

Ofsted's view of Global Learning and Geography

How does geography contribute to the global learning dimension in schools?

Ofsted guidance provides strong support for the view that aspects of global learning are integral to high quality provision and standards in geography, including:

- **World knowledge:** where places are and what they are like
- **Understanding:** of concepts such as interdependence, which help make sense of a complex and dynamic world
- **Procedural knowledge and skills:** including enquiry and critical thinking, as well as more general competences such as originality and creativity.

Geography subject-specific guidance 2013

In this [guidance](#) inspectors draw on criteria and grade descriptions in the inspection handbook and apply them to geography; it is their reference point for subject inspections. Global learning contributes to outstanding judgements in a number of ways:

Achievement

Outstanding

- Pupils have excellent knowledge of where places are and what they are like. They have excellent understanding of the ways in which places are interdependent and interconnected and how human and physical environments are interrelated.
- Pupils are able to carry out increasingly complex geographical enquiry, apply questioning skills and use effective analytical and presentational techniques ... They reach clear conclusions and are able to develop reasoned argument to explain their findings.
- Pupils show exceptional independence; they are able to think for themselves and take the initiative in, for example, asking questions, carrying out their own investigations and working constructively with others. They show significant levels of originality, imagination or creativity in their understanding and skills within the subject.
- Pupils are able to express well-balanced opinions, rooted in very good knowledge and understanding about current and contemporary issues in society and the environment.

Quality of teaching

Outstanding

- ... A range of innovative resources –especially those linked to topical issues – are used regularly and very effectively to explore a wide range of geographical topics at a range of scales and across a variety of places.
- Pupils' interest and a sense of wonder are stimulated through tasks which also help them to make sense of a complex and dynamically changing world.
- Very effective use is made of geographical enquiry to encourage questioning, investigation and critical thinking about issues affecting the world and peoples' lives, now and in the future.

Quality of the curriculum in geography

Outstanding (1)

- The key geographical concepts such as place, space, scale, diversity, interdependence and sustainability are clearly embedded in the planning.
- The curriculum provides consistently high-quality opportunities for pupils to develop and consolidate the key geographical skills of enquiry, graphicacy and geographical communication..
- The contribution of geography to learning and understanding about current and relevant local, national and global issues is at least good in all major respects, and is exemplary in significant elements.
- Excellent links are forged with other agencies and the wider, as well as the global, community to provide a wide range of enrichment activities to promote pupils' learning and engagement with the subject.
- Rigorous curriculum planning ensures that the subject makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Geography - Learning to make a world of difference (subject report, 2011)

Ofsted's subject reports summarise the evidence from inspections in recent years. The [2011 subject report](#) highlights strengths and areas for development in geography, including the importance of global learning. These are developed in detail – for example in case studies – in the report, and outlined in the executive summary and recommendations:

'By paying greater attention to literacy, the global dimension of geography and the use of topical exemplars, teachers enhanced pupils' learning, engaged them and made lessons more interesting and enjoyable'.

'In those schools where geography was strong, the subject contributed effectively to curriculum coherence as well as satisfying pupils' curiosity about people and places ... In strong secondary school geography departments many students were inspired by challenging and engaging questions; with diverse sources and data; and with more in-depth and detailed descriptions and explanations of contemporary changes'.

'In schools where geography was weak ... pupils were denied crucial elements of a broad and balanced education for life. These pupils had a narrow conception of the world and ... were denied the opportunity to think about change in the contemporary world and how to imagine alternative futures' (pp. 4-5).

Recommendations - schools should:

- focus strongly on developing pupils' core knowledge in geography, particularly their sense of place
- ensure that geography enables pupils to recognise their contribution to, and responsibilities for, their locality, their country and the global community (p.7).

Further reading:

- The global dimension: [extract from](#) *Geography in schools: changing practice, Ofsted 2008*
- The global dimension: [extract from](#) *Geography: Learning to make a world of difference, Ofsted 2011.*