

# Learning About Local Heritage

## A Study of the Impact of the Heritage Schools Programme 2022



Prepared for: Historic England

Prepared by: BMG

Date: October 2022

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Produced by BMG Research

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Cover image: Pupils in Great Yarmouth on a Heritage Trail.

# Contents

Key Findings .....	2
Introduction .....	3
The Programme’s impact on the quality of teaching and learning outcomes .....	5
The Programme’s broader impact on community and wellbeing .....	14
The importance of access to local heritage, and how far the Heritage Schools programme has increased access .....	20
Overall sentiment towards the programme .....	22
Conclusions .....	25
Appendix I: Example Topic Guide used for in depth interviews with teachers .....	27
Appendix II: Statement of Terms .....	31

# Key Findings

This study has reviewed quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate the impact of embedding local heritage into the school curriculum through the Heritage Schools programme. It finds that embedding local heritage has a significantly positive impact, notably in the following areas:

- Increasing access to heritage and cultural engagement for pupils, especially those living in Levelling Up areas of the country and areas where social mobility is low.
- Positively impacting on wellbeing through an increased sense of place, belonging and civic pride for pupils, teachers and the community.
- Improving the quality of teaching and curriculum design for teachers and trainee teachers.
- Improving the quality of learning outcomes and engagement in learning across a variety of curriculum subjects for pupils who are inspired by the heritage on their doorstep and its significance locally, nationally and globally.

The Heritage Schools programme is a highly successful vehicle for ensuring children and young people can learn about and enjoy their local heritage. The programme provides training, bespoke resources and supports teachers, trainee teachers and schools. It has had consistently positive results across the ten years of its delivery, in every region of the country and in all types of geographic locations.

# Introduction

Since 2012 Historic England has managed the Heritage Schools programme, funded by the Department for Education. The programme aims to ensure that school children develop an understanding of their local heritage and its significance. This is done through helping teachers to think about using what is local to their school to bring local heritage to life, to increase a sense of civic pride and use the resources 'on the doorstep' to help develop a sense of place, identity and teach the 'national story'. Each region of the country has a Local Heritage Education Manager, appointed by Historic England, who prioritises support to schools in areas where social mobility is low and those with higher numbers of pupils eligible for Free School Meals/Pupil Premium.

Since its inception 10 years ago, the programme has engaged over 1.5 million young people with their local heritage, providing better access to heritage to pupils in almost 2000 schools in some of the most deprived areas of England. Each year, there are over 3000 attendances at training events for teachers and trainee teachers and free resources are provided to support the delivery of the curriculum. The programme works in partnership with local heritage and cultural providers including museums, art galleries, archives, theatre groups and community-based heritage organisations to help facilitate the use of local services and resources.

Each year, Historic England has commissioned Qa Research to conduct a review of the programme's impact during that year. Each year, a report has been published which contained findings from short quantitative surveys completed by teachers and trainee teachers following the Continuing Professional Development training sessions (CPD) run through the programme, write-ups of a series of case studies across a range of schools and a small amount of data from surveys conducted among participating heritage partners. Since the programme has now been running for 10 years, BMG Research were commissioned to independently evaluate the long-term impact of learning about local heritage via the Heritage Schools programme.

To carry out this evaluation, BMG drew from the previous years' reports from Qa Research to review the evidence and pull out themes. The quantitative data is taken directly from the previously published reports. This means that amalgamating data to combine years together was out

of scope of the report. Moreover, in previously published data, “don’t know” responses were excluded from the sample. This removes less relevant answers from teachers who may not have had opportunities to put newly developed heritage skills into practice, but also may slightly inflate the levels of agreement. BMG also conducted 10 in-depth qualitative interviews, which lasted 30–40 minutes each. Seven of these interviews were conducted with teachers who had been involved in the programme for a number of years, across a range of schools with a broad geographic spread, and almost all schools were located in areas with low social mobility. These interviews followed a pre-defined topic guide but were designed to be an open and honest conversation to investigate the long-term impact of the programme. The other three interviews were conducted among professionals who had been involved in the programme through their professional capacity, either through their provision of museum-based learning or teacher training.

The report assesses the impact of the Heritage Schools programme against its objectives:

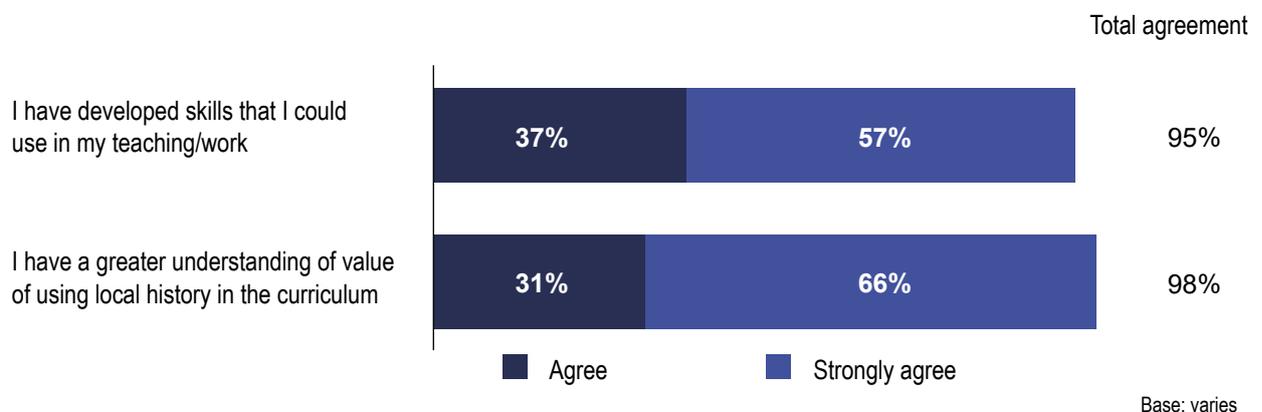
- To improve the quality of teaching and learning outcomes by embedding local heritage into the curriculum.
- To positively impact community and wellbeing, through an increased sense of place and local pride.
- To increase access to heritage, especially among pupils who are more affected by barriers to access.

The report then draws together the conclusions from the evidence reviewed, to show that learning about local heritage has had a considerable positive impact on pupils at participating schools.

