

High quality geography in primary Initial Teacher Education

Introduction

This guidance is for all providers of primary Initial Teacher Education (ITE), including that for early years. It has three purposes. First, it is intended as a prompt for discussion between primary pre-qualifiedⁱ teachers, tutors and partnerships about high quality provision in primary ITE. Second, it is designed to inform the role of primary geography tutors and mentors. Third, it may be used as a quality checklist or audit tool for primary partnerships to review their geography provision. The content has been developed from a range of sourcesⁱⁱ and by experienced primary geography teacher educators. It reflects the Geographical Association's commitment to high quality geography in primary ITE being available through all the routes into teaching. While recognising the demands in primary ITE provision, it is nonetheless important that high aspirations for geography are in place so that prospective and new teachers are well prepared to deliver high quality geography teaching, learning, progress and achievement to all primary children.

Overview

The best primary ITE partnerships prepare new teachers to teach a broad and balanced curriculum well. Such a curriculum includes geography, which has a key role to play in children's education about our lives and planet. Geography introduces children to narratives about the world and fosters their sense of awe and wonder through investigations at a range of scales from the local to the global. It enables children to understand other people, cultures and places and to appreciate global locations, links and connections, which include and go beyond their own locality. Geography is the lens through which to learn about and understand physical and human environments, processes and effects. It helps children to develop a sense of belonging and their own identity. It raises questions about diversity, equality, access and inclusion. Geography supports children's development of map understanding and their observations and investigations in outdoor environments. It fosters their appreciation of, positive attitudes to and values about their environments, people's lives and future scenarios, including matters such as local and global sustainability.

Primary schools need new teachers who are knowledgeable about geography, its purpose and value, its resources and its teaching, to be able to teach early years and primary children effectively. New teachers need to appreciate that children are brought up in different places and cultures, understand how they learn geography and that geography teaching contributes to the development of the whole child. Good ITE geography provision will advance pre-qualified primary teachers' geographical knowledge and understanding. Partnerships will introduce new teachers to the thinking which underpins good geography teaching, children's understandings and progress, and children's learning and achievements. Partnerships will help new teachers recognize and appreciate characteristic geography teaching approaches and encourage them to draw on their generic pedagogic skills when teaching in geographical and cross-curricular contexts, while maintaining their focus on geographical learning. New teachers should understand the need to develop children's enjoyment of and high expectations in learning geography, and their awareness of its application in their lives, including about current events and future trends. Partnerships will ensure new teachers are aware of the support they can access to foster their career development through the geography education community, primary networks and subject associations.

Effective primary ITE partnerships are committed to ensuring that a geography enthusiast leads new teachers' geographical learning and provides guidance on independent study. This person will have sufficient time and resources to provide a coherent vision for geography teaching and learning in the light of national geography policy and to ensure that new teachers develop their geographical knowledge and understanding of the subject and the primary school geography curriculum. They will be aware of pre-qualified teachers' geographical backgrounds, interests and needs. There must be opportunities for pre-qualified teachers to observe good geography teaching and to plan for teaching geography in school. Provision will be made for their assessment. Primary geography tutors and mentors recognize that such grounding is essential for new teachers to develop primary children's geographical learning effectively. The geography component in primary ITE will be regularly evaluated and reviewed.

High expectations of pre-qualified primary teachers are imperative for good geography provision in primary ITE. The quality criteria set out below can be used to develop, review and evaluate a primary ITE partnership's geography provision and support their high quality aspirations.

Quality criteria for geography in primary Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

1. Providing for geography in primary ITE

Provision by partnerships for effective geography in primary ITE requires that:

1.1 Staffing

- It is led by a knowledgeable, innovative and appropriately experienced primary geography enthusiast who has a vision for high quality geography in primary ITE and primary schooling.

1.2 Dedicated time for geography

- There are dedicated geography sessions which can provide for and inter-relate the expectations and requirements in these criteria.
- There is sufficient contact teaching time and provision for independent study time to meet the expectations and requirements in these criteria.

1.3 Assessment and evaluation

- There are informal and formal assessments of aspects of pre-qualified teachers' understanding of geography and its teaching and learning in primary schools.
- There is regular evaluation of the provision, which includes provider and pre-qualified teachers' feedback and, as appropriate, external expertise.

2. The key components for an effective geography programme

In providing ITE geography for pre-qualified primary teachers, tutors and mentors should:

2.1 Attitude to geography in education

- Enthuse pre-qualified teachers so as to foster positive attitudes to geography and its teaching and learning.

