

● Action Plan for Geography – The completion of a five-year programme of support for schools

As featured in the Autumn 2011 Bulletin

●●● **Schools that were involved in the ‘Action Plan for Geography’ provided some of the best geography teaching according to the Ofsted report published earlier in the year.**

The Action Plan aimed to provide a clear vision of geography as a relevant 21st century subject and to equip teachers with the professional skills and support they need so that pupils enjoy and succeed in geography. In order to do this the Society and the Geographical Association worked together to run the Action Plan on a joint and equal basis between 2006 and 2011. This was the first time these two organisations had worked together for such a sustained period and it has left a legacy of collaboration.

The Action Plan was funded (£3.8m) by the government for a total of five years, recognising the need to boost the teaching and learning of geography at school. It had some challenging targets, almost all of which were met or exceeded and it achieved some notable successes. The Society worked with 1,700 secondary schools (more than 50% of the English secondary school network); provided training to 5,000 teachers; and developed the Geography Teaching Today website (that saw 1.25 million user sessions).

The Society’s specific responsibilities also included the roll-out of the professional accreditation Chartered Geographer (Teacher). These ‘CGeogs’ are now at the heart of 40 regional teacher networks. During the course of its work, the Society published 46 online resources for the Key Stage 3 (11-14) curriculum and 24 resources supporting fieldwork both in the local area and further afield.

The Society was particularly pleased to see Ofsted, the schools’ inspectorate, in 2011 identify that some of the best geography was to be found in schools involved in the Action Plan. However Ofsted also found, in its sample of schools, that there is more

work to do as a significant number fail to reach good or outstanding levels of geography teaching.

Arguably most important was the development of the Society’s Geography Ambassador programme, from an idea into a national network. Ambassadors talked to more than 100,000 pupils across England about the value of geography for further study and careers. To achieve that, more than 1,000 Ambassadors from some 50 universities and employers were recruited, and their presentations helped inspire the next generation of geographers to choose geography at GCSE and A Level. The Society is delighted that Esri UK will sponsor the Geography Ambassador programme until 2013, giving continuity for the future.



“Geography Ambassadors visit schools from universities across the country and this lets young people hear a voice they can really relate to. But Ambassadors also come from the workplace and they really demonstrate the diverse range of careers that are open to geography graduates,” Simon Clive (above) said.

Website: www.rgs.org/schools