



Working with Schools

Introduction and content

This document is designed to help you set up, manage and evaluate your school project through best practice. This information was written during England's Past for Everyone (EPE) programme of school projects, but the practical advice will be invaluable to other organisations/groups planning and running their own school projects.

[England's Past for Everyone](#) (EPE) is a Heritage Lottery funded project run by the [Victoria County History](#), Institute of Historical Research (University of London). Our school projects form part of the EPE Learning Programme, which provides engagement with local history for life-long learners, young people and school children. Our projects involve volunteers in researching local history materials alongside professional historians, and by developing a programme of practical and online material which encourages the creative use of local history in schools. The educational materials are outputs from exciting projects tested and created with schools in the participating counties.

EPE's school projects show how local history can support work across the curriculum in both a primary and secondary setting. With a focus on Key Stages 1 – 3 (ages 5 – 14), and in consultation with teachers, local education authorities and history advisors, the EPE school projects have worked with partners including local museums, galleries and archives, artists and schools on 12 practical and innovative projects. The school projects have already exceeded their target by involving over 700 children in historical activity across England.

Through our projects we have encouraged pupils to look differently at their local environment, understand its changing history and the role they play in its future.

The key beneficiaries of the school projects have been:

- School pupils at Key Stage 1, 2 and/or 3 (aged 5 – 14).
- Teachers, trainee teachers and education/creative professionals engaged with the EPE project.
- Existing education programmes in local museums and heritage sites.

This document aims to act as a guide to developing projects with schools, based on a variety of EPE models.

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Partnerships and Relationships

A good solid relationship is needed, whatever the level of delivery with schools. Whilst meeting EPE aims and objectives, there has been enough flexibility to ensure that all projects have been tailored to the needs of the school. Not only does this ensure more commitment from the school, but it also allows for continuation at the end of the project.

Each project has been delivered in partnership with either an existing professional body or organisation delivering (or with the potential to deliver) similar programmes, or an education consultant. Research has been undertaken by the Education and Skills Manager at both local and national level to see what current and similar projects are being developed or delivered, before an education consultant is employed. This has cut down on duplication and encourages partnerships.

It is essential to have a firm element of trust between the Education and Skills Manager and project deliverer, which should encourage good communication. In most cases, this has been achieved through face to face meetings, swift responses to queries, coherent guidance and a non-judgemental approach to the creative delivery.

Partnership on the project has:

- Raised the profile of the whole EPE project.
- Provided a local sense of ownership.
- Provided a legacy and use of the local project after the life of EPE.
- Avoided duplication with similar programmes.
- Made use of existing resources available.

Partners have included:

- Local and National Museum Services.
- Teachers, trainee teachers and teacher trainers.
- Creative practitioners.
- County Record Offices.
- County and City Councils.

Roles and Responsibilities

EPE Education and Skills Manager

The Education and Skills Manager's responsibility includes:

- Local and national coordination of schools projects.
- Ensuring all projects follow best practice guidelines and remain within budget.
- Liaison to encourage good relationships between deliverer and schools.
- Planning, research and initial contacts.
- Ensuring guidelines are coherent and understood, and that schedules are met.
- Internal communication, developing strategy and policy for delivering the programme according to best practice guidance and the current developments in the education sector.
- Management of education consultants / delivery agents.
- Oversee delivery of project and lead on evaluation.

Education Consultant/Education Deliverer

The main purpose of this role is to create and deliver an education project which shows how local history can be used creatively in schools across history and other curriculum subjects. This should be done using the research being collated for the EPE publication. Alongside reporting, evaluation and liaison, the deliverer is expected to write up resources from the project to be hosted on the [Schools Learning Zone](#).

This relationship relies on a firm understanding of the requirements. The title 'Education Consultant' is often off-putting and often the word 'consultant' is substituted with 'deliverer'. Education Deliverers have generally ranged from teachers, artists, educationalists, advanced-skills teachers and teacher trainers. They are, and should be, a link between the Education and Skills Manager and the school. It is incredibly difficult to have an Education Deliverer who is not based in the county or does not have an understanding of the county locations. It is also good practice to recruit from within the county you are working in.

