PRIMARY GEOGRAPHY

Focus on settling geography

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FORTHCOMING ISSUE
Autumn 2019: Moving geography

EDITORIAL

STEVE RAWLINSON AND TESSA WILLY

Settling geography

This issue is deliberately called 'settling' geography rather than 'settlement' geography as it explores a range of concepts about the interpretation of the word 'settle'. This includes the traditional concept of settlement geography, a component part of the National Curriculum in England (DfE, 2013) in the category 'human' geography. As such, it is a crucial area of geographical study especially now that well over half of the world's population lives in urban areas. This area of study would include the characteristics of settlements such as its nature, the types of buildings and how they are organised, as is considered in Anne Dolan's revealing article on architecture. Paula Owens encourages us to find out more about settlement through engaging fieldwork and map work in the local area and Alf Wilkinson's article helps pupils to get to know the local area in an innovative and creative way. Ben Ballin and Simon Collis write about pupils' engagement with their local environment through poetry and help us to integrate geography with English and bring it alive for the pupils. Familiarisation with pupils' own settlement can inspire effective comparisons with other places, making their learning meaningful and significant as Rachel Lewis discusses in her article on place connections.

However, geography does not like fitting neatly into boxes, it is 'messy', and cannot be confined to one area of study, namely 'human' geography. Consideration of what the impact of settlement and urbanisation has on the natural world and on a local environment is a critical part of environmental geography, and sits at the interface between physical and human geography. Such interactions often lead to tensions between the human and physical; urbanisation is crucial for those who need homes, services, trade and education but devastating for those whose habitats are destroyed by it, just as Hazel, Bigwig and Fiver in *Watership Down* (Adams, 1972) witnessed. Such dilemmas are often discussed and debated through pupils' critical engagement in the primary classroom, and Leanne Chorekdijan shows us how to effectively help pupils to understand the impact of our actions on the environment, especially with regard to plastics. Emily Ballin and Michele Lancione also tackle one of the many problems of human distress in urban areas through their moving article on homelessness and the impact it has, making this difficult and controversial issue accessible to pupils in a sensitive and effective way.

Guest editors, Steve Rawlinson and Tessa Willy. Photo © Shaun Flannery/Geographical Association.

As well as the negative impacts of settlement, it is important to consider all the positives – good news stories in urban areas and the appreciation of nature and beauty in urban settings, parks, common land, reclamation of brownfield sites, and guerrilla gardening and making decorative plants into edible ones. Settling can also therefore be interpreted as a re-establishment of the natural order and empowering pupils to help to understand how that can and should happen, again as Leanne Chorekdijan outlines in her article about environmental activists in her school.

Using other media to articulate the geography in settlements can be engaging and meaningful, as Ben Ballin and Simon Collis show in their article: urban poetry as well as art can demonstrate and illustrate a range of different geographical concepts and skills, with striking patterns and processes being seen in transport and service links. We should always be looking for how we can give pupils the opportunity to develop their creative geography and not just 'settle' on traditional approaches to the subject.

'Settling geography' is also all about embedding and establishing – new people moving to an area and putting down roots, and developing an emotional attachment to a place. Julia Tanner explores this in her article about attachment to place and how we can help pupils think in different ways about how they feel about 'home'. In a contrasting way, Paula Owens explores 'meaningful' maps and how they can be used by pupils to express and articulate their feelings about special places. Settling geography can also include supporting pupils in enquiring about how people settle into a new area, where they have come from and how they have been helped to settle and feel settled, as shown by Tarnya Beras in her article.

Although the term settling has implications of permanence, there is, as in all things geographical, a dynamism and constant evolution as progress is made over time. This is reflected in Simon Catling's article celebrating 30 years of *Primary Geography*. Paula Richardson considers it in her article about pupils in different age phases examining perspectives of settlement and developing their skills and understanding over time to enable progression in their geographical learning, and former *PG* Editors Dr Margaret Mackintosh and Dr Fran Martin give their perspective in the PG Interview. Such work can encourage pupils to think about the

future of settlements, what they might be like in 10 or 20 years' time, locally and further afield. Essentially, this gives pupils the opportunity to design their future living spaces and consider how that vision could be achieved; another opportunity for some creative geography that will necessitate an examination of the concept and practical implications of sustainability. Geography is the ideal, indeed only, subject to consider this crucial 'futures' perspective; something David Hicks discusses in such a coherent way in his article.

Arguably, sustainability is the ultimate interpretation of settlement, depicting a future where we are all, in the physical and the human world, 'settled' in a state of interdependent harmony. The tricky and challenging bit is how we get there. We think children will have the answers and that geography can provide the 'map' to help them to find the solutions needed.

Ofsted

Just as geography is dynamic and continues to change in response to a number of influences, so too is the curriculum in which it has to 'settle'. On the horizon, and set to bring further potentially 'unsettling' changes, is the new recommended Ofsted framework. However, we take the view that this offers some real and positive opportunities for primary geography.

There is clear scope for developing pupils' geography in all three areas of Ofsted's quality education and this in turn can help schools to become at least good and hopefully outstanding in relation to this.

Intent

There is a significant emphasis on widening the curriculum and making it more ambitious, providing opportunities to develop the knowledge and cultural capital that pupils need in order to thrive in their lives. It is difficult to imagine a better, more appropriate, subject than geography for doing just that and the articles in this issue illustrate just how to do it. Primary geography is an ideal umbrella subject for providing a meaningful integrated curriculum that pupils can engage with, and which will give them some of the life skills and knowledge they are going to need for the future.

Implementation

Teaching and assessing a rich, coherent and inclusive curriculum will be an essential part of the implementation of quality learning and teachers will need to have a good knowledge of the subject and the areas that they teach. Being engaged with curriculum and professional development will be crucial for all class teachers as well as subject leaders. Reading, adapting and using information such as that provided in this and other issues of *Primary Geography* and engaging with the subject association are excellent ways of keeping abreast of the subject's content and pedagogy. This will also help you to tackle areas of the subject (without excessive additional workload) that you might not be so comfortable with but clearly do need to teach, and once you do, we can guarantee you will grow to love!

Impact

Pupils should be able to develop comprehensive knowledge and adaptable skills in all areas of the curriculum. Primary geography, through its effective teaching and learning approaches such as enquiry and critical thinking, will help pupils to do that and enable them to progress in their learning. They can then adapt and build on this, developing their curiosity and embedding their passion for asking questions, seeking answers and reaching informed decisions; in short preparing them for a fulfilled and happy life.

Implementing the new framework, whatever its final format, will present challenges, but the absolute necessity for pupils to have access to high-quality geography education will remain. Their future is too precious to ignore this pivotal subject, whatever the shape of the curriculum.

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Ofsted (2019) *Proposed new framework for consultation*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/770924/Proposed_education_inspection_framework_draft_for_consultation_140119.pdf.pdf (last accessed 14/3/2019).

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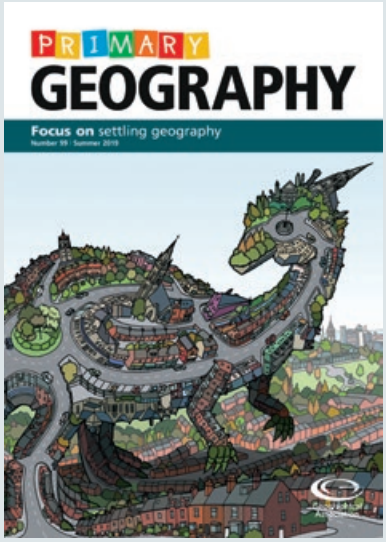
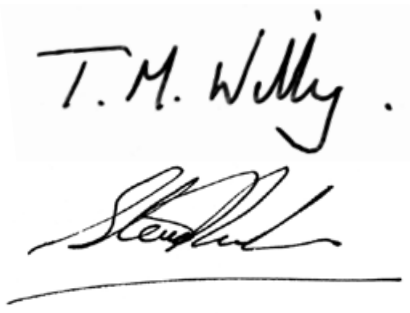
Using the front cover

The stunning front cover image is 'Huntersbarasaur' by the artist Andy Council. It will capture pupils' imaginations and is an excellent starter to encourage them to think about where they live (see pages 6–7). Other activities include:



- Do the patterns on the map of your local area look like any animal? Can you see a horse's head in Africa, turned anti-clockwise 90 degrees, or a dog and cat's head in west and east Australia?
- Some places have creatures as part of their county shield/flag etc. What is their significance? If your settlement does not have one, what creature would best represent it?
- A settlement may have an association with a particular animal. Weston Turville and Haddenham in Buckinghamshire were once famous for the breeding and selling of Aylesbury ducks. Investigating the rise and decline of this trade helps pupils to understand the history and the geography of the place.



The start gallery

ALL ABOUT SETTLEMENT

PAULA RICHARDSON

Paula suggests some ideas to help you get started on exploring settlement with your pupils.

Early settlements

If you ask pupils what are the important features of a house today, their responses might include enough rooms, a garden, internet access, parking and, perhaps, good transport links. Discuss how this might have been different in the past (Figure 1). What would early settlers have looked for when constructing their own villages? Discuss with the class and then make a list of requirements (including flat land for building, woodland for fires, water for drinking or a crossing point of a river), and features to avoid (such as marshy land, steep and hilly land, cold and windy valleys and stony fields). Next, pupils categorise the features by importance for deciding where to build homes.

Hand out copies of an OS map extract and ask pupils to identify why settlements originally developed there. Hint: use a map extract showing a rural area (rather than an urbanised area) so that pupils can locate settlements where the physical features are easier to identify.

Does colour matter?

Often we do not realise just how important colour is to the environments around us (Figure 2). Using images of your local village or town ask the pupils to identify as many different colours as they can. Are there many shades of the same colour? Now ask them to imagine that one colour was removed from the picture: which features would suffer as a result? What would be the impact on how they feel about the place (e.g. a park with no green)? How might people who live and work there feel? Are there any particular issues that might arise (e.g. if green was removed from traffic lights)?

Provide pupils with paint sample colour strips (found in most DIY shops) and ask them to match their strips with colours in the images. They will find that buildings that look the same colour will show various shades. Next, show black-and-white pictures of a townscape and compare them with full-colour images of the same place. Which do the pupils prefer and why? Why does colour have an emotional value in how we perceive a place?

Figure 1: What would early settlers have looked for when choosing where to settle? Image © Midnightblueowl under Creative Commons licence.

What can't we see?

Mask off sections of a set of images of a local town or settlement using blank paper. Ask groups of pupils to consider what they might see in the blanked-off section then draw it on the masking paper. Are there clues in the images to help them? Unmask the full images and compare them with the drawings. Every drawing is of value because it indicates the pupils' thinking and choices. Use a similar approach during fieldwork: ask pupils how the left and right sides of the street look. Are they the same or has each side developed in a different way? This encourages pupils to observe their surroundings more closely.

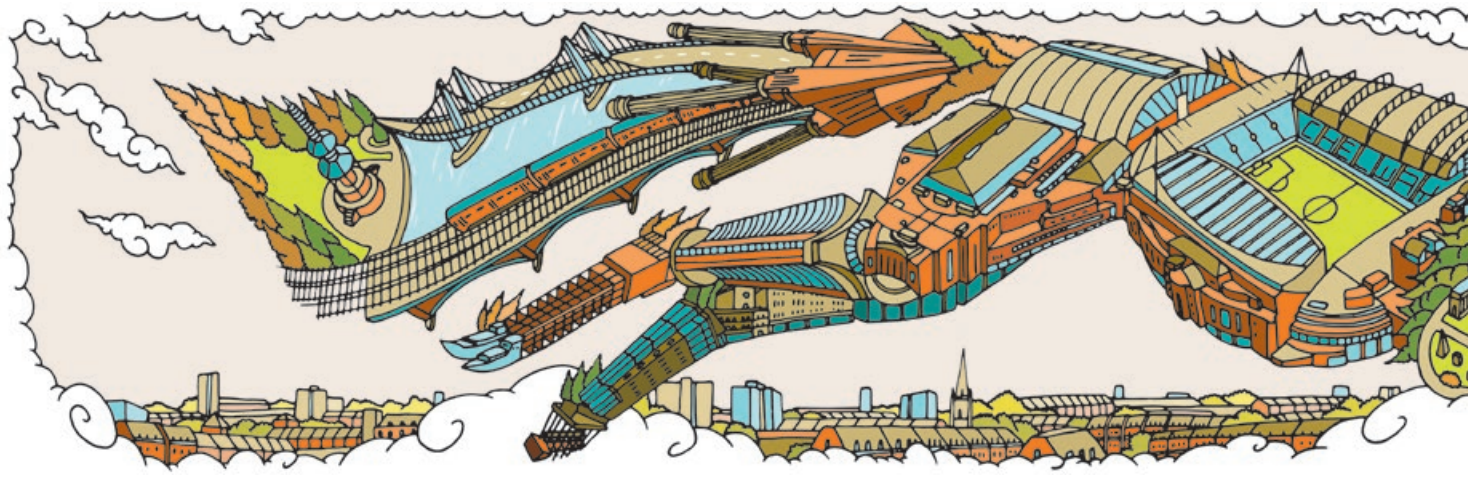


Figure 3: 'Chelsea Fox' incorporates the river, buildings and green space of the area, and of course the football stadium! Artwork © Andy Council.

How old is the street?

Looking at basic features, pupils can identify the age of the houses they are investigating. The PowerPoint (see web panel) provides information on how buildings have changed and developed over time. Posing questions such as 'why have so few houses survived from the Middle Ages?' and 'How has building style changed over time?' helps pupils understand that housing changes at different rates. Show images of modern buildings that mimic the characteristics of older styles (e.g. Mock Tudor, modern Georgian). How are these different from the originals? Why do people like houses that look old?

Houses for sale

Collect advertisements for properties for sale from newspapers or online. Discuss what the adverts show/do not show. Ask pupils to work out the approximate age of the buildings (for activity sheet see web panel.) Use adverts for properties in cities such as London or Manchester to provide a contrast. Invite pupils to identify examples of persuasive text used to sell the house. Can they work out who the adverts are targeted at (e.g. young families, retired people)? Ask them to consider what the perfect home for their own family would contain. Discuss people's needs in terms of transport, links to work/school, a garden, access to shops and services, and so on. How do these compare with needs of people in the past?

So many views

Start by asking the pupils how many different types of views they might see in the area. This helps to increase pupils' awareness of how places can change from street to street. Pupils can photograph or sketch their immediate view as they walk around corners or change direction on a walk around the area. Mark the stopping points on a large-scale map to display with the photos and sketches. Repeat this activity along a direct route from the school or as a transect across your area.

Figure 2: Colour is used to wonderful effect in this Bristol street. Photo © Adrian Scottow.

Discuss the changing landscape pupils encounter – is it what they expected? Do they have a favourite view?

Global settlements

Include a global perspective in lessons even with very young pupils. Start by establishing pupils' knowledge of places further away. Show images of different areas of settlement (see web panel). For instance, if you show images of skyscrapers include shantytowns from the same city too (e.g. Cape Town, South Africa). Older pupils can each research one city and prepare a display on it.

Locality beasts

Andy Council incorporates settlements and landmark buildings into fantastic beasts in his art (see Figure 3, front cover and web panel). Which animal could represent your locality? Pupils could list the buildings they would include in their locality animal, then research the shapes and colours before creating their own locality beast.

Wherever there is settlement, there is a multitude of human and physical geography to explore. With eyes, minds and doors open, the world is your geographical oyster!

