

RENAISSANCE

museums for
changing lives

**The most
interesting thing
at the museum
today was...**

THE IMPACT OF MUSEUM VISITS ON PUPILS AGED 11-18 YEARS

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intro

In 2005 pupils aged from 11-18 years were asked to complete a short questionnaire at the end of their visit to a museum or gallery about what they felt they had learnt. At the end of the sheet, a thought bubble invited spontaneous responses to the question: “the most interesting thing at the museum today was...”. The range and depth of responses were surprising. Pupils found the visits challenging, engaging and stimulating; their curiosity was aroused and learning was stimulated. The museum provided space for reflection and for very personal responses.

The young peoples’ responses reveal that they found (often to their surprise) that museums are inspiring places to learn in different ways from school. Pupils also thought that museums could help them with their assessments and in linked classroom-based research, we found that museums do play a role in boosting pupils’ sense of achievement, and in encouraging and motivating young people to greater levels of attainment.

The DfES Green paper Youth Matters identifies the challenges in engaging young people in positive and empowering activities, and the following pages present evidence that museums can offer positive environments in which young people can engage with learning opportunities that can successfully stimulate and encourage them.

Key findings from the Renaissance Museum Education Programme

In 2005, 1,643 teachers and 26,791 pupils completed a questionnaire in 69 museums, 4946 (18%) of which were pupils of KS3 and above. This repeats a study which took place in 2003.

- 40% increase since 2003 in the number of museum contacts with school-aged children
- 38% of schools on visits have high numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals
- 27% of teachers in 2005 have increased their use of museums for cross curricular work from 4% in 2003
- 85% of KS3 and above pupils discovered something interesting at the museum
- 83% felt the museum was a good way to learn in a different way to school
- 68% of older pupils thought their school work was made more inspiring

The Generic Learning Outcomes

MLA commissioned RCMG to devise an approach to measuring the learning outcomes of users of museums, archives and libraries. Five Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) were identified. These can be used to organise and analyse the things that people do, say and make in museums, libraries and archives.

GLOs

**ENJOYMENT, INSPIRATION,
CREATIVITY**

**KNOWLEDGE AND
UNDERSTANDING**

**ACTION, BEHAVIOUR,
PROGRESSION**

ATTITUDES AND VALUES

SKILLS

Young people's writing and drawing

The comments and drawings of the young people have been analysed against the Generic Learning Outcomes and are accompanied by short discussions to highlight the learning which has taken place.

The main learning outcome identified is given with each response.

Ivie

AGED 12

During a handling session of musical instruments at the Horniman Museum, Ivie was full of pride to see musical instruments from Nigeria, her country of origin. Learning for Ivie in this museum visit is a directly personal experience and the objects she looked at are meaningful to her because they relate to an important part of her identity. Their representation in the museum suggests they are of value, that they are special, and this has made Ivie proud because she can share this with her classmates.

proud

The most interesting thing about today was...

Was sketching all the different instruments.
Also to think the handling session was interesting
and I was very proud because some of the instruments were
from my ~~own~~ country (Nigeria)

Hannah

AGED 12

For Hannah, the most interesting thing about her visit to Roots of Norfolk, Gressenhall was being immersed in the experience of the 19th century workhouse for the day. Through experiencing the living conditions of the inmates and through personal contact with the traces those individuals have left behind, she was able to feel as though she was a part of history. Hannah has enjoyed this close connection with the past, something which she might not have experienced so vividly in the classroom, and as a result is able to make comparisons with the present in an empathetic way and her understanding is increased.

The most interesting thing about today was...

When we got a tour of the workhouse and found out how harsh things were in those days. I also liked looking at the wall where people had inscribed dates + names in. I enjoyed it because it felt like we were really there for part of the day.

James

AGED 13

Teachers use museums because of the potential to stimulate the imagination and raise questions in pupils' minds. At the museum, James has been exposed to different points of view and he has learnt to respect that although they might be different to his own views, they are equally valid. Equally, he has been able to place himself in the circumstances and experience of others and perhaps his own opinions have been challenged through this process? Certainly he understands now how hard it is to be homeless – how poverty is dealt with in other centuries can help challenge pupils' contemporary attitudes.

The most interesting thing about today was...

