

Local Heritage Planning – Guidance 8

The importance of local history and heritage learning within pupils' cultural education

What is Cultural Education?

*'At its best, a sound Cultural Education should allow children to gain **knowledge** through the learning of facts; **understanding** through the development of their critical faculties and **skills** through the opportunity to practise specific art forms. Involvement with cultural activities, whether as an active participant (creating a piece of art or craft, reading a book, making a short film) or actively experiencing an event or place (visiting a heritage site, gallery or museum, seeing how a building works, watching a music, dance, or film performance) can be habit forming for the rest of a young person's life.'*

Cultural Education in England, An independent review by Darren Henley for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Education, 2012, paragraph 3.2.



Exhibition of pupil's models of local buildings

Why is it important now?

The government announced in the 2022 Education White Paper, *Opportunity for All* that it will publish a cultural education plan in 2024, working with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Arts Council England.

In July 2023 the government published the Terms of Reference for the Cultural Education Plan Expert Advisory Panel and the names of the members of that panel.



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What does the Cultural Education Plan aim to achieve?

In explaining why the plan is to be produced, the government sets down four principal reasons:

- All children and young people should be equipped to access and enjoy the arts and our cultural heritage – as participants and audience members – while supported with the tools, techniques and aptitudes to co-create the arts and heritage of the future
- High-quality cultural education is a vital component of a well-rounded education, supporting children and young people’s personal and social development in ways that will sustain them as individuals, into the workplace and throughout their lives
- Cultural education can enhance young people’s health, wellbeing and resilience, particularly as we recover from the impact of the pandemic
- The creative and cultural industries offer rewarding careers in a vibrant growth sector that is recognised as key to the UK’s economic success and international reputation



Local heritage artwork display

What is the link between local history and heritage learning and cultural education?

If cultural education can be seen as a spine which runs through the curriculum linking to all curriculum subjects and to each and every child’s more general education, heritage learning and local history studies should be seen as one of those dynamic threads which weave their way through and around that spine, explaining, exemplifying and enriching what is being learned.

In this way, local history and heritage studies are an integral part of the education of young people not only through separate subjects, such as history and geography, but also through their more general holistic education.

Without heritage learning cultural education is partial; with them cultural education is complete.



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How Can Local History and Heritage Learning Contribute to Cultural Education?

If the cultural education plan is to help pupils instil a love and interest in culture throughout their education, heritage learning and local history are significant ways in which this can be achieved.



An exhibition of schools' heritage work in Oldham

When young people learn about their cultural heritage they are learning about ways of life. This includes arts, beliefs, places and institutions; all of which are passed down from generation to generation. These cultural traditions can have global, national and local traits and connections. By learning about their local cultural heritage young people will:

- 1 understand more about what they see around them and where it came from
- 2 be helped to feel more connected with their local communities
- 3 find greater common ground with their peers and the wider community.
- 4 be more likely to have a greater respect and appreciation for cultural diversity and community cohesion
- 5 gain a greater and wider sense of cultural belonging and participation
- 6 be helped to recognise what they and others around them value and what is worth protecting.
- 7 through knowledge and understanding feel more empowered to preserve aspects of their cultural heritage for future generations.

As a result, studying local history and heritage learning throughout the curriculum and across all year groups will substantially enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of their locality and its heritage and why it matters.



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Local history and heritage learning allows us to look at what was happening in a particular area and to see the extent to which it mirrors or differs from what was happening elsewhere.

As a result, it enables us to focus on a particular area and to move from the 'local' to the 'national' and often on to the 'global' scene.

It opens the doors from the particular and manageable study to the much larger and more complex study.

Thus, for children and young people local history can be the most appropriate access point for the study of history and for appreciating our rich cultural heritage.

It enables them to become grounded in the past, to get their feet firmly placed in the period and become accustomed to the times they study before launching into a much broader and perhaps less concrete and less tangible study.

As a result, pupils develop a broad appreciation of the cultural context, and how and why it has developed as it has, in which they live and go to school.

Local history and heritage learning can bring enormous benefits for children and young people.

