



Standing out: Building outstanding Geography Departments A view from King Edward VI Five Ways School, Birmingham Written by Paula Cooper, CGeog, King Edward VI Five Ways School

Online CPD <http://www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk/chartered-geographer/online-cpd-from-cgeogs/>

Objectives

This CPD unit aims to help geography teachers develop an approach to geography, teaching, resources and planning that will help their departments move from 'good' to 'outstanding'. This is the language of OfSTED and this unit will help teachers deal with inspection but the real intention is to help teachers build departments that exactly and successfully meet the needs of their young geographers, of which an outstanding inspection would be happy evidence.

This CPD unit consists of a series of slides that emphasise the characteristics of an outstanding department and suggests ideas for discussion and action that might help a department review its position and to become, or remain, outstanding.

Notes for presenters

Slide 2

It is vital that every department has a shared idea of what it is doing and why, that is, have a shared vision that informs planning and decision-making. The vision statement of KEFW is given below. Review it during a department meeting. How would yours be different?

KING EDWARD VI FIVE WAYS SCHOOL

GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT

OUR VISION

The geography department has a shared vision. This informs our endeavours as a department and as geography teachers.

The Geographers at King Edward VI Five Ways School aim to:

Be the best Geography Department in the UK

Build an extraordinary learning community that goes beyond the curriculum.

Foster a spirit of enquiry and continual improvement.

Draw on the rich variety of experience and views to support a coherent and collegiate approach to teaching and learning

Nurture links with other schools and departments locally, nationally and globally

Enable each person's continued personal and professional development

For pupils we seek to engender:



Knowledge and understanding of the planet Earth and its peoples.

Lasting awareness of the world around us.

Sensitivity and empathy towards all others.

Tolerance and independent thinking.

Preparedness for an active citizen's role in a changing world.

In our department every person's opinion counts and is valued, the pupil voice is encouraged and listened to.

Draft and share your vision for your department

Slide 3

It is interesting to consider whether the teachers in your department have a personal view on what geography is and why it is important, and to consider whether there is or can be a shared departmental view. Geography is dynamic, complex and exciting subject and an outstanding department will be one that acknowledges and communicates this. Ask teachers to consider whether the geography they teach 'brings the real world into the classroom' or takes pupils out of the 'classroom'.

Slide 4

This slide covers the importance statement from the current KS3 National Curriculum for geography. Do your geography teachers agree? How far do you already teach a geography that matches this statement?

Slide 5

An exercise in exploring your department's view of geography – ask your teachers to study the pictures and for each one identify the place, the geographical concept and a way of using it with pupils.

Clockwise the photos show:

European Space Agency image of space debris, a litterpicker from the Philippines

(www.geography.org.uk/adifferentview), child soldier in Congo

(www.geography.org.uk/adifferentview), Stromboli Volcano, Aeolian Islands Italy

(www.geography.org.uk/adifferentview), tourists in flooded St Mark's Square, Venice

(www.geography.org.uk/adifferentview), Norfolk coastal erosion

(www.geography.org.uk/adifferentview), a refugee family in Chad and their weekly food; and

centre – a German family and their weekly food.

Slide 6

Your pupils will live in and experience a distinct geography that is different from that of other pupils in other places. Are your pupils rural or urban dwellers? In the North or South? What



economic, political, social and environmental settings is your school in? What type of school is it? What resources are available to them and to you? How good at geography are they already? What do they already know? Different departments will have different answers to these questions and each department must consider these answers if they are to meet their pupils' needs and be an outstanding departments. Outstanding departments are not all the same.

Slide 7

Give your teachers an A4 copy of this slide, ask them to note down the specific geographical needs of your pupil in the pupil box and then note the specific characteristics of the geography of your place. Consider how your curriculum caters to these geographies. Does anything need to change? Are you missing any opportunities?

Can you use this information to decide what kind of geographer you want your pupils to be and give the guidance?

What do you think of the guidance given to geographers at KEFW:

HOW TO BE A KEFW GEOGRAPHER

At KEFW, we strive to be thoughtful and brilliant geographers at all times. You can help achieve this when you:

Note and credit all sources.

