 2010 this funding was provided by the Department for Education. The combined budget of the APG (2006-2011) was £3.8 million.

Two key elements have underpinned the APG's success. First, the subject community and government worked together to support geography. Secondly, the APG had a diverse and complementary programme of developing

new resources, professional development for teachers, accrediting good practice and promoting geography's contribution to further study and careers. It has met or exceeded² 47 of the APG's 50 key targets and milestones. The positive impact of the APG is reflected in the following:

- over 1700 secondary schools, (more than 50% of the maintained secondary sector), and 1200 primary schools have engaged with face-to-face events
- CPD has been provided to 5000 teachers
- Geography Ambassadors have provided presentations to 107,000 pupils
- online resources have received more than 1.25 million 'user sessions'³.

The majority of teachers responding to the APG evaluation activities identified an increase in the support provided for geography by the GA and RGS-IBG since 2006.

Taking stock of the Action Plan in 2011, and in light of the Education White Paper, (2010), we reiterate the central importance of geography as a subject discipline within the statutory primary and secondary school curriculum. We welcome the White Paper's inclusion of the need for teachers to be very well equipped in their subject knowledge and that *'the curriculum should embody rigour and high standards and outline a core of knowledge in the traditional subject disciplines.'*⁴ Further we believe geography is a robust academic examination choice at GCSE and A Level, a view shared by its identification as a 'facilitating subject' by the Russell Group of Universities (2011)⁵ and in the inclusion of geography in the English Baccalaureate.

In 2008 Ofsted recommended that

materials.

4 DfE (2010) *The Importance of Teaching* Education White Paper para 21 and 42. Available at www.education.gov.uk

5 Russell Group of Universities (2011), *Informed Choices*. Available at www.russellgroup.ac.uk

2 The three areas where targets were not fully met were the recruitment of joint members, the award of Geography Quality Mark to secondary schools and accreditation of Chartered Geographer (Teacher).

3 A 'user session' is a discrete period of time when one individual user has access the website and is browsing its

Government should '*continue to provide financial support for the Action Plan for Geography to ensure support for developing the subject*⁶'. Now in 2011 we are delighted to see Ofsted's subject report for geography identify that '*the best geography was usually seen in schools which were participating in the professional development programme offered through the Action Plan for Geography, in specialist humanities schools or where the school shared good practice with local partner schools*⁷'.

However, it is also clear from the same report that further work remains to be done, as Ofsted reported a growing polarisation in the provision of good or weak geography across schools. The future challenge is to ensure that the positive impact of the APG across over half of the secondary school cohort is shared with and embedded within those schools which need to improve their geographical provision significantly. In order to support this the GA and RGS-IBG have committed to maintain as legacy elements, albeit at a reduced level of funding, a number of the key elements of the APG beyond the agreed funding from Government. These elements are: the website www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk; a joint membership scheme; regional CPD networks for primary and secondary teachers; the complementary professional accreditations Chartered Geographer (Teacher); and primary and secondary Geography Quality Marks, and the Geography Ambassadors programme⁸. Alongside these tangible legacy programmes there is also the legacy of the positive impact of

APG on geography teachers' confidence and commitment and their appetite for professional support and sharing good practice.

Today's young people will live and work in the global market and geography can help them reach their full potential within it. For example, business leaders recently⁹ identified the need for employees to have key attributes and skills that geographical study can provide: critical thinking and advanced analytical skills; the ability to understand and interpret complex data; a team working capability; and an understanding of socio-economic environments. The next generation will also be faced with many social, economic and environmental challenges and opportunities, many of which call for robust geographical knowledge and the need to understand the human and physical geography of our world. Geography, through its study of the world's places, people and environments – including how they are interconnected and why they are changing – will remain of enormous relevance as an essential part of young people's learning. It provides the knowledge and understanding that helps young people to expand their intellectual horizons, lead successful careers and engage meaningfully with challenges that may face them. The APG has helped primary and secondary teachers secure this for many thousands of young people. Together the RGS-IBG and the GA look forward to continuing our distinctive, yet collaborative and complementary, support for geographical study in schools in the future.