If material is being presented for the web, as with all these roles, clear guidelines should be talked through, examples shared with enough opportunity given for clarification.

Lead Teacher/School

The school should take an active role in the planning and delivery of the project. Lead-in time and creating a project which takes account of the school's needs will encourage this. It is advisable to approach the school with an outline proposal of a project so there is a starting point for discussion. With a number of our projects, schools have followed up the work and theme through other subjects out of set workshop hours.

The Headteacher is usually the first point of contact and will assign a class teacher(s) to work with. Confirm who your lead contact is at the first meeting/discussion and take contact details.

Through the programme we have tried to ensure education projects vary in Key Stages and theme. However, the Key Stage and delivery dates have ultimately been determined by the school as it has needed to fit into their timetable of curriculum delivery.

Delivery Agent

The role of the Delivery Agent is to ensure that their organisation delivers the project within the remit of their contract. Most of the delivery agents on the project have been museums. A lead contact should be assigned early and direct lines to any of the staff who are delivering on and off site should be provided to strengthen communication. As with the consultants, it should be made clear what the themes and requirements of the project are before contracting.

Check previous or similar projects which the Delivery Agent has delivered in the past, and ensure you ask that any representative working in schools are CRB checked.

Delivery Agents are used to 'getting the job done' and will often deliver the project with little communication. Ensuring mid-term evaluation meetings are set at the start of the project; they should update you on progress and flag up any early problems.

Researcher/Team Leader

The most successful projects have been those where the Researcher/Team Leader has taken time to feed into the planning stages, make suggestions towards more engaging discoveries of the research and develop a relationship through the project with the deliverer. The Team Leader/Researcher should encourage the deliverer to email a list of requirements and book in meetings or telephone conversations so they are contactable. This helps minimise interruptions and creates a structure for communication.

Planning and Guidelines

It has been useful to set up some guidelines on delivering projects and the type of material expected to be web mounted on the *Schools Learning Zone*. Providing guidelines allows the deliverer to plan their projects whilst tailoring the research they are using.

School Project Planner (see Appendix A)

During the planning stage, it is advisable to complete a 'school project planner'. The planner is an opportunity to:

- Think and plan ahead.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities (including assigning a lead contact).
- Provide summary details of the project to support any marketing/publicity material.
- Show how the project will support EPE aims and objectives.
- Put key delivery dates in the diary.

The planner is usually completed by the person/organisation delivering the project, although much of the information is agreed at meetings and every party should receive a copy. It also acts as an informal agreement with the school and provides every one involved with full contact details.

The planner is seen as a working document and the information in it is not set in stone. It has not always been necessary to use a planner. In the few cases where one was not completed, there was little time between the planning and delivery stage and the Education and Skills Manager was in constant communication and regularly on site.

Education Consultant's requirements for web

As the web output for the project is important for the EPE project, it has been necessary to provide a set of guidelines referring to each requirement. In most cases the deliverer has been talked through the guidelines and has been able to ask specific questions.

Contracting

Education Consultants/Deliverers should have the opportunity to review their agreement/contract before signing. Professional fees vary across the counties. Most individuals will be registered freelance and pay their own tax and national insurance contributions. Each contract has been sent out with terms and conditions, and any other guidelines available. Both parties should receive original signed copies of the agreement for reference.

A simple in-kind agreement was drawn up for organisations and partners who have agreed to contribute resources to the project.

Delivery

There are currently five models for delivering EPE projects in schools:

Model A: (County Durham; Derbyshire; Oxfordshire)

Working with a Delivery Agent and school.

Benefits: Continuation; stronger relationships; stronger profile; more resources; partnership building; building on a previous relationship with schools.

Challenges: lack of updating/communication; separate agenda from the Delivery Agent.

Model B: (Bristol; Cornwall - Mounts Bay; Sussex)

Working with research to develop materials before trialling in school(s).

