



Leeds Museums and  
Gallery School  
Membership:  
A New Way of Working  
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Creating stories from museum collections

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# Introduction

In 2021 Museum Tales LTD worked collaboratively with the Leeds Museums and Galleries (LMG) Learning Team, Greenmount Primary School, Bracken Edge Primary School and St Bartholomew's C of E Primary School to explore their innovative approach to whole school learning and museum provided curriculum support.

In the last two years, new relationships have been formed between the partners as the result of, or in prelude to, schools joining the LMG Primary Membership Scheme. These relationships have evolved far beyond the scope of the original scheme, allowing teachers, students and LMG staff to improve their own knowledge and understanding as new ways of collaborative working have been developed.

This report showcases the journeys of all four partners, highlighting the mutually beneficial experience, and challenges, of working together with the LMG team.

## Objectives

The evaluation aims to gain insight into:

- Motivations behind the relationships of the schools and LMG.
- An analysis of the dynamics within the partnerships.
- The impact museums can have on access to cultural capital in the school environment.
- Whole school learning linked to local history and museum collections.

## Evaluation structure

Museum Tales LTD conducted 1:1 interviews with key personnel from each organisation. This included:

- Emily Nelson, Learning and Access Officer (Memberships) LMG
- Kate Fellows, Head of Learning and Access LMG
- Caroline Carr, Executive Headteacher Bracken Edge Primary School (was previously Headteacher at Greenmount Primary School)
- Lisa Dixon, Headteacher at Greenmount Primary School (was Deputy Head during the interviews for this report)
- Mark Crossland, teacher and curriculum lead at Bracken Edge Primary School
- Billy Waters, Assistant Headteacher at St Bartholomew's C of E Primary School.

## Partners

### Leeds Museums and Galleries Primary School Membership Scheme

In September 2018 Leeds Museums and Galleries (LMG) launched its Primary School Membership Scheme, enabling schools to access loans of real, accessioned objects, workshops, training and more through a single SLA.

The Membership Scheme has 3 different levels (Bronze, Silver and Gold). Through these, member schools can access (depending on level):

- Loans of curriculum linked topic boxes containing accessioned objects from the museum collections.
- Training in the care and management of objects, and how to use them in the classroom.
- Credits towards workshops on 9 museum/gallery sites run by Leeds Museums and Galleries.
- First opportunity for inclusion in any special LMG projects.
- Assemblies led by curators and learning staff
- Invites to exhibition previews
- 6 hours of bespoke CPD for teachers.

The scheme intends to support schools in embedding cultural capital and object-based teaching and learning into their school practice. It also aims to create long lasting relationships between member schools and LMG.

### Greenmount Primary School

Situated within Beeston, South Leeds, Greenmount Primary School is located within one of the most deprived wards in Leeds. The school welcomes children from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds with around 6% of households not speaking English as their first language<sup>1</sup>. The locality has a higher than average population of single parents and those earning less than the average income.

The school is a two form entry, arranged into teaching phases of Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception), Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) and Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6).

Greenmount have been a member of the LMG Primary Membership Scheme since 2019. They have been described by the LMG team as the 'blue print' for how they can work dynamically with schools going forward.

### Bracken Edge Primary School

Set within the Chapel Allerton Ward, Bracken Edge Primary School is situated within the 9<sup>th</sup> most deprived ward in the city<sup>2</sup>. In 2017 nearly 40% of children within the ward were classed as living in poverty<sup>3</sup>.

The school reports that in 2019 students scored significantly lower than the national average in Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 assessments.

<sup>1</sup> <https://observatory.leeds.gov.uk/population/report/view/7f04a3b414ed449cb2d72104f39279e4/4/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://observatory.leeds.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Chapel-Allerton-Ward-2020.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.leeds-live.co.uk/news/leeds-news/revealed-shocking-levels-child-poverty-14211443>

### **St Bartholomew's C of E Primary School**

This large church school is located in Armley, noted as one of the most deprived wards in the country<sup>4</sup>. Armley is a low income area, with higher than average unemployment and crime rates<sup>5</sup>.

The school has an attached nursery and hosts free stay and play sessions for those aged 2 and a half.

Key Stage 2 students at the school performed below the national average in reading, writing and maths in the academic year 2018-19.