WEB RESOURCES

Andy Council: *www.andycouncil.co.uk/*
Download settlement PowerPoint and activity sheet: *www.geography.org.uk/pg*
In the Know Settlements: *https://www.geography.org.uk/eBooks-detail/67c8a4ad-7c56-4839-b3c4-6f3e1c16dc87*
Images of settlements: *https://www.3dgeography.co.uk/settlement-images*
Superschemes Investigating Our Street: *https://www.geography.org.uk/Shop/Publication-series/Super-Schemes/SuperSchemes-Local-Fieldwork-Investigating-Our-Street/9781843774273*
Superschemes Investigating Our Town: *https://www.geography.org.uk/Shop/Publication-series/Super-Schemes/SuperSchemes-Local-Fieldwork-Investigating-Our-Town/9781843774280*

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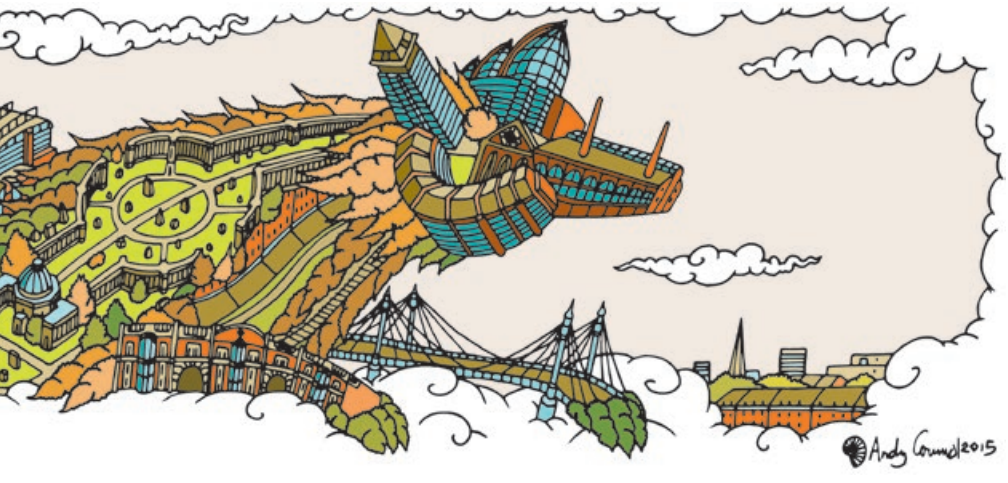

PLACE ATTACHMENTS: A SENSE OF SECURITY

JULIA TANNER

Julia explores the construction and importance of our emotional attachments to place. She also offers ideas to nurture the sense of belonging and security in school that underpins this fundamental aspect of well-being.

Throughout humankind's history, people have actively chosen particular places to settle and live. These choices are usually explained in economic terms – that sites are chosen for the access they offer to valuable resources or economic opportunities. Archaeological research suggests that the first settlements were located where early hunter-gatherers could best exploit resources in the local environment to meet their needs for water, food and shelter. As agriculture developed, people settled sites on fertile land with good access to water and woodland. Towns and cities, dependent on the production of rural surpluses for food, developed on easily defendable sites, along trading routes, at river bridging points or in sheltered estuaries. With industrialisation access to raw materials (such as coal or mineral ores), a labour force and new transport networks (canals, railways, motorways) became more important factors in the location of settlements. Significantly, however, economic considerations are not the only influences that affect why people chose to move to or stay in particular locations. People also develop emotional attachments to places – a sense of belonging, connection and security.

What is place attachment?

Place attachment is a key concept in environmental psychology. Defined as 'the emotional bonds between people and a particular place or environment' (Seamon, 2014, p. 11), it is associated with a sense of security, familiarity and belonging. People express their place attachments in many ways, through the display of images such as calendars or paintings, or verbally (e.g. 'I love Verona, it's my favourite Italian city'). For some people, their sense of identity derives in part from their identification with their town, region or country of birth (e.g. 'I'm a Yorkshire woman, through and through').

How do place attachments develop?

Place attachment appears to develop through significant and positive experiences of, and in, particular places (Scannell and Gifford, 2010; Devine-Wright, 2014). Pre-school children typically develop place attachments to where they spend most of their time, such as home and nursery. In large primary schools, the youngest pupils often have separate outdoor areas, toilets and lunchtimes and only slowly are they introduced to the whole school building and grounds. Teachers instinctively manage pupils' gradual exposure to places in the school; knowing that unfamiliar places may feel disorientating or even a little intimidating. Thus, if Reception pupils need to take a message to the school office we send them as a pair for mutual support, whereas we expect older pupils to be confident in navigating their way around school independently.

Figure 1: Finding solace in the school grounds' willow den with a good book. Photo © Anna Grandfield.

Place attachment is fostered by activities that create happy memories. As they grow, the range of places children visit expands, and as they experience and explore these places, they begin to develop specific preferences. Asked about places that are 'special' to them, primary-aged pupils habitually nominate places where they have fun, usually with people who are important to them (e.g. 'I love going to Whitby to stay with Grandma, where we play on the beach and are allowed to eat fish and chips outside'). In the early 1990s, both Chawla (1992) and Sobel (1993) found that primary-aged pupils especially valued outdoor spaces (Figure 1), but more recent studies have found that older children are now more likely to nominate their bedrooms as favourite places. What these places have in common are the opportunity to be with friends, free from adult supervision.

Common disruptions to place attachments experienced by primary pupils include moving classroom, school or house. Distressingly, many primary-aged pupils in UK schools have fled persecution or conflict as a refugee. For these children, place attachment disruption is likely to be compounded by the much greater trauma of having been driven from home and country.

Why do place attachments matter?

Attachment theory is increasingly influential in understanding pupils' wellbeing in schools (see Marshall, 2014). Attachment theory emphasises the crucial importance of early childhood interpersonal experiences. It asserts that infants' earliest experiences of care are critically significant for their subsequent social and emotional well-being, because these provide a template for a child's developing 'internal working model' of self, others and the wider world. Morgan (2010) explored the relationship between the concepts of place attachment and interpersonal attachment. He suggests that place attachment develops due to the association between the positive feelings experienced during contact with the comforting caregiver, and the sense of mastery and adventure experienced during exploration. Attachment theory explains the role of interpersonal relationships in developing children's sense of safety and security, and the concept of place attachment reveals the crucial role of place in this process.

Place attachment is important for happiness and psychological well-being. For adults, a strong sense of place attachment is associated with higher levels of life satisfaction, stronger social bonding, higher levels of trust in other people and lower levels of egocentricity (Lewicka, 2011). These are all attributes associated with good mental health.

Places of attachment are also restorative. In times of acute distress, many people simply want to go home, but visiting or even imagining other places of attachment can also help restore emotional equilibrium. Being able to take comfort from personally important places is one way children, young people and adults can build on facing the difficulties life will inevitably throw at them.

Given the known significance of place attachment for adults' well-being, surprisingly little attention has been paid to children's place attachments. A major study by Chawla concluded that 'our places of origin shape who we are whether we like it or not' (1992, p. 66). Spencer (2006) explored the role of place attachment in the development of a child's self-identity, linking a sense of belonging to a specific locality with a sense of self-worth. Spencer's work highlights the importance of the local area in primary geography.

When we investigate the school's locality, we demonstrate to pupils and parents that where they live is important, interesting and worthy of study. As each locality is unique, local studies reveal and celebrate a place's own specific history and special features. This may be especially valuable for pupils who live in stigmatised areas. Children living in places negatively portrayed in the media as deprived, dangerous or depressed may feel that if their area is 'rubbish', then so too (by implication) are they. Investigating the school's locality will hopefully counteract any negative messages and instead build pupils' sense of pride in their suburb, village or town (see also pages 24–5 of this issue).

How can we nurture children's place attachments?

If we want pupils to enjoy the benefits of secure place attachments, we need to pay attention to the school environment and the learning experiences we offer them. Pupils learn best in attractive, well-equipped schools where the emotional climate is positive, safe and respectful and where the learning activities are stimulating, interesting and purposeful. These conditions also lay the foundations for place attachment, because children develop attachments to places where they feel safe, secure, have fun and build happy memories. (To assess your classroom as a place for potential attachment, see web panel.)

The primary geography curriculum offers many opportunities for learning experiences (such as those outlined below) that lay the foundations for pupils to develop a sense of security and belonging – an essential element of place attachment.

Explore pupils' place attachments

Make time for activities that acknowledge and honour pupils' existing place attachments and investigate those of others (see Figure 2 for suggestions).

Encourage place-making

Small world play, in its myriad forms, enables pupils to fashion mini-worlds of their own creation and gives them time to 'experiment, create and reflect' (Bromley, 2004, p. 1) as they use miniature environments to act out scenarios. Young children enjoy making representations of places in favourite storybooks (see Tanner and Whittle, 2013) and creating models of known places using junk modelling approaches. Older primary pupils can use modelled environments to replicate dynamic earth processes, such as erosion and deposition in river valleys or on beaches, or to explore the potential impact of extreme weather conditions on their local area (see Witt and Clarke, 2016).

Nurture pupils' sense of awe and wonder

Remarkable experiences are everywhere: from observing the energy of wild weather and the annual spring miracle of bulb shoots pushing through frigid soil, to visits to ancient landmarks and watching glorious landscapes. Rich first-hand encounters with the wonders of our planet have a powerful emotional impact, so encourage pupils to marvel at the beauty and complexity of the natural world and at humankind's astonishing achievements. Such experiences not only enrich children's lives, but also nurture their sense of connection to the environment.

Improve your school grounds

School grounds projects can include creating a wildlife area, building a fitness trail, constructing a school garden, developing a sculpture trail, or growing willow structures. They allow numerous opportunities for geographical and cross-curricular learning and make the school estate a more stimulating environment for pupil learning and play. This, in turn, increases pupils' sense of stewardship.

Investigate local issues

Pupils can investigate local issues (such as litter, traffic problems, poor local amenities, inadequate bus services or vandalism) and take action. Direct action, such as undertaking a litter pick or organising a traffic reducing campaign directed at local residents, officials and politicians, builds pupils' sense of empowerment. It allows pupils to become engaged and responsible local citizens, strengthens their sense of belonging, and fosters their commitment and emotional connection to the local community.

Personal special places
Encourage pupils to talk about a place outside school that is special to them. Ask pupils to draw or bring in photos of these places. Use 'show and tell' sessions for individuals to talk about why these places are special to them. Provide materials for pupils to make scrapbooks about places that make them feel happy (Witt, 2010). Create a display, digital presentation or make a class book about 'Our Special Places'.

Mapping happiness
Display a map or aerial image of the school grounds. Ask pupils to nominate places where they feel happiest and explain why. Provide a printed map or image and invite pupils to use emoji stickers to locate their happy places. Discuss the distribution of these happy places. Explore the idea that different children may feel happy in different sorts of places (e.g. some like quiet places to talk with their friends, while others like open spaces for active play). To take this idea further, invite pupils to speculate on where adults feel happiest in school.

Loved local landmarks
Use Digimap for schools (see web panel) to display a large-scale map of the local area showing individual buildings. Invite pupils to suggest which local landmarks (buildings, statues, green spaces, etc.) might be most loved by local people. Construct a questionnaire showing images of these landmarks and ask parents and carers to nominate their favourite. Publish the results in the school newsletter or website.

Figure 2: Fostering place attachments. Photo © Anna Grandfield.

Conclusion

Schools have an important role in promoting their pupils' emotional well-being. They promote not only pupils' learning and educational attainment, but also their personal, social and emotional development. They help children and young people establish their identity, develop interpersonal skills and become more resilient. Research increasingly suggests that strong place attachments are associated with good mental health, and schools are well placed to nurture the sense of belonging and security that underpins this.

Taking a wider perspective, developing strong emotional attachments to places is also important for the future of our planet and humankind. Children who feel a sense of belonging to place – whether their local area, nation or the planet – will be better-prepared to become the responsible, active citizens needed to face the environmental, social and economic challenges of the twenty-first century.

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WEB RESOURCES

Classroom assessment activity:
www.geography.org.uk/pg
Digimap for schools:
https://digimapforschools.edina.ac.uk/dfs/schools

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PLACE PLUS POETRY

SIMON COLLIS AND BEN BALLIN

Based on a workshop delivered at the 2018 GA Annual Conference, Simon and Ben outline strategies for using real places to support poetry writing.

Geography offers a focus for poetry-specific language and a reason to get out into the world and really look at it. This approach provides a stimulus to engage and motivate pupils, and offers a purpose for their writing. In our workshop we took a group of teachers into the Sheffield landscape to make links between literacy and landscape, connecting the concrete and the curious. We began by asking the teachers what poetry-writing can contribute to geography – examples include: capturing a powerful sense of place, serving as a form of fieldwork data, and developing locational awareness and appreciation.

We wanted the teachers to gain as much first-hand experience as possible, so we kicked off with some kennings poems. (These comprise two-word phrases that describe an object often using a metaphor.) We used sticky notes to gather nouns and adjectives based on a video stimulus, with each word written on its own note. Participants were invited to pair a noun with another noun or adjective to create a line of a kennings poem (e.g. water dancer). Using sticky notes allowed participants to swap, change and play with the words, making different pairings to create the most effective image.

We then headed outdoors with a compass, some paper, pencils and chalks. Looking at the urban landscape, we used the chalks to create concrete poems on paving stones, based on what we could see (Figure 1a).

If we want to develop a sense of place, then we do not want to travel with a single view. In order to capture a 360° perspective on the local environment, we split into four groups. Each group faced a different compass point and was given a chatterbox (see Trevor and Owens, 2014) marked up with the points of the compass. On the chatterbox under their group's compass point were the first and last five-syllable lines of a haiku, for example 'to the West I see…' and 'to the North I turn'.

The task was to write the seven-syllable middle line (Figure 1b), based on what was in front of them. Once completed, we read the haikus out loud starting with one person from the North group, then turning clockwise to the East, and so on, until everyone had spoken and we had a full picture of the immediate landscape.

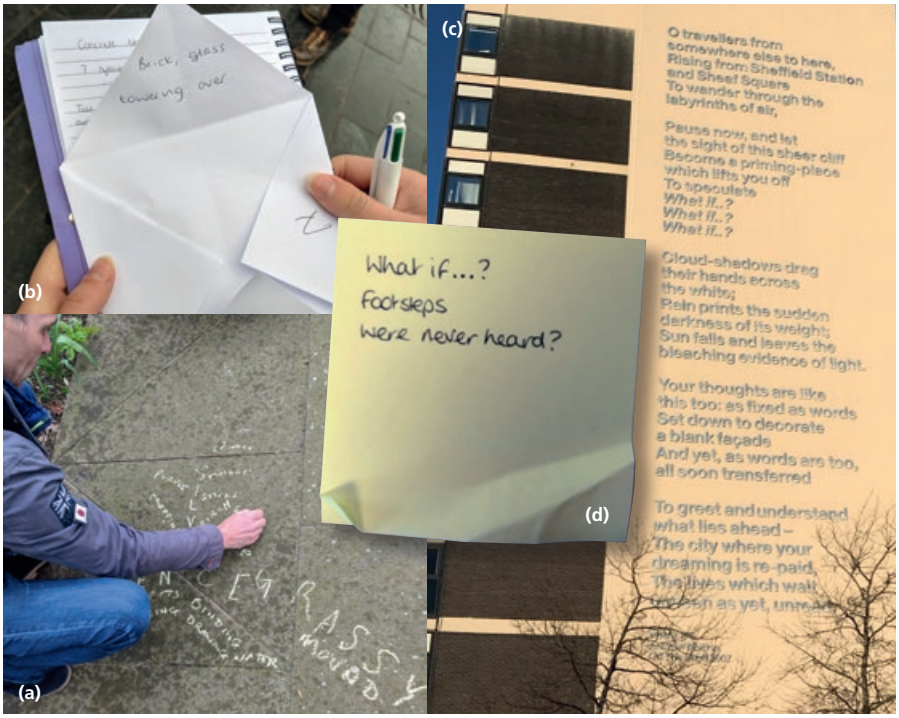

Figure 1: Poetry and place: (a) concrete poems: the words forming the branches of a silver birch, (b) the endless chatterbox haiku: looking west, (c) What if…? poetry in the landscape, and (d) What if…? sticky note poem. Photos (a) and (b) © Simon Collis and Ben Ballin, (c) Matt Brown.

