



Learning Strategy

2019 - 2021

Learning Policy

Executive Summary

This policy sets out the strategic context, aims and objectives of the Learning Department (including family engagement) over the next three years (2019 to 2021). This document details our learning mission and what our audiences can expect from our learning services. Education and learning are recognised as a core Museum charitable object and are fully integrated into all areas of the museum planning and operation. The main aims of this strategy are:

- To raise the profile of the Museum as a centre of learning
- To increase the use of the Museum by schools and families
- To improve the facilities and infrastructure for learning in the museum
- To become more appealing and accessible to the community as a whole.

The strategy and plan described in this document are best viewed in conjunction with the Royal Engineers Museum Strategic Plan.

Learning Service Background

The Royal Engineers Museum has offered a bespoke service for school learners since 2000. It was recognised that, in order to improve on the delivery of its charitable objects, school 'lessons' linking to the National Curriculum for history would increase awareness of the Corps's national role, impact and relevance.

Since then the learning Service has broadened its remit and increased its audiences substantially. The Museum now offers 23 'Inspiring Learning Sessions' covering six topics that support the teaching of Early Years Foundation Scheme to Key Stage 5 teaching in National Curriculum subjects which include history, English and Art. A review of the service in 2014-15 saw the Museum fully embrace its unique position as a museum of engineering and since then has become a well respected provider of Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) learning and partners with the STEM Ambassadors scheme, as well as the Corps of Royal Engineers and Rochester Bridge Trust as a teacher and promoter of engineering skills and careers.

The last 5 years have seen an average of 3547 annual school users with the majority coming from local primary schools.

As well as the offer to formal learning groups, the RE Museum Learning Manager is responsible for development and delivery of family activities at the Museum. This included school holiday activities as well as liaison with the Visitor Engagement Manager on the design of permanent displays and interactives.

The Museum also currently runs two learning clubs; Mini Museum Explorers for under 5's and STEM Club for 11-14 year olds.

Since 2014 the total number of children visiting the Museum, whether with school or for leisure, has risen from 3003 to 7690.

Our Learning Mission

The Royal Engineers Museum believes learning to be a core function of its service; working with education providers and partners to enable all sections of the community to connect with its collections.

The Royal Engineers Museum seeks to offer stimulating learning opportunities that will enrich people's lives and give a unique understanding of the role played by the Corps of Royal Engineers in the history of conflict as well as their impact on the development of engineering disciplines and United Kingdom in general.

Learning Department Vision

The learning department of the Royal Engineers Museum will:

- Provide high quality inspiring learning experiences that are stimulating, enjoyable, engaging and relevant for a wide range of different audiences.
- Increase access and awareness of the Royal Engineers Museum collection, British military history and engineering in general in order to make a positive difference to peoples' knowledge and understanding.
- Interpret the Museum's collections imaginatively and activity for all levels of interest and ability.
- Extend the formal learning experience in ways that are not feasible within schools, enhancing the taught curriculum and offering cross-curriculum opportunities.

Learning Department Principles

The principles of the learning department outline how the Royal Engineers Museum strives to achieve the aims listed above.

- Insightful** - The Museum will maximise the opportunities for engagement and interaction with the collections through learning activities and the development of temporary exhibitions and gallery spaces, that embody the principles set out in the Inspiring Learning for All framework.
- Accessible** - The learning service will meet the needs of all users including lifelong learners by being flexible and imaginative allowing access for all, regardless of age, sex, social status, ethnic origin or ability.
- Inspirational** - The learning department will maintain a welcoming, safe and stimulating learning space that reflects the Museum's theme, provokes visitor's curiosity and creates an atmosphere of enjoyable exploration and discovery for all.
- Relevant** - The learning service will be evaluated regularly to assess the impact of our services. This will help us to develop and improve the learning

department and the service we offer visitors to ensure it meets user needs at the highest standard.