### **Partnership development**

Between 2019-2020, LMG were approached by three members of their Primary School Membership scheme who were looking for additional support. Through the scheme, participating teachers had become increasingly aware of the LMG skills set and potential scope for further collaboration. Each of the schools were organically motivated to seek advice on how LMG could support them with the development of their curriculum.

From the LMG perspective, the Primary School Membership and developing relationships with client schools was a way to move beyond school engagement with culture venues being limited to the 'treat trip'. They wanted to support schools in accessing cultural capital, enabling students to form long standing relationships with museums and galleries and feel that these venues are 'for them'.

As Kate Fellows, Head of Learning and Access at LMG notes: *'a one off visit can only have so much impact. No matter how much you talk to the teacher and how much they plan it in... it's not going to have much impact. The kids will remember it for the rest of their lives, which is good, but in terms of tracking their academic attainment and what that's done for them, that's really difficult.'*

This developing relationship was accelerated by the 2020-21 Covid-19 pandemic, where schools and cultural venues across the country were encouraged to pivot and adapt their engagement methods. Face to face workshops were now impossible, but prolonged engagement between the schools and LMG was desired.

Whilst the LMG team already had an in-depth knowledge of the curriculum, the pandemic gave Emily Nelson space and time to attend a variety of training sessions and conferences, which further cemented her understanding. This provided an improved comprehension of school priorities and curriculum planning, providing the basis to create meaningful and targeted resources, far beyond the level previously provided. As Emily states: *'I think that we are now one of only a handful of museum services that really have an in depth understanding not only of the National Curriculum for primary, but of its wider implementation into schools and the opportunities and challenges that schools face. I know it backwards, off the top of my*

<sup>4</sup> <https://observatory.leeds.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/IMD2019KeyFindings.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ilivehere.co.uk/english-indices-of-deprivation-statistics-comparison-for-armley-in-leeds-e05011385.html>

*head, especially the history stuff. That's not usual practice for museums and I hadn't really realised that.'*

### **Greenmount Primary School**

Kate Fellows, Head of Learning and Access at LMG, is a regular attendee at the local head teachers' event, covering every school in Leeds. After one such session, Headteacher Caroline Carr approached Kate afterwards noting that their recent Ofsted report identified a need to work on reading and writing. Of Kate's briefing, Caroline stated *'I was just so hooked... we've got to get on board with what's going on with these museums and art.'*

Caroline noted that their previous curriculum at Greenmount *'didn't meet the needs of our children, it seemed too rushed. It wasn't relevant and it hadn't changed for a long time'*. Caroline and the team had created their own revised curriculum with six core themes, but it *'still didn't work'*.

Emily delivered some training on this using objects *'as a starting point for using objects to teach literacy'* and Greenmount signed up to the Bronze Membership scheme that November (2019). Emily notes that this was quite late in the year, indicating that they could see the potential for the scheme within their teaching and needs base.

After the initial training on how to use the membership scheme, they began a very open and regular dialogue. During the pandemic, they approached LMG in terms of teaching Art, and the extra support they would require around that.

### **St Bartholomew's Primary School**

This school joined the scheme as Gold members in 2020. Emily Nelson noted that by this point they now had a *'blueprint for how we work with Gold member schools.'* St Bartholomew's joined *'specifically because they wanted to support their curriculum as well as cultural access'*. It was noted that the team wanted to use the CPD support element of the scheme straight away.

Assistant Headteacher, Billy Waters notes: *'[w]e used loan boxes a few years ago and wanted to use them to supplement our history curriculum. We also opted for the more expensive package this year so that we could get some curriculum support for history, which has been excellent. The loan boxes have improved from the old Artemis ones.'*

The school were very keen to look at how the LMG team could support them in the development of their teaching of diversity. The team also requested addition support around inquiry based learning.

### **Bracken Edge Primary School**

Caroline Carr has recently moved from Greenmount Primary School as the Executive Headteacher at Bracken Edge Primary School, bringing with her the recommendation to join the membership scheme.