Thus far, we had concentrated on our visual senses. We stood in silence for a minute, listening to and sensing what else was around us. We could see a poem by Andrew Motion, displayed on one of the university buildings (Figure 1c). The poem relates a traveller's experience of emerging into the city from the station nearby. It includes the repeated refrain, 'What if…?'. Taking this as an opening, the teachers added one of their sense-impressions as their second line. Their poems were completed with a third line, which could be as imaginative as they wished (Figure 1d). The poems were displayed together and we invited the teachers to organise the verses into one larger group poem.

Conclusion

Our workshop was intended to act as a springboard for further professional creativity. It built on earlier work that used published poetry as a stimulus (Ballin and Willy, 2015). (See web panel for further resources you could use as a stimulus.) We would love to hear other teachers' ideas or experiences of linking poetry and geography. Let's set the world to write!

References

Ballin, B. and Willy, T. (2015) 'A place for poetry', *Primary Geography*, 86, pp. 16–17.

Trevor, C. and Owens, P. (2014) 'Unfolding fieldwork', *Primary Geography*, 83, pp. 18–19.

WEB RESOURCES

Paula Owens' Landscape Poetry: *https://digimapforschools.edina.ac.uk/schools/Resources/Primary/landscape_poetry.pdf*

Michael Rosen's *Primary Geography* interview: *https://www.geography.org.uk/Journal-Issue/e34edaa8-e7c2-4da1-ba45-3c9c5374d394*

Ben Ballin and Simon Collis are members of the *Primary Geography* Editorial Board. Simon is year 3/4 phase leader and has responsibility for developing teaching and learning at Emmaus Catholic and C of E Primary School, Sheffield. Ben is a Primary Champion and Consultant to the GA.

A CHANGING SETTLEMENT

ALF WILKINSON

In this article, Alf explores a Lincolnshire village through time. He demonstrates how we can combine history and geography to help pupils make sense of change and continuity in a local village or town.

Who has settled here?

Heckington lies on the edge of the Lincolnshire Fens, just off the A17, between Sleaford and Boston. It is a fertile agricultural area: some fields now produce three crops of vegetables a year. And there is evidence of settlement dating back to at least the Iron Age.

Each succeeding set of invaders and/or settlers have left their mark in the area:

- Roman kilns and a canal (the Car Dyke)
- an Anglo-Saxon monastery (Sempringham)
- Viking settlements
- a Norman village (Kirkby La Thorpe)
- a motte-and-bailey castle (Sleaford Castle, one of the last places visited by a dying King John)
- the ruins of a Tudor priory destroyed by Henry VIII (Haverholme Priory)
- Victorian canals (Sleaford Navigation), railways and factories (Bass Maltings, which was the biggest in the country at that time).

All these can be traced using place-names on the map. Thus, Heckington is (like many others) the perfect place to undertake a local history study. Looking at history and geography together can enhance pupils' understanding of both. Figure 1 takes the article headings and extends them into a joint historical and geographical enquiry.

Key question	History	Geography
Who has settled here?	Who settled here in the past? What did they do? (involves investigating secondary sources, place names and images)	Who lives here today? What do they do? (involves a survey of parents and residents)
Why do people choose to settle here?	What factors attracted people to live here in the past? (involves investigating primary sources, such as trade directories)	Why might people want to live or work here (push and pull factors)? (involves survey and links to understanding migration)
What are its distinctive features	What evidence of the past can we find here today? (involves comparing modern and historical maps and images, doing fieldwork)	What are the distinctive physical and human features of this place? Where is it located? (involves using maps and images, doing fieldwork)
How might this place change in future?	What can this place's past tell us about what might happen in future? What recent changes have occurred here? What effects might they have? (involves creating and extending a timeline)	How is this settlement changing? How might local, regional, national or global changes affect what happens here in future? (involves investigating local news and people's views on it)

Figure 1: Geography and history enquiry questions.

Year	Population
1811	2654
1821	3093
1831	3633
1841	3772
1851	4153
1881	4572
2011	3353

Figure 2: population of Heckington from 1811.

Figure 3: OS map of Heckington in 2019. © Crown Copyright. Reproduced with permission of Ordnance Survey.

Why do people choose to settle here?

Why is the area so attractive to settlement? What has made people want to live here in the past, and the present? As you can see from Figure 2, Heckington is a big village. In Victorian times it had its own police station, doctor, shops and services, all of which can be traced through both census data and trade directories (the latter list the more important inhabitants of the town and their occupations). In short, it was a prosperous village.

The traditional 'core' of Heckington is centred astride the B1394 adjacent to the church (Figure 3).

North Kesteven, of which Heckington is a part, is an attractive area to live in. (It is regularly voted one of the safest areas in the country.) Many people have sold their homes in southern England to move here where property is cheaper – but this causes tensions with young locals who increasingly find themselves priced out of the housing market.

There are good schools, swift transport links (it takes just over one hour to get to London from Grantham, and you can fly from East Midlands Airport to most parts of the world). There are plenty of jobs, even if many are low-paid in the agricultural sector. (A recent survey showed people in Lincolnshire are paid, on average, £100 per week less than the national average wage.) Recently, the area has attracted many European migrants, which is another aspect of settlement worth considering.

Figure 4: Recent expansion includes two large housing estates. © Crown Copyright. Reproduced with permission of Ordnance Survey.

What are its distinctive features?

In the 1850s, Heckington expanded south towards the railway and windmill, where a small industrial area developed and still exists today. The windmill and station are clearly visible in Figure 3 along with New Street and the rest of the village to the north. More recent expansion has occurred between the village centre and the A17, where two large housing estates have been built (Figure 4). These are close to transport links with Sleaford, Boston and Lincoln.

The windmill – now the only working eight-sail windmill in the world – is 20m tall (see Figure 5). It was built in 1830 on a rise to the south of the village centre. At one time there were four windmills, but this is the only one remaining. Discuss why the windmill was built here (the contours on the map will help), and encourage pupils to think of questions they could ask the girls in the picture. The railway was built in the 1850s (Figure 6). Are the siting of the railway and windmill linked? Can you tell from the map?

How might this place change in future?

Recently, Heckington's windmill was restored using money from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and it is now a tourist attraction with people from all over the world coming to visit it. It provides a good focus for a study of human and economic geography, as well as history.

Figure 5: The windmill in Heckington. Photo © Heckington Windmill Trust.

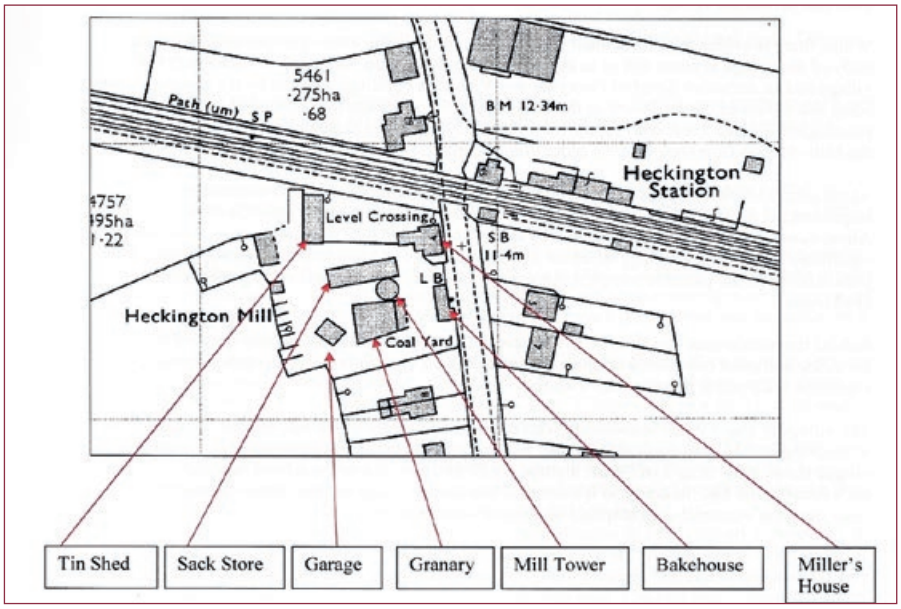

Figure 6: The plan from the Heckington windmill restoration project (see below) shows the location of the railway and the windmill.

What impact might 20,000 (the target figure by 2020) visitors have on the village? The windmill is run by volunteers, but two cafés have recently opened in the village. How many jobs are provided by tourism? What is the economic 'cost' in terms of congestion and traffic problems?

Heckington and its environs have attracted people since the Iron Age to the present day. Combining a study of history (looking at the reasons people settled here in the past) with geography (why people live here today), allows us to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of their local area. What distinctive aspects of your locality would you choose to explore?

Alf Wilkinson is a history consultant. This article draws on a case study created for a joint Geographical Association and Historical Association workshop at the 2017 GA Annual Conference.

EXPLORING SETTLEMENT THROUGH ARCHITECTURE AND ART

IAIN BURNS AND DR ANNE DOLAN

Iain and Anne explore the links between architecture and geography, and offer ideas on using architectural principles to develop pupils' awareness of the environment.

Introduction

Architecture is an inherent part of our daily existence. Considered by many as an art form, it involves the planning, designing and construction of buildings in our local and global environments. Architecture provides the framework for human activity and interaction by shaping our educational, social, economic, cultural and political spaces. Lessons that incorporate an architectural lens offer pupils the tools to influence the way in which buildings and their locality can be shaped.

Architecture represents and communicates community values in concrete forms by transforming abstract ideas into three-dimensional realities. Three dimensions of architecture are important for us as citizens.

- First, it affects our aesthetic experience of space and the forms that surround us.
- Second, it celebrates our cultural heritage reminding us of our identity and historical story.
- Third, it reassures us that the space in which we live is, to a certain extent, malleable, which we can shape, improve and enhance ourselves.

Pupils need to be aware that architecture and design are all around them. Indeed, art and architecture share a common relationship with design. Architecture is essentially a type of design that deals only with structure. In relation to buildings, the architecture provides structures (rooms, stairways and basic services, such as water and heating). Design decisions influence the type of materials used and the final aesthetics.

Architecture comes naturally to children. They have an inherent sense of space, which they exhibit by redesigning their bedrooms and making replica play houses. By making dens in a forest area, pupils claim their own space and create structures that involve fun, team building and imagination. In his famous document on architecture, *De Architectura*, the Roman architect Vitruvius highlighted three principles of good architecture:

- *Firmatis* (durability) – it should stand up robustly and remain in good condition.
- *Utilitas* (utility) – it should be useful and function well for the people using it.
- *Venustatis* (beauty) – it should delight people and raise their spirits.

Through studying architectural principles in school, pupils can learn how to observe, understand and enjoy their built environment. In line with good geographical practice, focusing on architecture allows pupils to explore the characteristics of materials, make observations about place and space and discover local treasure spots. By using an architect's eye pupils can uncover different aspects of spatial appearance and arrangement. Pupils can learn to see things in a different way and in a more detailed manner, while focusing on the design and the use of space. Architects develop ideas from single forms such as squares, rectangles, circles, triangles – all these geometric forms studied in schools are located in pupils' local environments. Local trails that feature a focus on shapes are a good way for developing the eye of the architect. Pupils can learn how to notice the elements of colour, texture and lighting and how these elements are used in local buildings, public spaces, parks or urban settings.

Learning about architecture around the world introduces pupils to innovative buildings and iconic landmarks including Art Deco skyscrapers in New York, the Colosseum in Rome, Kronborg Castle in Copenhagen, and (currently) the world's tallest skyscraper, the Khalifa Tower in Dubai. Architectural wonders such as the Taj Mahal (India), Notre Dame (France), Sydney Opera House (Australia) and the Shard (UK) demonstrate the creativity, imagination and ingenuity of humans. These buildings also reveal the differences and similarities that exist between places.

Local architecture

Working with model buildings (created from cardboard) can develop pupils' awareness of architecture. A number of artists created an installation based on the evolving nature of Irish towns, from the 18th century to modern times (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Pupils planned and constructed their own town using elements from different architectural periods.

- Photograph and classify buildings in your local area. Describe and evaluate them in terms of architectural principles.
- Use picture books to introduce themes of town planning, architecture and place design (see Figure 3)
- Include a focus on architecture in field trips and local trails. Ask such questions as, 'why was a particular building created?', 'how can we detect the purpose from the building itself?', 'how could the building be improved?' and 'how do signs of building decay affect us?'
- Examine one building in detail making sketches and drawings. Using an architectural lens, redraw the building or redesign the space outlining a geographical rationale (e.g. the need to cater for a larger population).
- Create a skyline based on the local urban area using black paper against a light background. Compare your skyline with those of other towns.
- Consider what kind of housing unit is best suited to your area. Take into account cost and availability of materials as well as the socio-cultural needs of the area.
- Design an eco-friendly building considering the position of the sun, insulation and renewable energy
- Complete an historical analysis of the building in which you live/work: When was it built? What materials were used in its construction? Who were the previous occupants? Who built it? Find out what important historical events occurred when the building was constructed?
- Design a building for the future, incorporate possible changes in lifestyle and environment.
- Examine the design of local bridges and re-create these using wooden blocks, LEGO and/or other equipment. Assess the advantages and disadvantages of each design.
- Using cardboard boxes or building blocks, design a new urban space.
- Invite a local architect to talk to pupils about the townscape.
- Experiment with earthquake-proof architecture: Using a 3-ring binder, rubber balls, two rubber bands and a large LEGO baseplate, create a shake plate for testing the stability of LEGO skyscrapers. Pupils can compare the variety of height and base sizes of different tower blocks and discuss ways to improve building stability.

Figure 2: Practical ideas for exploring architecture in your local area.

Armstrong, S. (2015) *Cool Architecture: 50 fantastic facts for kids of all ages*. Portico.

Beaty, A. and Roberts, D. (illus) (2007) *Iggy Peck Architect*. New York, NY: Abrams Books.

Fleishman, P. and Hawkes, K. (illus) (2002) *Weslandia*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press.

Halbur, T., Steins C. and Ryan, D. (illus) (2009) *Where Things Are: From near and far*. Los Angeles, CA: Planetizen Press.

Laroche, G. (2011) *If You Lived Here: Houses of the world*. Boston, MA: HMH Books for Young Readers.

Martin, S. and Kimpimäki, E. (2016) *Architect Academy*. Brighton: Ivy Kids.

McLerran, A. and Cooney, B. (illus) (2004) *Roxaboxen*. London: HarperCollins.

Paxmann, C. and Ibelings, A. (illlus) (2012) *From Mud Huts to Skyscrapers: Architecture for children*. New York, NY: Prestel.

Ritchie, S. (2011) *Look at that building! A first book of structures*. Toronto, ON: Kids Can Press.

Sanchez, H. (2017) *Architecture for Kids*. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse.

Van Dusen, C. (2012) *If I Built a House*. New York, NY: Dial Books.

Figure 3: Children's picture books to introduce themes of town planning, architecture and place design.

This installation consisted of a miniature town with individual units, which could be built and rebuilt by pupils. The exhibition highlighted the classically inspired architecture found in typical Irish 19th-century main streets. Artists transformed plain cardboard boxes into buildings with chimneys, roof angles and contemporary signage. Using these miniature cardboard buildings, pupils had the opportunity to design, develop and construct their own Irish town, while tracking the developments of different architectural periods. Pupils were invited to engage with the installation and undertake a variety of planning activities to enhance their understanding of the evolution of Irish urban landscape.

Working as architects, pupils can create a model of their local town or village in a free space in the school. During local fieldwork, pupils can sketch individual buildings noting architectural features (including windows, doorways and gateways) and the construction materials used. Pupils can also take photographs and video footage to record the buildings. Back in the classroom, pupils re-create the local town or village. OS maps can be used to enhance the process. When the model is complete, pupils can assess the strengths and weaknesses of the town plan and its architectural features based on the three principles of architecture outlined above. Pupils can rebuild their town based on different scenarios, including the importance of conserving local heritage and historic sites; or the need for employment; or the location of energy sources and the need to generate renewable energy. Important demolition decisions may be necessary. Inviting an architect to the school to listen to pupils' presentations will enhance geographical learning. Share the pupils' architectural creations with the broader community. Figure 2 offers further practical opportunities for exploring architecture in the locality.

