



## **Stepping Stones to Assessing, Recording and Reporting in Primary Geography. (The world beyond 'those' levels of long ago!!)**

**This short document merely seeks to promote discussion in schools with respect to ensuring manageable, effective and meaningful Geography assessment.**

**Assessment for learning (AfL)** has been, and always will be, an essential element of teaching. It is very carefully and effectively woven into all aspects of classroom practice by good and outstanding teachers.

This short discussion document sets out a simple structure for supporting **assessment of learning (AoL)**, enabling us to explore the progress children make over time and benchmark their attainment / achievement (outcomes) in geography. Of course AOL and AfL are interconnected.

-Evaluating the progress children make, their achievement, and setting realistic improvement targets will always be at the core of what we do in the classroom.

-National performance descriptors for the end of Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2) have not published for geography. However, we can develop our own descriptors for our school and our children.

-We can also be ahead of the game by agreeing standards locally in clusters or federations of schools.

### **A couple of questions the start the ball rolling-**

-Does each child achieve in line with their 'true potential' in geography?

-Is achievement capped by the geographical learning pathways we plan for the children?

### **Stepping Stones - A Routeway to Assessment in Primary Geography**

-Geography may well be taught in **blocks**. These blocks or units making up most of the time allocated to the subject.

**Note** - We need to be more efficient in how we use time, to ensure that we deliver a meaningful, relevant, challenging and progressive subject entitlement across both Key Stages. **Subject integrity** must be at the forefront of our thinking.

-We do not have to have traditional half term blocks. For example, a block might consist of a set of 5 afternoons for one week that allow the children to explore in

depth a series of key geographical questions around a place (for example a locality in a non-European country ) or theme (biomes – example Tropical Rainforest biome).

-Similarly the block of time might be a whole day exploring the local area through **geographical enquiry / investigation**. Planning / generating enquiry questions – thence collecting geographical data and information (using appropriate skills and techniques) – sorting – presenting – communicating information – and evaluating findings. (See ‘Secret Street Detectives’ – Welcome to SO31 Jolly Postman. [www.geographysouthwest.co.uk](http://www.geographysouthwest.co.uk) )

**Note** – In relation to time constrictions – **Your Motto** – ‘**Do less better**’. Do less but give the children time to dig deeper. Time to explore geography in some detail, not time to undertake mechanical and meaningless tasks!!

-**Continuity** (links between the blocks of time used for exploring geography) will probably be in the form of more **informal geography** such as Travelling Bears, Weekly News (local – global), Weather Reporting and Show and Tell etc.

-Some components of the subject will of course be ‘touched upon’ and investigated, in varying detail, in other areas of the curriculum\*\*. For example, the exploration of landscapes through paintings in Art, and the obvious synergy with History and Science topics.

-It is important that this ‘**tangential / additional / continuous**’ geography be carefully mapped and recorded by the subject coordinator in conjunction with year teams / class teachers. These aspects of coverage provide the ‘**continuity stepping stones**’ between geography focus blocks / units.

\*\*Geography is the ‘Heineken’ of subjects – by the very nature of the discipline it percolates and drives all others.

-The key **progressional elements** of the subject noted in the former statutory order May 2000 are:-

- Geographical Enquiry and Skills.
- Knowledge and Understanding of Places.
- Knowledge and Understanding of Patterns and Processes.
- Knowledge and Understanding of Environmental Change and Sustainable Development.

-The nature of geography as a discipline does not change because we have ‘new’ statutory orders from time to time.

**-Geographers have, and always will seek to explore people, place and environment.**

-It is the only discipline that investigates the interaction and interrelationship between people and the environment. **It is the only subject that seeks to unravel the**

**mystery of the landscape story-board.** We are in fact geographers every day of our lives, from the moment we are born.

-The progressional elements noted above, will always be at the heart of the discipline. They have merely been 'rebranded' in the existing statutory order.

**Note** - Exploring **geographical patterns**, is pivotal to supporting children in developing subject knowledge, understanding and expertise. The use of **patterning**, within teaching and learning, needs to be carefully explored with your colleagues. Think **spatial** and **repeating** patterns.

-The elements (components of geography) on which **progression** should now be considered, mapped and recorded, as noted in the National Curriculum statutory order for September 2014 onwards, are very specific – but really no different to those of the previous order:

- Locational knowledge
- Place knowledge
- Human and physical geography
- Geographical skills and fieldwork.

-These will need to be explained to, and unravelled with your colleagues and taken into account when planning for progression within and across units of work. For example, many people are unsure of the difference between locational and place knowledge. Look at the examples below

**Location** – Know the location of South America  
Know the location of Brazil within South America.  
Know the location of Rio de Janeiro (Rio) within Brazil.