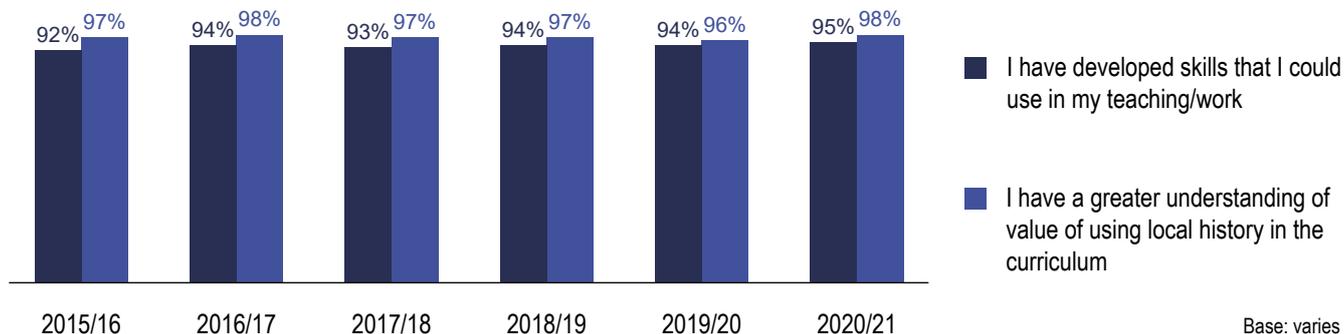
# The programme's impact on the quality of teaching and learning outcomes

One of the Heritage Schools programme's main aims was to empower teachers to improve the quality of teaching available to pupils by supporting the further development of teachers' pedagogical skills, their use of quality resources and their confidence to put these skills and resources into practice. This section of the report explores the ways in which the programme has impacted on the teaching at participating schools and assesses the extent to which it has improved overall quality.

There is clear evidence that the skills and experiences of teachers have grown as a result of participation in the programme. Following CPD sessions, almost all participating teachers said they had a greater understanding of the value of using local history in curriculum (98% of those surveyed following the latest sessions in 2021). Moreover, 95% of teachers at the 2021 CPD sessions said they had developed skills that they will use in their teaching. The strength of agreement among participating teachers to these statements, namely that they understand the value of incorporating local history into the curriculum, and that they have the skills to do so, is notable, as shown in the graph below. The data, and all subsequent data, is taken from reports published by Qa Research.

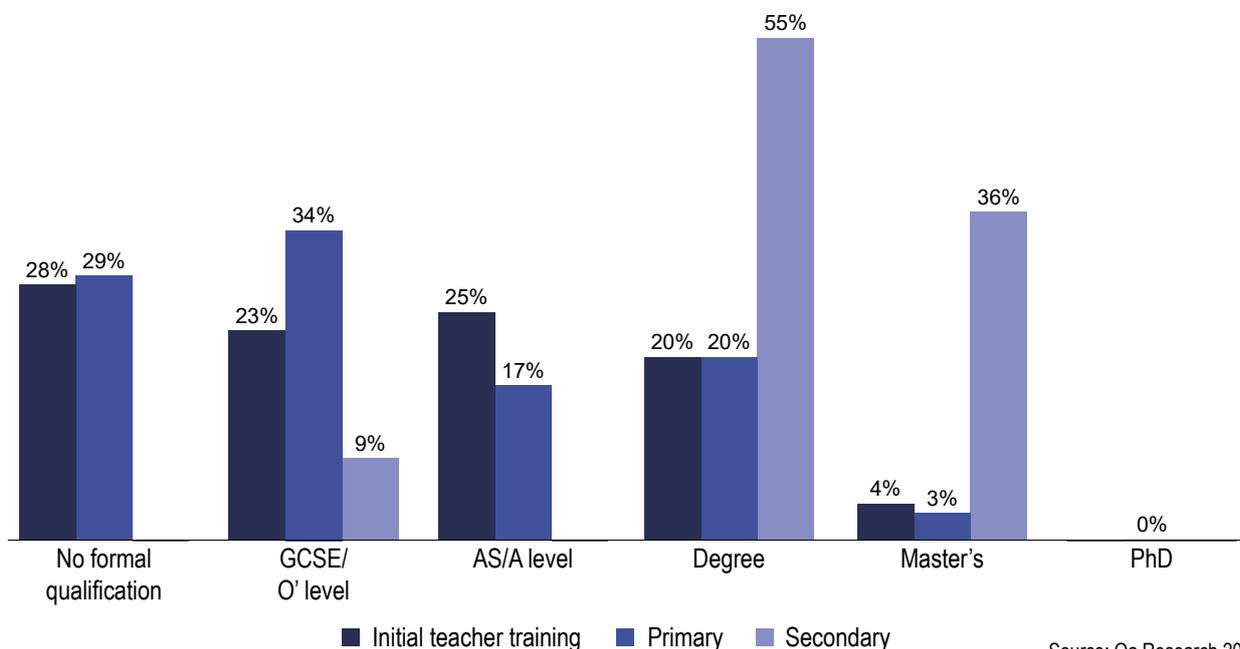


This very high level of agreement has been recorded consistently across the period of the Heritage Schools programme, showing that this impact is consistent across the running of the programme.



The value of providing this training to teachers who teach history in particular is seen in the frequency in which participating teachers have never previously received any formal history training. Data from the 2021 CPD training surveys shows that half of those in initial teacher training, and just under two in three of those teaching history in primary school do not have formal history qualifications beyond O-level/GCSE.

Question: Highest academic history qualification you have



Whilst the sample size of the above data is low, it mirrors the pattern recorded in the surveys undertaken among CPD participants across the 9-year period. It is also supported by the anecdotal experiences of those who deliver the training. One participant in the programme, who is a Senior Lecturer in Primary Education whose students undertook

CPD provided by Heritage Schools, said that ITT history training is vital, as teachers with no history qualifications can still become history subject leads.

In addition to being the only specialised history training some teachers receive, reception of the training is very positive, and those receiving training who gave feedback, or made comments through case studies about their experiences, praised the training they received.

