Progression in KS3 Geography as indicated within the Attainment Target

Note that these ‘progression strands’ are general trends within and across Level Descriptors, reflecting the use of language rather than a framework for ‘levelling’. They give, instead, a sense of ways in which we want pupils to make progress.

1. **The CONTEXT** in which the pupil works becomes more demanding, indicating progression:

   Level 4  “simple patterns”  
            ‘Improvements to the environment’

   Level 7  ‘patterns that result from interactions at a range of scales’   
            ‘Sustainable and other approaches to development’

   Exceptional  ‘Analyse complex geographical patterns’

   Implication for teaching – allow pupils to access appropriate contexts for learning. WHAT they study must become progressively more demanding in its nature & complexity.

2. **The thinking skills** demanded become ‘higher order’, indicating progression:

   Level 4  recognise describe appreciate understand offer reasons suggest use, communicate

   Level 8  use analyse explain draw on evaluate present

   Exceptional  use explain predict draw on show how analyse understand assess illustrate draw selectively evaluate

   Implication – build in appropriate command words to activities to encourage higher order thinking. [Note that the notion that such a hierarchy works can be challenged. Some would argue that young children can predict etc., they simply do so in different contexts and with different levels of detail and precision.]

3. **The degree of independence** indicates progression:

   Level 4  ‘drawing on their knowledge and understanding’  
            ‘Use a range of skills’; ‘use primary and secondary sources’

   Level 7  ‘with growing independence they draw on knowledge and understanding’  
            ‘They select and use skills’; ‘evaluate critically’

   Exceptional  ‘draw selectively’; ‘carry out investigations independently’

   Implication for teaching: teach independence! ‘How to’ research, enquire, communicate etc.
4. **Breadth** of knowledge, understanding and skills:

Level 4  ‘show knowledge and understanding of aspects of the geography of the UK and wider world’; ‘use a *range* of skills’

Level 7  ‘drawing on their knowledge of a wide range of locations, contexts and scales’; ‘understand that *many* factors influence decisions’ ‘select and use a *wide* range of skills’

Implication for teaching – allow access to **range/breadth** and allow pupils to do likewise as part of their assessment.

5. **‘Depth’, detail and precision** of understanding, knowledge and skills:

Level 4  knowledge and understanding is simply ‘shown’; Reasons are ‘offered’

Level 7  ‘use skills accurately’
‘present well-argued summary’
‘use accurate geographical vocabulary’
‘reach substantiated conclusions’

Implications for teaching – ensure the **COMPARABILITY** of assessed work (i.e. does one teacher’s judgement about ‘well-argued’ match another’s?) and provide guidance on depth, detail and accuracy to pupils through the use of success criteria.

6. Making **links** in knowledge and understanding, between different areas. This is possibly the single most prominent feature of the top Level Descriptors.

Level 4  ‘appreciate the importance of wider location’

Level 7  ‘make links in their knowledge and understanding’
‘describe and explain interactions’
‘understand many factors influence decisions’
‘recognise unintended consequences’
‘present well-argued summaries’

Implications for teaching – use Key Concepts to help plan learning and underpin it; make use of plenaries to link to ‘big ideas’; concept mapping; unit summaries and synoptic/decision-making exercises; avoid tokenistic or one-dimensional use of ‘case studies’ to illustrate simple thematic points – teach places as complex and interdependent.