

Heritage Schools programme

Short description of the project

Heritage Schools is a programme which aims to ensure school children develop an understanding of their local heritage and its significance. The programme is funded by the government and delivered by English Heritage. It is a 3 year programme, currently funded until March 2015, which includes clusters of schools in eight regions across England (Barking & Dagenham, Bristol, Great Yarmouth, Leicester, North Tyneside, Manchester, Telford & Wrekin and North Yorkshire).

Outcomes

- Children are proud of where they live
- Children understand their local heritage and how it relates to the national story
- Teachers are more confident in making effective use of local heritage resources in delivering the curriculum
- Local historic context is embedded in the school's curriculum
- Heritage providers are more connected to the needs of local schools
- Parents are engaged in their children's learning
- Communities are more deeply involved in the life of the school

In each of the eight regions a Local Heritage Education Manager has been appointed to work with a cluster of schools and to broker partnerships with local heritage and cultural providers. A Lead Teacher from each school is provided with training, so local heritage learning opportunities can be embedded in the schools' the curriculum.

Schools are provided with funding to develop the programme and cover costs are provided to release the Lead Teacher for training and cluster meetings. In addition training opportunities are extended to other members of staff and in some schools whole staff training is delivered in response to the needs and development plans of individual schools. In all eight regions school teachers have embraced the opportunity to learn more about the local heritage of the area they teach in and have been inspired to develop projects and schemes of work to engage pupils in learning about the heritage on their doorstep.

What would have happened without this project?

The Heritage Schools Programme has supported schools and teachers in embedding local heritage into the curriculum at a crucial time of change and development in the National Curriculum, particularly in history. The changes become a statutory requirement in September 2014 and 'local history studies' are listed at Key stages 1, 2 and 3 and the support provided to schools has enabled them to develop inspiring learning opportunities to engage pupils with their local heritage. Without this programme many of the local heritage treasures would have been overlooked in the

curriculum development plans, because teachers and schools were not aware of the opportunities or because they simply did not have the time and capacity to research and uncover the local stories that can bring history to life.

In addition local references have been embedded in other areas of the curriculum which enable pupils to connect their city, town or village to the wider 'Story of England'. The programme has also given rise to plethora of projects in partnership with the heritage sector and schools. These partnerships have been brokered by the Local Heritage Education Managers who have been able to support organisations in developing an offer which supports the needs of the schools and the curriculum.

What has the project achieved, or difference has it made?

There are now 150 schools directly benefitting from the programme and additional schools and teachers benefit from the resources being produced and opportunities to access training.

- "What a wonderful way for the children to put history into a real life context." Rachel Jacques, Headteacher, Bowker Vale Primary.

53,000 children have already been involved in the programme, a figure which rises continuously as projects are developed and programmes of study are repeated with different year groups of pupils. It is anticipated that at least 100,000 pupils will have taken part by the end of 2014.

- "I found this enquiry really interesting because I didn't know anything about the Anglo-Saxons before. Now I would like to be an archaeologist when I'm older and find my own Sutton Hoo" Jack year 4

The attendances at training sessions for teachers continues to rise with 540 attendances recorded at the end of the spring term 2014 and 800 delegates attending Heritage Schools events.

- "The local heritage session was excellent. Lots of information – made very accessible – good range of websites. Solid and factual. Very enthusing and inspiring." Primary Teacher - North Yorkshire Humanities Network.

The Churches Conservation Trust is the Heritage Schools national partner and delivers a parallel programme to foster partnerships with schools and promote the use of the properties in their care as learning resources and will extend learning opportunities to over 50 additional schools.

There have also been over 250 local heritage partners involved in the programme and in supporting schools in engaging in local heritage, in a vast array of creative ways, from both the cultural and heritage sector. Projects include partnerships local museums, including pupils curating their own local heritage exhibitions; with local artists to create and design artworks which represent and express the learning; film projects with local film makers, to uncover and share local stories and trace the pathways of discovery and learning and IT projects, where children have created

APPs, developed webpages and contributed to data bases e.g. HER and Warmemorials Online.

In addition all the Heritage Schools regions are working with local heritage partners on WW1 Commemoration activities and events which include exhibitions, showcases, films and trails.

What were the main lessons learnt or challenges overcome?

The Heritage Schools Programme was devised in response to Darren Henley's review of Cultural Education in England and is funded by the Department for Education. Various other strategies have been put into place in response to the review, including the formation of Cultural Education Partnership Groups (CEPGs) which bring together heritage and cultural organisations to work more cohesively in extending access to culture and heritage for young people

The Heritage Schools programme began in the three CEPG pilot regions of Barking and Dagenham, Bristol and Great Yarmouth in 2012 and rolled out to Leicester, Manchester and North Tyneside in 2013 and Telford and Wrekin and North Yorkshire in 2014.

A condition of the funding was to have a geographical spread of school clusters and while the programme has been established in just one local authority within each region, a combination of inner-city, rural and coastal schools have been included. The needs of the schools and teachers have been very similar, despite the diverse range of schools involved and it is clear that the programme is addressing a national need for local heritage learning and high quality Continuous Professional Development for teachers. The challenge is in extending this support to additional schools and regions.

What is the future of the project?

The sustainability of the Heritage Schools Programme lies in the development of strong local partnerships and in embedding local heritage learning into the curriculum. Engaging learning experiences are remembered by pupils and teachers alike and successful projects will be repeated and developed for subsequent cohorts of children.

The development of accessible online resources will provide existing schools with ongoing support and also extend the reach of the programme to additional schools. A range of Case Studies available on the Heritage Explorer website share good practice and provide a springboard for ideas and projects which can be adapted in other areas of the country.

The 'Teacher Kits' and 'How to Guides' on the site, support teachers and heritage partners in how to research and develop learning activities, to support the delivery of the curriculum.

The Heritage Schools film projects being developed are resources which provide information and inspiration for both pupils and teachers and illustrate the wide range of cross-curricular learning outcomes which can be achieved through engagement with local heritage.

Direct links to valuable online learning resources are delivered to teachers and heritage partners via the Heritage Schools E-Newsletter which has a growing number of subscribers from the Heritage Schools' clusters, attendees at Heritage Schools' events around the country and visitors to the website.

In addition an online Heritage Schools Network is being developed to enable teachers and partners to share and access resources, good practice and take part in local and national forums.

The potential learning opportunities across the wide variety of English Heritage departments are enormous and the programme is now looking to develop educational activities which support the NHPP and engage teachers and pupils with heritage protection, conservation and designation, so the next generation can learn about and care for the rich heritage of where they live.

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