As Gold members, the focus of the team was to maximise the use of the CPD hours. Emily notes that *'I did some initial work with the staff, we did some training around inquiry and using objects in the classroom... So, there was a little bit of probing, to find out where Bracken Edge was and what I could do to help. And from that, I asked them if they wanted to send their curriculum documents over so that I could make sure that the training that I did with them was bespoke.'*

At the point of joining, the *'subject leads were in need of guidance and support'* as they were not *'curriculum experts'* and the chronology of the curriculum was *'all over the place'*. Twinkle had been used for resources, rather than what was available through local museum services and Emily worked with teachers to empower them. *'I put together what was essentially a proposal or proposition that was more locally rooted, much more cross curricular and linking across the curriculum and linked in with the local area, and making more chronological sense.'*

As Caroline stated, this had to be another bespoke curriculum as the background of students and challenges at Bracken Edge, were very different to those at Greenmount. Emily had to *'do battle'* to get her curriculum suggestions approved, but it was accepted and praised by staff and governors.

Emily attended a session with the PTA at this point, who were *'very impressed'* by the changes with many now offering their own skills and expertise to enhance the curriculum through dance workshops and means to link in with local community initiatives such as Carnival. For Bracken Edge this is a massive step, particularly for a school which has a *'bad reputation'* and is struggling to fill places. Caroline now feels like this is *'helping to improve our reputation and make us a school of choice'*.

### **A move towards whole school learning**

The LMG team worked closely with all three partners to assess and revise their curriculum plans. Prior to her engagement, many departments and Subject Leads were *'silo working'*, unaware of their peers' plans. Emily Nelson saw this as an opportunity for LMG to address this – to encourage whole school learning which was themed and linked to the local area. This would *'set the students up for the year, with good recaps and a root before their wider exploration of subjects'*. Through, this Emily could maximise the partners' use of the Primary School Membership loan boxes, and forge stronger links to other collection items and resources across the museum service.

A key example of the impact of LMG's work with schools moving towards whole school learning can be seen at Bracken Edge Primary School. Prior to the LMG engagement with the team, an HLTA directed by the Art Subject Lead taught each year group independently. Emily Nelson saw the opportunity for class teachers to deliver this as part of their core teaching, allowing for greater links between Art and other subjects. This would reduce silo working and encourage students to value Art through other forms and areas of study. Emily Nelson used Bracken Edge Primary School's Gold membership CPD hours to deliver training with learning staff from the Leeds Art Gallery. As a result, staff who previously felt insecure in their ability to teach Art, are now leading these sessions within their own classrooms as part of a



wider whole school learning plan. As Emily Nelson said, *'that completely changed how they plan for Art... they started planning Art and History alongside each other'*.

Similarly, St Bartholomew's C of E Primary School were motivated to join the scheme by the CPD elements, with a desire to enhance diversity across the curriculum. Emily Nelson has worked closely with the school to create a whole school learning programme, which has authentic links to diversity which feel relevant to the students of the school.

Emily noted that the school now looks for appropriate historical links for their students, considering how traditional views can be questioned and discussions framed in relation to the diverse background of their students. As such, the standard curriculum is now being interrogated by the teachers and students, such as the framing of Egyptian history as being a part of Africa, rather than colonial Europe.

*'We went through every year group, but we were also looking at opportunities for adding diversity in a really authentic way. Like when you're doing, Egypt, are you talking about Egypt as an African civilization? Because most people aren't because historically primary teachers don't know that the colonial opinion was that Egypt was so advanced that they couldn't really be African, surely they would be European.'*

Assistant Headteacher of St Bartholomew's, Billy Waters, notes that *'[o]ur relationship with Emily has been key - she has been an excellent support and is very proactive about getting in touch to support further. She has also recommended workshops and other enrichment areas e.g., zoom sessions with herself to use our museum credits... Through curriculum support, Emily has supported our history leaders to support more local links - this has been planned and will be implemented from September.'*

For Greenmount Primary School, Emily supported the creation of a medium term curriculum plan for key year groups. Each plan comprised of cross curricula links to allow for whole school learning, supporting reading (where possible from local authors) and museum collection links, as well as wider links within the local community.

This detailed plan allowed teachers to link back into previous learning, creating roots for new exploration and provided measurable outcomes and summit points for each term and subject. As a result, the school were furnished with a creative approach to whole school learning, with local history and understanding at the foundation of all subject areas. These were termed as 'authentic links' by the teaching staff. The students' understanding of the curriculum is now relevant to them as individuals within their locality, fostering a sense of pride in where they are from. This has only been possible through Emily's in depth understanding of the curriculum, and the collaborative approach taken between the LMG team and the school.