“[The Local Heritage Education Manager] is passionate about history, I must say the CPD he offers is one of the best I have ever been on.” **Teacher, Millfield L.E.A.D Academy, Braunstone, Leicester.**

“[The Local Heritage Education Manager] has excellent knowledge; she can engage people in different ways, understands how schools work; flexibility. It’s credible CPD – teachers know its quality so more people come back.” **Learning and Engagement Officer, Stories of Lynn.**

“I can honestly say that in my twenty-four years of teaching I have never been on any kind of course that has inspired me as much as the HEN days have or which have given me such a wealth of information and resources right on my door step.” **Humanities Co-ordinator, South Wootton Infants School.**

Logically, the more inspired that the teachers attending the CPD courses are, then the greater the likelihood that they pass on their inspiration to their pupils. This link between teacher engagement and pupil engagement has been highlighted by several participants in the programme, for example:

“I could have done that CPD all day, it was so interesting. And if we as teachers find it interesting, then it’s easier for us to teach and the children find it interesting.” **Head Teacher St Robert’s RC First School, Morpeth, Northumberland.**

“[The ITT heritage] session allows the [ITT] students the confidence to know that actually local history is really good fun, local history is really hands-on. It’s engaging. They light up; my students in that session light up and absolutely love it... It’s real history and, they engage even the ones that aren’t really that keen on history. And I know that they’re not and that’s fine. You know, it can’t be everybody’s bag, but you can see that engagement and excitement and they want to then take that, you know, that tiny little spark [...] of interest, they then want to take that out to the pupils and that’s priceless.” **Senior Lecturer in Primary Education, Liverpool John Moores University.**

The interviewees also mentioned the increased confidence of teachers in delivering their curriculum and moving out of their “comfort zone” to bring the skills they learnt in the CPD to life in the classroom.

The positive impact that further development of pedagogical skills, and the inclusion of these approaches, have on the quality of teaching is suggested in the Ofsted reports of several of the participating schools. Of the seven teachers who took part in qualitative interviews, three highlighted the sections of their latest Ofsted reports which specifically singled out history. One school was praised for the quality of its history education, another for the children’s enthusiasm for history, and the third was praised in the first line of the report for the utilisation of heritage across the curriculum.

In addition to pedagogical skills, teachers who participated in the Programme also gained increased access, familiarity and confidence in using a much wider range of teaching resources. In the latest quantitative survey of participating teachers, conducted after the 2021 CPD sessions, 96% of teachers said they were more aware of where to access useful resources, with just over two in three participants (68%) strongly agreeing with this sentiment. This level of agreement that access to resources has been improved by the programme has been recorded consistently since the first evaluation of the project in 2015, with agreement ranging from 93% to 97%. Importantly, the fact that the resources provided to teachers through this programme are free is key to their availability. All teachers who took part in qualitative interviews to evaluate the impact of the Heritage Schools programme stressed the importance of the resources being free, as schools do not have funds available to pay for resources. (The impact that budget constraints and the cost-of-living increase is having on access to heritage and heritage resources is discussed in more detail below in the section 4.) Additionally, resources offered by heritage

organisations are made more accessible through the Heritage Schools programme. According to surveys completed by participating partners, most partners feel that their offer or service has developed, to support the delivery of the curriculum, as a result of their involvement with the Heritage Schools programme.<sup>1</sup>

Both the of those who gave interviews about the long-term effects of the programme who have academic specialisms in early years learning (Deputy Course Leader PGCE Primary with QTS and Senior Lecturer in Primary and Early Years Education, and Senior Lecturer in Primary Education respectively) expanded upon the nature of the resources that are made available to teachers. They emphasised that the resources are good quality. Online resources can be of a dubious nature, which is not always immediately apparent, especially to early-career teachers. Equally, it was stressed, the resources introduced or highlighted by LHEMs are both accessible and effective for teachers and pupils alike. In the interviews, teachers and those who train teachers tended to discuss the time commitments required to compile quality resources, which many teachers would not be able to make without the support of LHEMs.

An example of the resources accessed by teachers as a result of the Programme that was frequently given by teachers during qualitative interviews is the Map Packs provided by Historic England. These were unanimously praised for their usefulness and effectiveness in bringing history to life in an engaging way, as well as for the development of map literacy and linking history and geography techniques. Moreover, several teachers commented on the amount of work that the LHEMs put into creating the packs, which would not be possible for teachers to carry out due to the demands on their time and other responsibilities. The Map Packs were also frequently cited as fantastic resource in case studies conducted by Qa Research among schools.

“When I first joined Heritage Schools, it was resource map pack that they provided and it was perfect because it was free, because we’d joined the Heritage Schools. That was fantastic and amazing, because trying to get something so tailored and so personal to the school, that would have cost a lot of money or a lot of time to be able to do.” **Teacher.**

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1 Exact numbers have not been reported due to the low sample size of partners who participated in the survey. However, the levels of agreement among partners indicate positive developments in this regard.

“[Historic England] produce amazing packs for us at school and then [the LHEM] has delivered amazing training with myself and with my colleagues as well, explaining to them about how you can use the map and find those key areas which haven’t changed... and then you can see how the area’s developed over time from 18-something all the way up to 2014... and the pupils can say I live there, that’s my street and they can sort of see how their areas developed over time.” **Teacher.**



Pupils at St Robert’s RC First School, Morpeth, Northumberland, chart how the area has developed over time.

The Map Packs in particular lend themselves to including heritage in geography lessons, as well as history. Across the quantitative surveys, case studies and in-depth interviews, teachers spoke of their experiences in embedding heritage across the curriculum. In 2021, 96% of teachers who were surveyed after CPD training said they have a greater understanding of how to embed local heritage into the curriculum, and this proportion has consistently tracked at 95%–96% since 2015. Moreover, the case study examples provided by Historic England contain numerous examples of schools which take a whole-school approach, with each year group utilising heritage in a different way. Therefore, as pupils progress through the school, each year they encounter different aspects of the heritage curriculum. For instance, St Robert’s RC First School in Morpeth, Northumberland, have developed a “whole school spiral scheme” of work, through which each Year Group will revisit and build on what they have learned in previous years, so that their knowledge and understanding deepens as they pass through the school.