Feel their opinion is valued but it must be informed.

Ask questions and keep asking questions.

Be aware of the reliability and bias of all sources.

Appreciate the nature of data, the need to use judgement and informed guesstimates.

Be aware of stereotypes and generalisations.

Avoid oversimplification of complex issues.

Be aware of current issues and topical events.

Appreciate that there isn't always a clear answer or one answer.

Accept uncertainty.

Appreciate an understanding of Geography is necessary to understanding and participating in the world at large, whether one studies Geography further or not.

Appreciate teachers do not have the answers.

Issues are not 'black and white'.

Develop empathy.

Appreciate that Geographers can and should change the World.

Try to make sure you do all of these when:

In discussion (class, small group and one-to-one)

Asking and answering questions

Writing comments about your work

Researching

Completing homework

Working with others or independently



Slide 8

Compare this description of a 'good' OfSTED lesson with the description of an 'outstanding' OfSTED lesson on the following page. What are the key differences? How is the outstanding lesson distinct from the good?

Slide 9

Buddy up with a colleague and visit each other's lessons. Give each other informal feedback on how lessons fit this description of an outstanding lesson. It may help to agree a focus first. Use the feedback to set learning objectives for following lessons.

Slide 10

Is this the outstanding department in a nutshell? To what extent can you answer these questions for your department?

Slide 11

Getting our facts right and teaching accurately about the world when it is changing is the eternal challenge of the geography teacher, yet it may also be the subject's greatest strength. Are we currently giving our pupils an accurate view of the world? Have we changed what we teach and how we talk about the world over time as the world has changed? Development is a topic that requires teachers to be current. Outstanding departments will use facts and knowledge that are accurate and updated. Ask your teachers to answer the questions above and on the following slides.

Slide 14

How did your answers match up?

The answers are taken from the Gapminder website and the Economist Pocket Figures book of 2009. They show that the poorest do not always receive the most aid, that Europe may not be as developed as we might think when compared to other places and that higher fertility is not always directly associated with poorer countries. Teachers cannot know everything all of the time but on outstanding departments they might check and use current data to give an accurate and fact-based world view.

Slide 15

Teachers in outstanding departments might use varied and current resources when teaching and planning lessons and to update their own knowledge. This is a way of making lessons



exciting, motivating and the classroom an interesting place. An example of such a current resource is the website www.gapminder.org from which the chart is taken. The Gapminder Foundation is a non-profit venture that makes current data about the world freely available in a format that is accessible, meaningful and dynamic, a kind of modern 'museum' on the internet. Its aim is to *'fight the most devastating myths by building a fact-based world view that everyone understands'* and to promote sustainable global development.

The website www.gapminder.org is a phenomenal and invaluable resource for Geography teachers and pupils and is free to use. The website uses its innovative Trendalyzer software to produce animated 'bubble graphs' that show how the countries of the world have changed, users can change the parameters and so create their own graphs and animations. The website also has a download page with a wide range of engaging videos that illuminate the data and emphasise the fact-based world view. Gapminder is accessible to pupils and teachers alike and is an invaluable resource to help pupils make sense of contested concepts like uneven development, inequality and change.

How would you use the chart on this slide in lessons?

Slide 16

www.worldmapper.org is a fantastic collection of world maps, where territories are re-sized on each map according to the subject of interest. It is the collaborative work of researchers, including Prof Danny Dorling, at the Universities of Sheffield and Michigan. The maps give powerful visual impact and clarity to current patterns in development and present an accessible and knowledge based view of the world as it is now. Compare this cartogram to the one on the next slide.

Slide 17

These maps are up-to-date, visually striking and enable pupils to see and compare spatial contrasts. They are also a key resource for teachers in outstanding departments. Comparing the two maps shows that those regions where many live in poverty are also the places where development is increasing (India and China). How do you teach about these changes?