Dr Rita Gardner CBE

Director, Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

Professor David Lambert

Chief Executive, Geographical Association

6 Ofsted (2008) *Geography: Changing practice making fieldwork a focus*.

7 Ofsted (2011) *Geography: Learning to make a world of difference*.

8 Funded with support from Esri UK the leading Geographical Information Systems business.

9 Waite R. (2011) UK Businesses call for Advanced Technology Skills to Boost Economy. Available at www.esriuk.com

Executive summary

1. Supporting geography through a subject disciplinary focus

The APG supported teachers through a subject disciplinary approach, meeting identified needs to boost the teaching and learning of geography in schools. This has resulted in a coherent and successful programme spanning resources, CPD, accreditation and promoting geography's relevance to further study and careers. It engaged teachers through their subject specialism, namely geography.

Feedback in 2011 on the APG identified that 96% of participating geography teachers who were surveyed were very or quite confident about being able to maintain or improve the quality and status of geography in their school into the future.

2. Developing new resources to support the teaching and learning of geography

New resources to support teaching and learning in geography were provided through the APG's website www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk. More than 2000 pages of information, guidance and support have been published including 46 new teaching modules, user guides and online tutorials for Key Stage 3 (KS3) and 24 for fieldwork in Key Stage 2 (KS2) and KS3. These resources support both specialist and non-specialist teachers. The website has received 1.25 million 'user sessions' since its launch in October 2006, the

majority being access to the KS3 and fieldwork resources.

3. Providing subject specific CPD for geography teachers

Over 5000 teachers and 550 PGCE students have taken part in subject specific face-to-face CPD activities provided through the APG. These include year long 'curriculum making' courses¹⁰. 40 regional CPD networks for secondary schools, including networks focused on fieldwork, and 54 Primary Champion networks for primary schools have been established. In addition, more than 2900 teachers have registered as members of online CPD communities.

4. Accrediting good practice

The good practice of 462¹¹ teachers and schools have been recognised through the award of Chartered Geographer (Teacher) accreditation for individual geography teachers or Geography Quality Mark for secondary geography departments or whole primary schools.

5. Motivating and inspiring young people through the relevance of geography to further study and careers

Geography Ambassador presentations to motivate and inspire young people with the relevance and application of geography were provided to 107,000 pupils. 1450 Geography Ambassadors, either undergraduate or workplace geographers, acted as young role models. They have been trained and provided 4300 classroom presentations about the value of studying geography at university and its contribution to the workplace.

10 Curriculum making courses span an initial CPD session that supports teachers to develop creative, engaging and challenges approaches relevant to their school's context. These sessions are followed by a period of time during which a teacher developed and pilots new approaches and resources with their pupils and then a final CPD

session during which the materials are reviewed and shared.

11 224 primary schools and 103 secondary schools departments have received the Geography Quality Mark. Teachers from 135 schools have been accredited as Chartered Geographers.

What has the APG achieved?

1. Supporting geography through a subject disciplinary focus

The APG has put geography back on the map. Head teachers, subject leaders and teachers are realising its importance in the curriculum. Teacher, South West.

The APG's focus was on the subject discipline of geography and this was central to its success. It has reached out beyond the existing institutional or membership relationships of the GA and the RGS-IBG to involve more than 1700 secondary and 1200 primary schools. The majority of schools involved in the APG had no existing institutional membership relationship with either of the two organisations¹².

The APG, in its second phase (2008-2011), specifically identified target groups of schools that are 'hard to reach', such as schools using non-specialist teachers, a department with only one specialist geography teacher and schools with no existing membership relationships with either the GA or the RGS-IBG. These schools have been engaged through the provision of a dedicated programme of events and specific materials¹³. This comment from a Head of Humanities typifies how this targeted work has supported his school, '*at a school with no*

specialist geography teacher and no tradition for geography, the APG has been invaluable in helping me raise the status of geography in the school'.

In addition, the APG developed new joint GA/RGS-IBG membership schemes for the 'hard to reach' group. Over 386 teachers or geography departments became joint members. The most notable scheme is the joint Early Career Teacher membership which aims to keep teachers at the formative stage of their career connected with the professional advice and support provided by both the GA and RGS-IBG. It is available for PGCE (or equivalent) students, newly qualified teachers and teachers in the first three years of their career. Finally, feedback identified that 76% of teachers who responded, feel that the level of support provided by the GA and the RGS-IBG has increased over the five years of the APG.

