

Foreword

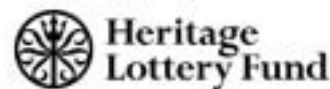
There are hundreds of education spaces within museums, historic buildings, heritage sites and discovery centres across the UK. Many more are planned in the context of an ever-increasing emphasis on these sites as cultural learning resources. Many have been – or will be – funded by some of the organisations listed below, yet few are built, furnished or developed with any clear guidance to hand. Many are inadequate and unsatisfactory – in terms of their dimensions, their location or their fixtures and fittings. Few realise their full potential as learning environments, with some succeeding only through the ingenuity and enthusiasm of the site's education team. Success is often mixed: rarely comprehensive. But this needn't always be the case.

This handbook aims to take the haphazardness out of the development of these spaces. It aims to inform, educate, advise and support staff, policy-makers, funders, architects and designers and to enable them to create high-quality, desirable spaces for learners of all ages, whatever their budgets. In the course of this handbook, we document many of the errors made in creating learning spaces – and we occasionally apportion blame – but we do so only to highlight the potential pitfalls and to lead readers towards creative solutions. We hope that education staff, project teams and architects will be able to use this handbook to guide their thinking – on both an individual and a collective basis – and to ensure that the best possible spaces can be created, whatever the particular set of circumstances or resources.

In researching this handbook, we struggled to find exemplar spaces to highlight best practice. We very much hope that in five years time, a similar survey will reveal a very different picture. But that's up to you. It will certainly help that this guidance is being published by a number of funders of learning spaces; a grant applicant would be unwise to ignore this handbook in submitting a bid for a learning space. Between us, we can make a difference.



department for
education and skills



cabe education