**Place** – Recognise, identify and describe the key features of central Rio.  
Explain how central Rio is similar and different to central Southampton.

-A suggested planning for **progression frame** which could be used for mapping geographical coverage within each unit is attached to this short document. – Appendix 1. This exemplar is for a Year 1 school locality investigation. (See - Welcome to SO31 Jolly Postman). The complete plan / learning pathway for which can be found on [www.geogrpahysouthwest.co.uk](http://www.geogrpahysouthwest.co.uk)

-When progression frames are completed for each investigative geography unit planned, subject progression, within and across year groups, will be more precisely (definitively) mapped.

-If subject progression is not clearly evident then there would be a need for additional discussion, modification and thence redesign of desired learning pathways and key outcomes.

**-Connected learning** is important. However, if geography is delivered as part of an integrated topic we must not plan for, or deliver, '**topic porridges**'.

-We must plan '**topic mueslis**', where there is **absolute clarity** to the **learning objectives and outcomes** for each discrete subject within the topic. Similarly there must be clear progression maps for each subject contained across topics.

-We must not lose the **integrity of subjects**. Children have a right to know when they are working as geographers or historians within a topic. Similarly they have a right to know the very unique skills and 'areas' of knowledge these individual subjects offer.

-The planning frame attached (Appendix 1) will, as mentioned, help to map and record progression and to ensure greater subject rigour, especially where integrated topics are planned and delivered.

-**Geographical skills** are the tools of a geographer. (They are the tools of the trade). They are not in themselves geography. To have any meaning, they **MUST** be developed, and thence enhanced and applied in a place or thematic context. You would almost certainly not expect to see stand-alone map skills units or purely skills-based assessment – out of any geographical context. This is however, for you to decide within your school. Of course that does not mean that you cannot have short map skill 'tests' etc. They are quick and help with AfL.

-Similarly, it is important to **integrate** places, themes and skills.

-The **level descriptors** noted in the former National Curriculum document – published May 2000 will certainly be of use to you in developing and refining assessment practice. (See also Appendix 2 - Intellectual Progression and Assessing Primary Geography documents)

-Each former descriptor contains key **command words / phrases** in them (e.g. recognise, describe, compare and express points of view etc.). Without doubt these can be of use in helping to inform subject planning, for example in generating key **learning outcomes** for a unit (against which children will be assessed), as well as learning objectives for each session within the **learning pathway**.

-Be careful not to have too many key learning outcomes, against which the children will be assessed, for each of your planned units (3 or 4). However, this is up to individual schools.

-Unit learning outcomes and session learning objectives need to be carefully shaped taking account of **intellectual progression** (see Simplified Bloom's Taxonomy - Appendix 2) and **geographical coverage**. There should be a synergy between these two key elements. For example:-

Year 1 -To (**recognise, identify and begin to describe**) (key buildings and land use in Station Road Netley Abbey)

Year 6 – To (**begin to explain the causes and consequences**) (of flooding in the Test Valley).

-You will know that any learning outcome or objective is a possible **assessment objective**. They are interchangeable.

-We **must** get away from listing numerous and often totally meaningless I can statements, and focus on assessing children against key / pivotal and progressive learning outcomes. Gone are the days of - I can name the countries of the UK, I can name the capital cities, I can name the seas that surround the UK etc.

-Similarly, we must get away from using, often meaningless, published assessment 'I can' criteria, and trying to shoehorn them into our own subject entitlement. They are not written for '**our geography**' thus they are nebulous. We must develop our own.

Think

What do we want our children to learn in geography across KS1 and KS2?

What do we want our children to learn in each unit within the Key Stage?

What do we want the key geography outcomes for each unit to be?

How are we going to deliver this? – The teaching and learning pathway.

How are we going to assess the children against the key outcomes?

-If you assimilate in one document or spread sheet the key learning / assessment outcomes for the Year 1 and 2 units of geography, you will have created a unique **performance descriptor** for children by the age of 7 in your school.

-Similarly, you can create performance descriptors for the end of year 4 and 6 in KS2. When these are complete you can use them to **benchmark** each child at 7, 9 and 11. Working towards – working at – working above – however you wish to play it!!

-Assessment against the key learning outcomes should be **integrated** not bolt-on. That is not to say that you cannot have short snappy little tests etc. if you want to.

-Presently, some schools are highlighting too many assessment opportunities within each geography unit. This often deflects us away from high quality teaching and learning. The focus is not on 'doing less better' and 'digging deeper' via more challenging geographical enquiry / investigation, but on superficial assessment.