APG targets and legacy

Target: To pilot three different joint membership schemes; Early Career Teacher, reciprocal professional membership and joint departmental membership.

Outcome: All three schemes were successfully piloted and more than 386 individuals and departments recruited as new joint members.

Legacy: The RGS-IBG and GA will continue the joint Early Career Teacher membership for PGCE (or equivalent) students, newly qualified teachers and teachers in the first three years of their careers.

12 Interim APG evaluation 2007, 59% of schools involved in face-to-face APG activities had no membership relationship with either the GA or RGS-IBG.

13 Such as CPD events for targeted schools and a dedicated area provided within the APG website that

introduces teachers to the wide range of resources and support available to them at www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk/about-the-apg/new-to-the-apg.

2. Developing new resources to support the teaching and learning of geography

The Action Plan helped to make a powerful case for the relevance of subject knowledge. It helped me to fight off attempts by my school to create project (rather than subject specific) based learning. Head of Humanities, North West

New resources to support teaching and learning in geography were scoped, written, tested and then delivered through the APG website www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk. Teacher focus groups helped in formative evaluation and leading geography teachers were also involved in the authoring of selected resources. More than 2000 pages of information, guidance and support have been published including 46 new teaching modules, user guides and tutorials for KS3, and 24 fieldwork modules for KS2 and KS3. These support both specialist and non-specialist teachers and cover a wide range of geographical themes and fieldwork locations.

The online resources for KS3 and fieldwork account for 60% of the 1.25 million 'user sessions' the APG website has received since 2006. The APG interim evaluation in 2007 identified that 78% of secondary schools had used this site and 95% of teachers who had used it rated it as excellent or good¹⁴. The level of use of the APG website grew significantly from its levels of 1015 user sessions/week in February 2007¹⁵ to 8500 user sessions/week in March 2011.

Recognising that around 20% of KS3 lessons are estimated to be taught by non-specialists, the website provides specific



Photo: Bryan Ledgard

support for non-specialist primary and KS3 geography teachers through subject specific tutorials, fact sheets and starter materials. This approach has been well received, as this Head of Geography from East Anglia notes, 'resources like the *Geography Teaching Today* website have been of huge benefit. We've been able to go and pick off the shelf (resources) for non specialists.' Resources and support have also been provided for primary geography through the publication of online resources developed by primary teachers.

Young People's Geographies Project

In addition, pupils themselves have been involved in the development of KS3 materials through the Young Peoples' Geographies project. This involved academic geographers, teacher trainers, teachers and pupils in 16 schools, together with PGCE students from six universities, developing new resources and curriculum approaches that are particularly focused on the pupils' local area. The resources were published online¹⁶.

14 APG interim evaluation 2007.

15 Six months after the website's launch in October 2006.

16 At www.youngpeoplesgeographies.co.uk This project has been described in Biddulph M (2011) *Young*

people's geographies: implications for secondary school geography. In: Butt G (ed) *Geography, Education and the Future*, Continuum

APG targets and legacy

Target: The website www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk to receive 6500 individual user sessions/week.

Outcome: 8500 individual user sessions/week were achieved, with 1.25 million user sessions made on the website since its launch in October 2006. The most popular sections are the KS3 and fieldwork resources which receive 60% of the total site use.

Target: To publish 20 KS3 and fieldwork resource modules.

Outcome: 46 KS3 and 24 fieldwork resources modules, user guides and online tutorials have been published.

Target: Young Peoples' Geographies to work in nine regions and provide six case studies.

Outcome: Young People's Geographies has worked in nine regions and produced nine case study materials.

Legacy: The GA and the RGS-IBG will continue to provide open, free access to all the resources developed with APG funding, including those on www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk and any other published elsewhere. In addition, to promote enhanced access, both organisations will replicate the materials they published on their respective corporate websites.

The Young People's Geography website and content will be maintained, with access free of charge, and case studies from the final year will be developed into a 'toolkit' pack of resources for new teachers and PGCE students.