Target Audiences

The Royal Engineers Museum aims to be fully inclusive, drawing in a wide cross-section of local people. The Museum remains, however, particularly focused on:

- Formal Learning groups
 - Early Years Groups
 - Primary School Groups
 - Secondary School Groups
 - SEND School Groups
 - Universities and higher education establishments
 - Home education groups
- Informal Learning Groups
 - Families with children
 - Teenagers/ Young People
 - Community Groups
 - Lifelong Learners

Learning Resource

The Royal Engineers Museum has a number of resources available that will improve the learning offer at the Museum:

- The Learning Team (made up of a Learning Manager and Casual Learning Officers) who are committed to further developing the learning offer.
- Permanent galleries (which include elements for all learning styles, objects, text panels, handling areas, sound effects, digital interactivities and traditional in interactivities).
- A programme of facilitated Inspiring Learning Sessions accessible for all learning groups.
- Temporary exhibitions linking to the Museum's collections and linking with the Royal Engineers.
- Interpretation aimed at family groups including layered text panels and a 'Snob the dog' trail.
- A programme of family friendly events and activities linking to the Museum's collections, special commemorations, exhibitions and world events.
- A dedicated learning space that is the hub from which forms the centre of all learning opportunities in the Museum with movable chairs and tables.
- Free car parking and designated coach parking to the side of the Museum.
- Free planning visits for teachers and a hazard identification sheet (for completing risk assessments).
- A lunch space inside for up to 100 learners and an outside picnic space

- A separate handling collection for use in formal and informal learning sessions.
- A museum shop selling resources that continue the learning beyond the museum (e.g. books/ replica packs).
- A café located at the heart of the Museum providing hot and cold drinks, as well as light refreshments.
- Toilets including an accessible toilet (and baby changing facilities).

Strategy Review

The Learning Strategy will be reviewed along with the main Museum Strategy in 2021. The Museum will use the results of ongoing evaluation of the service as well as asking for stakeholder participation in both assessing the success of this Strategy and identifying elements of the new.

Approval

The learning policy and strategy 2019-2021 was approved by the RE Museum Committee on the 17th October 2019.

Written by Amber Coulstock
Learning Manager - The Royal Engineers Museum
August 2019

The Learning Strategy

Aims of the Learning Strategy

The four aims of the Learning Strategy outline what the Royal Engineers Museum needs to improve on in order to achieve its vision:

- To raise the profile of the Museum as a centre of learning
- To increase the use of the Museum by schools and families
- To improve the facilities and infrastructure for learning in the museum
- To become more appealing and accessible to the community as a whole.

In order to achieve these the following goals have been identified for implementation by the Learning Team. Funding will be drawn from the annual Learning Budget and by seeking external grant funding and partnerships.

1. Goal: Increase the reach of the formal Learning Service

Objectives:

- Increase the number of users of the Learning Service.
- Review the Learning Service offer for Secondary Schools.
- Develop new sessions and ways of working using technologies (e.g. iPads).

Short Term (2019/20)

- Evaluation of current school users, identifying regular, lapse and one-off groups visiting for a particular reason (See Annex 1 Evaluation Plan).
- Implementation of the Learning Service Marketing Plan (see Annex 2).
- Continue to develop innovative best practices in the delivery of the Learning Service.
- Continue to grow the partnership with Brompton Academy and create new relationships with local secondary schools.
- Create package for Sleepovers for schools and local clubs using ideas from trial sleepover.
- Continue the relationship with Kent and Medway STEM hub to promote the Museum and STEM learning opportunities.

Long Term (2020/21)

- Hold STEM bridge building competitions for local primary schools.
- Go out to schools to talk to teachers at staff meetings (at least 3 times a year) to inform them what we have to offer in terms of our Inspiring Learning Service in the Museum and as an outreach service.
- Create new partnerships between the museum and schools via projects through organisation such as Kids in Museums and School Improvement Team Medway Council.
- Look for new partners in order to continue to develop our skills and extend the reach of our provision to new schools and specialist units.
- Involve young people in the planning and delivery of the Museum's Learning Service (such as through STEM Club).
- Continue networking with other museums and educational organisations in Kent.
- Continue to evaluate the learning service in line with the Evaluation Plan (See Annex 1) and review Inspiring Learning Sessions to ensure compliance with audience needs and expectations.
- Work alongside the Visitor Engagement Manager to support in the creation of summer exhibitions and curriculum links to the exhibition.

2. Goal: Develop the Learning Hub, creating a new Inspiring Learning Environment

Objectives:

- Create an imaginative, inspiring and engaging learning hub which forms the centre of all learning opportunities in the Museum. Uses will include:
 - As a 'break out' space for formal learning groups.
 - As a 'club house' for the Museum's learning clubs.
 - As a quiet zone for general family visitors, ensuring that it offers a welcoming environment for all audiences, including SEND audiences.
- Involve young people in the planning and redesign process.
- Seek new partners and funders.