Conclusion

Architecture and design affect the daily lives of all pupils. Architecture offers endless possibilities for geographical exploration and enables pupils to draw on and develop cross-curricular work in art, maths, history and DT. By focusing on the geographical skills of observation and communication in the context of architecture, pupils will become more aware of the cultural heritage that surrounds them.

Today's pupils will determine the quality of the local environment in future, therefore, incorporating an architectural lens into geography can enhance pupils' understanding and appreciation of their local area. Carrying out a study of architecture offers pathways to creativity and geographical futures thinking.

WEB RESOURCES

Further ideas and books: *http://archkidecture.org/archkid-books/*

A kid's guide to building great communities: *https://www.cip-icu.ca/Files/Resources/kidsguide.aspx*

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BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE: SETTLING IN

DAVID HICKS

In this article David explores how building practices that are a positive response to climate hazards will need to be at the heart of our future settlements.

The future is like another country, where things will be done differently. Potentially it will be an unsettling place, not least because we have not been there yet, but also because we all now live with a changing climate. One of the things we like to do when moving to a new place is to settle in. We live with a conundrum: we may hope to feel settled in the near future but know we will have to live with unsettling weather made more difficult by climate change. What can we do to manage these changes positively while helping pupils feel prepared?

Our weather has become more variable and extreme, with heavier rainfall and floods, longer heatwaves, droughts and damaging storms. This is our 'new normal' and will become more so during the lives of our pupils. We have a responsibility to keep our pupils, schools and homes safe, and to achieve this, we need to feel safe and settled in our homes and communities. This article thus looks at positive responses to three climate hazards:

1. Reliance on fossil fuel use.
2. Increased extensive flooding.
3. Longer dangerous heatwaves.

Low-carbon housing

Most houses in the UK today get their energy from fossil fuels (i.e. coal, oil and gas), which, when burnt, emit carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. While our parents and grandparents might still take their use as normal, climate scientists are clear that our use of fossil fuels over the last 200 years created global warming and thus climate change, so we cannot settle down safely at home or school unless we have tried-and-trusted post-carbon alternatives. The first example of building for the future is the Denby Dale Passivhaus in West Yorkshire (Figure 1).

The term 'Passivhaus' refers to a building where the loss of heat is so small that it barely needs any heating at all. Built in 2010, the one in Denby Dale is a 3-bed detached family home. Today it would cost about £300,000. What is so special about it? Because of the very high level of insulation, this house is 20 times more airtight and uses only 10 per cent of the energy (costing just £120 a year) required to heat the average home. There are no draughts and because the air is continuously filtered it is kept fresh.

The owners of this low-carbon house say that they are so used to it they do not find it unusual: it's their norm. 'It wins on comfort, it wins on cost, it wins on sustainability,' they explain, adding, 'We need to do this for humanity – we've got a finite Earth and we've got to do what we can. If we do this, society wins, the people who live in it win, the housing stock wins and the planet wins' (see web panel).

Figure 1: The Denby Dale Passivhaus uses 90 per cent less energy for heating. Photo © greenbuildingstore.co.uk.

Discerning house buyers are already seeking out future-proofed properties such as this one because it has such a low carbon-footprint. As a result, they are treading lightly on Earth, making a vital contribution to mitigating climate change and helping create a post-carbon future. A concerned government would ensure new building regulations were in place to make houses like this the norm. What are builders and architects doing in your area? Where are the nearest low-carbon houses to your school? Can you visit one or have someone come to talk about their importance?

Flood-proof housing

For several years we have seen serious and longer-lasting floods in the UK, with many people having to leave their homes. Some cannot return for a year or longer and this, together with replacing damaged contents, is a deeply unsettling experience. We know floods will become more commonplace as a result of climate change. Floods have different causes: tidal, from the sea and rivers; when rivers burst their banks; groundwater flooding that occurs when the soil is saturated; and flash flooding, which happens when drainage systems are overwhelmed. These are also part of our 'new normal'.

Most houses in the UK are not floodproof and water can find its way in through air vents, floorboards and drains. Surprisingly, councils still approve the construction of new housing on flood plains. Where flooding is likely to occur, new homes need to be flood resistant and older buildings retrofitted. Important key points to remember are:

- new houses should be higher than road level,
- paved areas require permeable drainage,
- plug sockets should be 10–12cm off the ground,
- floors should be solid rather than wooden, and
- homes at risk need a 'flood action plan' that everyone understands.

Other important things for residents to do are to acquire sandbags from the local council, fit non-return valves for pipes, keep valuables in sealed bags, protect doors and windows, and raise the threshold of the main door.

Figure 2: This flood-proof house uses concrete stilts to raise it above likely high-water levels. Photo © Architect Jorge Fontan AIA, Fontan Architecture.

Figure 3: The sunshades on the Al Bahr Towers in Abu Dhabi open and close according to sunlight levels. Photo © Philip Lange/ Shutterstock.com.

Flooding is a way of life for much of the world. Half of The Netherlands, for example, is below sea level but the Dutch have learnt to work with water rather than against it. In the UK, after flooding, an average home can take months to dry out and fixing the damage costs approximately £50,000. Many people feel it is the job of local authorities to manage flood risk, but it is not. People may not prepare in advance because they have never been flooded or, if they have, see it as a one-off event. Check what home insurance says about flood damage!

There are three main ways that houses can be made flood-proof (see web panel).

- Elevated homes: the most obvious way, if you live near a river or the sea, is to ensure your house is above likely high-water levels. The house can be built on stilts or a raised platform made of earth or concrete (Figure 2).
- Homes with floodwalls: these need to be particularly robust and waterproof. Flood walls can be made to protect individual houses or whole settlements. Watertight gates are essential to keep water out.
- Floating homes: these can guarantee to be above rising waters. Some are on pontoons, with waterproof and flexible pipework connecting the house to local services.

What are builders and architects doing in your area? Where are the nearest flood-proofed buildings to your school? Can you visit one or have someone come to talk about their importance?

Heat-proof housing

This is not just about keeping warm but staying safe during heatwaves too. Climate change not only makes flooding more common, but it also brings longer heatwaves. These are of concern because the young and elderly are particularly vulnerable to the effects of hot weather. At present, all that happens in the UK is that health warning alerts are issued. Current housing stock falls short in relation to dangerously hot weather. Most modern buildings are not designed to withstand such weather. In particular, windows often only point in one main direction. As yet, there is no legislation to ensure homes have double-aspect windows that allow cross-ventilation to occur. In North Africa and the Middle East many homes are traditionally based around a central courtyard, which allows air to flow and provides space in which to keep cool.

Many things can be done to minimise the danger of heatwaves (see web panel). Think of the house where you live and its surroundings. Good house insulation is important in maintaining a cool interior. Keep doors and windows open if they catch breezes during the day and take advantage of cooler overnight temperatures. Move to the coolest part of the house for sleeping. Ceiling fans are useful and portable fans can be placed where most needed. Trees and tall bushes can be planted near windows to add shade and block sunlight. External shutters, as used in France, are very effective while internal blinds or curtains are less so but cheaper. Ensuring buildings are cool during a heatwave should not be seen as a luxury, rather it is a necessity. Air conditioning can never be a solution to higher temperatures because it has a major carbon footprint; it is time for updated building regulations so that new heat-proofed housing is available. A beautiful example of what is possible is the Al Bahr Towers in Abu Dhabi (Figure 3). These have 1049 hexagonal shades that open and close like flowers when following the sun. Areas in direct sunlight are shaded, but then open to allow light in as the sun moves on.

Safe and settled

These positive architectural responses highlight three climate hazards that pupils need to know about in order to stay safe in the future. They are not intended to cause concern but to engage their spirit of enquiry in exploring positive responses – their own and others – so they will be prepared for the changes ahead. In so doing pupils will be more able to settle into these 'new times' rather than being unsettled by what lies ahead.

WEB RESOURCES

Denby Dale Passivhaus 5 years on:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ff8P7CJICNMDenby

What would a heat-proof city look like?:
https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/aug/15/what-heat-proof-city-look-like

Less CO2: a low energy programme for sustainable schools:
www.lessco2.org.uk/

Five ways to build a flood-proof home:
https://makewealthhistory.org/20166/01/08/five-ways-to-build-a-flood-proof-home

David Hicks was formerly Professor in the School of Education at Bath Spa University and has a particular interest in issues of sustainability and climate change. His website is www.teaching4abetterworld.co.uk

WAKING UP TO HOMELESSNESS: MYTHS AND CHALLENGES

EMILY BALLIN WITH MICHELE LANCIONE

Emily and Michele raise key questions for primary teachers, based on their research on homelessness geographies.

Homelessness is an issue that everyone is aware of, yet not necessarily educated about. We are given the opportunity to make sense of it during our daily lives: we walk past people in sleeping bags in doorways on the street, see posters about homelessness from charitable organisations, or may simply appreciate the pleasure of returning to our own home during cold weather. In this way, we too develop assumptions about homelessness; but what are our ideas based on?

This article aims to challenge some common assumptions about homelessness using understandings drawn from the field of homelessness geographies. As researchers in the field, we invite you to ask yourself: How do I understand homelessness? How do I think homelessness is created? What does it mean to be homeless? Who are the homeless? What does this mean to me as a teacher?

How do I understand homelessness?

We would like to start with the three common 'myths of homelessness'.

1. Homelessness is often seen as a failure of an individual (i.e. someone who has allowed themselves – perhaps through carelessness, recklessness, laziness or rebellion – to become detached from 'normality'). Here, people are understood to have become homeless through some fault of their own.
2. Homelessness is often (even exclusively) perceived as rough sleeping (i.e. people living without shelter are homeless, therefore people who have shelter are assumed not to be homeless).
3. The homeless are imagined to have shared characteristics and similar identities. Homeless people are recognised through their housing situation alone, rather than by their more complex, important and crucial realities as human beings. (Their homelessness thus dominates the general public's perception of their identity).

Contemporary homelessness geographies suggest understandings that dispute all three of these 'myths':

1. Homelessness is not simply a personal, but a systemic, issue.
2. Not all homeless people are rough sleepers.
3. Homeless people are still full, rounded members of society.

In considering these points, we can begin to consider ways of equipping pupils with meaningful insights into the phenomenon of homelessness.

How do I think homelessness is created?

Homelessness currently affects 320,000 people in the UK alone, including many families. The charity Shelter puts the 2018 figure for homeless children at 128,000 (Shelter website – see web panel). This means that homelessness, or the risk of it, is part of the reality of many children's lives. Teaching about homelessness not only demands great sensitivity from us as teachers, but also leads us to ensure we provide safe spaces where all pupils can explore the issue, including their related ideas and feelings.

Contemporary geographies of homelessness explain that negative life events happen to everyone (e.g. divorce and family breakdown, death of a family member, loss of job, increase in debt). Both local- and large-scale factors can exacerbate this situation: for example, following the 2008 financial crisis, there was a significant increase in debt-related homelessness in the USA and many EU countries.

These events may lead to other difficulties (e.g. depression, alcoholism), which leave people yet more vulnerable to homelessness. While safety nets (established by the state and society) may be in place for people in difficult circumstances, they are not currently sufficient. In fact, the safety nets have been declining (e.g. through reductions in welfare benefits and the availability of social housing). When these safety nets fail, people 'fall through the cracks' and homelessness results.

Because these life events can happen to anyone, we are all potentially vulnerable. On the one hand, there is a tricky question for teachers here about how to engage pupils with this reality without engendering an atmosphere of anxiety and fear. However, removing the perception of personal fault from homeless people and replacing it with ideas about misfortune and factors beyond the individuals' control can perhaps get pupils to think more deeply about how homelessness is generated.

What does it mean to be homeless?

Research from homelessness geographies makes it very clear that not all homeless people sleep rough. In fact, the increasingly visible number of homeless people on the streets is just the tip of the iceberg. The majority of homeless people actually have some form of shelter or housing (Figure 1).

The more hidden forms of homelessness are sometimes referred to as 'housing precarity'. This means that a house no longer fits the traditional secure and comforting notions associated with 'a home'. The European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS – see web panel) describes homelessness as:

- rooflessness (without a shelter of any kind, sleeping rough)
- houselessness (with a place to sleep, but temporary in institutions or shelter)
- living in insecure housing (being threatened with severe exclusion due to insecure tenancies, eviction and/or domestic violence)
- living in inadequate housing (including in caravans on illegal campsites, in unfit housing, in extreme overcrowding).

Using these descriptions allows teachers to consider taking a relational approach to understanding homelessness. For example, spending time with pupils exploring their own ideas and feelings about 'feeling at home' and 'when a home is not a home anymore' as well as the distinction between 'a house' and 'a home' (Figure 2). Most primary pupils can grasp and relate to these notions at their own level by drawing on their prior personal experiences of the world.

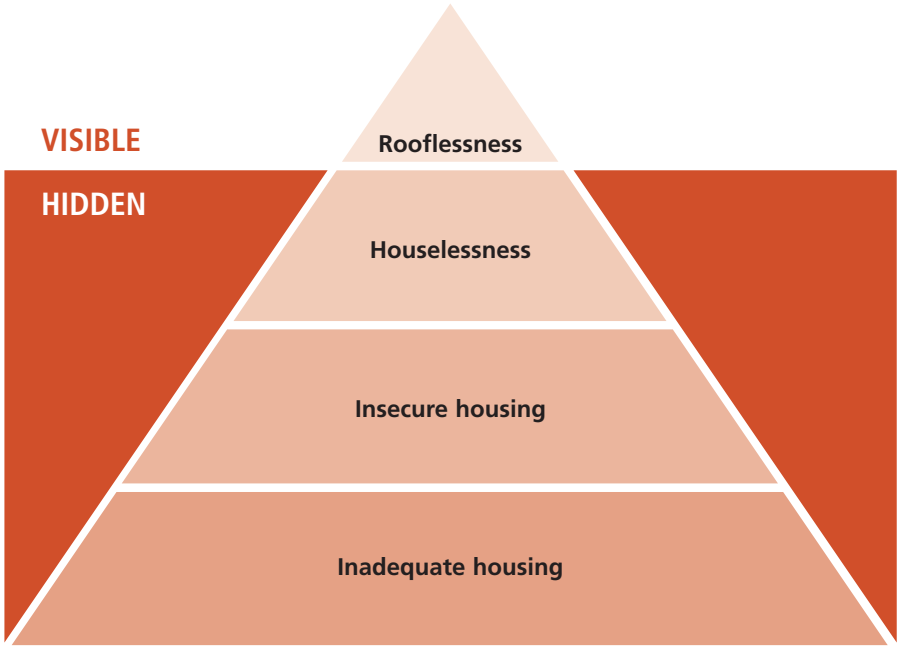


Figure 1: Visible and hidden forms of homelessness.

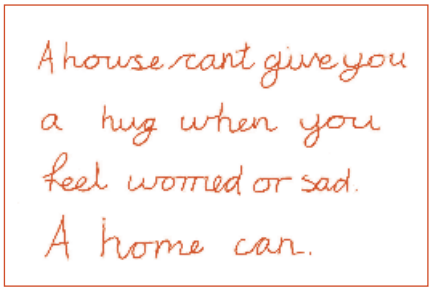


Figure 2: Exploring the distinction between 'a house' and 'a home': the words of a child working with Big Brum TIE (see web panel).

Who are the homeless?

Homelessness geographies remind us that people do not cease to be full, rounded individuals because they are without a home. While homelessness may control or restrict their lives in many respects, it does not have to be a person's most defining characteristic. Homeless people can and do express much more than their status.

For example, homeless people still make a life in hard conditions (including meeting with friends, enjoying activities and visiting places), and are able to make decisions on the opportunities presented to them. Most notably, homeless people can choose whether to receive or decline charity, which can be very challenging to both homeless people and would-be donors. For example, if a homeless person has just eaten and a stranger offers them food, they may decline it; similarly, if they do not enjoy the taste of the food offered, they may decline it. People can make choices around their homelessness.

