

## Urban spaces, Engaging Places

Louis Moreno of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment provides an update on what 'Engaging Places' has planned for the next school year. The built environment touches us all every day as we walk to the shops or travel to work or school. Buildings and public spaces are not just bricks and mortar, but help to define our history, our identity and the bonds which make us feel part of a community or a place. Because of this, exciting local experiences such as exploring the monastic ruins of Fountain's Abbey in Yorkshire, interacting with the futuristic design of the brand new John Lewis in Leicester, or studying the layout of your local high street could be on the books for children as part of the Government's Engaging Places plan to offer schools ways to connect with their local heritage and architecture.

Building on new research by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) into heritage and built environment education, English Heritage and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) have joined forces to trial and develop practical Learning Outside the Classroom support to schools so that young people have more opportunities to understand why buildings and places matter to them and their communities. By encouraging teachers to engage with their built surroundings, schools can help young people have a better understanding of what makes a good building or a great public space.

Engaging Places is closely linked to both the Find Your Talent programme and Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto, and is designed to offer teachers accessible, curriculum-linked ways to unlock the educational potential of their built surroundings. New support available to schools from autumn 2008 includes:

- an online resource for schools providing a national database of heritage/built environment curriculum resources, developed by Culture 24
- a national partnership of leading cultural and education organisations chaired by Anthea Case, Chair of Heritage Link and CABE commissioner
- a new network for schools and educators providing practical local support and resources over the next three years to support the new curriculum
- increased support to 'Find Your Talent' and the LOTC Manifesto.

Engaging Places will be taken forward by the CABE and English Heritage over the next three years.

You will find information on the NFER research [here](#).