This mid-term plan *'really impressed'* Ofsted. As the pandemic forced the school to close, it's noted *'we felt like we still quite weren't quite there with it and we felt like the objectives weren't doing the curriculum justice so we decided to take an inquiry led approach and change the objectives into questions because we wanted our*



*learners to be more inquisitive and independent, and it was linking into the way we wanted to approach teaching in school. And so, it wasn't just about the delivery and just feeding children information we wanted them to find out for themselves which is why the museum boxes were so important.'*

For Bracken Edge, the LMG curriculum service created a huge cultural shift, enabling whole school learning to take place. Caroline Carr has now appointed a curriculum leader, inviting Emily Nelson to site on the interview panel and Emily herself has become a Governor at the school. Mark Crossland, curriculum lead at the school, says that this '*shows a real desire to get involved in the school and to have an investment in how we improve the curriculum for our children.*'

Further to this, at Bracken Edge, the team are now encouraging staff to make the use of previously under used resources such as their onsite woodland, pond and hens. This, coupled with the improved staff confidence has resulted in '*increased attainment, particularly in art which was taught by a teaching assistant before*'.

The LMG approach is now thoroughly embedded across the school, with the LMG team bringing in specialists from across the service to provide additional training support to make this happen. This has included members of the Leeds Art Gallery service '*we'd suggested, teachers should be getting involved in the teaching of art because we need to get it embedded more widely within the curriculum and it's about embedding creativity through education and art being an integral part of it. Not just being this other thing on the side and from next year class teachers are teaching it.*'

In 2021 the LMG team had identified the possibility of expanding their whole school learning model to a whole academy chain package. Whilst this was investigated, the team noted that the strength of this scheme is the development of relationships with individual teachers, reflective of their school culture and needs. This was compounded by issues such as staff changes within each school and feedback from chain leaders that the pick-up and drop off of loan boxes might not work for them. As such, the team will continue to work with school on an individual basis, regardless of their inclusion within an academy chain or not.

### **Increasing links to local history and access to collections**

As stated in the previous section, the whole school curriculum support and planning provided by LMG has resulted in far stronger links between schools and their local history and collections.

To further this, the LMG team continues to pivot as we move through the pandemic, offering alternatives to onsite engagement, which is currently limited. The 2020 Museum Tales LTD report explores the breadth of engagement undertaken during the initial lockdowns through social media content provided by Emily Nelson. These were incorporated as part of remote learning for schools as well as long-term resources accessible on the LMG YouTube.

Emily noted the success of these videos and saw this as an opportunity for further engagement with individual schools. As such, in 2021, Emily has delivered a series

of free, 20 minute video sessions (and some CPD for teachers in person) for member classes to further enhance their learning and access to collections. The content and theme of these sessions have been developed in partnership with the schools and added further value to the members. Emily Nelson notes that *'this year Greenmount have not used any of their proper, full workshop credits as they weren't doing Zoom sessions long enough during home learning, and obviously can't visit the museums in person at the moment.'* These Zoom sessions therefore allow for this access to collections and local history to be continued and enhanced.

Sessions have included:

- Year Six - evolution
- Year Four - Greeks
- Year Two - food chains
- Year One - toys.

By the end of May, Emily will have worked with 23 classes across Greenmount Primary School and Bracken Edge Primary School. This engagement would not have been possible without the technology and skills developed during lockdown, nor without the membership scheme which has allowed for this progression of the membership to develop.

Emily has developed further, full length workshops which can be delivered virtually as an alternative to the site visits schools which have been cancelled due to the pandemic. These have been undertaken particularly at St Bartholomew's School, who accessed three virtual Stone Age workshops in March 2021.

The team continue to offer CPD sessions to school staff as part of the membership during lockdown, supporting teachers in how they can continue to engage students with local history and collections beyond these virtual and in person sessions. This includes bringing in specialists from the LMG team such as the Curator of Archaeology and staff members from Leeds Art Gallery. As Caroline Carr of Greenmount notes *'most people were saying 'nobody's done any CPD in the last twelve months due to Covid. But we have! We used lockdown as an opportunity to do CPD with staff'.*

The desire to improve access to local history and collections, and the skill with which LMG have delivered this, has been cemented by Emily Nelson being asked to join Bracken Edge Primary School as a curriculum lead on their board of governors.

