Join the GA to keep up-to-date with what is going on and for support in implementing the new geography curriculum

Curriculum Review: Next steps for geography teachers

- ***Take your time***

It can be tempting to start thinking about the next steps immediately. However, first teaching of the new National Curriculum is not until September 2028. The earliest you will start teaching the new GCSEs is September 2029. Keep up to date with what is going on by joining the GA, use our primary and secondary journals and attend our CPD and conference…and for the next few months at least, focus on the current requirements and specifications.

- ***Focus on the four key outcomes***

If you do want to get ahead, it would be wise to focus on the four key areas highlighted by the Review's report and in the government response. These were:

- Conceptual understanding
- Disciplinary knowledge
- Fieldwork
- Climate change and sustainability

- ***Conceptual understanding***

Many schools are developing their curriculum with concepts - such as place, scale, diversity, change, interconnection, earth systems and sustainability - running as golden threads throughout. By making these explicit, students can see that they are returning to and deepening the same core ideas in different contexts. It also means that progression can be hardwired into the curriculum, developing from simple, concrete examples to more abstract, contested ones.
Useful resource: Planning your coherent 11 – 16 geography curriculum: A design toolkit

- ***Embedding disciplinary knowledge***

Disciplinary knowledge is the "how" geographers think and investigate the world. It includes key concepts (see above), geographical practices (enquiry, spatial analysis and fieldwork), and application to real-world contexts. Consider how you might integrate disciplinary knowledge explicitly throughout topics. Instead of treating it as a separate unit, weave it into all units so students continually practise their geographical thinking and enquiry skills.
Useful resource: Geography through enquiry (2nd edition)

- ***Fieldwork***

Fieldwork should be an entitlement for all rather than enrichment for some. It is key to disciplinary knowledge and should be embedded throughout the curriculum, rather than seen as a curriculum 'bolt-on'. An ambition might be to include fieldwork – as homework or half a lesson in the school grounds – per unit of work, with at least one opportunity per year for students to engage in more in-depth fieldwork enquiry. Think about how students develop their fieldwork knowledge and skills to become more independent and fluent in their geographical thinking.
Useful resource: High-quality geography fieldwork for all

- ***Climate change and sustainability***

This is likely to be a key theme within the new primary and secondary curriculum. You might want to teach it as a standalone topic or run it through your curriculum as a conceptual golden thread. What do you already teach on this topic? Do you need to update your subject knowledge? This is an opportunity to read around the subject so when the new curriculum lands, you are well prepared.
Useful resource: Thinking critically in geography: teaching climate change