



**Department for
Culture, Media and Sport**

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The Learning Power of Museums

– A Vision for Museum Education



NOTE

In this document the term 'museum' has many applications. It is used to cover museums as defined by the Museums Association as well as such institutions as archives, galleries, science centres and children's museums.

Contents:

Foreword:	by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and the Secretary of State for Education and Employment	3
Section 1:	A Vision for Museum Education	4
Section 2:	What Has Happened So Far?	10
Section 3:	The Way Forward	15
Appendix 1:	Advisory Group Members	26
Appendix 2:	Abbreviations and Acronyms	27
Appendix 3:	Other Relevant Publications	28
Case Studies:	2000 & Counting in Rochdale	4
	Benwell – Centre of the Universe	6
	BBC History 2000	10
	encompass	12
	South Somerset	14
	Ware Museum	16
	Collaborations in Pattern and Print	18
	Telling Tales in the Museum	20
	The Learning Curve	22
	Xperiment!	24
	The Livesey Museum for Children	26



Foreword: by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and the Secretary of State for Education and Employment



Learning is at the heart of this Government's agenda because it is the key to a rich life for individuals and prosperity for the nation. Through its programme of education reform, the Government is seeking to create the 'learning habit' across the country, so that people of all ages can understand and enjoy the great cultural achievements of the past and the present, and gain the skills, attitudes and knowledge they need to contribute to and share in the information and communication age of this new century.

This document sets out our vision of the part museums, galleries, archives and other cultural bodies can play in contributing to the learning society. Many of our museums were originally created as educational organisations and we believe that more could and should be made of their great educational potential today. All museums, whether national institutions or local centres, help us to reflect on important issues. They tell us about our past, they enable us to explore our creativity, they exemplify our cultural diversity and help us to imagine the future.

The combination of leisure and learning that museums can offer is a most valuable asset. We are aware that many museums are already models of good practice, and the case studies given here illustrate examples of museums working closely with their communities to provide excellent services. Local education authorities have a particular part to play in promoting a close relationship between museums and schools and so helping to achieve our vision at a local level. We know that experiencing real objects and creating their own work can make a lasting impression on young people.

We are glad to be publishing this document jointly, and commend it to all readers. We are grateful to those who gave freely of their time to prepare it and to those who provided information on the case studies. Over the coming months, our Departments will be working with the education and museum communities to make this vision happen. We look forward to seeing all museums make a leading contribution to the learning society of the twenty-first century.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Smith".

Chris Smith MP

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Blunkett".

David Blunkett MP