-Although we could, we cannot assess everything the pupils do. **Assessment opportunities need to be considered very carefully and strategically**, and integrated into the learning.

-Integrated assessment will help to explore the attainment / achievement of children against the key learning outcomes for the unit of work – discussed earlier.

-To ensure a **common approach** across a year group, and across year groups, you may wish to highlight assessment opportunities and type (use of magic marker) within subject medium term planning.

-Assessments must be **manageable, reliable and robust**.

-Their position within a unit of work is up to you and your colleagues. **Flexibility** is the name of the game. You may wish to best fit each child against the key learning outcomes on completion of a unit – again this is up to you.

-Enquiry, problem solving, decision making and investigation are key elements of high quality learning in geography. As the subject is taught and learnt in a wide range of ways, there must be a **wide range of assessment opportunities** across a Key Stage.

-This really needs careful consideration. For example, many children in Year 1 will be 'skilled and knowledgeable' geographers. They will progress quickly and achieve well. However, for many, these geographical 'abilities' will not be reflected through an extended writing **learning output**. Here oral assessment is imperative. It will often give a better indication of their true progress and achievement as 'young geographers'. Modern technologies enable to collect and store their spoken outcomes.

Opportunities may include:-

**ORAL** - Paired discussion, individual presentations, debating, role play, questioning, pod-casting etc.

**WRITTEN** – Summaries, diaries, brochures, posters, newspaper articles, lists and poems and a range of extended writing – descriptive, comparative, explanatory etc.

**GRAPHIC** - Digital picture collections, use of Digimap electronic mapping, tables, graphs, paintings, photographs and labelled sketches, overlays and maps etc.

**CONSTRUCTIONS** - Models, sand maps, small world layouts, and collections etc.

-**Success criteria** for each assessment need to be carefully constructed, agreed and recorded. These need to be shared in an appropriate way with the children. No child should be unaware of what they need 'to do' in order to gain success against the learning / assessment outcomes.

-Assessment **outputs** should to be **marked, moderated, (where applicable) and thence the outcomes recorded** for each child.

-A single record sheet which moves with each child or group of children across a Key Stage, would be a really positive step in helping schools to summarise progress and achievement / attainment (outcomes) for them at 7, 9 and 11, and of course at any other time.

-Similarly the **record sheet** would help teachers to summarise progress and achievement against the end of Key Stage performance descriptor you have created – see earlier

### Example

Class	Assessment 1			Assessment 2		
	C1	C2	C3			
Jade	Y	Y	Y			
Ben	Y	N	N			
Leon	Y	N	Y			
Amelia	Y	Y	Y			

### Assessment Criteria for Assessment 1

C1 – Recognise and identify key geographical features in Lake Road.

C2 – Begin to describe the key geographical features in Lake Road.

C3 - Express likes and dislikes about the Lake Road environment.

-Summary - Leon can **recognise** and **identify** the key features in Lake Road, but finds it difficult to **describe** them. He **expresses his likes and dislikes** about the Lake Road environment really clearly. WOW!! – now we can give parents / guardians meaningful geographical commentary and set targets. Here, in Leon’s case, helping to develop his geographical descriptions.

-The information from years 5 / 6 assessment would (should) be very valuable for secondary schools, in securing ‘their’ knowledge of what children and young people crossing the **Key Stage 2 / 3 interface** know, understand and can do in geography. They cannot be allowed to go backwards in Year 7!!

-It is suggested that a **multi-functional portfolio of learning / assessment outcomes** be developed, for each key stage. This will help to exemplify not only progress ‘over time’ and standards of achievement, but also good and outstanding subject specific teaching and learning in your school. ‘Improving and Ensuring High Quality Practice In Geography In Our School’. (What a vital CPD tool!!).

-Your portfolio might include work across ability groups - top, middle and lower children. Importantly it will include samples of work from different groups of children (see Ofsted framework) – LACs, SEND and disadvantaged children etc. The samples should be annotated to note strengths and weaknesses of response in relation to the agreed learning outcomes / assessment criteria. This will significantly support staff in subject review, improvement planning and refinement of teaching and learning.

-Information recorded through the year will form the basis of meaningful **reporting** (to a range of stakeholders, but especially to adults who look after the children at

home). This needs to focus on what a child has achieved, rather than undertaken, and suggest targets for improvement.

-This will move some schools away from ('x really likes Geography, she has worked very hard this year and especially likes drawing maps'). *See above, noting what Leon has achieved and thence how we can support Leon to better describe the 'geography of place' in the future.*

-In respect of the last bullet point, all published **Ofsted inspection frameworks** clearly indicate the need to inform parents and carers of strengths and weaknesses and how they (and you) can help their child to improve.