Mark Crossland, of Bracken Edge Primary School, notes that his students *'have really enjoyed being able to look up close at the artefacts in the loan boxes and it has created some great discussions in the classroom.'*

### **Improving access to cultural capital**

The Primary School Membership Scheme has increased access to cultural capital in the city by unfathomable lengths. Prior to this scheme, many students would have only accessed objects and collections items at most, once a year through a 'treat trip' to a museum. Now, the students have original artefacts and primary sources in their

classrooms, which as the 2020 Museum Tales LTD report has shown, has had a huge impact on students and teachers.

Through the Membership Scheme and whole school learning approach spearheaded by LMG, students now have ongoing, meaningful engagement with the history of their local area. Mark Crossland, a teacher at Bracken Edge Primary School notes that the membership has *'certainly improved the cultural capital of our cohort of children, who have little or no access to such things outside of school'*.

Through this partnership, teachers have also had access to specialists such as St Bartholomew's C of E Primary School working closely with both LMG Curators of Archaeology and World Cultures, and Bracken Edge Primary School working with an Art specialist from Leeds Art Gallery. Prior to this project, this access to cultural specialists would rarely, if ever have happened. At best, the teachers and students would have engaged with curators through a one off workshop at a site, although even this would be highly unlikely.

Emily Nelson notes of Bracken Edge Primary School, that before LMG started working with the team *'it was all quite kind of Higgledy Piggledy before whereas now there is this whole group learning, and getting the teachers delivering Art in the classroom. That move from kind of being individual teachers doing individual things to this much wider access things, it has had a massive impact.'*

Billy Waters from St Bartholomew's Primary School does state that Covid has *'somewhat restricted the impact'* of access to cultural capital. However, he does note that *'[t]he children loved the sessions with Emily and staff received training on child led enquiry which is already evident in classrooms - giving children more control in their learning and enquiry.'*

At Greenmount, Caroline Carr noted the importance of students accessing cultural capital and that *'that was a huge deal to Ofsted'*. For this Beeston based school that was very important, *'because our pupils don't really go out of the area so we have to give them as many opportunities to see beyond their lives... it's our priority to expand their knowledge.'*

At times, LMG have had concerns regarding these relationships and access to cultural capital, particularly if a member of school staff leaves. *'You've no idea what's going to happen'* states Emily. For example, during the 2019-20 Membership review conducted by Museum Tales LTD, Raynville Primary School were highly active members. Yet as Emily notes: *'we were really embedded within Raynville for most of that for the first half of that year, and then the pandemic hit and then [the teacher] left. Then we just didn't really hear from them.'* However, they have since been back in contact as schools opened up, and in the latter part of this year have accessed loans boxes, workshops and CPD carried over from last year. Emily continues *'the great thing in Raynville's case is that because we did so much work with them before the pandemic, the teachers know us, know what we can offer, and want to carry on. The decision to re-join for 2021-2 was led by the teachers.'*

In figures, between September 2019 to March 2020, 3500 students were able to engage with real objects from the LMG collection through the Membership Scheme. Between September 2020 to March 2021, despite the pandemic and school closures, 1962 students have already had access to objects via the loan boxes.

### **Mutually beneficial relationships**

The LMG team notes that the organic development of their relationships between the three partner schools and their team has had a huge benefit on them. Emily Nelson in particular has been able to develop a wider skills set as she became a curriculum mentor to the partners. Emily now feels that LMG are offering exactly what the schools need, not what museums think they need; they're now *'talking the same language'*.

*'It means that we have got to know a lot more about our member schools, and about what works for the membership more generally, which means we have a clearer understanding of how to use the scheme to make an impact for our schools.'*

Conversely, this has allowed the LMG service to grow in response to these needs, particularly in light of Covid. As Kate Fellows, Head of Learning and Access at LMG notes: *'[i]f we are working with schools closely like we do through membership, they get to know us, they can help shape and change us as a service and the way we work, and we change their processes too.'* Kate expands upon this, noting areas of curriculum resources previously *'not on their radar'* prior to engaging with these schools, such as the [Hackney Diverse Curriculum – the Black Contribution](#), which was brought to the attention of LMG by parents at Bracken Edge. Emily later attended a parents meeting to talk about how LMG and the school were shaping their own 'Leeds' approach to diversity in the curriculum. New resources and approaches brought to their attention by member schools can now be built into their future work, for the wider benefit of their membership and team.