3. Providing subject specific CPD for geography teachers

The APG has started sustainable (CPD) networks and helped fill the void left by the demise of local authority advisors for geography.

Head of Geography, East Midlands

One of the motives for the APG was the limited opportunities that existed for subject specific professional development for geography teachers. Since 2000 local authority support for geography had repeatedly shrunk to the point that, with the exception of a few good examples, their support is now minimal. The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust provides modest support and although the previous National Strategy provided support for some foundation subjects¹⁷ it did not support geography. As Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (2005) noted, '*The National Strategy has not raised the profile of geography . . . The strategy's impact has been constrained by its failure to ground its work in existing practice and to integrate its approaches with the national curriculum.*'¹⁸

The APG sought to address this situation through the provision of face-to-face and online CPD, and with the development of regional CPD networks and online communities for teachers. More than 5000 teachers¹⁹ and 550 PGCE students attended APG CPD events²⁰ and 2944 teachers have registered as members of the online communities to date.

Face-to-face CPD

CPD events included one day courses and also more in depth engagements, including 'curriculum making' activities, which supported

17 Design and technology, modern foreign languages and music.

18 Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (2005) *Geography: 2004/05 annual report on curriculum and assessment* (QCA/05/2168) P9.

19 Split broadly 50% primary and 50% secondary.

20 CPD events spanned one day courses, twilight sessions and more extensive 'curriculum making' projects. A number of teachers may have attended more than one APG CPD event.

teachers locally in developing curriculum resources over a period of one year. More than 80% of 'curriculum making' participants, from both primary and secondary schools, produced materials, a selection being published on the APG website²¹. The CPD courses also provided opportunities for teachers to work towards Chartered Geographer (Teacher) status or, for their secondary departments or primary schools to apply for the Geography Quality Mark²².

Online CPD

CPD course materials, as well as examples of teachers' work and resources, were published online to complement the face-to-face courses. More than 60 online CPD units were published, on topics including subject knowledge, pedagogy and specific techniques such as the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) in the classroom. They are available via the APG website²³.

Local CPD provision

Very good use is made of the effective support offered by initiatives offered through the subject association such as the Geography Champions scheme.
Ofsted inspection, Hiltingbury Junior School.

Primary schools were supported through the recruitment of 54 local Primary Champions to work with their local primary schools to support geography. The Primary Champions are a range of experienced primary teachers²⁴ and secondary and Initial Teacher Education

colleagues, helping to connect primary schools with university education departments. The Champions have engaged and supported 2500 primary teachers.

40 local CPD networks were established for secondary teachers, and currently involve some 2000 teachers. Many of these networks are centred on a local Chartered Geographer (Teacher) who shared their expertise with local teachers; or on Quality Mark 'Centres of Excellence' schools. These networks were mainly focused on supporting the KS3 curriculum as well as on supporting fieldwork in the local area and further afield, assessment and examination specifications. These networks have their own web pages through which their events are promoted and course materials published²⁵.

Developing online communities for teachers

Geography teachers have shared ideas, resources and materials and requested help and advice through a series of online communities²⁶. Some 2944 teachers, spanning secondary subject specialists and generalist primary teachers, registered²⁷ for the online communities, which also offered thematically or regionally based sub-groups.

Making Geography Happen

This project examined pupils' progression in geography from KS1 to KS3. Teachers from eight schools have created teaching resources that have been published online²⁸, alongside examples of their pupils work illustrating progress and assessment. In addition, the site

21 www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk/curriculum-making/introduction

22 Accreditation opportunities were also provided through the GTC(E) Teaching and Learning Academy (TLA).

23 www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk/online-cpd/info/cpd-menu/. In addition, some extra online CPD units were funded separately by the Training and Development Agency (TDA).

24 Many of their schools have successfully applied for the

Geography Quality Mark.

25 www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk/chartered-geographer/regional-cpd-opportunities/

26 <http://geographical.ning.com/>

27 In March 2011, 1883 teachers were registered on the main online community and a further 1061 primary teachers have registered on the Primary Champions online network.