"Somebody came in and they showed us ancient artefacts and they were like well cool because we got to handle them and dress up in what they used to wear. And it was really exciting because you got to see more what it was like." **Year 6 pupil, The Hall School, Glenfield, Leicester.**

"They were drawn to it immediately, they are places they've actually been; if you showed them a map of London, it wouldn't be anywhere near as engaging. [It translates] into the quality of the written work, the depth of it. They know the places they're talking about so they're able to speculate about them far more easily than somewhere they've never been. It's also the discussion, the conversations our children are having through the sort of debates and engagement." **Year 4 teacher, The Hall School, Glenfield, Leicester.**

Taking the subject of history in the first instance, this is clearly an area where heritage is well suited to adding value, and across the in-depth interviews, teachers spoke of how connecting local heritage and global history had a profoundly positive impact on pupil's interest and engagement with the subject. Examples given included: the relationship with the cotton industry in Oldham and plantation slavery and the American Civil War; local connections to soldiers and evacuated children during the world wars; and local suffragettes and suffragists and the women's suffrage movement. Seeing national and international stories presented in local heritage was seen as making history "tangible and meaningful" (Secondary school teacher, East Midlands). The role the Heritage Schools programme plays in facilitating the contextualisation of global history in the experiences of pupils is made clear by the high numbers of teachers participating in the CPD provided by the Programme who agree that they have a greater understanding of how local heritage connects to regional, national or global history (94% agreement in 2020–2021. Agreement to similar statements, with minor wording changes, have been recorded among at least 9 in 10 over the course of the programme.) As mentioned above, the quality of history provision was singled out at several participating schools, with reference made to the pupil engagement in one case. This supports the perceptions of the teachers who took part in qualitative interviews and discussed the increased levels of engagement of the pupils during history classes.

However, the impact of the Heritage Schools programme was seen more broadly across the curriculum than just in history. Subjects specifically cited in qualitative research include geography, music, maths, and

English language. Summarising the qualitative case studies from the 2020–2021 participating schools, Qa Research highlighted the range of subjects into which schools had incorporated heritage and identified new heritage-led approaches to cross-curricular skills: “Not only does Heritage Schools make history seem more relevant and less abstract, along with developing high level history skills the projects undertaken also enable teachers to cover many other curriculum areas, primarily literacy but also art, geography, design & technology, drama, ICT, citizenship and even mathematics and science, along with developing oracy, debating, research and enquiry skill.”<sup>2</sup>

Examples of the ways in which heritage has been threaded through the curriculum by schools include the whole school approach by Netherton C of E Primary School in Netherton, which was jointly led by history and geography leads, with teachers for all Year Groups responsible for their own planning. In the case study of Millfield L.E.A.D Academy, in Braunstone, Leicester, a participating teacher emphasised the English and creative writing opportunities supported by the programme, saying, “Literacy is a very obvious [area where heritage has supported teaching], we were able to do a diary account, write letters, do drama, so from that point of view it embedded all of our learning” (Teacher, Millfield L.E.A.D Academy, Braunstone, Leicester.) A deputy head teacher who participated in qualitative interviews talked about how a film group within their school used heritage as a focal point in creating a short film, which went on to win a national school film competition.

In addition to using heritage in subjects across the curriculum to bring learning to life, teachers also identified an improvement in “soft skills” as a result of their practice through the programme. The skills most frequently mentioned in interviews and case studies were written communication, organisation (generally in the context of organising events), interpersonal skills, (such as interviewing and interacting with members of the community) hosting events and oratory skills developed through debating sessions. One school that particularly embraced using debates as a pedagogical tool was Manston St James Primary School, Cross Gates, Leeds. Over the 2020–2021 academic year, Year Five Pupils debated whether it was a just cause for Leonara Cohen, a local suffragette, to try to steal the crown jewels. Similarly, when studying the Barnbow Lasses, Year Six pupils debated whether it was right or wrong for the government to cover up their deaths because they did not want to damage morale during the war.

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2 Heritage Schools Evaluation Research 2020–21, Qa Research, September 2021, page 22.

“So I do believe it’s definitely helped their debating skills and the fact that they can reason better and explain their answers why, using evidence to justify why it’s right and wrong and appreciate that not everyone might always agree with what you say. I would say that I think heritage has done that because you’ve had that chance to have deep discussions, you actually do a lot of talking, discussing about places and why it’s important.” **Teacher, Manston St James Primary School, Cross Gates, Leeds.**

This positive assessment of the benefit of incorporating heritage into the curriculum on debating skills has been echoed by a Year 6 pupil in a primary school in Bristol, who took part in a debate about how modern Bristol should respond to the legacy of the slave trade. The class researched and then debated whether the statue of Edward Colston (a local philanthropist whose wealth was derived from the enslavement of people from Africa) should stay or be removed – a question with a lot of contemporary relevance.

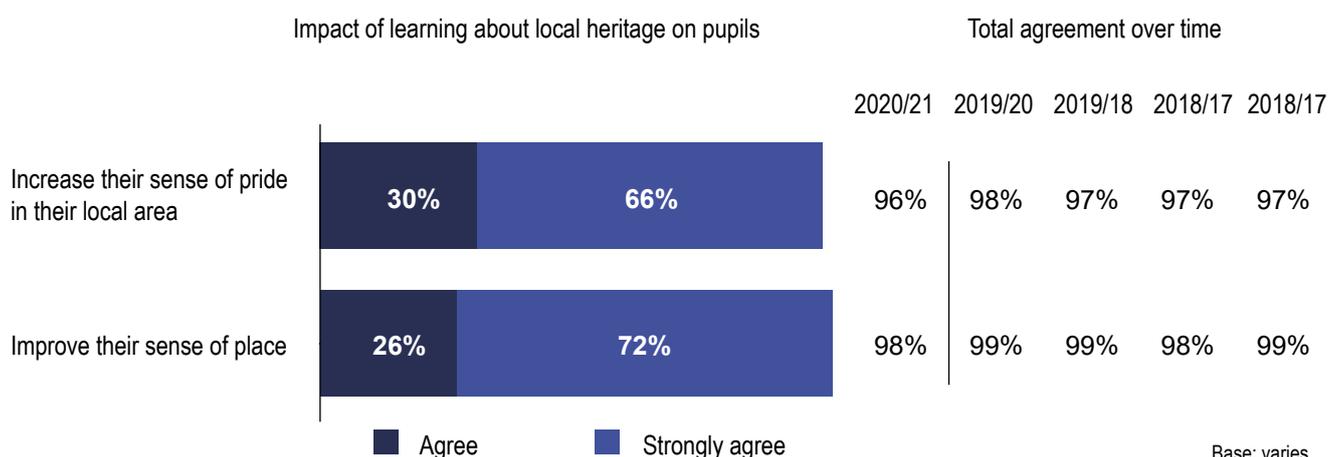
“[Most interesting bit] I would say was the debate because when I grow up, I want to work in Parliament, it was interesting to hear everyone’s sides and make reasons against them and make your ideas different.” **Year 6 student Christ Church C of E Primary School, Clifton, Bristol.**

A further benefit to the quality of the learning experience is that participation in the programme is likely to support children who do not thrive in a classroom environment but may benefit from heritage walks or attending sessions at partner heritage organisations. The Learning Manager across a network of local museums, whose museums took part in the programme, found that pupils who had a reputation at their school for being disruptive “shine in a museum setting” because they engage more with the experiential teaching method. They added “I think adding that into the mix really helps with their educational attainment, particularly for those students who are somewhat turned off by the classroom setting.”