In addition, the strong relationships between LMG and their school partners allowed them to swiftly move from face-to-face learning to digital programming very early on in the pandemic. Without the knowledge of what schools need, and open dialogue with member teachers, this would not have been possible. Kate Fellows noted *'we've got digital programming off the ground far quicker than some other arts and cultural organisations... So, statistically, we've missed out because of the pandemic like everybody has, but possibly not to such a massive extent because of the deep relationships we have.'*

The 2020 Museum Tales LTD report on this, highlights the vast reach and impact of these resources, which allowed schools across the UK to engage with artefacts and cultural capital in a meaningful way during the pandemic. Teacher Mark Crossland (Bracken Edge Primary School) states that the *'Zoom session for various classes... have proven invaluable in light of the Covid restrictions which have impacted on school trips and visits.'*

The partner schools have seen a real culture change, as they moved from silo working to whole school learning via their partnership with LMG. As such, teachers have been skilled up beyond their subject specialisms, and given the space, time

and encouragement to consider how they can make the curriculum more relevant to their students. As such LMG have become a critical friend to these schools, using their breadth of knowledge (including the primary curriculum, Artsmark and resources available) to hone curriculums to improve access to cultural capital and maximise whole school learning opportunities. A role which an internal member of staff would arguably be unable to do without the overview of the LMG collection and local history links.

The development of these partnerships have allowed the LMG team to be flexible in the delivery of the Primary School Membership package, which they find hugely beneficial. They are now able to offer a responsive, needs based service which fits within the parameters of the original membership scheme and payment package.

### **A replicable model**

The LMG team has highly confident that this model is replicable across museum services. In 2020, LMG partnered with GEM to deliver a series of loan box sessions to organisations across the UK. These were well received and introduced the basic principles of developing loan boxes and Primary School Membership Scheme. As the team note, *'we have proven that this works and can make transformative change'*. This has resulted in schools across Leeds viewing museums and galleries as *'meaningful and enriching. Not just external places to visit'*, something services across the UK should strive to achieve.

As a model, LMG notes that the service has been a large revenue generator for the team over the past year. This would be replicable for other services who already have learning staff in place and access to objects. LMG note that the relationship building capabilities linked to such a scheme is mutually beneficial for museum services and schools, manifesting in revenue through membership, secondary spend on site and an increase in on site visits. Kate Fellows, Head of Learning and Access at LMG noted that just one curriculum planning package with a non-member school, priced at £450, generates more income than 8 digital workshops or 6 onsite museum workshops. As such, in 2019-20 the membership generated £14,192 and 2020-21 has so far generated £11,950.

Head of Learning and Access at LMG, Kate Fellows, suggests that smaller museums could create local partnerships to deliver a similar model. This approach would allow for skills and cost sharing during the development phase.

The challenges of course are the development time required to create a membership scheme and associated costs. Emily Nelson was able to develop her curriculum understanding during the pandemic, and new services would need to set study time aside to fully skill up their staff. As Emily notes, her understanding is now at the level a teacher would have, rather than the traditionally broader knowledge of a museum Learning Officer.

Emily also has the benefit of her role being partially dedicated to the Membership scheme, which in the interim, other services might not be able to provide. However, the sector as a whole has reported an understandable drop in the number of



workshops and engagement with schools, potentially freeing up some teams to replicate this model within an established learning role.

Emily notes: *'I suppose the curriculum and topic support work we are now doing so much of has increased my workload, but at the same time it is quite flexible in terms of when I do that work in a day/week, so can be fit around the other things such as school workshops, and I just need to make sure I leave space in my diary for it... When we are back to in-person school visits, of course that will change things to a certain extent, but they only fill the time from 9:30am to 2:30pm max, and that's assuming I am taking 2 classes on the same day, which is not always the case. The extra membership work can be made to fit around this, including short free digital sessions which I am hoping to continue to offer members where I can fit them in.'*

Emily has also noted the benefits of taking a fluid approach to the membership scheme – noting that it may benefit some schools to flit between Gold and Silver or Bronze if their training and curriculum support needs have been met under the higher level of membership in a previous year.

