Built Environment

Definition
The built environment is made up of historic and contemporary buildings and the spaces between them, including parks, streets and housing. Learning about the built environment is about learning to see the value of well designed spaces and the relationship between the natural environment and local community. We can learn about the built environment in the school grounds as well as in our cities and streetscapes.

Categories

Learning opportunities
Learning about and through the built environment can help young people contribute to and understand their local community. The most popular built environment activities include:

- visits to buildings and places
- school-based project work delivered by learning providers, architects and design professionals
- creative learning projects which engage children and young people in the school design process.

Built environment education cuts across themes in the National Curriculum and is relevant to teaching and learning in subjects at all key stages, especially geography, history, art and design, religious education and citizenship. In the delivery of the New Secondary curriculum for example, exploring local opportunities in the built environment can help to deliver cross-curriculum dimensions.

Learning support
The built environment sector includes a wide range of organisations and providers who cover contemporary architecture, urban design and public space and the historic built environment. Provision and support is available at a national, regional and local level.
Organisations providing site visits and experiences to explore the built environment come mainly from the museums, galleries and historic built environment sectors. Regional architecture centres also offer programmes which aim to support teachers to use sites in the local area as part of learning.

A government-funded initiative, ‘Engaging Places’, is available to teachers to help them identify local opportunities, access resources and curriculum related materials and find partnership organisations and networks in their region. More details are available via [www.engagingplaces.org.uk](http://www.engagingplaces.org.uk)

Group leaders can access the following learning support and guidance from the national organisations that support learning about the built environment:

- guidance and support for site visits and experiences
- project based work with built environment organisations and providers, including formal learning programmes
- curriculum and wider curricular teaching and learning resources
- web-based resources to support delivery of the national curriculum and learning outside the classroom
- young people’s involvement in school design of buildings and spaces.

**Built Environment Web resources**

- [www.24hourmuseum.org.uk/etc/teah/teahindex_gfx_en.html](http://www.24hourmuseum.org.uk/etc/teah/teahindex_gfx_en.html)
  Culture24 provides resources for teachers looking for learning outside the classroom activities in the UK’s museums and galleries. Many museums and galleries have resources on their own websites.

- [www.hha.org.uk/metadot/index.pl?id=23068&isa=Category&op=show](http://www.hha.org.uk/metadot/index.pl?id=23068&isa=Category&op=show)
  The Historic Houses Association is a membership body for privately-owned historic houses in the UK. This part of their website allows you to search for members’ organisations which have education provision.

- [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-chl/w-learning_discovery/w-schools.htm](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-chl/w-learning_discovery/w-schools.htm)
  The National Trust offers extensive education guidance and resources as well as specific education schemes including School Arts Partnerships and School Guardianships that seek to connect schools to their local National Trust properties and develop sustainable learning partnerships.

- [www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.1571](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.1571)
  English Heritage offers a wide range of learning provision across the UK. This education section of their site provides a link to Discovery Visits which have been specifically developed as cross-curricular opportunities for learning outside the classroom.

  The teachernet museums and galleries database can be searched to find organisations that have provision matching your curriculum requirements.
Built Environment Information

www.mla.gov.uk/home
The MLA Partnership is the government’s agency for museums, galleries, libraries and archives. It delivers strategic leadership in England and in each of its regions and collaborates with partners across the UK. There are links to MLA sites in each of the nine English Government regions, and some have case studies and information of use to teachers and leaders. Some museums and galleries work in partnership groups or hubs to provide educational resources.

www.4children.org.uk/whatwedo/view/node/19
Part of the 4Children Charity, these centres for curiosity and imagination provide hands-on learning for young people in their communities, focusing on out-of-school time.

www.heritageeducationtrust.org.uk
The Heritage Education Trust oversees the Sandford Awards which are given annually to heritage sites for excellence in education provision. The site contains lists of winners which are a good source of ideas for school visits and other links.

http://www.gem.org.uk/pubs/pubs_menu.html
A source of education research reports that focus on education provision in the heritage sector and include a large number of case studies. The site also has a searchable database of freelance educators.

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