One common response to homelessness by pupils – and schools – is to want to help, for example, through fundraising. This approach needs to be tackled with care if it is not to define homeless people by their homelessness, or assume a lack of personal agency. Pupils may be afraid of homeless people in public places. The key thing is to keep stressing the point that, since anyone can become homeless, then homeless people are, basically, people like us, but ones who find themselves in difficult circumstances.

In this sense, how schools approach homelessness can enable us to learn a great deal from the ways in which development education approaches global economic inequality; i.e. from a critical standpoint that moves 'from a charity mentality to a social justice mentality' while 'encouraging empathy, fairness and respect' (Global Learning Programme – see web panel).

Picture books about family change:

- Haughton, E. (2001) *Rainy Day*. London: Picture Corgi.
- McAfee, A. (2000) *The Visitors Who Came to Stay*. London: Walker Books.

Picture books about feeling at home and feeling lost:

- Cowcher, H. (1991) *Tigress*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- Hoffman, M. (1992) *The Colour of Home*. London: Frances Lincoln.
- Morley, B. (2009) *The Silence Seeker*. London: Tamarind.
- Tan, S. (2000) *The Lost Thing*. Sydney: Hachette Australia (also available as a film clip – see web panel).

Figure 3: Resources and support for teaching about homelessness through fiction.

What does this mean to me as a teacher?

So far, we have invited you to explore your own understanding of the issues and to consider some common myths about homelessness. Securing a realistic understanding of the key issues for yourself is an important step to take if you wish to address those issues in the classroom. We think that the field of homelessness geographies offers valuable insights in this respect.

We have stressed that a large number of children may be homeless or precariously housed, which calls for sensitivity and care in the classroom to avoid the negative stereotypes of homelessness, or blame, or the assumption that everyone in the class is living in a relatively secure housing situation.

We have invited you to consider taking a relational approach to homelessness, such as exploring ideas and feelings around 'house' and 'home', emphasising the idea that people who are homeless are, fundamentally, just like ourselves, with feelings, choices and rights.

We have outlined some of the causes of homelessness (especially when a precarious situation intersects with an inadequate 'safety net'). Pupils of all ages can explore the issues through the emotional safety of fiction (Figure 3). Older pupils could look at carefully-chosen film clips, or perhaps receive a visit from organisations working with homeless people. The latter are particularly useful if they articulate the voices of homeless people themselves. There are also opportunities for meaningful drama work.

WEB RESOURCES

Big Brum Theatre in Education: *www.bigbrum.org.uk*
FEANTSA: *https://www.feantsa.org/en/toolkit/2005/04/01/ethos-typology-on-homelessness-and-housing-exclusion*
Global Learning Programme – England: *https://globaldimension.org.uk/chooseglp/glp-england-update/what-is-global-learning/*
Shelter website: *https://england.shelter.org.uk*
The Lost Thing film clip: *https://youtu.be/rpak6ktsux4*

Emily Ballin has a degree in Human Geography from Cardiff University, where her BSc dissertation centred on homeless day centre use in the city. Michele Lancione is Senior Research Fellow and Director of ECRs Development at the Urban Institute, and the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, University of Sheffield.

A QUESTION OF CONNECTION

RACHEL LEWIS

There are lots of ways pupils can find out more about other countries. Here, Rachel shows how she developed cross-curricular opportunities for pupils to take the lead in developing links with schools overseas.

At Kingscourt School we recognise the importance of encouraging pupils in the 21st century to have a global perspective and we work hard to increase opportunities for our pupils to be involved global learning.

In this article, year 5 pupils describe their experiences in trying a 'Mystery Skype' for the first time and developing an email link with a class in the United Arab Emirates. I chose these two different approaches because I thought they would appeal to different pupils and incorporate a wider range of skills. A Mystery Skype is immediate and fast-paced – pupils need to be able to think quickly and have the confidence to speak to children that they have not met – while emailing allows everyone to contribute and work together in smaller groups to create the email.

I contacted the teacher of a year 4 class at The British School of Barcelona, Spain. We talked about the objectives for the session and arranged a convenient time to Skype. Making this contact was straightforward because both our schools are Cognita schools. The Cognita group is keen to utilise the opportunities for co-operation between its schools around the world, and with 70 schools in eight countries, was a good starting point to organise a school to Skype with. However, you do not have to part of a group that has overseas schools in order to try this yourself. Links in the web panel offer guidance on organising a Mystery Skype and a database of schools that are looking for a Skype partner.

I introduced the idea to the class, and we played a game where I thought of a country and the pupils used their atlas with a restricted number of questions to work out where in the world my country was. To start with many pupils randomly picked out countries. We discussed that this would be a very time-consuming and boring process. The pupils realised they needed questions that eliminated as many countries as possible.

The process offered so much opportunity. Geographical language flowed – from hemispheres, continents and names of seas and oceans, to rivers, mountain ranges, city names, latitude and longitude as well as directional vocabulary. Very soon, pupils were asking questions such as 'Are you in the northern hemisphere?' or 'Are you landlocked?' Pupils had to listen carefully to avoid repetition or wasted questions. Once they had worked out the continent, pupils changed scale from a world map to look at individual continents. Sometimes pupils worked in pairs, sometimes on their own. The number of questions pupils needed to locate my country dramatically reduced and I was delighted with the range of skills they had developed.

Once the pupils had developed their confidence with finding a particular country on a map, through their own questioning, we Skyped a year 6 class within the school as a trial.

Finally, we were ready! The year 5 pupils knew they would be talking to a class somewhere in the world, but had no idea where. They thought about the questions they would like to ask (see Figure 1) and I invited two volunteers to introduce us all.

Pupils had an atlas to refer to and we waited for the Skype ring tone… In Figure 2 pupils outline the process and offer their thoughts on taking part.

After the session, year 5 looked at Google Earth and found the mountains that the pupils from Barcelona had described. In their next languages lesson, the teacher (who is a Spanish specialist) explained about Catalan and why some of the pupils in Barcelona were learning the language.

Year 5 had also created a link with a school in the UAE, which was just down to luck! (One Kingscourt teacher's daughter had moved to the UAE to work. She is not a teacher, but shares a house with a teacher from Brighton College in Abu Dhabi, so we made the link.) We needed to use a different type of communication for this link because no Skype is allowed to/from the UAE. As the link has developed, year 5 Kingscourt pupils have sent emails, photos and letters every half term to year 4 pupils at Brighton College, Abu Dhabi. They talk about the school, their lives and wider events happening in Britain. Initially, both classes had to guess where the other one was located. Again, Figure 3 takes us through the process and the thoughts of the pupils on taking part.

Connecting classrooms

Connecting classrooms was a powerful learning tool in many ways. It made for a practical experience instead of simply telling pupils about a place, and they had much greater control over their learning. In many lessons, we spend time thinking about the differences between people. This project has really made us all think about how similar we are in lots of ways – and probably all of the ones that really matter!

What would be your typical weather at this time of year?

What sports do you play in school and out of school?

What holidays do you celebrate?

Do you speak different languages?

What kind of pets do you have?

What can you see from your classroom? Is there lots of countryside or is it a town or city?

Do most people live close to the school? How do you get to school?

How big is your school?

Can you describe a typical school day? What subjects do you study?

What is a typical lunch or food for you to have?

What activities do you do at break time? Sometimes we have wet break because of rain when we have to stay inside, do you have that?

What is there to visit near your school?

Figure 1: The year 5 pupil questions about school life at the link school.

I worried that they might not be able to understand us.

When we did the practice with year six we were laughing and making jokes because we know them, and they were just in the other classroom. When we did the real one, I felt much more shy.

I remember our teacher saying 'You need to be really quiet now'. Then she pressed the button and we could see the other children for the first time.

It was so exciting. I wondered if we would be able to tell where they were just by looking at them or if there would be clues in their classroom. It was a tiny bit scary.

We asked the other class questions and they could only answer 'yes' or 'no'. We quickly realised that they were in the Northern Hemisphere and then narrowed it down to Europe.

Everyone had to listen really carefully to the answers that the other school gave so that we did not waste questions.

We guessed where their school was first. I didn't know many cities in Spain, but I had heard of Barcelona because of the football.

I loved hearing the other children talking. They did speak English, but you could tell by their accents that they were not in England.

We asked them questions about their school and lessons. They told us that some of them were learning Catalan.

They told us about the weather and what they like to do at the weekends.

We wanted to know what they had eaten for lunch and which sports they played.

Some of us wanted to know about football.

I asked what they could see out of their classroom window. They told us that they could see some mountains in the distance, which had snow on them.

We asked them what you could visit near their school.

We got more and more confident with asking questions. The Spanish children asked us lots of questions too.

It was like they were right there with us at that moment.

I couldn't believe that I had talked to someone from another country. I have never done that before.

We were all working together and even to think about meeting children in another school in a different country is amazing.

I felt very nervous at the start. Then at the end, it had all gone fine and I loved doing it.

Figure 2: The Barcelona Mystery Skype in the pupils' own words.

We sent clues about where our school was. The other school sent them back for us.

We looked in the atlas and found out exactly where they were. None of us had been there before and so we had lots of questions.

We sent some pictures of our school when it was closed because of the heavy snow. The children from Abu Dhabi emailed back with a picture of their play area. Some of it is shaded because the temperatures can be up to 50°C in the summer. It never snows in Abu Dhabi.

We sent them a picture of our World Book Day where everyone dressed up and brought in to school their favourite book. The children from Abu Dhabi sent us a picture back of their World Book Day.

Our schools are over 4000 miles apart, in different countries and different continents. We all enjoyed the same things on that day; dressing up and talking about our reading.

We visited a mosque in Woking and the next time the children from the UAE wrote to us they told us about Ramadan in their school and in the UAE.

The school in the UAE was much more modern than our school, but their classroom looked like ours inside.

We sent some pictures of our class residential to Dorset. We spent one day sea kayaking, but we needed a wet suit because the sea was cold. We still really enjoyed it.

I preferred communicating by email because we could send pictures and add in everything we wanted to.

We both preferred the Skype because we could see the children and their reactions.

When I talk to people from other countries, I now know that in some ways they are different, but in lots of ways they are quite similar.

It has changed the way that I see people from other places. Now I realise that people in other countries are not all the same, but not really that different from me.

At first I thought that we would find it difficult talking to people from other countries. I worried we would not have anything to say. I have totally changed my way of thinking and it was really fun.

It has made me more interested in finding out about different countries.

Figure 3: The UAE email connection in the Kingscourt pupils' own words.

WEB RESOURCES

Mystery Skype: *https://education.microsoft.com/skype-in-the-classroom/mystery-skype*
How to play mystery Skype: *https://education.microsoft.com/courses-and-resources/webinars/webinar-how-to-play-mystery-skype*

Rachel Lewis is the subject leader for geography at Kingscourt School in Hampshire, where they received the Silver Primary Geography Quality Mark in 2016.

EMBEDDING GEOGRAPHY FOR POSITIVE EMPOWERMENT

LEANNE CHOREKDIJAN

Leanne describes how a group of pupils at Kingsbury Green Primary School, London, are undertaking projects to make everyone in the school aware of global issues and to try to combat them on a local scale.

Background

For the last three years, I have been working closely with the Global Learning Programme (GLP), delivering sessions to a group of teachers from schools in our Partnership Schools' Network. As part of my role, I run a lunchtime Eco-Champions club for year 5/6 pupils. The Eco-Champions' main role is to promote awareness of global issues and tackle them on a local scale.

Kingsbury Green is a diverse and inclusive primary school in Brent, London, with 680 pupils. The school has embedded global learning across the curriculum, with a focus on critical thinking, empathy and intellectual and physical agility. The school values depth and breadth in its curriculum and pledges a greater focus on learning about global development. Personally, I have found providing immersive, memorable experiences not only engages pupils in their learning, but also provides the foundations for future learning.

Settling our geography

One dictionary definition of the word 'settle' is 'to begin to feel comfortable or established in a new situation'. Therefore, my understanding of the term in relation to 'settling geography' is one where geography in its many evolving forms (and moving away from a more stereotypical geography) becomes embedded or established in new or unlikely situations. In other words, how teachers in urban areas are adapting and incorporating geography into the curriculum without necessarily having access to open natural spaces.

Another interpretation of 'settling geography' is associated with the interdependence of humans and the natural environment and our impact on the eco-systems of places we populate. Thus, sustainability – or ensuring the interdependent balance between the physical and human worlds – must be maintained for both worlds to continue to thrive into the future. The project I detail below focuses on empowering pupils through an awareness of global issues, to make a difference to their school and local community. Underpinning this is the belief that if everyone makes changes locally, eventually it will have an impact globally as well. Exposing pupils to projects like these embeds and 'settles' geography in their everyday learning and contributes to their knowledge and experiences of the world.

The project

In November 2017, awareness of single-use plastic pollution was raised in the BBC documentary, Blue Planet II. We used the series as a stimulus to thinking empathetically and researching what happened to the sealife that human plastic waste had an impact upon (Figure 1). Pupils watched clips from the series then read a Radio Times news article that detailed viewers' responses to the episode (see web panel). In debates with peers, pupils voiced their own views and thought critically about ways they could reduce single-use plastic in the school and local community.

As with other GLP projects, this was linked to the UN's (2015) Sustainable Development Goals. The pupils thought about interdependence, questioning what happens to the single-use plastic brought into school in lunchboxes, which is then thrown away. Pupils researched the 'life' of the plastic once it had been discarded, highlighting issues around recycling (or lack of), landfill sites, rivers, oceans and, ultimately, plastic washing up on beaches across the world. The pupils drew images to show how everything in the natural environment is connected and reflected on how their direct actions positively and negatively affect not just their immediate environment, but also the global environment. Despite being in an inner-city area, through their geographical understanding the pupils are aware of the impact that they have in other parts of the world. This highlights the fact that geography can be continuously embedded, or 'settled', regardless of a school's geographical context.

Eco-activities and actions

The main aim of the project was to increase awareness of the impact of plastic waste and to try to reduce the amount thrown away by pupils, their friends and families. Geography was the core tool used to support pupils in better understanding their daily lives in their environment, and it became apparent that, increasingly, geography became embedded in their learning and thinking. 'Eco-Champion' pupils delivered two assemblies, designed to encourage all the school's pupils to use reusable bags and water bottles in school and at home.

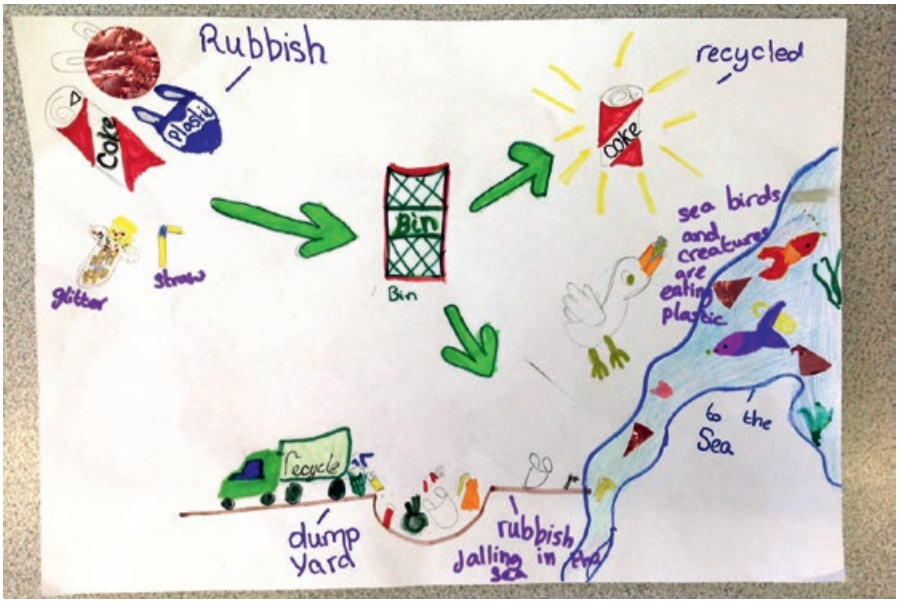


Figure 1: An example of a pupil's learning during our research phase.