I learnt to respect the
views of others and how
hard it is to be homeless

Dave

AGED 15

Unusually for a 15 year old boy Dave was moved to tears by the Theatre in Education drama. He has had a highly charged emotional experience, and was inspired by his visit to the museum. Together with many other KS3 and above pupils Dave found his museum visit emotionally engaging. Many pupils talked about how the 'reality' of their experience, and their personal involvement with this experience, provoked an emotional response. Emotional responses can be a powerful catalyst for further learning.

moving

The most interesting thing about today was...

The house at the
beginning. It was moving
& I almost cried. Seriously.

Daniel

AGED 13

During his visit to Roots of Norfolk, Gressenhall, Daniel was struck by the contradictions he encountered of the different value system that was placed on the lives of the 19th century inmates. Daniel has understood some of the attitudes of the 19th century workhouse which provided a good education for children, which was not universally available outside the workhouse. However, Daniel has also learnt that if you died in the workhouse you were of no value and were not given your own coffin. Through the knowledge and understanding that Daniel has gained from the visit his attitudes and values may have been shaped

The most interesting thing about today was...

finding out that you get a really
good education, ~~and~~ but you don't get
your own coffee.

Will

AGED 13

Will demonstrates how an increase in knowledge and understanding can stimulate a change in attitudes and values, and also lead to progression. He visited the museum to look at the debate around extending housing development in rural areas, and its impact on the countryside. His increased knowledge and understanding has convinced him to take a clear stance against further development. He shows concern for preservation of a resource he realises is precious and fragile, and which is home to rare species he might not have known about previously. He develops his argument clearly and precisely, justifying his position, and indicates a significant development in his awareness.

The most interesting thing about today was...

Seeing the country side and
realising how easy it would be to loose
it. Also how many rare animals there
was, and we MUST preserve what
we have and not loose something that is
precious and fragile to mankind.

Vincent

AGED 18

Writing an audio guide for an art gallery has not inspired Vincent at all, in fact it has led him to write a rather scathing attack on art galleries and their visitors! He is very vocal about his dislikes, which is very unusual for pupils who took part in this research, and has actively changed the theme to “the most uninteresting thing”. He has set himself up in clear opposition to the act of visiting a gallery and even to the art on display, which he labels ‘pretentious’ and depressing. He is challenging the purpose of art galleries, asking what is the point? He cannot see any. From Vincent’s response it appears that he had quite a negative learning experience in the gallery, and indeed not all learning experiences are positive.

The most ^{art interest} interesting thing about today was...

Not that the gallery was bad because im sure
boaring people love to pinesure things like this all day,
I have better things to do than ask questions about a picture
its very boaring ~~to~~ also, I think a lot of the so called
art in this museum is over pretentious and hence depression
me, this art gallery has given me an insight into other peoples
boaring and drab lifes, and it will make my life feel
a lot more fullfilling + +.

Georgia

AGED 17

Georgia is working towards her AS Art and design, critical and contextual studies, purposefully choosing a theme amongst the artworks on display at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. She has taken her time to think about what she found most interesting as she obviously had a huge amount of ideas as a result of the visit. She has changed her mind a few times until she has been happy with what she wants to say. Her time at the museum has been a journey of discovery, of viewing different artworks, weighing up their suitability for her working theme and being inspired to produce her own work.

The most interesting thing about today was...

~~The modern art~~

~~Discovering different themes from the
Renaissance + modern art~~

3D artworks - provided inspiring ideas that I could
do with parallelism. It was also scary
with how it played with my perception.

Loved the Bridget Riley works too.

I also found other paintings that I hadn't considered
for my working theme.

Sobia

AGED 12

Visiting The Museum of London as part of Black History Month Sobia's response is brief but the significance of her experience is profound. She has learnt about how others feel when they have been abused. Although she does not go into detail about the session she was involved with, it enabled her to develop a sense of empathy with the people she talks about. Perhaps it will have a further impact upon her understanding and tolerance?

LEARNING

The most interesting thing about today was...

Learning about how people felt when people were getting abused.