# The programme's broader impact on community and wellbeing

A key aim of the Heritage Schools programme was to develop in children a strong sense of place and belonging, through engaging with heritage on their doorstep. The value to social infrastructure of a well-developed sense of place and belonging has become generally accepted, and advantages have been identified in terms of wellbeing and mental health. Evidence has also been gathered that links an increased appreciation of local heritage with a sense of belonging, local pride, and the associated wellbeing benefits.<sup>3</sup>

The data observed in post-CPD surveys conducted among teachers evidences a near universal perceived increase in participating pupils' sense of place and pride in their local area. In line with the figures observed in previous years, following the 2020–2021 CPD sessions, 98% of teachers said that learning about local heritage improved pupils' sense of place, of which 72% agreed strongly, and 96% said learning about heritage increased pupils' sense of pride in their local area, of which 66% agreed strongly.



3 Pride in Place, Shaw, J., Garling, O., and Kenny, M., Bennett Institute for Public Policy, 2022. Accessed 2 Sep. 2022. Crucial to the argument put forward is how cultural life boosts feelings of place-identity; it is argued that this can make important contributions to economic growth and social capital. On the importance of heritage for local pride see especially. pages 27–30.

On the impact of heritage on wellbeing and a sense of identity, even in very rural communities: Wallace, Claire, and David Beel. "How Cultural Heritage Can Contribute to Community Development and Wellbeing." *Researching Happiness: Qualitative, Biographical and Critical Perspectives*, edited by Mark Cieslik, 1st ed., Bristol University Press, 2021, pp. 133–54. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1nh3m9p.11>. Accessed 2 Sep. 2022

“The enthusiasm and pride as well, a sense of pride. Just the fact that in every classroom that you went into the children could talk about it and they just wanted to show you and tell you, they made things at home in their own time, and they’d come and show you... the children are now proud of where they come from. Before they didn’t know what was around them, now they walk home and they’re telling their parents, their siblings, they are obviously talking about it at home. I think through that sense of pride, they enjoy it so in the classroom it helps with their presentation, they’ve actually wanted to really make sure their work is neat and tidy and they’ve taken a lot more pride in their work because they have really wanted to do it.” **History Lead Netherton C of E Primary School in Netherton, near Dudley.**

A number of the teachers who gave interviews about the impact of the programme were very positive about the effects of the pupil’s increased pride in their local area, which one teacher referred to as “healthy pride”, and the stronger connections they felt to the area as a result. Teachers in schools with a high number of immigrant children tended to speak about how heritage brought children from different backgrounds together, helped recently arrived children develop a sense of pride in the area they now live, and gave all children a sense of their shared heritage. Equally, a head teacher in a very rural area spoke about how their pupils are more likely to move away from the area, and in their case, they wanted to enthuse children about local heritage and give them a strong sense of place, so that if they move to somewhere else, they take their interest and desire to engage with local heritage with them and build a new relationship with place.

The sense of shared heritage that pupils tended to develop was seen to lead to an increased sense of community, specifically in relation to the broader community of the local area. Three of the teachers in the in-depth interviews talked about how the public perception and local standing of their school had increased due to the increased participation of pupils in the wider community through the Heritage Schools Project, such as through music events and war commemoration. Several teachers said that there had been negative perceptions of the school’s pupils, but now considered their school to be a valued part of the local community, thanks to increased interaction with members of the public at heritage sites.<sup>4</sup>

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4 Given that just over 4 in 5 of those surveyed in 2020–2021 at partner heritage organisations said that they feel more connected to the needs to schools and teachers, the programme is key to facilitating this link between schools and heritage organisations within the community. However, the base size for partner data on an annual basis is very low (22 in 2020–2021) and should be used as an indication of sentiment only.

One Year 3 group in Northumberland were keen to share the information they learnt and designed noticeboards to be displayed outside the school so that passer-by could read the information. Other schools made flyers and leaflets that they passed out to local residents to inform them of the heritage of the local area.



Informative noticeboards outside St Robert's RC First School, Morpeth, Northumberland, to share information about local heritage to passers-by.

There was also a sense of increased inter-generational interactions which came through in the interviews and case studies. A number of participants noted special interest by grandparents who were happy to provide oral histories to be recorded. For instance, one school in Telford saw children create “books” for younger children about “Archie the Pit Pony” and recorded oral histories from older members of the community, with the intention of keeping those stories alive and building greater understanding across generations.

The increased sense of pride in the local area identified among children was considered by interviewed teachers to lead to an increased propensity to care for the area in the future: “where [the children] have got a fondness and a pride for the local community they are more likely to invest in it, to look after it, to nurture it.” (Deputy Course Leader PGCE Primary with Qualified Teacher Status, Senior Lecturer in Primary and Early Years Education.) One teacher also identified an increase in positivity towards the local area among parents, after hearing about

the heritage from their children, which was seen as a “unifying thread” that could lead to increased social cohesion: “I do strongly believe that it’s important to foster that sense of community and that mutual respect and... understanding and that celebration of diversity.”

A number of the case studies submitted specifically discuss how heritage has been used to celebrate diversity and champion social cohesion. For example, the head teacher of Hathershaw College used Heritage Schools funding to provide a local history book for all 220 pupils moving up to the College from Primary school. One of the 3 books provided to pupils was “Cotton, Curry and Commerce: A History of Asian Businesses In Oldham” about the contribution South Asian communities had made to Oldham when they moved there to work in the cotton mills in the 1960s and 1970s. Another example of heritage being used to promote social cohesion was submitted by Greenleaf Primary School in Walthamstow, London, 67.5% of whose pupils have a first language other than English (compared to 21.2% nationally). Greenleaf Primary School used the Heritage Schools programme to create a project on the Windrush Generation. Following the success of this project, the teachers have reviewed the whole curriculum to make it more inclusive: “We looked at links across the curriculum to make it more inclusive and an integral part of the curriculum instead of [teaching about inclusivity for] one hour a week.” (History Co-ordinator.) Year 2 also studied the arrival of the railway in Walthamstow and learnt that people have been moving into Walthamstow for many generations, and that immigration is not new. “This project showed that everyone is an immigrant – it has been a great leveller.” The programme has also enabled schools with a less diverse intake to increase diversity in the curriculum. For example, a semi-rural village school near Newcastle identified a diverse range of local historical figures to study in the classroom.