Benefits: Less planning time and no delivery required; more economic.

Challenges: Materials are trialled after being developed; no or little engagement with pupils; ensure the consultant is experienced in writing materials for schools.

NB – These EPE projects were written by experienced educationalists and consulted on by schools and trainee teachers.

Model C: (Cornwall - Religious Sites; Exmoor; Herefordshire; Kent)

Working with Deliverer and school.

Benefits: Direct contact with school; encourages teacher to be more 'hands on'.

Challenges: More time consuming; requires more coordination and management from Education and Skills Manager.

Model D: (Wiltshire)

Supporting school to independently deliver the project.

Benefits: cost effective; tailored to schools needs.

Challenges: Relies heavily on the school which is high risk; time consuming for Education and Skills Manager; school is more likely to work to its own agenda and not take into account the requirements of EPE.

NB – as with the Wiltshire project, it is important to find the right school and meet with them regular to show support and avoid damaging the relationship and risking the delivery of the project.

Celebrating the end of the Project

All of our school projects (with the exception of those delivered under Model B) have been celebrated in some way at the end of delivery. This has mainly been led by the school with input from the Deliverer and Education and Skills Manager where necessary. There have been two main ways of celebrating the school projects in the counties:

Presentation

A presentation given to other pupils, teachers in the school and/or parents, has been a popular way to celebrate the completion of projects. Most projects created a PowerPoint presentation showing what they did during the project and pictures/facts that the pupils had learnt (with the pupils giving commentary throughout). An exhibition of the pupils work has been on display with time to view the exhibition at the end of the presentation. Presentations are more effective at the end of the school day at an assembly when parents are coming to the school to collect their children. The presentation and time allowed to view an exhibition should take no longer than 1 – 2 hours. Some schools have provided refreshments but this is only advisable if you are expecting a small group.

Event

The event will usually take place out of school, with a visit to a key place with the pupils involved or in the case of Cornwall Religious Sites, a pilgrimage and whole day event to link into the launch of a publication. This option requires more resources, coordination and organisation, but is very effective and a good way of increasing publicity.

Documentation and Child Consent

Documentation of projects has been essential for the EPE Learning programme. Not only as a way of reporting to our funders and evaluating, but as an opportunity to show the creativity and engagement of a project and the programme.

You are required to gain consent for children under the age of 18 from a parent or guardian. In some cases consent is lowered to the age of 16. In general terms, consent is needed to allow children to leave the school grounds and be recorded (visually and audibly). Most schools ask parents to sign consent forms at the start of their first term, however, the school forms will be used specifically to promote activities within the school. Because EPE and VCH are national projects, it is necessary to create new forms which cover, in terms of photography, where the images will be placed and what they will be used for.

The school can often help with this, but it is essential, particularly regarding photographic images that consent is obtained before any material is used on or off line.

Evaluation

Evaluation should be an ongoing tool throughout the project. The purpose of a mid-term evaluation is to flag up any potential problems with the delivery and ensure the rest of the project runs smoothly. Mid-term evaluation meetings have been face to face in the county and have often clarified the requirements for the project and cleared up any communication difficulties between partners. As Education and Skills Manager, it is also a good opportunity to offer encouragement and support.

Questions from evaluation forms for schools have been used as a starting point for the evaluation meeting. Examples of these questions could be: 'what went well?'; 'what might you have done differently?'; 'what was your highlight of the project?' etc. It is best for the evaluation meeting to take place at the school as close to the end of the project as possible with the deliverer, Education and Skills Manager and lead teachers. The most informative evaluations have been when the questions have been sent to the school in advance of the meeting, and where teaching assistants or anyone else involved in the delivery of the project has been present. An additional meeting should be held with just the Deliverer.

Check what methods the school already has in place to evaluate projects with pupils during the delivery. Ask the school to collect comments during and at the end. Ask assistants to be aware of any improvements to the pupils work and developments in their understanding or skills.

All Deliverers are required to write up a report of the project.