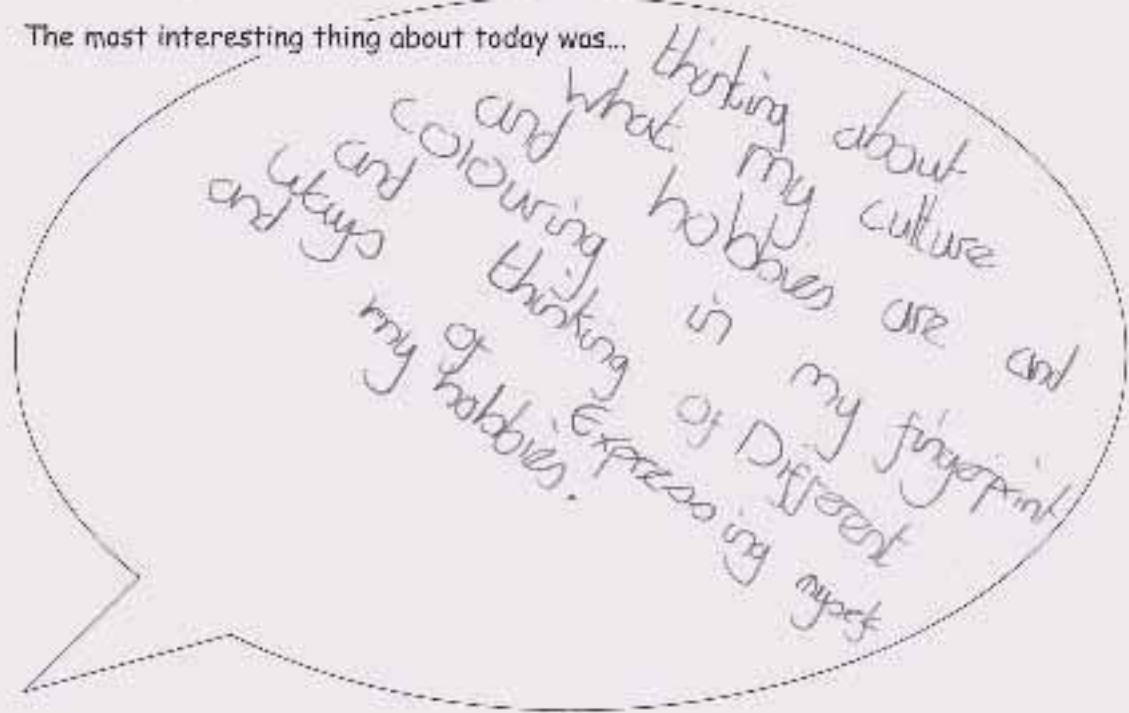
Ryan

AGED 12

Ryan's time at Shipley Art Gallery enabled him to look more closely at himself and think about his own identity. Through being involved in working on an interpretation of his own fingerprint, he began to consider other ways of expressing himself. His experience at the museum has begun to open up new ways of de-coding his identity and communicating this.

thinking

The most interesting thing about today was...



Nick

AGED 17

Nick is exuberant in his response to his visit to Temple Newsam House near Leeds, a magnificent Tudor-Jacobean mansion with renowned collections and lavish interiors. Working with a professional textiles artist in such grandeur has generated immense enthusiasm from Nick because it is so different to his everyday experience of school. He has worked with, and had help from, a specialist and visited an extraordinary place with special collections, so it is something that he is likely to remember for a long time.

WOTRIBED

The most interesting thing about today was...

The sheer unbridled extravagance
of the mansion which we worked in
and the aid of a professional
textiles artist.

Beatrice

AGED 17

Visiting the Horniman Museum for her performance studies was very successful for Beatrice. The resources that she has seen and the interaction that she has had with the stories behind them have inspired her development of a themed performance, enabling her to think more globally. Her horizons have been opened in other ways too. Masks and costumes have become something more than artworks or something to hide behind. Beatrice can appreciate that they all have a story to tell and it enables her to understand the meaning behind them. She has progressed subtly both in her thinking and in using her experiences to directly inform her creativity.

The most interesting thing about today was...

the way that costumes and masks have a history and a story behind each one - in a way its another human being! the workshop has helped me as am now thinking how we can include certain areas from around the world in our themed performance!

Sally

AGED 12

Sally has been very active at the Horniman Museum in London. She has been involved in an activity which has enabled her to try loads of different ways of making music using instruments from around the world. Her enjoyment is palpable in her response. She lists all the different instruments that she has tried from drums to string instruments to wind instruments, implicit within this is that they used all different parts of the body. Her awareness and knowledge has increased through exposure to the museum collections, a sense of the world opening up beyond her 'ordinary' horizons.