Another aim of the programme was to improve participating children’s general wellbeing. This is a theme that spontaneously came through during in-depth interviews with teachers. Teachers outlined the benefits of children getting out of the classroom. Several teachers highlighted the mental health benefits of taking part in the heritage walks. They thought that the frequency of the children then taking their parents on the same walk in the evening to show what they had learnt, thereby getting outside as a family, was especially good for mental wellbeing. There is evidence

that links spending time outside with increased mental wellbeing, including positive effects from outdoor learning on children, so the observations of teachers in this regard are supported by other studies.<sup>5</sup>

The data evaluating the Heritage Schools programme also indicates that the programme has been beneficial to pupils' confidence and self-esteem. From the latest year of post CPD surveys, 83% of teachers agreed that learning about local heritage developed pupils' self-esteem. Whilst this measure has lower levels of agreement compared to other statements asked in the survey at the same time, this is unsurprising as it is measuring self-esteem, which is hard to quantify. It is, therefore, notable that over 4 in 5 agreed with this, and in previous years the level of agreement has ranged from 87% (2016–2017) to as high as 92% (2019–2020). An example of a project involving a participating school which was seen to particularly improve self-confidence was “Rochdale Re-imagined.” Pupils at St Patrick’s RC Primary School, Rochdale, took part in the project with students from Manchester School of Architecture, which saw the pupils become honorary architects for a day. As explained by a participating teacher, “The pupils saw that their ideas were of equal importance with the students’. They don’t always have their ideas listened to outside school, they are used to being directed, so this gave them self-confidence, resilience in putting their ideas forward and being creative. Working with Rochdale Council, their ideas might be part of a future plan in context and purpose. It was a good way to engage because they could see it was real.” Linked with pupil’s self-confidence, is the suggestion in the data that pupil’s learning about local heritage raised pupils’ aspirations. Eighty-seven percent of teachers who participated in the latest year’s CPD training agreed that learning about local heritage raised pupils’ aspirations, agreement for which had, during previous years registered at around 9 in 10 (91%–93%).

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5 For example, for positive effects of being outdoors as part of education curriculum on children, see: Gustafsson, Per & Szczepanski, Anders & Nelson, Nina & Gustafsson, Per. (2012). “Effects of an outdoor education intervention on the mental health of schoolchildren”. *Journal of Adventure Education & Outdoor Learning*. 12. pp63–79. 10.1080/14729679.2010.532994

For improvement in enjoyment and health and wellbeing for both teachers and pupils having classes in nature: WAITE, S., PASSY, R., GILCHRIST, M., HUNT, A. & BLACKWELL, I. 2016. *Natural Connections Demonstration Project, 2012–2016: Final Report*. Natural England Commissioned Reports, Number 215.

“It helps with aspiration, the idea that they too could become someone who makes a difference to their community or locality as the people they have studied...When Alice Hawkins the suffragette’s great grandson came to school and he told us about the impact she had in Leicester, it was one of those moments when the whole school was smiling, including the staff; it was an amazing story and the children were hanging onto every word”

**Teacher, Millfield L.E.A.D Academy, Braunstone, Leicester**

# The importance of access to local heritage, and how far the Heritage Schools programme has increased access

All teachers who took part in in-depth interviews stressed that their pupils have either no or limited access to their local heritage outside of that provided through schools. This is supported by the testimony of teachers in the case studies: “[many of the children] have a limited point of experience so they don’t really know what is on the doorstep or don’t get those opportunities to go out with their families... they might be familiar with the local shopping centre but don’t know about Saltaire which is a UNESCO world heritage site which is literally on our doorstep, I don’t think any of them had been” (teacher, Peel Park Primary School and Nursery, Bradford, Yorkshire). This serves to highlight the importance of the school as a means of accessing heritage.

However, the teachers interviewed were also in agreement that schools are having to tighten their budgets, and that the cost-of-living crisis means that there are reduced funds available within schools, at a time when it is vital that schools can engage pupils without incurring costs to parents. A partner at a heritage site who took part in the interviews had already noticed that schools were asking for financial support in order for visits to go ahead, or cancelling them outright. The museum has been using funds dedicated to school access to ensure the pupils do not miss out, by funding mini-buses, which have increased in cost, and bringing museum displays to schools. The increase in transport costs have been felt by teachers across participating schools according to those interviewed, with one teacher stating that the increase in coach costs is “killing them.” That the funding available through the programme is seen as especially important to ensure access to heritage and heritage-based learning during a financial crisis.

Another barrier to heritage access identified through the case studies is that parents do not feel that museums are for them or are not comfortable going into heritage sites. It was suggested that the relationships developed between schools and heritage partners opened up access to

these sites by making them seem more accessible. “You need someone familiar to draw you into those areas” “Going to a museum might not be the first port of call for many” (Teachers, Peel Park Primary School and Nursery, Bradford, Yorkshire).

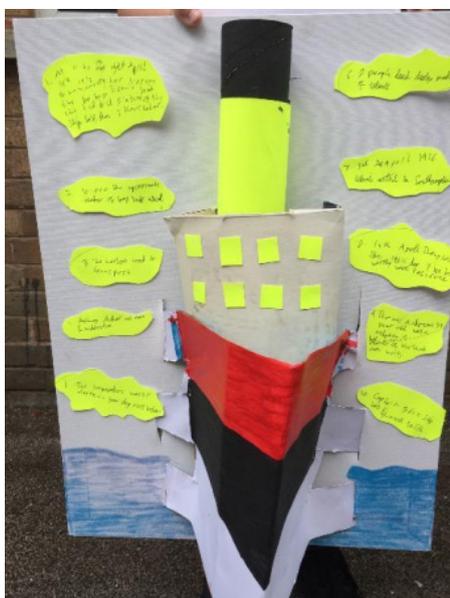
The Heritage Schools programme gives more children access to heritage, increases their engagement with their local area and inspires them to learn more. A sense of the children’s inspiration came across through the in-depth interviews with teachers and can be summarised by some examples from the case studies. As one Year 6 pupil put it:

“Learning about your area and knowing that makes you feel a lot better about where you live, being proud of where you live because so many interesting things have happened here; you are more connected to where you live and maybe if find out something that you actually enjoy about where you live, you might want to find out more about that topic and that give you a bigger interest in history.”

