



Museums and Galleries Strategic Commissioning Programme 2006-07

Evaluation report: executive summary

In 2006/7 the Strategic Commissioning programme has had a direct impact on over 20,000 young people and more than 2,000 teachers and cultural sector staff. It has demonstrated that:

- Museum, archive and gallery education has a positive impact on pupils' attainment, behaviour, attitude and skills.
- Teachers who have worked with museums, archives and galleries value their provision and are keen to work with them again.
- Pupils enjoy and are inspired by museums, archives and galleries.
- Museum, archive and gallery staff are knowledgeable, flexible and responsive to the changing needs of the education sector.

Strategic Commissioning has overcome preconceptions and fear of the unknown in teachers and staff to promote a positive engagement between the two sectors which has in turn resulted in collaborative projects with real benefits for pupils.

Teachers have discovered the range of resources in their local museums, archives or galleries and the willingness of staff to work with them to develop education activity. Staff have engaged directly with schools and teachers to find out what they need, and responded to those needs. Pupils have made a journey of discovery into the exciting, informative and inspirational places that modern museums, archives and galleries have become.

The role of regional MLAs and engage has been vital to the creation and dissemination of the resources and examples of good practice created through Strategic Commissioning, in developing partnerships and providing advocacy for the sector in schools.

Through the duration of Strategic Commissioning a number of lessons have been learned which can help to maximise its impact in the future.

The relationships made between individuals through the programme are fragile and for true sustainability there needs to be a willingness on the part of

organisations to formalise these partnerships through school development plans and museum, archive and gallery strategic planning and management.

A major force in the education sector is the advocacy of teachers, so all participants need to continue to be encouraged to spread their positive experiences wherever possible.

An obvious stumbling block to the continuing development of these activities is cost, however one of the lessons learned through this evaluation is that interaction does not need to be expensive. As long as museums, archives, galleries and schools work together it is possible for teachers to access no or low cost activities that still deliver huge rewards. Where new projects are being developed, an initial investment in research and development can have a big impact on future delivery.

The educational sector is subject to constant change. There is an increasing focus on interaction with the real world through vocational courses and personalised learning, there is an emphasis on the child through Every Child Matters and extended schools and there is an increasing need for resources to support the citizenship and diversity agenda.

The cultural sector is well placed to support many of these current educational priorities. However the strength of the cultural sector, and of the Strategic Commissioning programme in particular, is not its ability to support these specific priorities, it is its ability to respond to the needs of educators and provide the resources they need to deliver a well rounded and fulfilling education to children and young people.

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Hayton Associates on behalf of Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and Arts Council England