The most interesting thing about today was...

Trying out unusual instruments which I have never seen before, for they are from all different countries. We played drums, string instruments, blow instruments and Beating instruments. I discovered more different ways of making music!

William

AGED 13

William is convinced that his visit to the museum will have an impact on his schoolwork, as he feels that actually experiencing a 19th century workhouse will help significantly when he comes to write about it. He understands the potential that his visit has had for his own learning outcomes. This is most evident in his ability to make judgements and draw conclusions as a result of the role plays he saw, which enabled him to understand the workhouse from different perspectives. This confidence is not misplaced; we found that some students did indeed achieve higher grades in their assessed work after a museum visit.

W I T N E S S

The most interesting thing about today was... learning
about the school and on the
farm I also enjoyed the role plays.
about their point of views, it was very
realistic. I think it will help my essay
because I have actually been and experienced
a work house. I heard the good and bad
point of views about it.

Harriet

AGED 13

Harriett's trip to the museum was focused on the development of rural settlements as part of a Geography syllabus. She has been through a process of debate, a process which she has clearly laid out for us and described diagrammatically. The debates have stimulated her and aided her understanding. She has been exposed to different points of view and the real life scenarios are something which she valued. Setting out her thought processes in this way, Harriett enables us to see clearly the impact of the museum activity upon the learning outcomes. It is clear that she recognises her own learning as she articulates it so successfully.

The most interesting thing about today was...

The debates

Seeing
different things
through the lives
of different people.

more understanding

real life
scenarios

Frederick

AGED 15

Few of the older pupils represented their thoughts through a drawing but Frederick has chosen to do just that. He has drawn a picture of a jug, part of the strong decorative art collections at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. Maybe for his GCSE Art and Design he has drawn on their extensive collections to inspire his work? This drawing impresses with its bulbous shape, flowing lines and elegant decoration. He has captured the aesthetic qualities of the jug in a confident and straightforward manner.

100KING

The most interesting thing about today was...



Megan

AGED 15

Megan has had a lot of fun during her visit to Manchester Art Gallery but she remembers that there is a serious reason behind it. She talks about how she has seen artworks connected with what she identifies as important subjects like HIV, racism and homosexuality. It suggests that she understands the universality of such themes and their significance for society. They have inspired her in some way and she has gone back to school feeling that she has a better understanding of the subject.

The most interesting thing about today was...

dressing up and cooking
in funny merros. Also some
of pieces were very inspiring
on important subjects like homosexuality
and HIV. also racism.

Toby

AGED 11

At Bolton Museum, Toby was able to develop his art and drawing skills. Firstly he learnt how to blend colours and mix paints in a more subtle way. Secondly he learnt about capturing movement through the process of sketching very quickly to convey life and movement. He enjoyed this the most, using the aquarium as a resource to produce artworks.

learnt

The most interesting thing about today was...

that I learnt about using white to blend light colours together. The best area of the museum was the aquarium because you had to draw quicker to catch an image.

Stacey

AGED 15

Stacey has learnt a new technique which has helped to make her school work more inspiring; it has stimulated and intrigued her. Unfortunately we don't know why Stacey was visiting Manchester City Art Gallery but she is enthusiastic about what she did there. Perhaps she will return to school charged and motivated, filled with new ideas.

inspired

The most interesting thing about today was...

Taking photographs, and making pictures from tape, it was using a new method to express creativity.
The whole trip was inspirational.

Darren

AGED 11

What is striking about Darren's response is the manner in which she has organised her thoughts onto the paper. We can see clearly what she did and how she felt about it. Young people express their enthusiasm in many ways and for Darren her museum visit compares favourably to school because it doesn't feel like work. Yet she is still learning. Teachers consistently flag up this causal link between enjoyment and learning. Enjoyable, and different, learning experiences can inspire young people, leading to a heightened sense of awareness and openness to new experiences.

Fun

The most interesting thing about today was...