Schools Learning Zone

Many projects and websites exist offering teachers the opportunity to enhance their curriculum topics (including history) with worksheets, interactive activities and creative planning. Most of these are government-funded programmes. *Schools Learning Zone* differs from these by linking elements of the curriculum to academic research and offering creative solutions to history and cross-curriculum learning.

Schools Learning Zone hosts the teaching material and learning resources created from each county's project. These units of material include: lesson plans; resources; timelines; interactive activities; images and audio files. The material is intended to support generic learning, using the county projects as examples. The Deliverer is responsible for the development of the materials in consultation with teachers (where relevant). It is also useful for the Team Leader/Researcher to review the materials along with the Education and Skills Manager for comments.

At the central EPE office, a system has been set up where any content (e.g. teaching material) is passed through the lead editor from the support team to make sure we have some continuity and accuracy between the books and the resources. Any comments from this should go through the Education and Skills Manager.

www.EnglandsPastForEveryone.org.uk/Schools

Timetabling

It is crucial to allow as much time as possible for the planning of your projects. Schools usually have their academic year planned including areas of curriculum delivery and any external projects or trips they wish to do that year, some of these are annual.

If you are lucky, your project will fit into the themes planned to support the delivery. However, it is best not to rely on this and by having a deliverer who can be creative with the subject (and a flexible timetable) certainly helps.

We have found that projects which have had the longer lead in time (8 - 12 months) have run smoother and developed stronger relationships. On average, most projects have taken between 16 – 20 months from start to finish.

Schedule	Action	Note
3 – 4 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication with Team Leader/Researcher to determine themes. Draw up proposal. 	Think about some of the themes before arranging a brainstorming meeting to agree some overarching themes.
1 – 3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Education Consultant/Deliverer. Identify partners/schools (first stop is usually county/city council education department, ASTs or local museums). 	Be aware that it can take several months to find the right school. Bring a Deliverer on board early so they can take ownership of the project and advise. If using an individual, either post the position on GEM or artsjobs mailing lists, ask at local museums and/or education departments.
8 – 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project planning. 	Be realistic, flexible and listen to the needs/requirements of all parties. A couple of our projects ran successfully after only 5 months planning, but feedback from the schools/Deliverer was that more planning time would have been better.
4 – 9 weeks (not including half terms)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery including mid-term evaluation. 	Dependant on time agreed. Most schools find it difficult to commit past 6 weeks. Try not to let projects run over more than one term.

<p>Within 1 month of project completion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation. 	<p>Try to do the evaluation soon after the end of the project. Invite teaching assistants and any other teachers/ others who have been involved in the delivery or planning of the project.</p> <p>A separate evaluation meeting should be held with the Deliverer.</p>
<p>1- 3 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write up of resources and editing process. 	<p>Make sure comments are clear and concise. Avoid several changes and remember that you have employed the deliverer because they have experience within their field.</p>

Some Dos and Don'ts

Child consent forms need to be sent out at the start of the project.

Working across two key stages should not be dismissed but there should be careful considerations as to why you wish to do it and the feasibility/capacity to do so within the school.

Internal communication must be strong so all staff are aware of why they are involved in the project and what their role is.

Confirm details as far in advance as possible to ensure parents, partners and organisations are clear about the project. The school project planner will help with this and a simple letter to the parents, giving prior warning to field trips.

Have one person as main liaison on the project. Ensure everyone involved in the project is aware of this person. Again, the school project planner will help identify the best person.

The autumn term is never a great time to start a project. Not only does it take the school a few weeks to settle into the new school year, but there are also new intake and staff changes.

We have found that middle schools find it more difficult to be as flexible as primary schools or secondary schools.

Do not underestimate the time it takes to plan and deliver a school project. Include meetings (planning, delivery and evaluation), research and planning and delivery into your allocation when developing your budget.

Check that all images/material used as resources for the project have copyright permission.

This document was written by **Aretha George** in April 2008, and edited by **Skye Dillon** (EPE Education and Skills Manager) in October 2009.