2.2 Knowledge and understanding of geography

- Examine with pre-qualified teachers the core ideas, nature and purpose of geography and its relationship to personal geographies, geography as publicly perceived, geography in the primary curriculum, geographers' disciplinary perspectives, and examples of topics and events with a geographical dimension.

- Develop pre-qualified teachers' knowledge and understanding of the school geography curriculum, providing a coherent vision for geography's teaching and learning in the light of national geography policy.
- Take into account in their teaching the personal geographies of their pre-qualified primary teachers.
- Provide insight for pre-qualified teachers into early years and primary children's progression in the understanding and learning of geographical knowledge, skills and values.
- Consider the nature and some sources of children's geographical understandings, misunderstandings, knowledge gaps, alternative conceptions and stereotypes, and examine some approaches to respond to these.

2.3 Geography curriculum and planning

- Select and cover in their teaching aspects of locational knowledge, place studies, human, physical and environmental geography and geographical skills, appropriate for 3-11/12 year old children.
- Examine the planning of lessons for a geography topic, incorporating appropriate objectives, teaching and learning approaches, resources and assessment and making relevant cross-subject links.
- Provide an opportunity to undertake a geographical enquiry into a topic and its role in primary geography teaching and learning.

2.4 Geography teaching and assessment

- Provide the opportunity to observe well-taught geography lessons which demonstrate good practices, and consider what might have gone before and come after to support children's effective learning.
- Introduce a variety of good quality resources for geography teaching and consider effective criteria for selecting appropriate good resources for teaching geography topics.
- Provide opportunities to examine a range of approaches to teaching and learning geography in subject and cross-curricular contexts, including the application of generic teaching skills, to foster and advance children's understanding and progress, including in fieldwork and mapwork.
- Introduce a variety of methods to assess children's learning and achievements in geography.
- Identify approaches which pre-qualified teachers can use to reflect on and evaluate their geography teaching.

3. The expectations for geography to be met by pre-qualified primary teachers

By the end of their primary ITE geography component, pre-qualified primary teachers should:

3.1 Attitude to geography in education

- Demonstrate their commitment to geography, and communicate their enjoyment of the subject.
- Recognize, appreciate and value children's potential for geographical learning, and know ways to develop children's positive attitudes to and enjoyment of geography.

3.2 Knowledge and understanding of geography

- Have well-grounded knowledge and understanding of geography as a subject.
- Have a clear sense of the role, purpose and value of geography in children's education, and of how introducing geography through the pre-school and school curriculum supports 3 to 11/12 year olds' geographical learning.
- Understand and appreciate geographical enquiry as a key approach to use in teaching geography.

- Know how to use maps, atlases and globes, as well as picture, photographs and diagrams, to develop children's geographical learning.
- Be able to identify and make use of opportunities for learning outside the classroom to support children's geographical understanding and skills, including how to prepare and facilitate effective fieldwork.
- Make good use of multi-media, including digital technologies, to explore a wide range of geographical content, knowledge and issues at a range of scales to promote geographical learning and to enable children to use data and information sources.
- Know how children's geographical experience, knowledge, understanding and skills develop from 3 to 11/12 years old, and about their alternative conceptions and attitudes and how they think geographically.

3.3 Geography curriculum and planning

- Know how to plan effective lessons in a geography curriculum, which include clear learning intentions and expectations.
- Know how to access support from the Geographical Association and from other organisations which support continuing professional development in geography education.

3.4 Geography teaching and assessment

- Teach lessons that enable all children to make good progress in their geographical understanding in subject and cross-curricular contexts.
- Assess geographical learning that recognises children's achievement and indicates next steps for progression.
- Recognise the contribution that geography makes to children's spiritual, moral, social, emotional and cultural understanding, identity and well-being, and how children develop and might act as citizens in a democratic society, not least in relation to controversial social, environmental and related topical matters and events.
- Know how to make appropriate links to other areas of the curriculum to enable cross-curricular work with other subjects, including English and mathematics, while maintaining the integrity of geography.
- Develop children's geographical understanding through using and reflecting on creative, imaginative and critically aware approaches to their geography teaching.

ⁱ The term 'pre-qualified' refers to all prospective teachers through whichever route they take to achieve a teaching qualification: it includes those on Teach First and cognate programmes. 'New teachers' refers to teachers about to enter their first teaching post.

ⁱⁱ Carter, A. (2015) *Carter Review of Initial Teacher Training (ITT)*. London: Department for Education

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