**-Pupil self-evaluation** / review, and the setting of realistic improvement targets is of course a major facet of AfL and AoL – you will include this, in a range of applicable fashions (dependent on age and ability), across time.

-The local subject cluster / pyramid may wish to consider documentation which highlights learning / assessment outcomes across Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. This will support, more precisely, the notion of a 5-14 Geography curriculum. It would also enable planning in different phases to build on what children and young people know, understand and can do.



## Appendix 1

### Year 1 – Welcome to SO31 (school’s postcode) Jolly Postman.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Locational Knowledge</u></b> Includes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Place Knowledge</u></b> includes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Human and Physical Knowledge</u></b> includes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Geographical Skills</u></b> includes</p>
<p>The location of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-the countries of the United Kingdom.</li> <li>-of specific places in the United Kingdom as indicated by post-codes.</li> <li>-children’s homes within the locality of the school (if necessary further afield).</li> <li>-important streets within the school locality and their position in relation to the school.</li> <li>-key buildings, land uses and features etc. within the school locality.</li> <li>-places and features that the children like and dislike within the school locality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Recognise the components of an address and the importance of postcodes in locating places.</li> <li>-To recognise and identify features in the school locality.</li> <li>-To begin to describe the school locality.</li> <li>-To begin to compare / contrast ‘areas’ of the school locality.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Settlement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-identify and begin to describe different types of houses commonly found in UK settlements.</li> <li>-Identify features on, and begin to describe the character of their house.</li> <li>-Identify and begin to describe how houses can be both similar and different.</li> <li>-Identify and begin to describe features commonly found in streets in the UK.</li> <li>-Identify and describe how streets can be both similar and different.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Environment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Express likes and dislikes about the local environment.</li> <li>-Begin to describe how the local environment can be sustained or improved.</li> <li>-Begin to consider</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Use postcodes to locate places.</li> <li>-Use Google or Bing maps to locate places in the UK.</li> <li>-Use <a href="http://www.geograph.org.uk">www.geograph.org.uk</a> a simple GIS to explore the character of places.</li> <li>-Use Google Street View to investigate streets within the locality of the school and other selected UK settlements.</li> <li>-Use secondary sources – ground shot photographs to investigate different types of houses.</li> <li>-Use OS 1:1250 and 1:500 maps along with other large scale maps to locate places in the school locality.</li> <li>-Introduce near and far and N S W E.</li> <li>-Follow simple photo trails within the school locality.</li> <li>-Draw large scale maps to show routes followed – for example houses and homes trail in the school locality.</li> <li>-Ask geographical questions related to the school locality.</li> <li>-Undertake a framed geographical enquiry to explore the streets in the locality of the school.</li> <li>-Collect, sort, present and communicate primary data and information.</li> <li>-Use appropriate fieldworking skills and techniques to collect data and information on streets in the school locality.</li> </ul>

		why and how places change.	
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The complete plan / learning pathway for this unit of work can be found on [www.geographysouthwest.co.uk](http://www.geographysouthwest.co.uk)

**Appendix 2 - Intellectual Progression – Selected Key Words**

Check out Bloom’s Taxonomy

**KNOWLEDGE**

**COMPREHENSION**

**APPLICATION**

**ANALYSIS**

**SYNTHESIS**

**EVALUATION**

- List
- Name
- Recall
- Recognise
- Repeat
- Identify
- Observe
- Describe
- Compare
- Explain
- Express
- Reason
- Apply
- Demonstrate
- Illustrate
- Interpret
- Classify
- Analyse
- Appraise
- Prioritise
- Interrelate
- Predict
- Justify
- Evaluate
- Critic
- Hypothesise

**Intellectual Progression + Subject Progression** (shaping learning objectives / outcomes)

To **recognise and begin to identify** *key buildings in Netley Abbey*

To **describe** the *village of Netley Abbey*

To begin to **compare** *Netley Abbey to Old Netley*

To **describe and begin to explain** *change in Netley Abbey*

## **VITAL CONSIDERATIONS**

No doubt you will have a definition for each of these command words agreed by all teaching and support staff, so that there is commonality of understanding and use.

No doubt you will have explained each of these command words with the children and where appropriate, and modelled it.

No doubt you will have shared these words and meaning with parents / guardians via the school website. This will help them with supporting their child's learning – Remember Leon (see commentary). How can I as a parent / guardian help him to be better at describing? You will of course give them ideas.

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