Action Plan

Short term (2019-20)

- Finalise design concepts and engage schools in decision on:
Artwork and object selection
Naming the new facility.
- Research and procure equipment for the space.
- Redecorate as required.
- Promotion of the new facility (in external marketing material as well as internal site orientation).

Long term (2020/21)

- Engage users with the production and choice of rolling displays.
- Create maintenance plan to keep the new Learning Space fresh.
- Source funding for ongoing upkeep.
- Scope potential for extending learning resources to the Bridge Study Displays.

3. Goal: Improve SEND offer to become an 'Autistic Friendly Museum'

Objectives:

- Create working partnership with local Kent Autistic Trust.
- Develop young adult SEND monthly bookable weekday workshop.
- Develop triannual drop-in open day for families with SEND children.

Action Plan:

Short term (2019)

- Continue to develop innovative best practice in the delivery of provision for children, young people and adults with special educational needs and disabilities. Such as noise cancelling head phones, I-Spy trails to pick up in the Museum and the use of sound boxes and smelly boxes as part of the learning service.
- Train Learning Staff in the use of basic Makaton singing. Look into apply for a grant from Museum South East to cover the cost of training and purchasing the Makaton symbols package to re-label learning space/ create Museum visit daily sequence.
- Invite the Kent Autistic Trust for a tour of Museum and to discuss a new potential working partnership.
- Attend SEND network meetings and conferences to find out new best practises and ideas.
- Promote SEND learning programme to schools and learning practitioners.

Long term (2020/21)

- Research innovative new SEND learning practises to support the development of workshops and family days (including the use of new technologies).
- Trial an initial young adult workshops and evaluate the outcome before developing years programme.
- Develop family fun days in conjunction with the Kent Autistic Trust.
- Work with the Kent Autistic Trust to promote new open days and workshops.

4. Goal: Improve family friendly offer to become a 'Kids in Museums' Family Friendly Museum

Objectives:

- Increase number of family users of the Museum.
- Work with local families to create an imaginative interpretation for the Museums.

Action Plan

Short term (2019)

- Develop and launch new self-directed resources for the under 5s.
- Work with local families to develop imaginative interpretation, trails and STEM resources for the Museum.
- Continue running popular monthly Mini Museums under 5's sessions.
- Continue planning and running STEM club for 11-14 year olds.
- Research and programme family friendly holiday activities and work with marketing team to promote.
- Continue to develop ways for young people to actively participate at the museum through volunteering and creative projects such as the Kids in Museum Takeover Day and Teen Digital Takeover Day.
- Support schools' family open days and school fetes to prompt the Museum's family offer.
- Leases with the Operations & Commercial Manager on the development of new learning shop lines.

Long term (2020/21)

- Seek additional funding to sustain a fun Family Learning programme.
- Introduce new technologies into the family friendly Museum offer.
- Work with Visitor Engagement manager to support the programming of future family friendly exhibitions.
- Review STEM club for 11-14 year olds and adapt and develop.

5. Goal: Establish a group of volunteers to support Museums Learning offer.

Objectives:

- Involve volunteers from the local community in the delivery of family friendly activities.
- Invite Mid Kent College students to volunteer and support projects.
- Work with Canterbury Christ Church University to offer trainee teacher volunteering opportunities.

Action plan

Short term (2019)

- Review our existing arrangements for learning volunteer management and involvement.
- Diversify the range of volunteering opportunities at the museum by developing new role descriptions for different opportunities, such as gallery explainers, under 5's volunteers and family volunteers.

Long term (2020/21)

- Liaise with Mid Kent collage to see if any of the students would be interested in volunteering opportunities.
- Work with Canterbury Christ Church University to develop potential new openings for trainee teachers.
- Hold a coffee open morning for potential new volunteers from the local community, local universities and colleges.

6. Goal: Maintain and develop the existing relationships with university partners.

Objectives:

- Improving access to the collection for all students and researchers.
- Develop the Museum's
- Engage subject specialists on projects to improve understanding of the Museum collection

Action plan

Short term (2019)

- Review our existing arrangements for with the University of Kent; seeking enhancements to the Museums feedback and input in the student assessment process.
- Scope the potential for increasing formal partnerships with the University of Kent based on student access to the new Museum Research Centre.
- Participation in the African Connections project with the University of Sussex.

Long term (2020/21)

- Launch the new Study Centre for use by students and academics.
- Host the African Connections Exhibition created by the University of Sussex.
- Identify new partnership and funding opportunities that bring subject specialist knowledge into the Museum and enhance understanding of the Collection.