Slide 18

How do you refer to rich and poor countries? Only 7 countries on Earth have shown a decrease in development in recent times. The global picture has been one of progress. Do your teachers share this when teaching about development and places? Are you prepared to change your teaching as the world changes?



Slide 19

Photographs are a powerful resource for teaching geography. These are taken from a Sunday Times magazine in March 2010. They show some African children with all they possess. Do these images affect how you think and teach about geography?

Slide 20

What places and cases are we teaching? An outstanding department might use a range and definitely refer to recent events and places in the news.

The Kobe Earthquake of 1995 was a devastating event that killed over 6000 people in Japan. It has featured in many geography schemes as case study. Case study choice and the places we teach about in lessons fundamentally influence our pupils' world view. The Kobe quake is not an unimportant event but if in the 21st century we only refer to it because we have resources on it and don't refer to more recent events as well then we may not be giving our pupils a current view. The photos are of the Chilean quake of 2010 and those on the left of the Haiti quake of 2010.

Slide 21

The power of geography is that it is all around us all of the time and so the scope of resources that we can use in lessons is huge, from images to maps to film to poetry, GIS to fieldwork and news sources. How many of the resource types listed above does your department use? An outstanding department might use such an outstanding range of resources. Challenge members of your department to discover and share resources for each of the types listed.

Slide 22

So, an outstanding department uses current case studies and imparts an accurate and fact-based world view, and knows the characteristics and needs of its pupils, and brings these together by planning an outstanding curriculum across the Key Stages.

Slide 23

How far do you and your department agree with the characteristics listed on the slide? Which do you already do? Which do you need to work on? Have you got a curriculum that suits you and your pupils?

Slide 25

Now you have considered the needs of your pupils, the significance of an accurate fact-based world view, case study choice, and resources – how are these reflected in a curriculum?



This slide offers some ideas on presenting a curriculum

What does your curriculum look like?

- 1 represents an innovative 'circular' curriculum in which units in each year are linked by themes to other years
- 2 represents a traditional scheme of work
- 3 offers the idea of planning with concepts (after Prof David Lambert) specifying key aspects of a scheme of work, these aspects are listed below but does not prescribe all activities so that it can be updated every year without lots of work.

Overall purpose of the learning

The place, theme or issue to be used (content)

Key understandings learners will develop (drawn from the key concepts)

Key processes learners will draw upon and develop

Key questions that relate to key understandings

Range of sources of information

Assessment activity

Curriculum statement (what learners know, understand and are able to do)

Would any of these ideas suit you?

Slide 26

Take advantage of the professional community (as you are doing right now!) for the best advice, support and CPD on building an outstanding department. How many of the above have you done?

Slide 27

Hopefully, this unit will help you achieve or maintain an outstanding department that matches this description

Slide 28

How your department operates will fundamentally influence whether it can move from good to outstanding or maintain outstanding characteristics. There are many ways of running an outstanding department but all would assess, monitor and evidence their pupils' progress, communicate this effectively and teach a curriculum that was created and 'owned' by the staff for their pupils. It is important for you and other stakeholders (pupils, parents, Governors, SMT) to know that you are outstanding, or that you are striving to be outstanding. Knowing how your pupils are doing is a crucial aspect of an outstanding department.

Ask your teachers to consider these questions in relation to your department and bring their responses for discussion at a department meeting. This could form the basis of an analysis of



your department's strengths and needs. Consider whether or how your department does the following:

- Assess pupil progress – do you have regular, common, challenging and varied assessment activities for pupils? How are these assessments administered and marked? (measure progress)
- Record pupil progress- do you centrally record, share and review pupil attainment? Do all staff support and understand this? (evidence of progress)
- Communicate pupil progress- do the SMT/parents/pupils know how pupils are doing? (knowledge of progress)
- Are schemes of work and learning resources shared? Do all staff have the chance to comment on and contribute to current resources that suit the needs of your pupils?
- Are meetings, communications and CPD within your department conducive to progress for and involving all?

There is no one model of achieving these, rather, it is the departments that address these questions in a way that suits their pupils, staff and resources that are more likely to become and remain outstanding.