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Building Climate Change into Weather and Climate Teaching

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The Royal Meteorological Society believes that every student should leave school with the basic climate literacy that would enable them to engage with the messages put forward by the media or politicians, or to make informed decisions about their own opportunities and responsibilities.

Through 2019/ 2020, students, the media and academics became increasingly vocal in demanding that more climate change be taught in UK schools. With a rigid National Curriculum and exam specifications, part of the problem lies in students (and teachers) not realising the relevance of concepts and processes they have actually been taught in school to understanding climate change and the broad spectrum of impacts, mitigation and adaptation issues associated with it. In addition, weather and climate are commonly perceived as being amongst the harder topics in geography and so, even when they are taught at all, geography teachers are used to teaching weather, climate and climate change separately, not highlighting the close ties and links between the topics.

With this in mind, the Royal Meteorological Society has developed a full scheme of work for 11-14 year old students which integrates climate change thinking into weather and climate lessons. Hard copy teacher's guides have been distributed to schools throughout the UK, free of charge, with associated teaching resources being made available online. Recognising the importance of teacher understanding, the resources are accompanied by CPD materials for teachers.

In 2021, we hope to build on this work by developing resources and teacher training materials for science teachers and students.