28 www.geography.org.uk/projects/makinggeographyhappen.

will show a longitudinal study of students as they move from Y7 to Y9 and we see how their perceptions of the subject and their experience of it changes through the course of KS3.

APG targets and legacy

Target: To involve teachers in face-to-face CPD through 54 regional network meetings a year.

Outcome: 55 regional CPD network meetings took place in 2010.

Target: To establish 30 CPD networks, including nine networks that specifically support the teaching of fieldwork.

Outcome: 40 networks established, including nine fieldwork networks.

Target: For 2800 teachers to become involved in online networks.

Outcome: 2944 teachers registered as online members.

Target: 50 Primary Champions to be recruited in all nine English regions.

Outcome: 54 Primary Champions recruited nationally.

Target: To create a dedicated website using teacher and pupil materials to explore progression in geography.

Outcome: Making Geography Happen website developed with exemplar material of student tasks and outcomes at a range of ages from KS1 to KS3 and guidance materials for teachers.

Legacy: In March 2011 the GA and the RGS-IBG will maintain their respective Primary Champions and secondary regional CPD networks. These networks will be run on a minimum cost basis. In addition, the online CPD networks will be continued and the Making Geography Happen online materials maintained.

4. Accrediting good practice

The APG has allowed me and my colleagues to become Chartered Geographers, and the department to get recognition through the Quality Mark. We're running work with local schools and the local authority, which has had a huge impact within Brighton and Hove.
Assistant Head Teacher, South East.

The APG has created opportunities for teachers, and their departments or schools, to have good practice in geography externally assessed, recognised or accredited. This is through the two complementary schemes for professional recognition which play a leading role in helping to support the professional development of their peers.

Chartered Geographer (Teacher)

Chartered Geographer status has greatly benefited me, members of the department and my students.
Head of Geography, South West.

Chartered Geographer (Teacher)²⁹ CGeog is part of the professional accreditation of Chartered Geographer, developed for geography teachers. It is provided for individuals and accredited by the RGS-IBG, the professional body for geography. CGeog is open for applications from teachers who have studied geography at degree level, who have taught for at least six years, have an evidence base of good practice, have an ongoing commitment to CPD and to sharing professional learning with others. The

²⁹ Chartered Geographer (Teacher) is an accreditation comparable to other Chartered schemes such as CScience Teach, Chartered Mathematician and the proposed programmes for Chartered English Teacher and Chartered History Teacher. It is part of the family of 'Chartered Geographer' professional accreditations, recognised by the Privy Council.



Photo: Barking Photographic

accreditation has been aligned to provide subject-specific evidence towards a teacher's progression through the Professional Standards for Teachers. Applications are validated by external expert assessors and accredited by the Society. A total of 135 teachers have been accredited CGeog status. 30 more are currently being mentored towards an application, to achieve the depth of professional practice or length of experience to qualify.

CGeog (Teacher) has provided a significant opportunity to recognise, enhance and accredit the professional knowledge and abilities of geography teachers.

Geography Quality Marks

As a recent Head of Department, the Secondary Geography Quality Mark has been a great opportunity to sharpen my departmental focus. It allows us to concentrate on a shared vision that celebrates good geography, rather than a generic, shallow approach.

Head of Department, South West.

The Geography Quality Mark is available for secondary school geography departments or

the entire primary school to recognise their overall provision and standards in geography. It is assessed and awarded by the GA. The Geography Quality Mark is awarded to either primary schools or secondary school geography departments that can demonstrate good practice in geography.

At primary level it is provided at three levels, bronze, silver and gold; the gold award being externally moderated. The award of quality mark recognises good standards in the provision of geography across a whole primary school.

For secondary schools the quality mark it is provided at two levels with the highest award conferring 'Centre of Excellence' status on a geography department.

Looking at our progress, we have in a short time changed from where geography needed to be developed, to a school which values and recognises the importance of geography; where it is an integral part of the curriculum; visible, celebrated and enjoyed by the children. Primary Geography Co-ordinator, London

Many primary and secondary teachers have commented on how an application for the Geography Quality Mark has provided an internal CPD opportunity to review their school's existing provision in geography and plan new improvements. The quality marks help underpin the development of geography and assist in raising the standards of geography in both primary and secondary schools.