Eco-champions

Kingsbury Green Primary School
Old Kenton Lane
NW9 9ND

Dear Ms. Wynne,
We are writing to persuade you to start purchasing biodegradable glitter because as you know, glitter is a micro-plastic that fish, sea creatures and birds are eating.

Plastic (including the glitter we use in school) is finding its way into our oceans – it's frightening! The micro-plastic is interfering with marine life as they are eating the plastic and some are even dying. In addition to this, plastic is now in our food chain, we could be eating poisonous plastic from fish served in our homes or even **our school!!**

In addition, our school is called Kingsbury Green Primary School. The 'GREEN' is important. We should be making sure that we help the environment in every way that we can.

The cost to the school will be expensive, it is about £18 for 100ml. We know it is costly, but we're sure you will agree that by buying biodegradable glitter we will be doing our bit to help the environment.

We are so passionate about this issue that we are willing to fundraise in order to buy the new glitter. We want to have an Eco-Afternoon next half-term to wash teachers' cars, sell cup-cakes and hold a raffle. Nishil's band have even offered to entertain our customers for FREE! Can we meet with you on a Friday afternoon straight after lunch? Let us know which date is convenient for you (please let Ms. Chorekdjian know as well).

Yours sincerely,
The Eco-Champions

Figure 2: A passionate and carefully-written letter from the Eco-Champions to the Head teacher notified her of their campaign.

The Eco-Champions awarded certificates as an incentive to pupils who managed to reduce the amount of plastic they used. A school-wide poster competition encouraged all pupils to spread the word on the impact of plastic and outlined how to reduce its use. As well as being praised in the school newsletter, the posters were chosen to represent the school in a 'British Science Week' poster competition. This had a significant impact on the pupils because it empowered them to employ problem-solving skills to generate ways to bring about change in others' behaviour and to improve the immediate (local) environment as well as benefitting the wider, global environment.

As the project progressed, the pupils discovered that glitter is a form of micro-plastic that does not biodegrade. The pupils were shocked to discover that, alongside microbeads, plastic bottles and bags, glitter enters our seas and oceans as well as the food chain. This fact encouraged the pupils to switch from micro-plastic to biodegradable glitter. They wrote to the Head teacher to inform her of their ideas and asked for a meeting to discuss the issues further (Figure 2).

The pupils were so passionate about reducing the amount of micro-plastic wasted in school that they decided to fundraise to pay for the more expensive biodegradable glitter. They thought critically about sustainable ways to use the micro-plastic glitter collected across the school. The pupils asked for jam-jar donations so they could make candle holders using the micro-plastic glitter. Also, once the glitter had been used to decorate the jam jars, rather than discarding the plastic tubs it was stored in, pupils used them to make pencil pots. The pupils came up with the idea of an 'Eco-Afternoon' – here they sold the products made, together with cakes they had baked. They also formed a band, which performed at an Eco-Afternoon, and washed teachers' cars in order to attract more donations.

To promote the event, pupils used ICT skills to design posters and advertisements for the school newsletter. The Eco-Afternoon was cross-curricular in so many ways – the pupils used knowledge of:

- number and money (when giving change/collecting donations),
- music (during the band's performance),
- speaking and listening (to persuade people to make purchases and spread awareness of the aims of the project), and
- art/DT (to design candle holders and pencil pots).

Impact

Through their fundraising, the pupils raised enough money to buy biodegradable glitter and the school no longer orders micro-plastic glitter. Longer term, and more significantly, the amount of single-use plastic thrown away has been reduced dramatically: canvas bags and refillable bottles have replaced the use of plastic ones. Rather than banning glitter, the pupils used critical thinking skills to create an alternative solution, successfully pitched to the Head teacher. Pupils across the school were engaged and eager to support the club and they have continued to work towards caring for the environment long after the project came to an end.

The number of pupils who applied for the Eco-Champion club increased from ten in 2017–18 to twenty in 2018–19 – a clear indication that, inspired by the actions of their peers, pupils associate the club with a positive identity. As one pupil commented: 'I want to be an Eco-Champion because I want to protect the animals in the world and in the sea'. This highlights the fact that in an inner-city school, seemingly disconnected from nature, pupils can feel connected with and reflect on nature in their own lives. Living in an urban settlement does not result in a detachment from nature, but has the potential to empower and instil a desire within pupils to connect and think deeply about the environment around them.

Throughout the project, pupils have employed geography skills to think critically. They have grappled with internal conflict: should they continue to use single-use plastic for convenience or should they stop and protect the environment? The result has been a compromise – they did not want to stop using glitter, so found a solution. Through the actions of Eco-Champions and other pupils, geography education is well and truly 'settled' into the everyday life of our school.

WEB RESOURCES

BBC Blue Planet II: *https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p04tjbtx*
Radio Times news: *https://www.radiotimes.com/news/tv/2018-08-29/blue-planet-2-plastic-waste-final-episode*
GLP (England): *https://www.ssatuk.co.uk/cpd/subjects-curriculum-and-assessment/glp/glp-e/*
Kingsbury Green Primary School Vision Statement (2016): *https://www.kingsburygreenprimaryschool.org.uk/mission-statement*
UN SDGs: *https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/*

Leanne Chorekdjian is TCB Leader at Kingsbury Green Primary School, Brent, London. As part of her role, she delivers sessions on GLP to teachers from schools in a local Partnership Schools' Network.

SETTLING NERVES: UNDERTAKING FIELDWORK IN CHALLENGING LOCATIONS

PAULA RICHARDSON

If you think your school's local area is not suitable for fieldwork activities, think again. Here, Paula urges you to embrace all that challenging locations have to offer.

Often only historic or gentrified towns and cities, attractive and accessible rivers and green landscapes are seen as ideal for fieldwork. However, the reality is that many schools are located in what appear to be unpromising residential areas with the local river and other potential fieldwork sites seen as too industrialised or difficult to access. Coupled with time pressures and financial considerations, these constraints can dent teachers' resolve to take pupils out. However, we know that out-of-classroom experiences are vital in helping pupils to develop an understanding of their local area and the world around them, so we need to look again at 'challenging locations'.

Using such locations requires sensitive handling because many pupils may live in the local area and the houses being investigated may belong to their families. Similarly, care should be taken when photographing or making judgements about individual houses within earshot of residents. What follows are some ideas for creating interesting and worthwhile activities to help pupils see local places in a new light.

The housing estate or suburban area

Look at buildings

Many pupils are relatively unobservant about their home area, so it is an opportunity to look at the place with fresh eyes. At first glance, a row of houses may all look the same, but it is likely that they have been personalised by residents. For example, some houses may have hanging baskets or potted plants, some houses will have numbers while others are named, some may have a front garden while others have converted it into a parking space.

Figure 1: Any area can offer opportunities for enquiry fieldwork. Photo © Andy Wright.

As well as these aspects, pupils can investigate housing by type and age. They should also identify the different types of materials (slate, brick, granite, iron, pebbles, sand, etc.) used in housing construction.

Some estates were built specifically to house people working in the locality. Because the houses will have been constructed at the same time, such estates offer pupils the opportunity to investigate old maps of the area to find out what was there before the houses. If the houses are fairly new, some residents may be willing to talk to the pupils about how the area looked in the past.

A 'Missing building' scenario enables pupils to think about how they might fill a space between existing buildings. Having identified a 'space', they can investigate what was there first. They then decide what facility might be of most benefit to the area. As they design the building, pupils can either match the style of the surrounding buildings or create something entirely different.

Find out the function

This is an opportunity for pupils to establish whether an area is primarily a residential, an industrial, a retail or an office zone. Have a series of questions ready to allow them to discover more about how the area operates (Figure 1). What are the special challenges that emerge as a result of a zone's industrial function (e.g. traffic build-up at specific times)? How do people cope with these challenges? And, if not, what could be a solution? In a residential area, is there one dominant type of accommodation? How and why has this occurred? In an out-of-town shopping area, what outlets are there and what are their opening hours? Who might shop at midnight in a 24-hour store? How many different services does a petrol station offer beside fuel?

Draw up task cards to encourage pupils to think critically about a specific area. Tasks can include 'sum up the character of the area in three words' or 'write a short sentence on the function of the area' (download the activity sheet for more suggestions – see web panel). Pupils can walk around the area with their task card and make notes on what they see, feel and think about it.

Figure 2: Direct access difficulties at urban waterways can be overcome by utilising safe viewpoints. Photo © Ted and Jen.

Getting around

Accessibility

This topic encourages pupils to look at how their home area is connected with other places. On a map of the area, pupils mark transport access (such as bus stops and routes) and the nearest shops, post boxes, library, and so on, to build up a pattern of how accessible places are. They can find out the times of first and last buses and think about the impact on residents if the last bus runs at 6pm. Pupils can also investigate how far people travel to a supermarket, cinema, dentist, or other service using public transport. What is the cost of doing this? Is there a 'Dial-a-ride' or similar community bus service to transport elderly people around? How do wheelchair users or adults with prams get around? Are there suitable road crossing points and, if not, where might these be located? Pupils could establish whether crossing points enable pedestrians in a wheelchair or using a walking stick enough time to cross safely.

Parking and cycling issues

Parking is a good topic to investigate: pupils can map how it is regulated in a given area. After marking no parking, limited and open parking zones on a map, they could decide if there are there sufficient parking bays for the number of vehicles. Many residential areas now have permit-only parking – is this necessary? Does it work? Who are the winners and losers? Where there are cycle lanes on roads – are they safe for cyclists to use? Other road users often use cycle lanes, is this acceptable or permissible?

Urban waterways

Rivers and canals

Although many areas have a river or canal, one of the difficulties is accessing them to carry out fieldwork. However, you should be able to identify safe viewing points that allow pupils to make observations about the physical features on the river/canal, the land use on either side, evidence of pollution (both on land and in the water) and any regeneration along its course (Figure 2). Bridges are places pupils can use to measure the width of a waterway safely, and some urban rivers/canals have a walkway or towpath alongside that enables pupils to record observations about specific water features. Investigate secondary sources in the classroom, including local newspapers, which often have reports about flooding in the area. Pupils could also interview local people about their experiences of living near a waterway. Where there are older buildings (e.g. mills, former industrial units), these can provide the historical evidence for the changing life of the river. Renovated or new-build flats alongside a river/canal can provoke questions about who might live in them and why people like to live there.

Other water features

Other urban water features include drainage channels, fountains, lakes and ponds, which also provide material for investigation. What were the features originally built for? What are they used for now?

The present and the future

Looking at present-day physical and human features of a waterway is an opportunity to think about what the future may hold for it. Can pupils see evidence of change already? What are the local council plans for the use of the river/canal in the future?

Street signage and art

Street signs

No matter where we live, an abundance of street signs provides excellent material for investigation. Pupils can categorise the variety of informational, warning or message signs to see just how much information they convey. Who are the signs for? Are the signs mandatory, interesting, useful or just distracting? Introducing the Highway code allows pupils to link street signs with the rules of the road and consider where road signs are placed. Are there places where the number of signs could overwhelm road users? How might this be overcome?

Urban art

Few urban places have escaped the eye of the graffiti artist. Discussion can centre on the aesthetic appeal of graffiti as well as street art. Do pupils think graffiti improves their area? Why? What messages does the graffiti convey? Is it street art? Is Banksy (for instance) a vandal rather than an artist? By way of contrast, pupils could investigate how local planners use street art/furniture to make city centres more appealing. What kind of street furniture, artwork (murals and sculptures) and information boards is there in your area? Where is it located? Discuss whether officially sanctioned street art/furniture is more appealing than unofficial ones.

Conclusion

Every place, every street and every house has a history, a present and a future use. Pupils should be encouraged to use first-hand observation and secondary resources to look again at their place. The benefit of carrying out fieldwork in the local area is that it can be visited repeatedly, allowing pupils to capture change as it happens. Far from being a challenging environment, your local area can be the ideal place for good fieldwork experiences.

WEB RESOURCES

Settlement activity sheet:
www.geography.org.uk/pg
Why streets matter:
https://www.sustrans.org.uk/what-you-can-do/change-your-street/why-streets-matter

Paula Richardson is an education adviser, teacher and author, Chair of the GA's Publications Board, and Director and Trustee of the GA.

SETTLING IN A DISTANT PLACE

TARNYA BERAS

In this article Tarnya reflects on her emotional journey in moving from Wales to settle in the Dominican Republic.

Pushing boundaries

I had always been a 'home bird', choosing to remain in Wales for my university studies and returning to my home town to work at my primary school as a Newly Qualified Teacher. Teaching was something I had wanted to do since I was a young girl and, by the age of 21, this dream had become a reality. However, nothing quite prepared me for the challenges of teaching while becoming an adult and figuring out what my life would hold. It was during my fourth year of teaching – when almost all my friends and family had moved away from that small town, I had missed out on a promotion, and the prospect of finding someone to settle down with had near-disappeared – that I decided it was time for a change. As moving elsewhere in the UK was not going to be enough, teaching abroad and pushing my boundaries seemed like the perfect idea.

I immediately began searching online for teaching positions overseas, and thinking about what part of the world I would like to live in. I knew a busy city would not be for me. I am quite shy and nervous in new situations, so finding a job that came with accommodation and a short commute helped me narrow my search. That was when I discovered a job at a private school in the Dominican Republic. After meeting with the Head teacher in London, I knew I had made a great choice. Despite the terrifying prospect of learning to ride a scooter, I hoped that I would be offered the job. The day I got the phone call, I held an impromptu meeting in my classroom at playtime to tell the other members of staff. They were all happy for me, which confirmed that going beyond my comfort zone and making this move was the right decision.

Making the move

The next few months of planning and shopping were hectic, and the goodbyes were emotional, but on 24 August 2014, I travelled from London Gatwick into what was for me, the unknown. As expected, I became known as the quiet one among the eight newcomers (and the one that other members of staff questioned whether I would stick it out for the two years I had signed up for). For the first few days this may have been true, but after endless activities and social events I started to come out of my shell and embrace this new life. I was settling in the Dominican Republic, or DR, as it has affectionately become known.

Ethos and environment

A week after arriving, school began and I immediately felt comfortable in front of a class again. One of the main differences was that there were now just 18 faces staring back at me, instead of the 30–32 I was accustomed to. The expectations were clear: for pupils to pass all the assessments by the end of the year, otherwise they fail and must repeat the year. Do that twice and they are out of school. Teaching assistants were available only in the first few grades, so support for students with additional needs came from a 1-hour weekly session with the Language Support teacher. Parents and pupils knew that the responsibility was on them. The trust in my teaching was strong and almost never questioned. If a pupil was having difficulties, this was communicated to the parents, whose immediate response was to take away treats like television and play dates. Many pupils had tutors or siblings that would support them and daily homework was expected. I was unaccustomed to an environment where teachers were so respected and education so valued.

I had a partner teacher in the same year group who had been teaching at the school for two years. She supported me through the first few weeks as I got to grips with the new system. We planned objectives together, but the way I taught them was completely up to me. Again, the trust in my abilities was clear and the pressure (although still there) was minimised. Paperwork was part of the job. Planning, assessments and reports were important (and checked by management regularly), but the focus was on teaching pupils. One of my favourite aspects of the job was second-language skills. Of course, I was teaching maths, science, writing etc., but a large part of classroom time involved teaching the pupils to speak English correctly. As a second-language Welsh speaker and teacher, I truly understood the importance of correction and repetition and took pride in my ability to do this well.

In the UK, my work-life balance was near non-existent – and something my parents questioned. My mother pushed me to study hard and focus on my career, but she never anticipated the amount of time I would have to sacrifice to it in my early twenties. I would often hide the fact that I felt I was drowning in marking, planning, extra-curricular activities and all the other stress that came with teaching in the UK. Now, here I was, living in a tropical country, with working hours from 8am until 2pm. Daily planning, preparation

Figure 1: Settling into the novelty of trips to the beach after work. Photo courtesy of the author.