THEATRE

NO WORK

BOLLYWOOD

HAD FUN

WAS NOT
BORING

Shanez

AGED 13

Museums work with young people who are at important stages in their development. Exposure to experiences that are different or thought-provoking can help pupils reach their individual potential or inspire them to greater things. Shanez has been inspired by discovering the contribution that Black people have made through history, and she hopes that their efforts can be continued.

drama

The most interesting thing about today was...

The drama on the
Respect awards
the drama in the work
shop and many black
people have done
a lot of things for
us and I hope we continue
what they did

Myyles

AGED 13

Museums can challenge the perceptions and stimulate the imagination of young people. For Myyles, the enthusiasm he demonstrated for his visit was generated by the greater understanding he obtained of Black history, which his school was celebrating during October. He was introduced to new heroes and the strong characters of Black history, which grasped his attention, possibly through personal relevance.

learn

The most interesting thing about today was...

now the characters ^{the play} they played were
very strong especially the freed slaves
and ~~the~~ Black history exhibit I learnt
about a lot of new Black heroes

Nichole

AGED 16

Nicole was at Segedunum in Newcastle and instead of being a passive visitor to an exhibition it appears that she was using the museum in an active manner. She was collecting questionnaires from people, quite a different use of the museum. Teachers did not always recognise that their pupils would learn skills in the museum but we can think about the kinds of social skills that Nicole would be learning; approaching people she doesn't know, learning to talk to people and asking their opinions, and developing more confidence in social interaction. More importantly Nicole recognises her own learning and has articulated that to us.

The most interesting thing about today was...

Asking the questionnaires to
people as it helped my social
skills

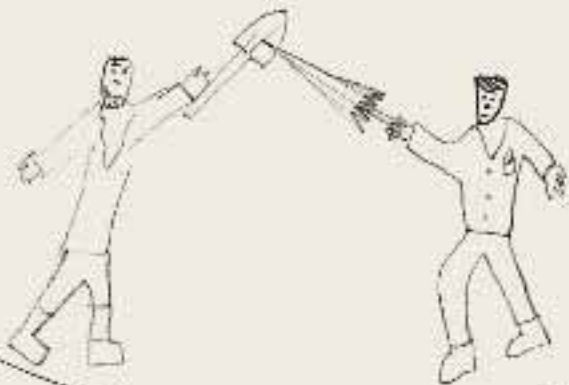
Geoffrey

AGED 14

Geoffrey is studying inner city regeneration as part of GCSE Geography. He has chosen to visually recreate the struggles he has learnt about during his visit to the Museum of Docklands between the original residents and those who moved in alongside them, whom Geoffrey describes as the new 'successful yuppies'. He has represented both sides in a humorous way. The working class are portrayed as fighting with a spade, dressed in boots and scruffy clothes, and the yuppie as fighting with an umbrella and in a sharp city suit. The stimulation of his imagination in this way may help to aid his retention of the information.

The most interesting thing about today was...

I was most interested by the conflict
between the original residents who lived here for
years and the new successful "yuppies".



Background and context

RENAISSANCE IN THE REGIONS

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) is the lead strategic agency for museums, libraries and archives. We are part of the wider MLA Partnership, working with the nine regional agencies to improve people's lives by building knowledge, supporting learning, inspiring creativity and celebrating identity.

Renaissance in the Regions is MLA's programme to transform England's regional museums. For the first time ever, investment from central government is enabling regional museums across the country to raise their standards and deliver real results in the support of education, community development and economic regeneration.

THE MUSEUM EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Between 2003 and 2006, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Education and Skills have provided nearly £12 million to Renaissance in the Regions for schools education programmes, enabling participating museums across England to develop services and closer links with schools.

EVALUATING THE RENAISSANCE MUSEUM EDUCATION PROGRAMME

In 2003, MLA commissioned the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG) in the Department of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester to evaluate the impact of the government's investment in education in 36 museums in the three Phase 1 museums

Hubs - North East, West Midlands and South West.

Both DCMS and the Treasury said that the evidence from this first study was the most compelling evidence supplied by MLA to the last Spending Review, and that this played a significant part in securing the £15 million additional Renaissance funding.

A second study was commissioned in 2005 which built upon and extended the survey to 47 museums in the Phase 1 Hubs and 22 museums in the Phase 2 Hubs - Yorkshire, London, North West, South East, East Midlands and The East of England. Information about schools' use of museums and pupils' learning outcomes was collected during September and October 2005.

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