APG targets and legacy

Chartered Geographer (Teacher)

Target: To achieve 375 accredited CGeog and aspiring Chartered Geographer teachers.

Outcome: 135 CGeogs have been accredited, 30 are being mentored and a further 2000 involved in CPD provided by CGeogs.

Legacy: Chartered Geographer (Teacher) will continue to be provided by the RGS-IBG as the professional body accreditation for geography specialist teachers.

Primary and Secondary Geography Quality Marks

Target: 150 schools to be awarded Primary Geography Quality Mark.

Outcome: 224 schools awarded and 72 registered for future application.

Target: 300 schools to be awarded Secondary Geography Quality Mark.

Outcome: 103 schools awarded and 40 registered for future application.

Legacy: The GA will reconfigure the Geography Quality Mark to provide a low cost scheme that maintains its established standards and promotion of professional development.

5. Motivating and inspiring young people through the relevance of geography to further study and careers

The ambassador was great. Our results are in and geography got the highest number of students, almost 70, choosing geography GCSE. The deputy head said he's been here for 14 years and has never known geography to be so popular.
Geography Teacher, South East.

The question 'why should I choose geography?' has been answered through the Geography Ambassadors programme, which provides inspirational role models, across the whole of England, to demonstrate the value of geography to further study and careers. In particular, the good levels of employability of geographers, in jobs as diverse as financial services, environmental management, social research, business planning, retail location services and computer mapping, has been highlighted through face-to-face presentations. The usefulness of geographical knowledge and skills in the workplace, together with the unusually wide set of transferable skills that people learn through studying geography, is not always understood by teachers. The presentations have been given to more than 107,500 pupils, and have been supported by online careers advice and employment profiles.

The career options workshops were all really good and have helped me with deciding what to do with my future.
Year 12 student, South East.

The Geography Ambassadors are mainly undergraduates or geographers who have recently entered the workplace. They usually

provide a presentation and activities for a class of pupils, although some Ambassadors have also become involved in supporting fieldwork, giving presentations on curriculum-based case studies and mentoring pupils. In addition to their 'in-school' presentations Geography Ambassadors have also supported 23 Going Places with Geography conferences, through which pupils attend a series of workshops about progression, careers, life at university and UCAS applications³⁰.

The Ambassadors' face-to-face work is complemented by a series of online career interviews, downloadable careers profiles, the *Why I love Geography* Teachers TV video. A 'Going Places with Geography' DVD was distributed to every school requesting a visit from a Geography Ambassador. Approximately 1000 ambassadors are currently registered on the website www.findgeographyambassadors.org which provides an online booking service for the 950 secondary schools that are currently registered with the Geography Ambassadors programme.

³⁰ These conferences have had demonstrable impact on the levels of pupils expressing an interest in choosing geography. For example, pupils at three Manchester schools were asked about their interest in choosing geography at GCSE prior to their attendance at a Going Places with Geography conference. 24 said they planned to, 19 said not and 25 were undecided. Following their attendance 45 planned to choose geography, 3 said not and 20 were undecided.

APG targets and legacy

Target: To recruit 950 ambassadors, provide 4200 geography ambassador presentations on a national basis and to run 23 Going Places with Geography conferences.

Outcome: 1450 ambassadors trained and recruited¹ and 4300 presentations provided reaching more than 107,500 young people. Through the programme's partnership with 47 English universities, ambassadors are able to provide school visits across all nine English regions. 23 'Going Places with Geography' conferences have been successfully run.

Legacy: The RGS-IBG is delighted that Esri UK² has agreed to become a corporate partner and will support will the running of the Geography Ambassador programme for three years from April 2011, as well as enhance it with a new group of ambassadors from the Geographical Information industry.



Photo: Shaun Flannery

Evaluation information

Ongoing feedback

Throughout the APG a wide range of feedback has been regularly collected. This has included evaluation sheets completed by teachers at the end of CPD and Geography Ambassador presentations. Ongoing feedback from these activities indicated that:

- over 90% of teachers taking part in APG CPD have rated it as either good or excellent
- over 80% of teachers who have hosted a presentation from a Geography Ambassador have provided written feedback, which has been overwhelmingly positive.