Figure 2: New challenges include organising the end-of-year art exhibition. Photo courtesy of the author.

and assessment (PPA) time took place while specialist subjects were taught, thus allowing me to stay on top of my marking, planning and displays. I participated in the free Spanish classes, immersing myself in the language and culture as much as possible. I spent afternoons by the pool or on the beach, taking naps or having coffee with new friends. I felt relaxed and had more of a life and less work (Figure 1).

Settling into my future

In my four-and-a-half years in the DR the novelty of the beach has worn off, and I now choose to tutor English and teach piano. This was something I had always wanted to do in the UK, but could never find the time or energy. I have taken on extra responsibilities such as Art Co-ordinator, which involves organising (with the Upper School Art Teacher) an exhibition at the end of the school year (Figure 2). The age group that I teach has changed too, I now teach first year pupils with a British teacher. This brings many challenges, which are completely outweighed by the rewards.

I also found love: seven months ago, I married my Dominican husband in a beautiful ceremony at a local resort, surrounded by family and close friends from the UK. We have a puppy and hope soon to start a family. Now my life is very different from when I moved here in 2014; however, the same feelings of calm, trust and balance remain (Figure 3). If I had remained in the UK, I would be like so many enthusiastic young teachers who graduate, teach for a few years and then give up on their dream career early. I plan to spend the rest of my life in the Dominican Republic, working at the school for as long as I am able. My family support me in this, and the internet makes them feel a little closer.

Moving abroad to teach is not for everyone, and sometimes it does not work out; seeing whether it can is the best adventure ever and for me, the best decision I have ever made.

Figure 3: Fully settled and looking forward to a Dominican future featuring love, family and teaching. Photo courtesy of the author.

Tarnya Beras is a Primary teacher from Mid Wales with nine years' experience, currently teaching first grade at Abraham Lincoln School, La Romana, Dominican Republic.

SETTLING ON A MAP

PAULA OWENS

Here Paula offers practical ideas for using maps to help pupils enquire about, express, compare and analyse aspects of 'settling geography'.

Our places

When learning about the term 'settlement', there is a simple and obvious starting point: us. It makes sense to start by talking about and sharing our personal place: discuss what kind of settlement we live in and how we feel about it. How we feel about places is very important, but so too is having core knowledge about it. What are places really like? What is their spatial layout? What are places and their features called and what happens there? What human and physical forces are at work? How has a place changed over time and why? Increasingly complex questions, and the resulting answers, require pupils to have the relevant vocabulary and knowledge to ground their emotional responses and give them a solid context.

What do we know about where we live?

It is always helpful to find out what pupils know about the area they live and go to school in, because this allows teachers to identify and challenge any misconceptions and build on pupils' local, real-life interests. Some pupils may live nearby but tend not to walk to school, while others may have never explored their locality on foot. Some pupils will have a far greater range than others – this may depend on their age, the area they live in and their home contexts (Catling and Willy, 2018).

How do you find out the extent of pupils' knowledge? One productive way is to ask pupils to draw and annotate a map showing their locality. As they do so, you could ask:

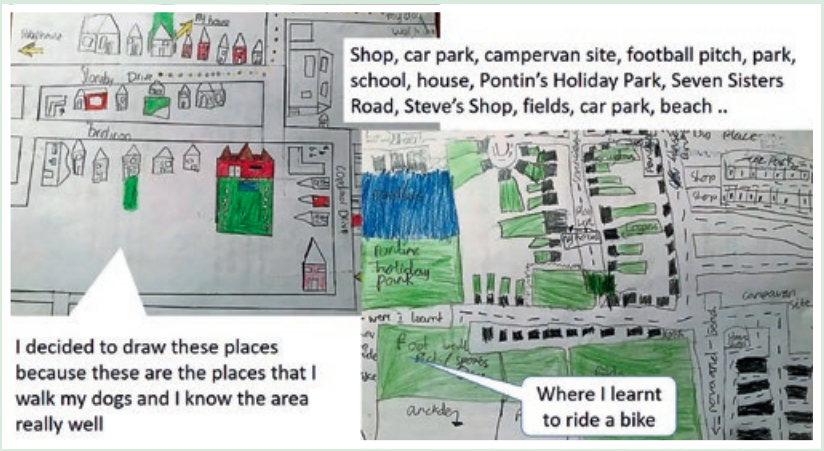
- What do we mean by 'local'?
- Which places have a special meaning for you and why?
- Which places do you like going to? Which do you avoid? Can you say why?
- Can you label features, routes and places of interest?

These are the kinds of questions pupils have been asked as part of the 'Meaningful Maps' project (see web panel). Teachers who have engaged their classes with this seemingly simple activity have been amazed at the wealth of learning opportunities and issues it has thrown up. In many cases, teachers have said that discussing how places are represented and what features might be found on maps has been a vital precursor for engaging with formal OS maps, as required by the National Curriculum for geography (DfE, 2013). Other teachers have commented that the maps drawn by pupils made them realise how poorly understood the local area was by pupils, necessitating a rethink about the extent and purpose of local fieldwork. Stephen Scoffham explains some of the findings so far (Figure 1).

What kinds of features do settlements have?

The following activities use the Digimap for Schools mapping software (download a PowerPoint to view all the images – see web panel). Start with a common frame of reference for all pupils: the school. Ask the pupils what features they would expect to find within a 1km- and a 2km-range and either create a list, or get them to guess features from a grid provided. Open Digimap and locate your school using its postcode. Use the Buffer Tool to create a zone or radius of 1-2km, or both. Next, give pupils a map key and ask them to do the detective work: locate different features. This is a great way to encourage close attention to map detail.

Figure 2 shows buffer zones around Lent Rise School, Slough. Within the 1km buffer zone we can find houses and roads, a farm, a rail line, sewerage works, schools, a place of worship and a sports ground. Within the 2km zone, we can also find an abbey, a rail station, a river, and much more. You could challenge groups of pupils to find the most features in a given time.



'The ideas that children have about the places they live in are remarkably varied. During the last year the "Meaningful Maps" project has collected around 500 maps from around the UK of places that primary school pupils find significant. Their maps focus especially on the built environment and often show their home, school and where their friends and relatives live. Play areas and leisure facilities also figure prominently. Some of the maps simply show the child's own bedroom. Others cover an entire neighbourhood or show journeys to specific places. Comparing these mental maps with the "formal" maps produced by the Ordnance Survey and other agencies makes an interesting exercise.'

Figure 1: Maps produced by pupils aged nine, as part of the Meaningful Maps pilot study, and initial comments on the project. Source: personal communication with Dr Stephen Scoffham.

Figure 2: Looking for features within 1km and 2km radius of Lent Rise School, Slough, 2019.

What was this place like a long time ago?

Start with your school again and, keeping the buffer zones onscreen (it helps pupils visualise features on the map more easily), select the function that allows you to Toggle between current maps and digitised maps from 1890. In the example in Figure 3, we quickly notice that the railway line was already built in 1890 but the school was not. We also notice that (as would be expected) the area is developed with many more houses in 2019.

Figure 3: An 1890 view of the area around Lent Rise School, Slough, shown in the 2019 map in Figure 2.

However, the Jubilee River seen on the 2019 map seems to have not existed in 1890! A quick bit of research revealed that the Jubilee River was built to relieve the risk of flooding from the River Thames, from above Maidenhead to below Windsor, and it opened in 2002. Settlements change over time and this is just an example of how we can identify and investigate development by comparing past and present maps.

How does our landscape compare?

The above techniques help pupils to compare settlements and can be useful to accentuate patterns of land use. Select the option to 'highlight, shade and measure' different features. Figure 4 compares the woodland (areas shaded green) and housing (shaded grey) features in 4km^2 areas around Lent Rise School in Slough, Buckinghamshire, Penboyr School in Felindre, Carmarthenshire, and Park Primary School in Oban, Argyll and Bute.

Figure 4: Patterns in the landscape around schools in: (a) Slough, (b) Felindre, and (c) Oban. Wooded areas are emphasised with green shading and housing areas with grey shading.

Sustainable settlements

Maps can help us to share narratives about where we live and our everyday lives. We can use them to identify where landscapes are littered, degraded and in need of improvement, with precise locations and measurements. In this way we can visualise how we might improve specific areas or features. Figure 5 tells the story of a public bench that was vandalised and thrown onto the beach where, moved by coastal processes, it became yet more plastic waste. Why not survey and map things that are out of place or 'unsettling' in your locale and use this to create visions for change?

Figure 5: Recording environmental damage: the 'story' of a vandalised public bench.

How can we think more critically?

Settlements may not always compare in ways that we expect, challenging our expectations of geographical vocabulary at the very least! What happens, for example, when we compare Cranleigh, England (a town that is sometimes referred to as a village), with the city of St David's, Wales? Why is it that St David's is a city, yet is five times smaller than Cranleigh? Why is Cranleigh considered a village by some and a town by others? How do we define these terms and differentiate between fact and opinion?

In exploring and recording the factual, we inevitably collide with difference and uncertainty. Digital maps can help us better understand the real, messy and contradictory world of geography.

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Catling, S. and Willy, T. (2018) *Understanding and Teaching Primary Geography*. London: Sage.

WEB RESOURCES

Digimap for Schools:
www.digimapforschools.edina.ac.uk
Meaningful Maps project:
www.meaningfulmaps.org
Settling on a map PowerPoint:
www.geography.org.uk/pg

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SIGNIFICANTLY PRIMARY GEOGRAPHY

SIMON CATLING

Having been an author in the first issue, Simon offers his thoughts on the continuing importance of *Primary Geography* to all primary teachers.

In 1989 the government's introduction of the National Curriculum for England included geography as a compulsory primary subject from age five (HMG, 1988). A highly critical, but supportive, report about geography and history teaching in primary schools (HMI, 1989) appeared the following year. Primary heads and teachers needed and were looking for encouragement and guidance, so *Primary Geographer* (latterly, *Primary Geography*) mattered from its first issue. It became increasingly significant from 1991, when the curriculum requirements for geography were published (DES, 1991).

Since then *Primary Geography* has gone on to become the only geography journal in the world published specifically for primary teachers. The GA had introduced *Teaching Geography* in 1976, which published a number of articles on primary geography prior to *Primary Geography*'s existence (Norman, 2017). The National Council for Geographic Education in the USA introduced *The Geography Teacher* in 2004 to support elementary, junior high and high school teachers of geography, and nations from Australia to Turkey and Italy publish association journals for those who teach geography, but these focus mainly towards secondary schooling. *Primary Geography* therefore occupies a rather unique position.

Focusing on practice

Primary Geography's true value lies in its constant focus on high-quality practice in primary geography. The term 'practice' means much more than teaching classroom lessons. It encompasses schools:

- considering, determining and justifying their approaches to pupils' learning and their teaching
- constructing their curriculum, accessing resources, planning and teaching their sequences of lessons
- identifying how and what pupils learn through their classroom and wider school experiences
- evaluating and revising their curriculum and teaching
- and developing staff to reflect on and enhance such provision and teaching.

Primary Geography has always published articles that support all these aspects of practice. It has had effective positive impacts on subscribing schools and readers. It has been informative in illustrating the variety of ways in which schools might develop and update their practices; raised concerns and issues to address; offered much advice (from curriculum organisation to geographical topics and resources) and has been all about day-to-day classroom teaching. It maintains a down-to-earth sense of geography and its context, taking readers into familiar and novel places, revitalising longstanding themes and exploring topical and new concerns and issues.

Covering geography

Primary Geography has covered a wide range of geography, reinforcing good practice, introducing new topics and encouraging thinking and teaching outside the (mis)perceived constraints of curriculum requirements (Figure 1). The geography covered has included:

- local studies, fieldwork and investigations of other localities and countries;
- the variety of physical geography, including geology and landforms, earthquakes and flooding, river and coastal studies, and climate and weather, including their causes and impacts;
- human and cultural geography, from neighbourhoods and communities to diversity, social concerns, migration and lives in differing contexts and cultures;

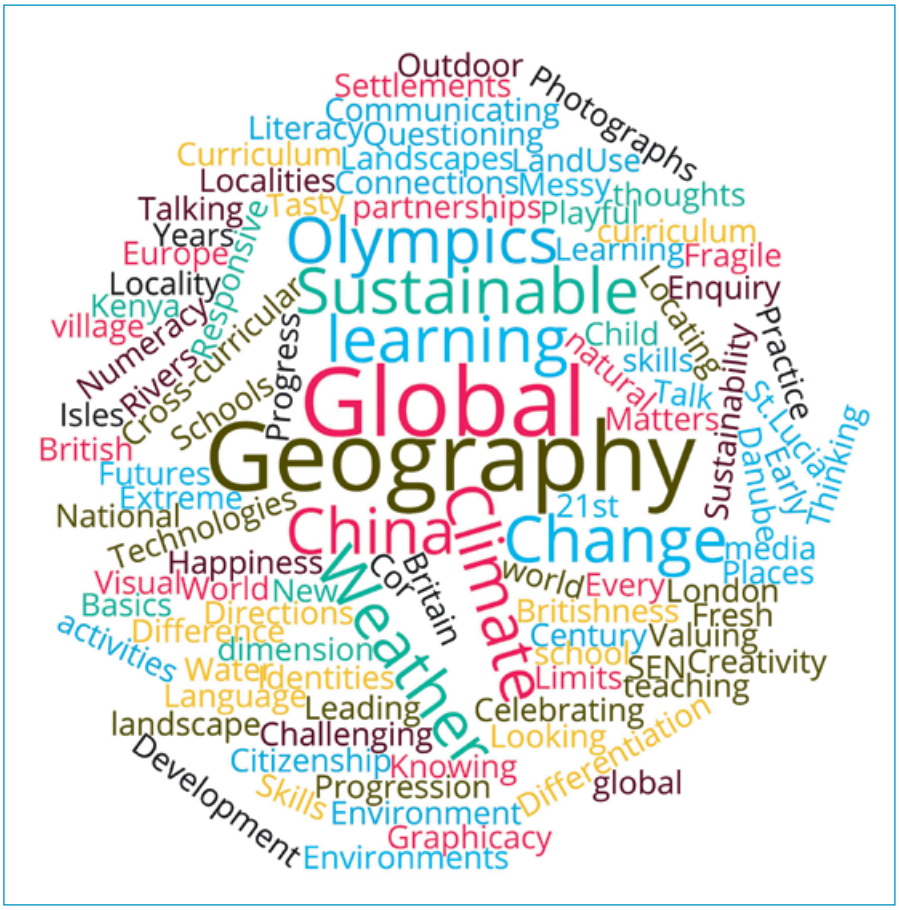

Figure 1: This Wordle features *Primary Geography*'s wide range of themes and issues over the past 30 years.

- environmental use, exploitation, events and issues at local, cross-national and global scales, including litter and traffic, urban development, and pollution and climate change;
- care for our places and the planet, and the role of sustainability, from what 'sustainability' means to how our own behaviours might change to accommodate it.

Almost every aspect of geography has been covered since the first issue in 1989. Throughout its life, the journal has encouraged the use of many geographical approaches, skills and resources, not least:

- geographical enquiry
- learning to use and understand maps
- appreciating the vitality of outdoor learning and the skills for undertaking high-quality fieldwork
- the uses and messages of visual resources and models
- the opportunities provided by digital technologies
- the wide range of texts, programs, packs of materials, photographs, floor maps and stories.

Written from practice

Of real worth is that *Primary Geography* is written by classroom teachers, head teachers, teacher educators, school geography consultants and inspectors. It has drawn on the experiences of practice – whether about a particular geography topic with a specific class or from observations of many classes and topics, to explain and encourage broader and deeper approaches within schools. The editors have encouraged and drawn in new authors, extending the pool of the rich knowledge and understanding of geography existing in primary classrooms.

Writing from practice and research, and promoting and challenging well-tried and innovative and creative ideas and approaches has been central to maintaining the high quality of the journal. Its value has been enhanced periodically by articles by geographers and non-geographers writing about the geography that matters to them and how this might deepen and develop what pupils encounter, learn and are motivated by. All of these contributions provide vitality and continuous encouragement to primary teachers.