**Year 6 student, The Hall School, Glenfield, Leicester.**

“All the children were very excited to meet a Real Live Historian, they were pleased as punch.” **History Co-ordinator, Greenleaf Primary School, Walthamstow, London.**

An example of child engagement from the case studies comes from Netherton C of E Primary School in Netherton, near Dudley. One pupil undertook their own heritage project outside of school in their own time, researching the Titanic, designing a model which was annotated with their findings. One of the challenges in incorporating heritage identified by teachers at the school, was that the pupils were so enthusiastic and full of questions, that the teachers had to work hard to remain focussed on the intended topics of study.



A model of the Titanic, annotated with various facts, created by a pupil in their spare time.

# Overall sentiment towards the programme

The previous sections of the report have looked the impact of or learning about local heritage and the Heritage Schools programme on teachers, pupils and their communities. This section summarises the overall sentiment towards the project among teachers and heritage partners who participated.

Across interviews and case studies, participants were very enthusiastic and positive about the programme and learning about local heritage. Those interviewed said they would recommend participation to other schools, a sentiment sometimes echoed in the case studies, for example:

“Don’t be scared of the lack of resources that seem not to be there, contact Historic England because they have a wealth of knowledge, we’ve been lucky having [the LHEM] but I know there are other people as well; they go above and beyond... it is hard work and you do need to spend a lot of time on it to make it successful, it is a lot of hours, but it is worth it. It’s challenging yourself to go out of your comfort zone and think it might not work but let’s try and take those risks because actually we’ve seen equally things can work and work very well, so I’d just say go for it.” **History Lead, Netherton C of E Primary School in Netherton, near Dudley.**

Unsurprisingly, therefore, these same teachers want the programme to continue. Across the teacher interviews there were a number of different reasons cited for why it is so important that the programme be taken forwards:

- Due to funding and resource issues, the barriers were seen as too great to continue the programme without support from Historic England.
- As there are always new pupils joining the school, continuing the project was seen as vital for maintaining the quality of the education. (In addition to this, of the 2020–2021 cohort of schools, 69% were new to the

programme, so the teachers would be gaining the skills, experience and benefits of the programme for the first time).

- One teacher cited staff change-over at school and “disruptions” over recent years, making the school reliant on the programme in order to make the most out of the resources and opportunities; the LHEM has been “a constant” over this period.

An additional possible benefit of the programme is the impact it can have on the careers and professional development of the participating teachers. Several teachers in the interviews talked about professional growth they have undertaken due to the new skills and experiences they have learnt by participating in the programme, which have allowed them to take on more professional responsibilities.

However, the most powerful theme that came across in both interviews and case studies was the high regard that the Local Heritage Education Managers (LHEMs) are held in. All teachers and partners were effusive in their praise of the LHEMs, singling out specifically, their support, specialised knowledge, hard work, approachability, and contagious can-do attitudes.

“I live in awe of what [the LHEM] does, you know, her enthusiasm, her passion, everything” **Teacher.**

It is clear across the qualitative research that the role the LHEMs play is crucial to the effectiveness of the Heritage Schools programme, as they form a vital link between schools and heritage, providing training that builds and increases skills and knowledge, as well as support, expertise, resources and links to heritage organisations. They also identify opportunities for schools to access heritage, take part in local community events and apply for funding. The expertise, resources and opportunities accessed through LHEMs were unlikely to have been available to schools without this crucial link.

When asked, the only improvements that were suggested by multiple participants during the in-depth interviews was a desire for more LHEMs. A number of the teachers and a heritage partner said that the value provided by the LHEMs was great, that more of them would improve the programme, with a couple of teachers thinking they are spread too thinly and that “There’s not enough [LHEMs] to go around.” There was a recognition that this was connected to funding, and it was thought that more funding would mean that Historic England could bring more LHEMs

on board. A couple of participants noted that the LHEMs were more “hands-on” at the start of the programme, which was very effective, but now each LHEM has a wider remit and more schools to oversee. Another respondent noted that changes in pedagogical best practice and the constant evolution of scholarship of ancient and medieval history mean that regular training for history teachers is vital, which would be best supported by the programme through an increase in LHEM resource.

Other suggested changes were only made by individual respondents. These suggestions were:

- A return to the higher levels of sharing between schools, as seen in the initial years of the programme, as sharing ideas has been very inspirational.
- Improved website accessibility, especially in finding educational resources.
- Needs to be advertised to get more schools involved.

Most participants had no suggestions for changes to the programme, and only wanted to see it expand to bring the benefits of participation to even more schools.

“I think they’re amazing. As you can probably tell, I think the work that Historic England do is transformative for teachers and therefore for the children and..., yes, mainly in local history, but actually across that sort of British history, from Stone Age to 1066 and beyond, it’s brilliant... It’s vital for history teaching in England currently and has a huge impact. And I think, if anything, it needs expanding.” **Teacher.**

“It’s been a great project, really beneficial and we hope it hope it continues.” **Partner at a heritage organisation.**

# Conclusions

As the above sections show, the evidence from the previous quantitative surveys, case studies and the in-depth interviews demonstrates that the learning about local heritage through the Heritage Schools programme has had a positive impact across the three remits of the programme: quality of teaching and learning; impact on pupils; and access to heritage. Participating teachers have been up-skilled through the programme, and gained, in many cases, greater subject knowledge, increased pedagogical skills, increased access to resources and improved confidence in using heritage in the curriculum. This is achieved through the high-quality Initial Teacher Education and Continuing Professional Development sessions, the delivery of free, accessible and reliable resources (such as Map Packs) and support, inspiration and community links provided by the Local Heritage Education Managers (LHEMs). The full range of support provided allows teachers to incorporate heritage across the curriculum, with the benefits felt across diverse subjects such as history, geography, music, art and literacy. The inclusion of local heritage brings the curriculum to life for the pupils. The case studies reviewed describe pupils' increased levels of engagement and excitement in their learning.

Participating teachers believe that their pupils have developed a stronger sense of place and local pride. This frequently brought children from different backgrounds together, with a sense of shared heritage and community. At schools with a very ethnically-diverse cohort of pupils this was especially effective. However, benefits associated with the programme, including increased pride in the local areas, were seen by teachers across the country, both in urban and rural areas. There is evidence to suggest that the increased sense of local pride impacted the wider community, as parents and family members became more engaged with the curriculum, and schools became more involved with the community, possibly improving perceptions of the school in doing so. The perception of the teachers is that the increased engagement, local pride and sense of place has a positive impact on wellbeing, especially given the popularity of heritage walks, which enable learning to take place outside of a classroom environment.

