

# Presenting the importance of fieldwork to your Senior Management

## Notes to accompany the presentation slides

For help and advice:

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### Slide 2:

The aim of this online CPD is to highlight the value and necessity of fieldwork within the department and wider school.

Whilst primarily aimed at a 'geographical' audience, the materials presented here are equally applicable to senior management and a whole school audience. Thus the materials can be used in a variety of contexts, for example this online CPD may be used to:-

1. review the nature and extent of fieldwork within the geography curriculum and identify a programme of change
2. persuade and encourage 'others' to become involved with fieldwork
3. realise the wider social as well as academic benefits of a whole school approach to outdoor education.

### Slide 3:

Most recently, the term 'fieldwork' has perhaps become overused and rather diluted. The increases in affordable technology and the ability to bring the outside world into the classroom have given rise to concepts such as 'Virtual Fieldwork'; more than ever before it seems that the necessity of practical work outside school is in competition with rich geographical electronic information brought directly into the classroom. Indeed, the term or concept of fieldwork is rarely defined opening up the debate wider.

### Task

It may therefore be appropriate to discuss the different interpretations of fieldwork with colleagues and agree on a shared vision of fieldwork within your school. For example, the nature of the fieldwork activity will determine venue, timing, year group, costs, staff ratios and so on.

### Slide 4:

*Fieldwork makes geography come to life, puts everything into context in glorious 3D and helps students really grasp how geography literally shapes the world around us.*  
Kate Humble, Presenter of BBC Springwatch.

Source: [www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk/fieldwork](http://www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk/fieldwork)

This slide should serve as a starting point for a sharing of views and opinions. Indeed, responses to this question are likely to be influenced by an individual's role within the school – for example, contrast views of senior leaders, middle managers and NQTs. Is fieldwork designed to satisfy the needs of the teachers (e.g. compulsory requirement of examination specifications) and/or the needs of pupils (e.g. 'something different and exciting – not another settlement investigation')?

**Slide 5:**

- The identity and existence of Geography in schools is under threat. There is now good evidence that in secondary schools, the uptake of Geography as an option at GCSE and A Level is in long-term decline. Curriculum changes across all Key Stages, whilst presenting new opportunities also present increased challenges, particularly the demands on curriculum contact time. The most recent Ofsted report on Geography in primary and secondary schools identifies evidence that 'the provision of geography teaching in schools is declining'.
- The Action Plan for Geography is a direct response to these challenges.
- Fieldwork is one invaluable tool to reverse this trend and any associated negative stereotypes.

**Slide 6:**

**Geography in schools – changing practice, Ofsted (January 2008)**

Available from [www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research).

*Geography in schools* is a major report evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of geography in primary and secondary schools.

Some key findings:

- Geography is not doing enough to help children develop a picture of climate change, learn to lead sustainable lives and find their feet as global citizens of the 21st century.
- In primary and secondary schools, although there are many good lessons, too much teaching and learning is mediocre and pupils' achievement is weaker than in most other subjects.
- Many children interviewed in Key Stage 3 (age 11-14) said that they found geography to be boring and irrelevant.
- The number of children choosing to study the subject at Key Stage 4 (age 14-16) continues to fall.
- Good Geography teaching and learning = good fieldwork opportunities.
- Fieldwork is and will continue to be a core activity:

*The National Curriculum for geography requires pupils to 'carry out fieldwork investigations outside the classroom'; activities should be planned to enable all pupils to 'be included and to participate actively and safely in geography fieldwork'. [1]  
Fieldwork is an essential part of all National Frameworks 3–19. It is explicit in the*

*Foundation Stage as identified in the Early Learning Goals where pupils are expected to 'observe, find out about and identify features in the place they live and the natural world' and 'find out about their environment'. The statutory geography curriculum (Key Stages 1–3) expects pupils to participate in 'fieldwork investigations outside the classroom'. GCSE criteria require students to 'acquire and apply techniques of enquiry – including fieldwork' and at AS/A level they are required to 'undertake investigative work and use primary sources including fieldwork'.*

Geography: the National Curriculum for England key stages 1–3. QCA, 2000, pp17, 20 and 25.