At heart: pupils and learning

What appears very strongly across its articles is the capability and enthusiasm of primary pupils of all ages. It is evident that undertaking geographical studies engages and stimulates primary pupils, especially where it is directly pertinent to them. This is more than the result of good teaching; it comes from the pupils themselves, their responsiveness and what they contribute in ideas, asking questions, ways of working, teamwork, findings and their reflections, views and proposals.

Primary Geography shows how geography excites and informs pupils, and enhances their sense of being in the world. Clearly what pupils gain is enhanced geographical knowledge, understanding and skills. The many articles about classroom topics and the geography curriculum show that pupils can, should and do think about the attitudes and values that will enable them to contribute as growing people and developing citizens through the rest of their lives. Primary pupils understand what is going on around them; they know about the challenges and demands facing their futures. They are optimists and come across as seeing much to be gained from being engaged. Geography is in their make up, not an add-on achieved simply through their schooling. These are important messages that appear across the years in *Primary Geography*.

Promoting high-quality geography

Since 1989, *Primary Geography* has communicated and promoted the potential, value and high quality of teaching geography in primary schools both nationally and internationally. The journal has mattered to the Geographical Association as a key connection with and beyond its primary membership. It is a very strong advert for the quality and potential of geography in primary schools across the world. The journal does not sit still. It provokes new ideas and possibilities for primary schools and teachers to run with.

The essential geography support

All these points illustrate that *Primary Geography* is quintessentially the vital support for primary teachers from their initiation into and throughout their teaching careers. This journal is career professional development personified for all who read it. This is why it remains such a significant journal for primary teachers. What it offers is greater than the sum of its parts.

There is much available through the internet for primary teachers to use to provide geography lessons, some with well-grounded rationales. However, off-the-shelf lesson plans and activity sheets are no substitute for well-thought out, properly focused planning, enquiries and sequences of lessons for specific classes, if pupils are to gain real value from their school geography. *Primary Geography* always offers this, helping primary schools provide a full and rounded primary geography curriculum and experience. It provides the ideas, illustrates practice and enables primary schools to bring the parts together into a whole. That is its core contribution and legacy.

Primary Geography matters

Primary Geography demonstrates to primary teachers the trusted voice of the Geographical Association through its examples, support and guidance. It challenges teachers and pupils to go beyond what curriculum requirements state. It does this because geography matters hugely in the schooling and education of primary pupils. It matters for them, because geography is a core aspect of their lives, in their local contexts and through their fascination with what happens in other places and environments. It matters because pupils are aware of the global issues that affect not only the present but that will also be increasingly challenging in their futures. Primary geography is significant because it deepens and extends pupils' understanding, challenges their preconceptions and misunderstandings, and engages their awe for and fascination with the world around them, at hand and distant, urban, rural and wild.

This journal matters because all primary pupils matter, the world matters and their teachers matter. Its journey started in 1989; it is still travelling. Its purpose to enhance the world of geography for primary schools, teachers and pupils remains not simply unique, but fundamental. Celebrate and proclaim *Primary Geography* clearly and loudly.

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HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectorate) (1989) *Aspects of Primary Education: The teaching and learning of history and geography*. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office.

Norman, M. (2017) 'Representations of primary geography in *Teaching Geography* from 1975 to 1989' in Catling, S. (ed) *Reflections on Primary Geography*. Sheffield: Register of Research in Primary Geography, pp. 58–64.

Simon Catling is emeritus professor of primary education at Oxford Brookes University. His article 'What is primary geography?' appeared in *Primary Geography*'s first issue and he has contributed many articles to the journal ever since.

THE PRIMARY GEOGRAPHY INTERVIEW

DR MARGARET MACKINTOSH AND DR FRAN MARTIN

Following on from Wendy Morgan's editorship, *Primary Geography* was taken up by Margaret Mackintosh, who steered the journal through further (and extensive) curriculum change before passing the crown on to Fran Martin, who navigated the journal through the tricky times of the Rose Review and curriculum hiatus. Both Margaret and Fran's dedication, passion and hard work has left a lasting impression on the journal today and all those who work on it. Here they give their thoughts on geography and look back at their time as Editors of *Primary Geography*.

Dr Margaret Mackintosh, Editor of *Primary Geography* 1996–2005.

Dr Fran Martin, Editor of *Primary Geography* 2005–2010.

What were your thoughts and feelings about taking on *Primary Geography*?

MM: I became Honorary Editor in October 1995 when the journal was called *Primary Geographer*. I was excited but certainly apprehensive. Could I keep up the high standards set by Wendy Morgan, let alone further develop the journal? Could I fit being Editor into my already heavy work load? Did I have enough expertise, knowledge and contacts?

FM: I was a bit daunted, but also very excited because I love the Geographical Association, had subscribed to the primary journal since it started in 1989, and had some ideas about how to develop the journal. Margaret kindly agreed to remain part of the wider board, which helped enormously when it came to the transition.

What can you tell us about geography in schools during your time as Editor?

MM: Schools were grappling with all subjects of a frequently changing National Curriculum. Some were teaching geography for the first time while others were reinventing the wheel rather than developing what they already had. There was a huge need for CPD and help with interpreting the documentation. Geography was a 'Foundation' subject with a large number of attainment targets and extensive level descriptors. This tended to lead to fragmentation and tick-box recording of individual targets rather than holistic geography.

FM: As people have said before me, it was the best of times and the worst of times. As far as developing the subject and developing really innovative pedagogies for primary geography, there was so much creativity evident in schools. However, at the same time the constraints put on schools by Ofsted, performance measures and the like made it increasingly harder for geography to find enough space in the curriculum. It really relied on the geography co-ordinator being energetic, being supported by the wider community through membership of the GA, and being supported by the senior management team.

What were the biggest challenges you faced during your time as Editor?

MM: The first challenge was to keep to schedule. With four issues a year, consecutive issues overlapped in the sense that text for one issue had to be with HQ before the previous issue had been published, so it was a full-time (unpaid) effort. To address this, I negotiated the change to publishing three larger issues per year, which helped make the workload more manageable while maintaining both quality and quantity of content. The second challenge was how to maintain and improve the quality of *PG*. I was determined to provide 'something for everyone', from trainee to experienced classroom teachers and university tutors. Each issue needed to cover EY–Y6, with practical examples including fieldwork backed up by theory (not just 'tips for teachers'), subject knowledge and examples of research. The third challenge was to include 'this is what we, pupils and teachers, have done', rather than 'you could do', articles illustrating quality geography carried out in schools. The editorial group identified both preferred content and potential authors and encouraged practising teachers to write. The fourth challenge was the NC itself that brought a need to provide for a readership among whom some were subject specialists but many who had given up geography at or before GCSE. Then, as now, there was also a demand for subject knowledge. Maintaining a 'Focus' for each issue was a great help in addressing all of these challenges, as it concentrated our minds, as well as the articles, while allowing some flexibility to look wider.

FM: The biggest challenge was the same challenge faced by the GA as a whole – declining membership. With fewer and fewer primary members we had to make hard decisions about balancing high-quality contributions in the journal, that would stretch people's thinking about the subject, with meeting the needs of teachers who are very busy people with all

sorts of other pressures on them. The print journal became shorter and more material was provided online, but I am enormously proud of the way the journal developed and the innovative practices it brought to the membership. Many of these came directly from classroom practitioners, which was a key goal.

What do you remember best (or most!) about your time as Editor?

MM: The best thing happened three times per year as each new issue came through my letterbox on time, with articles illustrating the health and quality of primary geography in some schools. Articles by new authors were always particularly rewarding, as was working with a group of committed, enthusiastic, hard-working primary geographers, and Fran Royle from 1996 then Anna Gunby/Grandfield from 1999 at HQ, to produce the journal. I remember my delight in Fran Martin agreeing to be the next editor. I should like to thank everyone I've worked with on *PG* and at the GA for their support, enthusiasm and inspiration.

FM: The bi-annual Editorial Board meetings in London. During my time as editor we extended the board to include a wider range of people from different parts of the education system (teachers, advisors, teacher educators) from different parts of the country so that members would feel that they were all represented. I have never before or since worked with a more dedicated, hard-working, joyful yet challenging group of people. Oh – and the cakes provided by Anna Grandfield at each meeting were pretty good too!

Why is primary geography important in the primary school?

MM: *Primary Geography* has always illustrated the very significant contribution the subject can make to the primary curriculum. Each issue tried to show that geography should be essential and central to the curriculum, giving children real, exciting and dynamic contexts to develop their literacy, numeracy, scientific (enquiry), pictorial and thinking skills. In encountering situations where there isn't necessarily a right answer, they learn to express their own opinion and weigh up evidence to arrive at a conclusion. In current parlance 'critical thinking' would be highlighted. Including something for everybody, *Primary Geography* shows geography as an integrated, inclusive subject.

FM: Oh my goodness! Where do I start? It is not only important in the primary school but in life. It helps pupils make sense of who they are, where they are, how they relate to people, places and environments both near and far. It is relevant on a daily basis to how we live our lives, who we become as people, whether we care about each other or not, whether we care about the world we live on and its capacity to sustain us or not. It is futures oriented, informed by but not tied to the past and helps us become people who contribute to finding solutions to the very real issues we face in the 21st century.

How do you see *Primary Geography* in the future?

MM: In this digital age of rapidly changing technologies this is a difficult question. Here are some questions and thoughts, but not answers. I hope that a paper edition continues to be published as I believe that looking through and reading a real journal communicates more effectively than scrolling a screen. It is also more visible in school. How can the needs of the readership or audience – EY to Y6 and beyond, trainee and practising teachers, HEI tutors and others be met? Should *PG* be a source of everything from subject knowledge to local, global, environmental and controversial issues to research findings, or will it have to focus more tightly?

FM: If I was to base my response to this on the trajectory of the subject over the last 30 years, I might be quite conservative because there are times when the system-level constraints seem to far outweigh the individual and community level creativity and passion for the subject. Instead, in the way that teachers give feedback to pupils in primary schools with 'two stars and a wish', I would like to provide two wishes and a hope: I wish geography could be seen as a curriculum area in its own right, with its own character appropriate for the primary phase, that is not based on being 'ready' for secondary geography. I wish geography could become a subject that seriously incorporates social and environmental justice at its heart – and that would require a shift in the current National Curriculum Statutory orders which, in some regards, represent a move back to the more conservative view of geography of the 1950s. I hope that the people who are passionate about the subject, and who are already working to find innovative ways of interpreting the curriculum so that it meets the two wishes above, will have the energy to continue as they are, and that this energy is supported and given space by the GA.

What message would you give to future primary geography teachers?

MM: Consider making geography the core of your curriculum, providing a real, exciting and dynamic context in which to develop the rest of the curriculum. You owe it to the pupils you teach to equip them with knowledge and understanding of their increasingly globalised, interconnected world. Geography provides a framework for their understanding while combining a full range of skills, literacy, numeracy, oracy, graphicacy/visual literacy, enquiry, critical thinking and more.

FM: Think about geography as something that you and the pupils live and breathe every day. Make connections between this and what the curriculum demands rather than the other way around. The curriculum is, by its very nature, limiting. It cannot bring geography to life, but in your classrooms you can. Think of geographical knowledge as something that has meaning – and that each lesson you and the pupils are working together as co-enquirers trying to reveal that meaning and its relevance to the betterment of *all* life (and this can include thinking of the planet as a living being). Most of all, convey to pupils what it means to think geographically, to look at and understand the world as a geographer and to use this way of thinking to make the world a better place.

What message would you give to future primary geography pupils?

MM: Geography is exciting. It is about the world you live in now, from the local to the global; it is about the world you will grow up in to be adults; it is about learning from, and overcoming, mistakes of the past. It is so important that you have knowledge of the world you live in – the countries, cities, etc and where they are on the globe; the challenges facing the world you live in – climate change, pollution and so on and what you can do about them; it is about your place in the world and the interconnectedness of all peoples, places, environments and more.

FM: I have a large number of nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews, so I thought I would ask those of school age what message I could give. Sadly, none of them had much to say. Most did not know they studied geography at school. Those who did know said 'make it more interesting and fun'. I suppose my message would therefore be 'ask your teacher to let you know when you are studying geography, what difference it makes to know this and why thinking in a geographical way is important in life'.

WEB RESOURCES

Read Margaret and Fran's first PG Editorials: *www.geography.org.uk*

PRIMARY

GEOGRAPHY IN PRACTICE

This page offers ideas for using the contents of this issue of *Primary Geography* in practice in your classroom. Share your ideas inspired by this journal on Twitter @The_GA #PriGeogJournal

Article	In practice
The Start Gallery	• Take colleagues on a fieldtrip into the school's local area to discover facets of its development and structure they might not have considered, share local knowledge, and discuss how studies in the local area can add new dimensions to the curriculum and help address issues of progression in local studies across all phases
Place attachments: a sense of security	• Ask pupils to describe their favourite place either by talking to a partner, making a drawing or a model or bringing in an artefact associated with it. You will learn a great deal about your class and their interests from this exercise • Are special places secret places? Why might they be secret, what might happen if they stop being secret? Using these questions offers an opportunity for creative writing and will give a different dimension to discussing special places
Place Plus Poetry	• For CPD on geography and poetry undertake the activities with colleagues. You will quickly see the links and potential for exciting cross-curricular activities • Encourage each class to undertake some of these activities to produce a whole-school display or presentation
A changing settlement	• Investigate your local area to uncover the reasons why it became settled. A dramatic reconstruction of the area's development would offer opportunities for community involvement. • Use Digimap (*https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/education/teachers/digimap-for-schools.html*) to explore the local area through comparison of historic and present-day maps
Exploring settlement through architecture and art	• Pupils could design their ideal town using Lego or junk modelling materials. If possible, get a town planner to come in and discuss their designs • Take the pupils on a trip around their local area to each photograph their favourite building. They then build or draw it, labelling the features that make it special to them
Building for the future: settling in	• Pupils could explore how the three different types of houses adapt to changes in the environment and design their own buildings to tackle the same issue. Inviting an architect or planner to assess their work would make it special.
Waking up to homelessness: myths and challenges	• Approach the suggested questions sensitively, asking the pupils to explore and express their ideas in ways in which they feel comfortable, e.g. a poem, a drawing, or a piece of drama. • Ask pupils to pack an imaginary suitcase with the things they would take with them if they had to leave home – this will reveal what the pupils regard as being important to them
A question of connection	• Ask pupils to write a brochure/tv broadcast about their local area and use technology to collect and present the information in a variety of formats for sharing with a school in a contrasting locality (not necessarily one overseas)
Embedding geography for positive empowerment	• Could you adapt the project that Leanne describes to your school's situation? Consider the issue with your pupils to identify ways in which your school can make a difference in its use of resources • Develop your own Eco Champions club to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their environment
Settling nerves: undertaking fieldwork in challenging locations	• For a CPD session examine how the local area might be investigated by pupils of different ages. This will necessitate considering a pupil's experiences as they progress through the school and ensure that progression, not repetition, takes place • Following the investigations suggested, encourage pupils to imagine the local area of the future and enable them to present their ideas in a variety of ways
Settling in a distant place	• Explore with colleagues their aspirations for their classes and themselves, then explore and discuss how some of those aspirations might be realistically achieved in your setting • Ask pupils to describe a change of location they may have undertaken – this could be a permanent change of location or a holiday. What did they like about their new location, what did they miss about their former place?
Settling on a map	• Encourage pupils to produce their own meaningful map to express their ideas about their special places • Investigate the meanings of words that describe places on a map of your local area. How do these words compare with other areas?
Significantly Primary Geography	• Use the *Primary Geography* online archive (*www.geography.org.uk/Journals/Primary-Geography*) for a CPD session in which colleagues explore previous issues and share their findings from the materials • Consider how the work you are undertaking for your school might be developed into an article for *Primary Geography*. Why not submit it? Find out more (*www.geography.org.uk/Journals/Primary-Geography/259-2252*)

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