The consensus among teachers who participated in interviews and whose schools submitted case studies is that without the Heritage Schools programme, the benefits it provides would not be easily accessed through other means. Partly this is due to a lack of awareness of what is available locally, or due to a perception that heritage is not relevant to them. However, access to heritage is seen by teachers as especially limited due to the increasing cost of living, which is putting school budgets under pressure. That the resources provided by the programme are free to schools, and that the local heritage that schools are supported in utilising is “on the doorstep” is fundamental to providing equality of access to heritage and the associated benefits this brings. This is only likely to become more pressing.

There are clear benefits of learning about local heritage and the Heritage Schools programme is a very effective delivery mechanism for this. There is clear potential to encourage continued participation among schools that are currently part of the programme and to extend the programme to new schools to bring these benefits to more children.

# Appendix I: Example topic guide used for in depth interviews with teachers

## Welcome and Briefing (2 minutes)

### Introduction

- Facilitator to introduce themselves and BMG
- Explain objective of research and value of their participation: to understand the longer term impact the Heritage Schools programme has had on participating pupils, partner organisations and teachers.
- Explain how the interview will work: the facilitator will guide the conversation. If things are going off track, the facilitator will try to steer the conversation back to the main focus of the discussion.
- There are no right or wrong answers

### Length

The interview will last 30–45 minutes

### Confidentiality

All information you provide will be treated confidentially. We will not identify any individuals or share the personal details of those who took part. Your responses are strictly confidential which is required by the Market Research Society.

- Views stated are not linked to individuals; the more open and honest you can be the better
- Individuals will not be named in any public report, nor will individual responses be shared with Historic England
- We may use some of the things you say in our reports, but we won't reveal who said them. This is in line with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct

- Ask permission to record and reassure that recordings will not be shared outside of BMG and will be securely deleted within 6 months

## Background (3 minutes)

1. What is your current role?
  - Probe for teachers: job title/role, subject, age range of pupils
  - Probe for headteachers: do they have contact with pupils? How much of a role do they have in lesson planning/delivery?
  - Probe: Where in the country is your role based?
2. How have you participated in the Heritage Schools programme?
  - Probe: for how many years have you been involved in the programme?
3. What prompted you to get involved with Heritage Schools?
4. Teachers/ headteachers: Do you have any academic history/heritage-related qualifications?
  - If so, what are they?

## Impact of programme on pupils (5–10 minutes)

5. What do you think the impact of the programme has been on participating pupils?
  - Why do you say that?
6. What has the impact of the programme been in terms of the following?

### Impact

- impact on confidence; self-esteem
- aspirations;
- impact of opportunities to engage with heritage on the doorstep in developing develop a sense of place and belonging;
- wellbeing;

## Quality

- academic attainment;
- quality of teaching and learning experiences;
- impact on local heritage being threaded throughout the curriculum – pupils building on knowledge – long-term impact;

## Access

- access to heritage and cultural education;
- interest in heritage/local area; engagement/ inspiration.

## Impact of programme on respondent (15–20 minutes)

7. Has participation in the programme enabled you/ teachers in your school to integrate local heritage into the curriculum?
  - How?
8. Has participation in the programme impacted the way you deliver/ your school delivers your curriculum to pupils while you have been involved in the programme (longer-term)?

### Probe for

- Quality teaching/provision
  - Skills/knowledge
  - Confidence
  - Access to resources
9. Will you continue to integrate the local area into your curriculum?
    - If so, how?
  10. Without this programme, would you know where you could find resources on heritage appropriate to your role?
    - Where?
  11. Do you feel more confident in developing place-based/ local heritage learning into the curriculum without support

after your involvement in Heritage Schools?

12. Has involvement in the programme had any impact on your professional development?
13. Would you recommend participating in the programme to others who work in a similar role?
  - If yes, why?
14. What would you change about the programme to improve it?
15. How would you like to see the programme run in the future? Are there any ways in which you'd like to see it develop or expand?

### Access to local heritage and cultural opportunities (5 minutes)

16. How important is it to provide opportunities to engage with local heritage/cultural experiences for the young people in your area/you work with?
  - Why do you say this?
17. Do you think your pupils/ young people you work with have opportunities to engage with local heritage?
  - If yes, where do these opportunities come from?
  - What are the barriers?
18. What are the benefits for children of engaging with the heritage on the doorstep/in their local area?
19. How, if at all, has engaging in local heritage/stories/ accessing local services had an impact on the families, parents and local communities you encounter as part of our role?
20. Has the impact of the pandemic/rising cost of living impacted on access to opportunities to engage with local heritage and culture.

### Wrap up and close (3 minutes)

21. Are there any further comments we have not covered?
22. Reiterate confidentiality
23. Thank and close

# Appendix II: Statement of Terms

## Compliance with International Standards

BMG complies with the International Standard for Quality Management Systems requirements (ISO 9001:2015) and the International Standard for Market, opinion and social research service requirements (ISO 20252:2012) and The International Standard for Information Security Management (ISO 27001:2013).

## Interpretation and publication of results

The interpretation of the results as reported in this document pertain to the research problem and are supported by the empirical findings of this research project and, where applicable, by other data. These interpretations and recommendations are based on empirical findings and are distinguishable from personal views and opinions.

BMG will not publish any part of these results without the written and informed consent of the client.

## Ethical practice

BMG promotes ethical practice in research: We conduct our work responsibly and in light of the legal and moral codes of society.

We have a responsibility to maintain high scientific standards in the methods employed in the collection and dissemination of data, in the impartial assessment and dissemination of findings and in the maintenance of standards commensurate with professional integrity.

We recognise we have a duty of care to all those undertaking and participating in research and strive to protect subjects from undue harm arising as a consequence of their participation in research. This requires that subjects' participation should be as fully informed as possible and no group should be disadvantaged by routinely being excluded from consideration. All adequate steps shall be taken by both agency and client to ensure that the identity of each respondent participating in the research is protected.

With more than 30 years' experience, BMG Research has established a strong reputation for delivering high quality research and consultancy.

BMG serves both the public and the private sector, providing market and customer insight which is vital in the development of plans, the support of campaigns and the evaluation of performance.

Innovation and development is very much at the heart of our business, and considerable attention is paid to the utilisation of the most up to date technologies and information systems to ensure that market and customer intelligence is widely shared.