### **Slide 7:**

*In the schools where fieldwork is effective, there is clear progression between each key stage, with pupils able to build up their fieldwork skills in a variety of contexts.'*  
Geography in schools: changing practice (Ofsted, 2008)

### **Task**

As a group discuss the above statement. In this context, fieldwork may be considered as including all school fieldwork. One argument for engaging a senior leadership team in a whole school fieldwork programme is to identify gaps and/or support, that Geographical fieldwork can offer throughout the curriculum. For example, 'orienteeing' within an outdoor pursuits week, 'mini beast trail' with Biology, 'site and situation – castles visit with History' and so on. The creative use of the school calendar cannot be underestimated!

Thus, 'progression' need not necessarily be seen only within Geography.

Use a similar timeline to map out the fieldwork activities across the school. Consider the quality and the experience of the fieldwork. Does it satisfy a 'need'?

### **Slide 8:**

Any internal 'marketing' of fieldwork demands a balanced approach.

### **Task**

It might be an interesting exercise to jot down the reasons for and against fieldwork within the school and then consider which side has the longest list!

Consolidating an existing programme or indeed an expansion of fieldwork within a school is not straightforward, yet a majority of barriers can be successfully 'managed'.

For example:-

**Expertise** – local organisations and charities are often unrivalled sources of information. For example, free of charge our school has used the expertise of both local universities in Lincoln.

**Budget** – local fieldwork within walking distance from school minimises travel costs. Alternatively, expertise does not have to be expensive – recent fieldwork with the

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust was less than £5 per A Level Student, including all data collection sheets and equipment.

**Health and Safety** – The value of a pre-visit cannot be underestimated and will allow confident and informed decision making. The school Trips and Visits co-ordinator (a legal requirement) should have attended the necessary training to assist with you with the mandatory Risk Assessment. Alternatively, book yourself in at: [www.rgs.org/OurWork/Fieldwork+and+Expeditions/GO+seminars+and+workshops/EAC+seminars+and+workshops.htm](http://www.rgs.org/OurWork/Fieldwork+and+Expeditions/GO+seminars+and+workshops/EAC+seminars+and+workshops.htm)

**Curriculum Time** – if fieldwork is well planned and an enriching experience, it will add value to the whole school curriculum. For example, fieldwork reinforces higher order skills such as decision-making and opportunities for pupils with preferences for visual-spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic, interpersonal and naturalist learning styles.

### **Slide 9:**

New technologies and curriculum developments offer significant challenges – nevertheless, they also create new opportunities. In the rationalisation and review of the curriculum, for example, there is the opportunity to embed fieldwork as a core activity across the school.

### **Key Stage 3**

Geographical enquiry encourages questioning, investigation and critical thinking about issues affecting the world and people's lives, now and in the future. Fieldwork is an essential element of this. Pupils learn to think spatially and use maps, visual images and new technologies, including geographical information systems, to obtain, present and analyse information.

*Source: Geography: programme of study for key stage 3 and attainment target. QCA, 2007, p101.*

### **Rose Review (Interim Report, December 2008)**

The Geographical Association endorse Rose's view that the 'key processes' in the Framework should develop specific skills that 'help children gain a better understanding of the key ideas' (underpinning subjects). From a geographical perspective, such a key process would be fieldwork, so central to powerful, geographical understanding and application and vital to personal development.

*Source: [www.geography.org.uk/eyprimary/curriculumreview/](http://www.geography.org.uk/eyprimary/curriculumreview/)*

### **Key Stage 4**

Rationalisation of coursework and introduction of controlled assessments.

### **Key Stage 5**

Assessment of fieldwork within a modular examination system demands a view of fieldwork as beyond a 'summer' only activity.