*'Again, we can look at putting more bespoke things together for members... they could join our onsite sessions or we could add that extra box, add in assemblies and create a package if they don't want the CPD... I think that was something I really took away from last year was that that was almost what the teachers were looking for was a bit more flexibility because I think they were getting a bit over faced with how much stuff they could possibly access.'*

As such, Emily notes the need for some of the box content to be flexible. For example, a school might be covering space – but they want information on people such as Tim Peake and Buzz Aldrin rather than geological specimens and physics resources. By having such a strong relationship with the LMG curatorial team, Emily can make a more bespoke loan box in response to that.

That is the type of relationship a museum service will have to foster to make this a success – clear buy in from the curatorial team to allow for a breadth of pre-approved items to be loaned, sometimes in response to an individual need from a school. Schools are not one size fits all, and the success of the LMG programme has been based on the individual relationships which have been fostered.

However, as it has been widely reported. Museums and cultural venues have suffered massively during the pandemic and the way in which schools access their collections has changed dramatically. Schemes such as the LMG Primary School Membership and curriculum planning service will allow museum services to be at the heart of primary teaching – channelling their skills and experience into reuniting schools with their local history. As Caroline Carr of Bracken Edge Primary School (previously of Greenmount) states: *'even with Covid, our staff are doing really well to bring new experiences to the classroom when we can't take them out. They're still teaching the curriculum and then bringing in new experiences'*. Without this scheme, this would not have been possible.



## The next steps

Going forward, the LMG team hope to continue their work supporting schools as they access cultural capital and move towards whole school learning.

Kate Fellows, Head of Learning and Access at LMG sees further opportunities to support schools, beyond curriculum planning. *'[T]he kind of next stage beyond just curriculum planning is tracking and evidencing long term attainment. Schools and individual teachers aren't often as good at evidencing long term soft skills or impact as they are concrete metrics such as reading levels, for lots of reasons. Actually, how that works to me is that they possibly need a bit more support, which is the longer term bit, beyond the curriculum planning.'*

Tracking how the curriculum planning elements have been implemented within schools is also a concern for Emily Nelson. Museum Tales LTD recommends some more robust analysis of this, to capture how the recommendations are implemented on a classroom and whole school level. As Kate notes *'[students] shouldn't really necessarily notice what's going on. Apart from that they enjoy their curriculum they enjoy coming to school. It probably has more of a noticeable articulated impact on the teachers. And with Bracken Edge's new curriculum, on the school culture as a whole. Or at least that's what we aim to do.'* Emily Nelson adds that *'we're now looking at evaluating how it's worked this year, what has worked, what hasn't, there might be some changes to topics, obviously not the whole thing.'*

There is certainly room for the Membership scheme and curriculum planning service to evolve in the coming months. Emily Nelson has noted 'cultural shifts' within other membership holders such as Raynville who despite staff changes *'see that there is room for us, because, there's a space for us to support them and when they've needed that support and when they have the headspace to think about it, they've come back to speak to me about it.'* Further work with membership schools will enable them to follow a similar path, shifting their internal culture and returning to LMG for further support and engagement for their pupils.

The digital offer which was produced during the pandemic has also provided to be an incredible asset for participating schools and the LMG team. It has not only allowed students access to cultural capital during lockdown, which was unheard of for many schools, but it has also allowed for schools to participate in bite sized virtual workshop sessions. Schools can now have the LMG team virtually 'drop in' for a 20 minute sessions, complete with objects and specialist knowledge, rather than having to plan a half day visit with the associated costs, logistics and paperwork.

The LMG team continues to work with a wide variety of schools through the Membership Scheme, beyond the partners noted in this report. Some of these schools, such as Richmond Hill, were used to pilot the virtual workshops created in response to the pandemic and benefited from the LMG skills and experience in other ways. These schools, and future members, will now be able to take advantage of the new curriculum planning service which has proven to be a real asset to the partner schools mentioned in this report.

The flexibility of this service and responsiveness of the staff opens up a wealth of knowledge, expertise and skills to schools across the region and is a service which has the potential to keep growing. There is a huge opportunity for LMG to share their knowledge within the culture sector too, to support their peers to create similar services for their own local area.

The pandemic has widened the chasm between schools and access to cultural venues and resources. School trips will be harder to arrange, venues have lost key learning staff members and budgets have been reduced to try and recover from the impact of the pandemic. As such, the LMG model would allow other services to pivot their services as they face the 'new normal' whilst closing the gap between students and cultural capital.

*You can tell me what you want, or you can send me your curriculum and I can make suggestions, if you want extra help in resolving topics, just ask, just let me know.*