Interim evaluation (2007)

At the end of the first stage of the APG 2006-08 an interim evaluation was undertaken with a cohort of around 2000 teachers, alongside a review of CPD, ambassador and other face-to-face activities. This identified that by then 870 secondary schools had become involved in the APG through face-to-face activities. In addition, it identified that around 78% of secondary schools had used the APG website and 95% of teachers who had used it rated it as excellent or good.

Final evaluation (2010-11)

By 2011 more than 1700 secondary and 1200 primary schools had become involved in face-to-face APG activities, spanning CPD activities, Geography Ambassador visits and curriculum projects (such as Young Peoples' Geographies and Making Geography Happen).

Over the last quarter of 2010 and the start of 2011 a final evaluation questionnaire was circulated to a sample of about 2000 teachers spanning those previously involved in APG activities and our respective members. 246 teachers completed the evaluation providing a response rate of 12%. The majority of responses were from secondary teachers and responses were received from all nine English regions. The key findings from this final evaluation were:

- 76% of respondents feel there is more support provided by the subject bodies for geography, when compared with 4 years ago
- 96% of respondents feel either very or quite confident about being able to maintain or improve the quality and status of geography in their school
- 46% of respondents reported increased numbers for GCSE, 20% similar numbers, 34% a decline
- 75% of respondents reported increased numbers at A Level, 7% similar numbers, 18% a decline.

In addition, focus group discussions were carried out with identified groups of teachers who had been involved in specific APG activities, namely Chartered Geographer, Quality Mark and the Geography Ambassadors programme. Comments from these focus groups, together with other qualitative feedback have been included in this report.

Contributors to the Action Plan for Geography 2006-2011

Geographical Association

Nicky Batchen, Julie Beattie, Richard Gill, Anne Greaves, Professor David Lambert, John Lyon, Wendy North, Dr Paula Owens, Lucy Oxley, Alan Parkinson, Di Swift, Ruth Totterdell, Justin Woolliscroft, other GA colleagues at the Solly Street office, volunteers and the Primary Champions.

Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

Nasim Adeli, Kate Amis, Steve Brace, Bryony Collins, Dr Eleanor Coulber, Alison Gardner, Dr Rita Gardner, Gemma Hay, Sanjay Johal, Dr Holly McLaren, Claire Wheeler and Jon Wolton. Also the coordinators of the regional CPD networks, regional ambassador coordinators and Geography Ambassadors who volunteered their time to support the APG.

Organisational responsibility

1. Supporting geography through a subject disciplinary focus, including joint membership Joint
2. Developing new resources to support the teaching and learning of geography
KS3 and fieldwork online resources RGS-IBG
Young Peoples Geographies GA
3. Providing subject specific CPD for geography teachers
Online CPD & networks Joint
Regional curriculum making CPD GA
Local CPD Primary Champions GA
Local CPD CGeog networks RGS-IBG
Making Geography Happen GA
4. Accrediting good practice
Chartered Geographer (Teacher) RGS-IBG
Geography Quality Mark GA
5. Motivating and inspiring young people through the relevance of geography to careers.
Geography Ambassadors RGS-IBG

The GA and RGS-IBG would like to thank their respective Education Committees and Trustees for the advice and guidance they have provide to the APG. They would also like to thank other colleagues who have supported the APG, including ITE tutors, local authority staff and particularly geography teachers in English primary and secondary schools.

The **Geographical Association (GA)** is a UK-based subject association formed in 1893 with the charitable objective of furthering geographical knowledge and understanding through education. We support teachers, students, tutors and academics at all levels of education through journals, publications, training events, projects, websites and promoting to wider publics the importance of geography in education. The GA has approximately 6000 school and personal memberships.



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The **Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)** is the UK's learned society and professional body for geography, founded in 1830. We advance and promote geography and support its practitioners in the UK and across the world; in schools, research and higher education, fieldwork and expeditions, knowledge transfer to policy and public engagement with geography. The Society has approximately 14000 Fellows and members and is a leading advocate for geography.

**Royal
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Advancing geography
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