### **Slide 10:**

The formalisation of fieldwork within a programme of study will involve three distinct, albeit overlapping approaches.

Geographical Information Systems and the wider use of technologies have an important role to play in supporting each phase and the fieldwork as a whole.

Nevertheless, it is the authors' view, that fieldwork should inform and input GIS – rather than the fieldwork being dictated by the needs, demands and availability of the technologies. In short, 'geovisualisation' has an important role to play but virtual fieldwork alone is no substitute for quality and accessible fieldwork.

**Slide 11:**

Geovisualisation is an important strand of fieldwork and consequently its value and role need to be shared to senior managers. This is not as a substitute to fieldwork but as an invaluable tool in supporting the needs of all learners – and meeting the needs of the **personalised learning** agenda. Furthermore, as GIS is increasingly emerging as a core skill on new examination specifications, there may be an (urgent) need for schools to review their capacity to support such new (often web based) technologies.

Geovisualisation may be defined as 'interactive analysis of geographical data'.

Increasingly, technology is converging – for example, freely available web based GIS applications, offer 'georeferenced' satellite imagery, oblique photographs, maps, points of interest and so on. In short, technology is bringing together a variety of geographically information within applications that are straightforward to use. The interactive and analytical use of these applications is geovisualisation.

Geovisualisation is greatly assisted by a Geographical Information System (GIS). There is a myriad of GIS from which to choose. The choice of an appropriate GIS should consider the three themes of:

- cost
- ease of use
- available tools.

For further exemplification see,

[www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk/images/misc/CGT\\_CPD\\_GIS\\_presentation.ppt](http://www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk/images/misc/CGT_CPD_GIS_presentation.ppt)

**Slide 12:**

The process of identification and management of risks within fieldwork is beyond the scope of this CPD unit. Nevertheless, it is worthy of inclusion for the role that Geographers can play within a school's Trips and Visits Policy. In our experience, the author of the Trips and Visits Policy is rarely the end user of a sometimes onerous and cumbersome administrative machine! Do inform and advise the senior management on the practicalities of running a school trip and visit and where possible, share your experiences as a leader of fieldwork activities. Attempt to make the system work for you and in the process, earn the respect of colleagues.

**Slide 13:**

From September 2009, controlled assessment will replace traditional coursework activities at GCSE. For many centres, this change will necessitate a rethinking of the 'fieldwork process' – not least, whilst the fieldwork activity may remain the same, the nature and depth of the written report is likely to be significantly different.

Fieldwork will remain a core activity at Key Stage 4 and therefore to a certain extent, the place of fieldwork here is not up for discussion. However, it is important to discuss the changes with senior managers in order that they are aware of your (different) needs. For example, students may require increased access to new technologies within the 'pre-fieldwork phase' or two half-days of 'fieldwork related activity' rather than one traditional day of data collection.

**Slide 14:**

Fieldwork supports the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTC) manifesto – which in turn, supports **Every Child Matters**

**LOTC vision**

*We believe that every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances.*

**[www.lotc.org.uk](http://www.lotc.org.uk)**

It is important to make senior leaders aware of the LOTC quality badge, awarded from January 2009. As aforementioned, such details reinforce your position as a point of expertise and knowledge within the broader area of outdoor teaching and learning.

**Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge**

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has worked in partnership with the Learning Outside the Classroom National Advisory Group to bring together existing safety and quality badges into one easily recognisable Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge for provider organisations. It is hoped that this badge will be instantly recognised and trusted by local authorities and schools.

The LOTC Quality Badge was launched on 2nd October 2008. The scheme is live from January 2009 when the first badges will be awarded.

**Slide 16:**

The accompanying slides and photographs illustrate two examples of fieldwork followed at Lincoln Minster School.

The separate PowerPoint downloads may be used to accompany the presentation or used independently to stimulate discussion.

The organisation of each case study, broadly follows the overall structure provided on this page.