Some of the most important are that they enable them to:

- Understand how and why their local community has developed in the way it has
- Investigate the people and events that took place where they lived
- Develop a sense of historical curiosity about their area and a sense of place
- See how their locality was involved in, responded to and was affected by regional, national and international events and actions – was their area typical or was it unique?
- Understand why the area in which they live is worth knowing about
- Be aware of the features of their local community and the extent to which they are an asset
- Strengthen their chronological understanding and their appreciation of how and why some things change and others remain the same
- Develop their enquiry skills and strengthen their skills in using a range of resources such as maps, photographs, census returns and directories
- Increase their confidence and sense of achievement
- Strengthen their knowledge and appreciation of their local community and forge stronger links with that community
- Develop an identity and pride in where they live
- Provide opportunities for out of class activities which are known to improve pupils physical and mental wellbeing

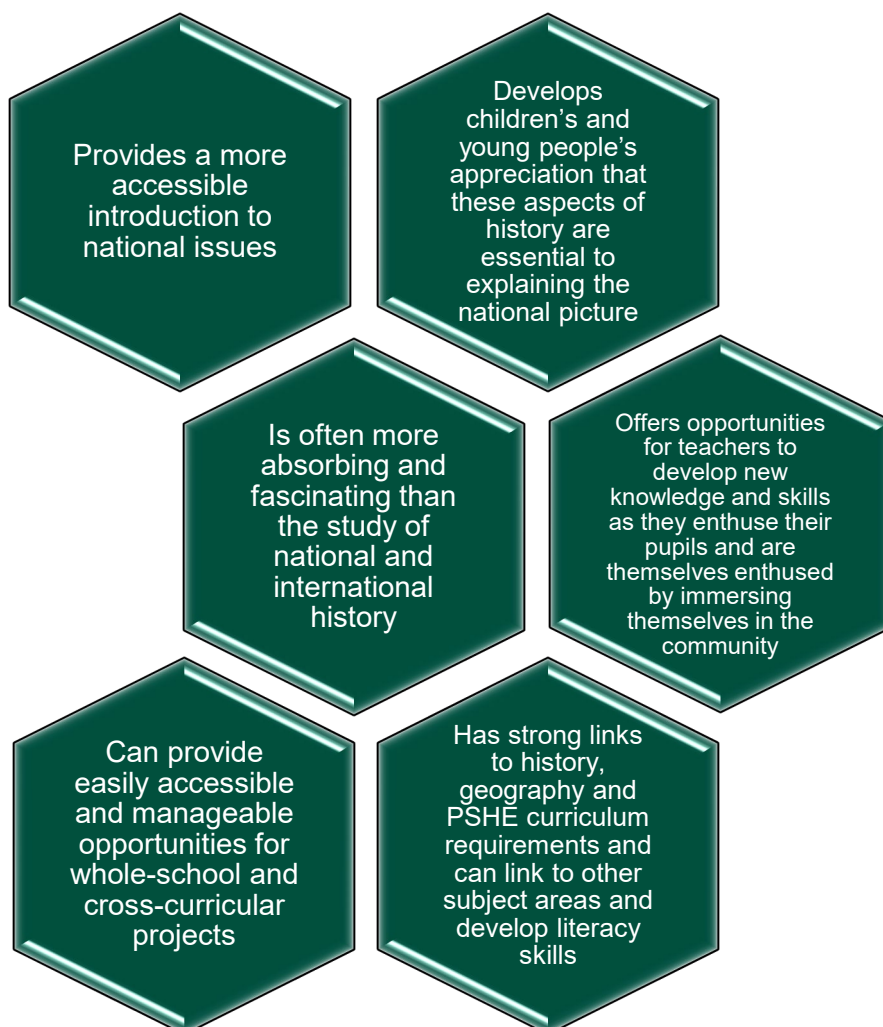


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Pupils on a WW2 Heritage Trail in Leicester

Ultimately, the study of local history and heritage:



Excluding local history and heritage learning will mean that cultural education will be partial. Including them, will make cultural education complete.